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There Ought to Be a Law - Or Should There?

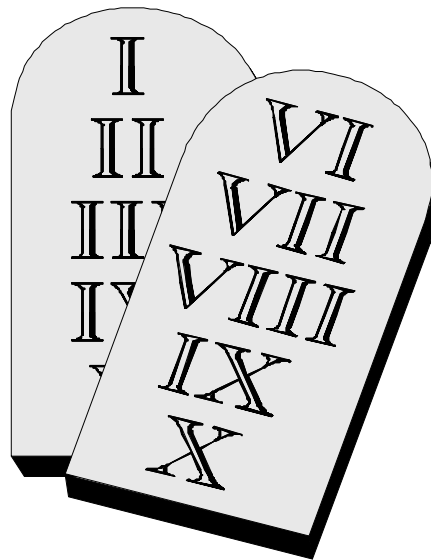
The Old Testament Law and the New Testament Church

by G. Richard Fisher

One thing that ties together all cults, aberrational teachers or sects with cultic tendencies is an insistence on salvation by works. Dave Breese, in *Know The Marks of Cults*, defines a cult as a "religious perversion" and "devotion to a religious view or leader centered in false doctrine."¹ He further shows that a false basis of salvation is nothing more than an attempt to merit salvation through human works and human effort. In many cases the works system draws heavily from Old Testament law or extrabiblical rules. These rules, doctrines and practices are extrapolated by twisting many Old Testament verses.

For instance, "soul sleep" is taught by Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses from the Book of Ecclesiastes without regard for the context, progression, message or intent of the book.

For most Evangelical Christians, salvation by works is an easy teaching to refute and all would agree that we are not saved by works (Ephesians 2:8-9) or by the law (Galatians, Romans 4-5). Righteousness does not come by the works of the law but by grace



through faith. Grace is God's free and unmerited favor bestowed on the unrighteous even in the face of their demerit. It is not what we do for God, but accepting what God has

done for us through Jesus' life and work on the cross which saves us.

HOW THEN SHALL WE GROW?

The much more difficult question is in regard to sanctification or Christian growth. There are great misunderstandings and divisions among believers in the area of law and grace as they affect sanctification. How much law or just what laws do we need to obey to be sanctified? Arbitrarily imposing certain portions of the Old Testament on the Christian life seems, at best, inconstant, speculative and subjective. The issue can easily lead to misunderstanding and divisiveness. Studying the relationship of Old Testament law to the believer requires patience, passion and prayer.

In theological circles, the issue of how much law applies to the believer

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Editorials

THE NON-NOURISHING MIX OF CHICKEN SOUP

An old joke goes: "Come on over for supper. We'll throw a little more water in the soup." However, with too many guests one ends up with a watery non-nourishing mix. Spiritually speaking, the plethora of self-esteem/self-help books that continue to stockpile the shelves of even Christian bookstores depict this unhealthy brew. And none more so than the best-selling "Chicken Soup" series.

The title and concept has caught on and there are "Chicken Soup" books for everyone and everything imaginable (including women, mothers, teenagers, children, the surviving soul, the soul at work, and the never forgotten doll). The line sells at an unabated rate. And many of its titles repeatedly appear on the best-seller list with selections including, *Chicken Soup for the Woman's Soul* and various cookbooks.

Despite the series' appeal, Christians should take pause and exercise caution when they realize that these books are published by a New Age publisher. And the authors, Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, are admittedly New Age proponents. At the very least, these books will be tainted by Canfield's visualization and self-esteem ideas and Hansen's humanistic bent. The books further include contributions by or references to M. Scott Peck, Joseph Campbell, Norman Vincent Peale, Napoleon Hill and other New Age or positive mental attitude gurus.

Apologist K. Craig Branch of Watchman Fellowship in Birmingham, Ala., has done the Christian body a valuable service in exposing Canfield's and Hansen's views on man's perfectibility. In his article, "Chicken Soup Or Witch's Brew" (*The Watchman Expositor*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 18-20), he notes that in one book alone (*A 2nd Helping of Chicken Soup*), at least 38 New Age and Mormon authors are cited. Other volumes from the series are equally seasoned with the same unchristian flavor. In addition, both Canfield and Hansen have published another work, *The Aladdin Factor*, which affirms visualization techniques and cites numerous New Age leaders.

Further in his article, Branch catalogs three areas of deep concern for the Christian. These include:

1) *The humanistic tendency of these books.* Throughout the series, people are told that life is just reaching one's potential. It is a feel-good message of simply living in terms of what one feels is right. It removes the Christian's focus from the sure Word of God. Our reference point as believers is the eternal God and His eternal Word, not our feelings and opinions.

2) *The success in sales have given notable credibility to Canfield and his coauthor Hansen.* In addition to local Christian bookstores, national booksellers such as Christian Book Distributors (CBD) and Christian book brokers such as Ingram/Spring Arbor Distributors, all have added respectability by making the publications available. Yet, New Age ideas — no matter how popular they

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VINEYARD LEADER DIES

John Wimber, purveyor of a self-styled brand of "power evangelism," died last Nov. 17 from a brain hemorrhage caused by an accidental fall. He was 63.

The former jazz musician-turned-pastor became a Christian in 1962 and was affiliated with Chuck Smith and the Calvary Chapel fellowships. In 1983, he joined a group of independent congregations known as the "Vineyards." Four years later, the Association of Vineyard Churches was officially formed. Under his leadership, he helped to build the affiliation into a 150,000-member international group. Wimber's teachings emphasized the spiritual gifts of tongues and healing and cited such signs and wonders as God's validation of his ministry.

Robert Schuller, pastor of the Crystal Cathedral, told the *Los Angeles Times* that he felt "power when Wimber visited him" after an accident in 1991 that left him in a coma. "I'm convinced that God's healing power entered my body through the personal touch of John Wimber," Schuller told the newspaper after learning of Wimber's death.

Wimber's critics had long criticized his "power evangelism" was devoid of the cross, which according to 1 Corinthians 1:18 is the "power" of God. The *Los Angeles Times* quoted Todd Hunter, National Coordinator of Vineyard Churches, as saying Wimber used to say, "Look at me, I'm just a fat man trying to get to heaven."

Although Wimber believed that the perpetuation of the gifts of tongues and healing could eliminate "Satan, sin and sickness," he suffered a number of ailments in his last years. Just a few weeks before his death, he underwent open heart surgery. Three years earlier, he suffered a mild stroke. In 1993, doctors discovered a malignant tumor in his nasal pharynx. The cancer and subsequent treatment reportedly caused Wimber to lose more than 100 pounds.

—MKG

CARTER SAYS MORMONS ARE CHRISTIAN

Southern Baptist Jimmy Carter has denounced leaders of his denomination for declaring that professing members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are non-Christians.

Carter told reporters, "Too many leaders now, I think, in the Southern Baptist Convention and in other conventions, are trying to act as Pharisees did, who were condemned by Christ, in trying to define who can and who cannot be considered an acceptable person in the eyes of God. In other words, they're making judgments on behalf of God. I think that's wrong."

The former U.S. president also told the Mormon-owned *Deseret News* that his church's leaders were "narrow in their definition of what is a proper Christian or certainly even a proper Baptist." He said Baptists "are inerrantists (meaning) there cannot possibly be any error in even a translation of a Bible down through the centuries."

The newspaper stated that Carter has misgivings about "Christians trying to convert other Christians." The North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptists, under the direction of Interfaith Witness director Phil Roberts, has made a concerted effort to equip its members to witness to Mormons. The Southern Baptists will hold their annual convention this summer in Salt Lake City.

Carter's comments raised the ire of Southern Baptist leaders. Roberts told the Baptist Press that, "Mr. Carter must be a better politician and diplomat than a theologian. His comments show he is totally uninformed and naive about the nature and beliefs of the Mormon church." Southern Baptist Convention president Tom Elliff said Carter "would do well to take a serious look at the Mormon faith before embracing it as part of the Christian community."

Carter's reservations about interfaith witnessing were not exclusive to the Mormon religion. "If you mean should we Protestants devote our time to converting Catholics to be Protestants, that's something with which I generally disagree."

—MKG

NEWSPAPER CHALLENGES REVIVAL'S CLAIMS

Following four months of investigative work, the *Pensacola News Journal* revealed an excess of questionable issues and practices by the leadership of the Brownsville Assembly of God church. Last November, the Florida newspaper reported its findings in a five-day series of "special reports" in nearly three dozen articles.

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The Basic Life Principles of BILL GOTHARD

BENEVOLENT MINISTRY OR BONDAGE MAKING?



by G. Richard Fisher

During the past two decades, Personal Freedom Outreach repeatedly has been asked to provide analysis of the teachings of seminar leader Bill Gothard. Most who have contacted PFO report negative results from a following of Gothard's strict teachings. This author had surveyed the teachings and writings of Gothard a number of years earlier in an article in *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*. Two years ago, in the spring issue of *The Quarterly Journal*, PFO reported on the heavy legalism of Gothard's teachings in an article titled "A Study in Evolving Fadism — The Cultic Leanings of Bill Gothard's Teachings."¹

Following publication of the article, PFO received even more phone calls from people whose lives, marriages and even churches had been or were being disrupted by Gothard's legalism.

The article also resulted in requests for radio interviews and seminars. Other ministries, including Christian Research Institute, used and distributed the article in response to requests for information. Midwest Christian Outreach, realizing the seriousness and magnitude of the teachings, began researching and publishing its own findings. Midwest Christian Outreach's leadership also met with Gothard but produced no change in his positions.

Gothard and his organization have responded to the mounting criticism in a negative, cruel and self-defeating fashion. For example, last October he submitted a seven-page paper to PFO titled, "A Response to Richard Fisher's Article on The Teachings of Bill Gothard." The report credited no author. In response to a phone inquiry last October, Gothard told PFO that the paper had been done by a "team" but he would not identify by name, gender or background the makeup of the "team." PFO has been told that Gothard sometimes uses young employees or volunteers to do research.

A few days later, Gothard's organization sent a revised version of the response. The four-page rewrite said it was the product of "several members of the Institute staff, headed by Roy Blackwood." Blackwood is part of Basic Life Principles' Board of Directors. The other members of the "team" were not identified.

This revised response says that this writer, in his article in PFO's *Quarterly Journal*, is reacting to Gothard's high standards. The implication is that anyone who questions Gothard has low standards. However, a rereading of the PFO critique makes it obvious that it is Gothard's *interpretations* of Scripture and the imposition of them

into the lives of others that are being criticized.

Last November, another version of the response appeared. It featured no substantial changes apart from the smoothing out of some rough wording pointed out during a phone conversation Gothard had with this writer.

After Gothard had sent his original response, he told this writer that he wanted to discuss his reply privately before releasing it to other concerned parties. He asked this writer to keep the respective responses private for the time being, "for the greater cause of the body of Christ."

However, PFO learned that Gothard already had begun publicizing his response. When PFO confronted Gothard, he admitted that it had been sent to Dr. Norman L. Geisler (who is on PFO's Board of Reference) and Hank Hanegraaff of the Christian Research Institute (because CRI is distributing the original PFO article). Even then, Gothard withheld the fact that he had sent the response to at least one other ministry known by PFO. When pushed to tell the truth, *he did not tell all the truth*. Since Gothard sent to others the longer, first edition, this response will refer to it unless otherwise mentioned.²

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The “Closing” of The Way International

by John P. Juedes

The Way International, the pseudo-Christian cult founded by Victor Paul Wierwille, has suffered such a steep decline in its membership that even its own publication could not ignore it. *The Way Magazine* reported in its Nov.-Dec. 1997 issue that the decline is the result of Way President L. Craig Martindale’s initiation of “changes to build a spiritually pure and sweet household” (“The Prevailing Word Report,” pg. 22).

The decline began about the same time Martindale became The Way’s president. In 1982, The Way said 3,100 Word Over the World Ambassadors went out to recruit followers. By March 1997, only 43 members of “The Way Disciples Outreach Group,” which replaced the WOW Ambassadors and worked in six cities, finished what is now a six-month term. That is 1.4 percent of the number of WOW Ambassadors in 1982. If two groups were sent out per year, it would still amount to less than 3 percent.

The Way also said it graduated 415 Corps and Family Corps in 1982. Since the Corps class of 1997 included about 43 adults and The Way usually inflates its Corps number by counting children — who are officially Junior

and Mini Corps — and since many of the Corps members are married to one another, this may represent only 25 or so households.

Martindale, in his book, *The Rise and Expansion of the Christian Church in the First Century*, writes about the importance of expansion, “... the Book of Acts vividly illustrates God’s passionate will and concern for the ‘expansion’ of His Word by way of those who speak it in love. Expansion occurs numerically and geographically and in impact throughout the whole inhabited world. ... In the principles and techniques found in its records, the Book of Acts presents the godly blueprint for success in outreach to the end of the expansion of the Word over the world” (pp. 6, 7).

The catastrophic decline that has marked Martindale’s term suggests that he has not learned or followed the Book of Acts’ “godly blueprint for success.” The early Church faced opposition and persecution hundreds of times greater than any opposition Martindale has faced, yet it prospered.

While The Way says the changes were intended to build a “sweet” household, the hundreds who have been reprovved, purged, marked, avoided, or who left in disappointment, describe their experiences as sour. A large proportion of these don’t reject Way teaching, but all reject Way leadership.

The Way has made great efforts to close its doors to everyone who does not seem to be completely committed to obeying its president. It has restricted access to its new classes, refused to sell publications, ejected many members, ended or replaced activities, consolidated its locations and increased security at its campuses. Martindale hoped that these changes would prevent potential critics from closely examining the group and would further divorce TWI from its many ex-followers and splinter groups.

The centerpiece and primary recruitment tool of TWI for nearly thirty years was the *Power for Abundant Living* (PFAL) class by the late founder Victor Paul Wierwille. However, the class had become well known to outsiders over the years, who then published critical analyses

of it. In addition, thousands who accused top Way leaders of error and left TWI still held Wierwille's class in high regard.

Martindale then replaced PFAL with his own class, *The Way of Abundance and Power*. He has tried to keep the class secret by allowing only people who are regular participants in a twig (home fellowship) to take the class. Nonetheless, reviews of the class (by this author) are available on the World Wide Web.

Martindale also replaced other classes by Wierwille and restricted access to its publications. At one time The Way allowed anyone to buy any publication except Wierwille's book, *Power for Abundant Living*, because it contained the first four sessions of the PFAL class and The Way wanted to limit that information to paying registrants.

Currently, The Way will not sell its publications to anyone who is not an active participant in a Way twig — except for subscriptions to Sunday Night Service recordings and *The Way Magazine*. (However, as this article was going to press, this writer's new subscription to *The Way Magazine* was cancelled.) A standard form from its bookstore reads:

"It is our policy that we sell only to those who actively attend our fellowships. Our records indicate that you are not currently attending a Way International fellowship. If our records are incorrect, please have your limb coordinator contact us so that we can update our information."

The Way probably found itself selling Wierwille's books to its "competitors" — its splinter groups and critics — and thought that refusing to sell the books might hinder or spite them. It also hoped to reduce the number of articles criticizing the slipshod aspects of its "research."

PURGE, MARK AND AVOID

The Way also booted out many of its followers and closed the door behind them. "Purge, mark and avoid" became The Way's rallying cry

of the 1990s. It started by purging all who seemed to be homosexuals or "homo" sympathizers. (The Way seems to enjoy using "politically incorrect" terms and profanity.) Then leaders went on to purge all who appear not to obey Martindale unquestioningly. Many seemed to fear questioning even a few practices in private, afraid word would get back to zealous leaders. Those who were purged were "avoided," and were escorted off Way campuses and utterly ignored, even by longtime friends.

One result of this is increased tension in marriages. Leaders often pressure devoted followers to either induce their mates to actively participate in Way gatherings (twigs, limbs, etc.) or to separate from or divorce them.

Many Way followers are also encouraged to move closer to the New Knoxville, Ohio, headquarters. Those who live within 250 miles of New Knoxville are pressured to attend all Sunday night services there. Those beyond that range are expected to get a live telephone hookup to the Victor Paul Wierwille Word Over the World Auditorium during the services. This practice closes ranks, and gives leaders more control over their followers.


TWI ended the WOW Ambassador program in 1994, fearing that nearly 10 percent of that year's applicants were homosexual. A year later it began the "The Way Disciples Outreach Group" program to replace the WOWs. The Disciples were to find new recruits for TWI as the WOWs did, but serve only four months instead of the year the WOWs served. But the Trustees limit the Disciples to only Advanced Class graduates in order to assure that they are more entrenched in Way practices and more answerable to leaders.

TWI has also reduced its number of campuses, closing Tinnie, N.M., and selling its Emporia, Kan., campus at a great financial loss to reduce debt brought on by diminishing financial

resources and a decline in experienced leadership.

The Way has always controlled visitors to its campuses much more than any college or institution. Its members always use name tags so that they can instantly identify any outsiders. Since the split, its security force has become increasingly aggressive, approaching and running off anyone who is not currently active in a Way-controlled twig. (Being involved in a "stick," a home fellowship of ex-Way followers not now answerable to New Knoxville, is a quick ticket off campus.) Security personnel try to intimidate outsiders by dressing as police officers — complete with police-style utility belt, holster, CB-style microphone, badge with the word "patrolman" stamped on it, and white vehicles with a seal painted on the door and emergency lights on top. The fact that security was busy confronting ex-Way followers during the last Rock of Ages gathering contributed to The Way's decision to discontinue that annual event as well.

These efforts to close circle the wagons have backfired. The increased pressure to control Way followers has actually forced many of them out, as the blatant manipulation tipped them off to the unhealthy nature of the group. These, and others who were forcibly purged, took their class materials and books with them, and passed them on to others. Those who leave, then become an exit point for some of their friends or relatives still in The Way. Computers and the World Wide Web have enabled former Way followers to contact one another and exchange information previously unavailable. Overall, the increasingly restrictive nature of The Way is showing no sign of subsiding anytime soon.

Editor's Note: John P. Juedes is a Missouri Synod Lutheran pastor in California and serves on PFO's Board of Reference. He has a large collection of articles and information on The Way International available on his church's Web site: www.empirenet.com/~messiah7. 

The previously published article in *The Quarterly Journal* examined large amounts of Gothard material. Gothard has never requested the doctrinal statement of the Baptist church of which this writer is pastor, nor has he requested the doctrinal statement of PFO to determine what beliefs it holds. Gothard's charges are ill-informed and unfounded. Moreover, because of disagreements with his biblical interpretations, Gothard has insinuated that this writer has a low view of Scripture.

Old habits die hard and Gothard seems to have learned little from his past encounters with critics. Over 20 years ago, author Wilfred Bockelman observed:

"And even when finally confronted with an objection, Gothard, according to one alumnus, doesn't show how his position is more reasonable, but merely falls back on his interpretation. Then he takes any further objection to be an attack on the Bible, not a questioning of his own interpretation. ... Gothard has a very low opinion of reason."³

Gothard's — or the team's — response is consistent throughout the seven pages, using straw men, negative innuendos, scriptural distortions, practical misinformation, name-calling, false witness, character assassinations and false accusations. In many cases it does not answer with Scripture (except to try to mislead with proof-texting), but lapses into *ad hominem* attacks.

In a January 1997 debate on a Chicago radio station in which this writer participated, Gothard was pressed as to whether his teachings were to be taken as "helpful hints" or dogmatic assertions by which one becomes spiritual. When forced to answer, Gothard responded, "helpful hints." That, therefore, would make his assertions on many personal and peripheral issues not seem too impor-

tant. However, in the defensive response sent to PFO, the subtle suggestions that those who question his teaching may not even be in the Christian camp, make it clear that all Gothard's teachings are seen by him and his followers as dogmatic and right in every last detail and as "do or die" issues.

ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Page one of the response mentions the subject of "Divorce and Remarriage." Let it be stated that this writer agrees with Gothard statements regarding a high view of marriage. This writer has spent the last 30 years in ministry emphasizing the permanence of marriage as Jesus did, as well as doing premarital counseling and marrying only believers to other believers. Along with that there have been years of crisis intervention and constant marriage counseling, helping salvage many homes to the glory of God. This writer looks for reasons to keep marriages and families together. To suggest otherwise is to lie.

The Gothard response quotes the critique's statement, "All of Gothard's early materials make plain that he does not believe a divorce can take place for any reason whatsoever. He avoids the exception clause of Matthew 19:9." Note the words "early materials."

He does not refer at all to later statements in the article such as, "Further confusion has been added by the publishing of Gothard's *Rebuilder's Guide*, in which he says 'The exception clause does refer to illegal marriages such as incest. It may also refer to immorality during the Jewish betrothal period.'" The point in *The Quarterly Journal* article was that the context of Matthew 19 does not support the incest/betrothal idea and those words are never used in that chapter. As well, the incest/betrothal teaching came later through Gothard's use of Charles Ryrie.

Gothard suggests that this writer's questioning of his interpretation of

the Matthew 19 exception clause amounts to looking for rationalizations to dissolve marriages or "looking for justification to violate marriage vows" is horribly misleading. Disagreeing with him on this subject is not tantamount to having a low view of marriage or condoning indiscriminate divorce.

Gothard is right when he defines *porneia* as unlawful sexual activity. It is clear that Jesus said in Matthew 19:9 that there was no divorce "except for sexual immorality" (*porneia*). Making an exception where Jesus does is safe ground. Refusing to make an exception where Jesus does is dangerous and adds to the Word of God putting that person, in fact, above Christ. It binds people with a yoke as the Pharisees did.

Then Gothard talks of a "porneia marriage" and distorts 1 Corinthians 5:1 by saying, "The incestuous marriage of a son with his mother (I Corinthians 5:1) was a porneia marriage." First, the passage cited is not talking about marriage at all, but incest of a son with his mother. Secondly, the passage states clearly "that a man has his father's wife." How could his mother be his wife when the text says she was his father's wife? It is clear that this is not a "porneia marriage" (whatever that is) and not a marriage at all, but a clear case of incest and has nothing to do with Matthew 19 and the exception clause. The context of 1 Corinthians 5 is heinous sin and church discipline.

Gothard then states that, "A homosexual marriage would be a porneia marriage." However, in the phone conversation referenced above, Gothard admitted that there is no such thing as homosexual marriage. There is no way Jesus could be referring to "homosexual marriage" in Matthew 19 since it did not exist — and does not exist — and Matthew 19 refers to male and female in the bonds of marriage. Even if a "homosexual marriage" did exist, Jesus would not be addressing "their right to divorce." Surprisingly, the third version of the

Gothard response still ignores the facts. It reads, "*Porneia* relationships would also include sodomite 'marriages' which are now being proposed in America."

To state clearly, homosexuality is *porneia*, sodomy is *porneia*, incest is *porneia*, adultery is *porneia* and fornication and child molestation are *porneia*. *Porneia* is any kind of sexual immorality. This can be established easily and quickly even by someone not knowing Greek. More in-depth studies are available to the English reader through the works of Gerhard Kittel. *The Greek New Testament With English Notes* states: "Our Saviour here ... limits the lawfulness of repudiating a wife to the single case of adultery."⁴

Unlawful sexual activity (*porneia*) may be grounds upon which one may consider the possibility of divorce according to Jesus in Matthew 19:9. If there is repentance and restoration, divorce is not inevitable. This writer agrees with Gothard that divorce "is the beginning of a new set of problems." Even when there isn't a divorce, there may be a whole new set of problems. When people are sinned against there can be horrible consequences and ramifications. God's grace can and must be sought for these.

Gothard then states on page two: "It is significant to note that cults tend to have a disregard for the permanence of marriage and, in fact, encourage their break up when it suits their goals." Gothard should be very careful here since PFO's ministry and by report, other ministries, have received calls telling of marriages troubled or broken because of Gothard's legalistic teachings.

Gothard's position seems to be, as evidenced just on the first two pages of his response, that those who don't agree with him on every point must be doing the work of the enemy and contributing to the demise of the American home. This kind of elitism can produce pride and judgmentalism in followers.

In last October's phone conversation, Gothard said he believed in "separation." Yet he offered no biblical support for such "separation," nor did he explain on what grounds. This writer rarely would counsel separation except when there is threat to the life and safety of a spouse or children and with a view toward counseling and restoration.

So throughout the first section of Gothard's response there are negative innuendoes, scriptural distortions, practical misinformation, along with false accusations. And that's just the beginning.

ON PERSONAL GUIDANCE

On page three, Gothard replies to the questioning of his method of personal guidance. Here he gives as an almost absolute endorsement of guidance through "'God-given authorities' such as parents and husbands." No one would deny that this is generally true. There can be no submission to sinful expectations and children must honor parents (Exodus 20) and women their husbands (Ephesians 5, 1 Peter 3). At least on that we agree. We should not look lightly on God-given authorities. The larger question, however, is: Are those authorities absolute?

Nowhere did *The Quarterly Journal* critique suggest rebellion against any God-given commands. The concern expressed was over "adult single people" and the complex issues of their relationship with unsaved parents and how that applies to Psalm 1's admonition against "walking in the counsel of the ungodly." The issue is far more complex than Gothard would have us believe. Also on page three, Gothard takes issue with an objection to making inner peace part of a Christian's guidance system. The article said, "So, in Gothard's guidance system an inner feeling of peace is the ultimate test." The phone conversation included intense discussion of that issue. However, had the article said, "Peace for Gothard is the last test," it would not have changed two

key facts. First, that peace is no test at all. And secondly, Gothard misuses Colossians 3:15 to try to make his point.

The peace of God is a real and wonderful provision for the child of God (Romans 5:1, Philippians 4). However, it should not be confused with guidance. Fathers must confront their children and discipline them. This can cause grief and unrest despite the fact that it is within God's will. This kind of obedience sometimes brings no peace. The peaceful fruit of righteousness in child-rearing may only come in the long term. There may be times in intense confrontation when we witness of our faith and we feel no peace but only stress. Yet we obey God and try to be responsible witnesses.

The Apostles had no peace on the Sea of Galilee during that violent storm. Mark 4:41 reports they were "terrified." Yet they were in the perfect will of God. Jesus had no peace in Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-36). Yet He was in the perfect will of the Father.

We ought not to confuse people by making peace anything else than a by-product. Yes, God does give real peace, but sometimes it is not experienced until long after a biblical course of action has been taken. It is no test for guidance. If we lack peace because of a guilty conscience it does not have to be related to lack of peace but to guilt and confession. If we have lost peace because of sin, confession will restore it as a by-product of being right with God.

Further, Gothard misuses Colossians 3:15 ("Let the peace of God rule in your hearts") and tries to apply it to guidance. As was stated in my article, the context of Colossians 3 is keeping peace in relationships. Note the words in verse 13: "bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another even as Christ forgave you so you also must do."

Note verse 15 again as it says, "And let the peace of God rule in your

hearts to which you were called into one body." Paul is saying have a heart for peace in all your relationships. Be a peacemaker. It is the equivalent of 1 Thessalonians 5:13, "Be at peace among yourselves" and Romans 12:18, "Live peaceably with all men." Paul is saying to have a real heart for peace in your relationships. That is not just a feeling or emotion but a commitment to the maintaining of peace with others.

Dr. Jay Adams is a Greek scholar, counselor, pastor and a fine exegete of Scripture. He brings all these disciplines to his interpretation of God's Word. His careful exegesis of Colossians 3:15, is worth noting:

"The misinterpretation of Col. 3:15 (as *individual* peace — 'I have peace about the matter' — as the basis for decision-making must be rejected). The entire passage speaks of *corporate* relations among the members of the church. Peace is the 'umpire' for the interpersonal relations of the parts of the body to the whole. This is the peace *in the church*; there is nothing about guidance in this passage."⁵

Furthermore, Deuteronomy 29:19 warns that a person can be in sin and convince himself that he has peace. The Word of God — not an emotion — must be our sole source of guidance.

REGARDING CABBAGE PATCH KIDS DOLLS

The Gothard response also says, "Richard Fisher states: '...He [Gothard] taught that the highly popular Cabbage Patch Kids® dolls were causing strange and destructive behavior in children that could only be alleviated when the dolls were removed or destroyed.'" The team then ignores the report of a 1986 letter to PFO from the Gothard organization itself saying that the Cabbage Patch Kids were "a violation of the first Commandment" and a deterrent to children wanting to raise up godly children later in life. Perhaps this letter went out with Gothard's full knowledge and ap-

proval and is now an embarrassment to him.

The Gothard team did cite *The Quarterly Journal* critique's statement that there was "no allowance made for other environmental and social factors in the homes." It appears that letters and testimonials were accepted at face value without any investigation of backgrounds or long-term results. Many of Gothard's teachings are based upon anecdotal stories and devoid of scriptural basis.

The team tries to conciliate by adding, "Bill reported this information during the basic seminar and provided documentation to those who requested it. This produced many additional testimonies from parents who saw dramatic freedom as soon as the Cabbage Patch Kids® dolls were removed. The parents were the ones giving the warnings, not Bill's teaching." This is a useless nuance. If a preacher endorses testimonials from his pulpit, and those testimonials teach something, then the preacher is teaching it, if not directly then by endorsement and approval.

Gothard has published even more claims about Cabbage Patch Kids since that first letter. His January 1996 *Basic Care Newsletter* from his Medical Training Institute defines the potential of the once-popular dolls. The publication stated that there are a core of midwives that are working against "Satan's program from Genesis to Revelation to destroy the Godly seed." This report endorsed by Gothard and his organization then describes "cleansing the home from evil influences." The midwives searched the homes for Cabbage Patch Kids dolls and Troll dolls. They believed the destruction of these facilitated the births. Just having these items in the home retarded a speedy delivery, said the newsletter. Attributing this much power to a doll goes beyond the pale of reason and lapses into pagan superstition.

Testimonials are a slippery foundation. Nearly every cult in the world bases its authority on its testimonials.

That is why some of Gothard's teachings have cultic leanings. However, this kind of numbers game can cut both ways and thousands of parents and children could be produced who saw no harmful effects from owning such a doll. Saying something is an idol does not make it so.

ON INIQUITIES OF THE FOREFATHERS

Page four of the response reiterates Gothard's view on the iniquities of the forefathers and contains false accusation and misinformation. It states that, "Mr. Fisher ridicules the idea of 'some kind of direct consequences of fathers' iniquities to their children.'"

The Quarterly Journal critique did not ridicule but simply questioned and disagreed with Gothard's teaching that we must research our ancestors' sins and in a ritual prayer cast them off our natural or adopted children. Certainly there are social and environmental consequences to parents sinning but exorcistic prayers and quick fixes are not true to the Bible or real life.

One may have a horrible past but grace changes all that. First Peter 1:18 reminds us that we are redeemed (released) from the vain habit patterns and empty conduct of our parents through grace and salvation. I do not want to stay bound by rooting around in my ancestors' past but "am forgetting the things that lie behind." We are instructed by Paul to "forget the things that lie behind" (Philippians 3:13). Gothard's ideas here stem from pop psychology with a veneer of misapplied Bible verses.

Even Gothard's use of Adam from Romans 5 is fundamentally flawed. Romans 5 is talking about the relationship of Adam to *the unsaved*. We are no longer in Adam if we are in Christ. The direct consequences of Adam's transgression and guilt are taken care of in salvation. The results of the fall in nature will be taken care of at glorification. Romans 5 teaches no more than that.

Although each of us has a sin

nature, we must handle that biblically by applying the truths of Scripture and growing in grace, not going back into the past (Romans 6-8). Referencing Adam's sin and trying to relate it to other than the unsaved, as Romans 5 does, is an error which leads to more error. Romans 5 discusses the issue of Federal Headship and the relationship of Adam to the *unbeliever* as contrasted to the new head Jesus and His relationship to the saved.

To prove that we are supposed to confess our ancestors' sins as our own, the Gothard team quotes a number of Old Testament verses that show God's people identifying with and acknowledging their ancestors' sins. No one would deny solidarity of the nation of Israel. The moral unit of the Old Testament was that nation. It is important to note that *all* the verses Gothard references, including a few New Testament ones, *have to do with the nation of Israel*. It is also important to note that this confession is a corporate and *national* exercise. All the people of Israel were in a covenant relationship with God and one another. The covenant community in the Old Testament was the nation. In the New Covenant we are in a spiritual relationship and covenant with Christ and others in the body, not our ancestors (especially if they are unsaved).

Our New Covenant in Christ is unlike the Old in the respect as to with whom we are linked *covenantally*. Israel was linked nationally. There is no longer a *covenant nation* or a *national covenant*. Gothard confuses Israel with the Church. He also tries to impose unique Jewish covenantal practices on the Church.

The Church is called a holy nation by Peter, but only in a spiritual sense. It is this new "nation" of believers that is covenantally linked, not the ancestors of a person unless they are saved. If those ancestors are saved we do not need to confess their sins because those sins are "under the blood." So what Gothard suggests is needless. We are not covenantally linked with unsaved ancestors.

Therefore, there is no sense in which the New Testament believer, under grace, is in covenant relationship with unsaved ancestors, as was racial Israel. Remember also that scripturally the *direct* link with Adam is severed at conversion when a person is placed into Christ. Gothard and his team miss this fundamental fact.

Gothard really does not understand what is called "reparational reconciliation," that is, asking forgiveness for the sins of others in the past. If this is not understood properly, we can, like many, go through "substitutionary voodoo apologies."⁶ Israel was linked as a covenant nation. We are linked by Christ to the covenant body, the Church.

Theologian John Murray warns:

"The principle of solidarity can be exaggerated; it can become an obsession and lead to fatalistic abuse. ... Whatever additional principle of solidarity may be posited or established it cannot be abstracted from the fact of biological ancestry."⁷

We are never told in the Bible to confess a sin that we did not commit *or are not covenantally responsible for*. A believer might more readily confess the sins of his church (i.e., his covenant body), but even this he is not commanded to do. Matthew 18 and James 5 indicate that a Christian may at times, under some circumstances, confess *to* the church. But these passages do not even remotely suggest Gothard's practice.

The Quarterly Journal critique suggested that Gothard missed the context of Exodus 20:5 (visiting the iniquity to the third and fourth generation) by not seeing or dealing properly with the weight of the phrase "of them that hate me." It is obvious that God would carry his judgments out to the third and fourth generation if they continued in their sins and continued to perpetuate their parents' hatred of God. Gothard has ignored mentioning that the very next verse promises

mercy to any and all who turn to Him, in spite of parents. This is all consistent with Ezekiel 18:20-22 and Jeremiah 31:29-30. Perhaps, as well, Gothard needs to think about the difference between consequences and culpability. Confession is always attached to culpability. In conversion, God deals with our culpability as individuals. In sanctification, God gives us His Spirit, His grace and His Word to deal with any consequences and temptations.

Not once when Jesus offered forgiveness did he say, "you are forgiven and the sins of your ancestors are forgiven." Never once does Ephesians 6 suggest reparational reconciliation as a necessity. Such a thought is foreign simply because reparational reconciliation belonged to Israel and the Old Covenant and was not part of the Church's new structure. Think of all the other Jewish practices that fell away under the New Covenant. We are not a covenant nation in the same sense as Israel, but are now in covenant with Christ and His Church.

ON FAMILY STRUCTURE

Whatever the family structure was in the Old Testament, are we mandated to recreate and live under it? On page six of Gothard's response, the team sets up another straw man and issues another false accusation by suggesting that this writer encourages young people to separate from their families. In fact, Gothard has young people separate from their families to go into his programs or ministries.

The team's innuendo is:

"Cult leaders take an opposite view and urge young people to leave their families so that they are free to make their own decisions. These decisions often turn out to be the decisions of those who exploit young people for their own purposes."

The Quarterly Journal critique did mention that Jesus did not get Mary's permission to leave home. We all know that He left home around age 30, so He was not a young person.

Incredibly, the team challenges the statement regarding Jesus not getting permission as an “astonishing misuse of Scripture.”

The team then writes: “He did not forsake His mother, but continued to care for her.” We do not know what Jesus did or did not do for Mary during the three years of His public ministry, with the exception of His statement to John at the cross (John 19:27). We can assume she remained in Nazareth and was assisted by family and friends, but on one occasion when Jesus was asked to meet with her He refused (Mark 3:32-35). This passage shows He did not continue to care for her, probably because she was being cared for by the brothers and sisters with her.

It is also evident that as Paul brought the Gospel to Greeks and Romans, they remained in their existing family structure. There is not a hint in Acts or the Epistles that Paul imposed a Jewish patriarchal structure on the homes of his Gentile converts. Paul did not address the structure *per se* as much as how the interpersonal relationships were to be conducted (as in Ephesians 4-5).

This writer sticks to the position stated in *The Quarterly Journal*:

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

Christ demolished the idea of a family having to be at the behest of the oldest living patriarch with these words: “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh” (Matthew 19:5).

Leave means leave. The Greek word, *kataleipo*, is used of Moses

leaving Egypt in Hebrews 11:27. This shows finality. We may have an ongoing relationship and friendship with parents as married adults and certainly we respect them, but we are not under them or subject to them. The new family unit is to be totally subject to God and His Word.

ON THE OLD TESTAMENT

On page six of the team’s response, there is total misrepresentation. Gothard (or his team) suggests that the desire of this writer is to throw away the Old Testament. This is a total distortion of what was said in the original report. The article said, “So much of Gothard’s teaching is based on an imposition of Old Testament *legalism*” (emphasis added).

In a letter to MCO apologist Don Veinot, Gothard wrote that the word “legalism” is not in the Bible. However, Gothard knows fully well what the concept is. The word “Trinity” is not in the Bible, but the concept of a Triune God certainly is. Additionally, the words, “Chain of Command,” “Umbrella of Authority” or even “Cabbage Patch Kids” do not appear in the Bible. The point is, how biblical are they and are they scripturally relevant for believers today?

Legalism can be trying to earn salvation by law, as in the Book of Galatians or imposing extrabiblical rules (like Old Testament feasts and fasts) as in Colossians 2:16-23. The Pharisees were notorious for interpreting and extrapolating from Scripture and then making those ideas and extrabiblical rites a matter of divine rule. These were called *tradition*. Pharisaic rules can be called legalism for want of a better term.

It seems that if there is some disagreement with Gothard as to the continuity/discontinuity issue (how much of the Old comes into the New) one is automatically accused of wanting to throw away the Old Testament. For centuries, many fine Christians have struggled over this issue. Gothard does not have the last word on it.

Gothard knows fully well this writer’s position and is distorting it. This is not the first time we have exchanged thoughts on this. In a Jan. 18, 1997, correspondence to Gothard, this writer stated:

“The continuity/discontinuity issue (i.e., how much law comes into the New Covenant) is an issue that requires balance lest one fall into the extremes of the Seventh Day Adventists or regulating the sexual practice of others from Leviticus as you try to do. Certainly good godly men have struggled over the continuity/discontinuity issue and have not lapsed into suggestions that the other is a libertine as you have with me.”

“The safest use of the Old Testament as it impinges and overlaps into the New Testament are the passages from the Old which are clearly repeated and reinforced in the New. I feel safe letting Jesus and the Apostles direct me on that. Otherwise one is on a sea of personal subjectivity picking willy nilly out of the Old Testament. As I see it, this is what you do. Once you commit to arbitrarily pulling something from the Old Testament then you must find a survey, a medical fact, a statistic, something, to try and buttress your choice. ... I love the Old Testament.”

ON CHRISTIAN ROCK MUSIC

Page seven of the response contains more distortions. The team writes, “By giving ‘blanket approval’ to Christian rock music, Mr. Fisher and others are urging young people to dishonor their parents.”

The original critique said, “Gothard launched his campaign against *contemporary* musical artists” (emphasis added). Nothing was said about “rock,” but the critique specifically mentioned “contemporary Christian music.” The concern was that Gothard had become judge and jury over Bill and Gloria Gaither, Dave Boyer, Sandi Patty and Michael Card. He

accused them of destroying the youth of America. He has two published booklets condemning these and other artists. If testimonials were sought, no doubt hundreds of thousands have been blessed and encouraged by these people's gifts.

When asked during last October's phone conversation why he had a staff person with a family member who sang Sandi Patty numbers in her concert, Gothard said, "It shows how broad-minded we are." What it shows is a double standard. Gothard does not run his internal business in accord with his own strict demands on others.

WHAT WAS NOT COVERED

The team's response never got around to addressing *The Quarterly Journal* critique's concerns over Gothard's legislating the sex relations of his married followers, sexual abstinence in marriage, his claim that he

has God's order of worship, his teachings on how women should dress and wear make-up, his incredible misinterpretations of key words such as grace and faith, his forbidding of partnerships, his legislating many minor areas of life by imposing obscure Old Testament passages, the elitism of his followers, the testimonials of spiritual harm and church splits, and other issues. The response given is hardly a response at all.

Gothard's organization, in being defensive, unbalanced and slanderous, has become its own worst enemy. Fair-minded people can see through the convoluted thinking and *ad hominem* attacks. Much heat has been generated, but no light. It is unfortunate that we do not see in the tone or words of the team's response reasoned and biblical interpretation or the principles touted at the Gothard seminars. It is an "us-or-them" siege mentality that does little to further the

cause of dialogue or the cause of Christ.

Endnotes:

1. The back issue of *The Quarterly Journal* containing this article is available from PFO for \$3.00 postpaid. Mail your request, along with payment to PFO-Saint Louis.
2. A photocopy of Bill Gothard's original seven-page response may be obtained from PFO. Send \$1.00 for copying and postage to PFO-Saint Louis.
3. Wilfred Bockelman, *Gothard, The Man and His Ministry: An Evaluation*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Quill Publications, 1976, pg. 146.
4. *The Greek New Testament With English Notes*. London: A.J. Valpy, 1831, Vol. 1, pg. 129, emphasis added.
5. Jay Adams, *More Than Redemption*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing Company, 1979, pg. 31, footnote 30.
6. See further, David Hagopian and Douglas Wilson, *Beyond Promises*. Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 1996, pg. 235.
7. John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959, pp. 22-23.

THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW

(continued from page 1)

is called the continuity/discontinuity issue: How much continuity or discontinuity is there as far as the law continuing as a ruling code for the New Testament believer? The issues are difficult and Christians of good will can and do differ.

Stephen Westerholm, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at McMaster University in Ontario, addresses the longstanding difficulties of the issue:

"The question how those with Christian faith should relate to the divine law of Israel was a burning issue in the first Christian century and has remained a crucial subject for Christian theology and ethics ever since. Different answers have of course been given."²

Commenting on the Apostle Paul's statement in Romans 6:14 ("You are not under law but under grace"), Professor of Old Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Thomas McComiskey says:

"The use of the word *under* denotes dominion. Believers are not under the dominion of law, but under the dominion of 'grace.'"³

McComiskey then addresses "the ethic of the ancient law" and adds, "Under 'grace' man has the capability of fulfilling the ideal of the law (Rom. 3:31)."⁴

The "ideal of the law," as far as its specifics, ends up in the eye of the beholder.

It seems clear that imposing obscure or not-so-obscure portions of the Old Covenant on the Church can be a fertile ground for the rise of cultic teaching and manipulation. It can be anyone's guess as to what the "ideal of the law" is. After all, who is the final authority on what and how much of the Old Testament we must observe? How do we define "ideal of the law"? Teachers of Theonomy⁵ would go as far as to want the Old Testament death penalty (for adultery and homosexuality and other sins) imposed on American democracy.

From the Ebionites⁶ or Judaizers (c. A.D. 100s) to the Anabaptists (c. A.D. 1500s), this certainly is not a new debate as Westerholm noted. George Williams, Harvard professor, in his 924-page treatment of these 16th century rebaptizers, notes:

"The Anabaptists differed among themselves as to the degree to which the pattern and institutions of the people of the Old Covenant and their Scriptures were appropriate."⁷

Another subculture of debate is the varieties and variances within the Messianic Movement. Mart DeHaan expresses deep concern over these "Torah observant people" and says:

"I am afraid some Torah-observant people are all too ready to accept a principle Paul rejected. He rejected the idea that law-keeping could be a means of spiritual growth (Galatians 3:1-3). ... I'm convinced that the rediscovery of Torah (Old Testament teaching) can be of great benefit to a church that has forgotten its

roots, and to unbelievers who need to see the way in which Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures. But to suggest that Gentile believers in Jesus would be more obedient if they lived like Jewish forefathers (with beards, mezuzahs, phylacteries, kosher diet, Sabbath law, and Festival observance) is to miss the spirit and freedom of the Gospel of Christ. Few things could be worse for the Gospel than to suggest to a Gentile world that to become a more obedient believer in Jesus, you must begin to live outwardly like a Jew. Paul stood against that idea, and we should too."⁸

Some commentators, though well-meaning, artificially try to impose civil, ceremonial and moral categories on the Old Testament laws but this is not altogether satisfactory because different teachers disagree as to where one ends and the other begins. Seeing part of the Old Testament as "the moral law" is a category nowhere stated in Scripture. The Old Testament as a whole covenant cannot be dissected subjectively. Anything that God commands is moral.

The word "law" (Greek: *nomos*) can mean the Ten Commandments, all the specific laws given at Sinai, the five books of Moses, or the entire Old Testament depending on the context. It is important to note that Paul's most frequent use of the word has to do with all the divine requirements given to Israel to do. Unless the context clearly demands otherwise, Paul usually intends to convey a whole, unified law system and not just parts and pieces. Paul never makes an artificial distinction between civil, ceremonial and moral law. To try to do so creates a pseudo-hermeneutic.

Grace Theological Seminary founder, Alva J. McClain, speaks of the definite elements of the Mosaic Code (religious, moral and civil), as being an indivisible unity. These three categories, he says, are:

"...never separated into fragmentary and autonomous compart-

ments of human existence, but always finding their indivisible unity in God Himself as man's Creator and Sovereign."⁹

Pastor and author John Reisinger rightly observes:

"Everything that God commands is 'moral law' to the individual commanded. To pick up sticks on the Sabbath was one of the most immoral things that a man could do under the Old Covenant. This was not because there is anything inherently wrong with picking up sticks. The man was stoned to death because the Fourth Commandment, which was the covenant sign, specifically forbid any physical labor on the seventh day. A commandment that was ceremonial in nature became the highest moral duty possible when God made it the sign of the covenant."¹⁰

Reisinger further states his case:

"It was not immoral for a man to take a second wife under the same Old Covenant that had the man stoned to death for gathering sticks. The same 'Book of The Covenant' that commanded 'keep the Sabbath holy' also commanded a man to sleep with both wives when he took the second wife (Ex. 21:10)."¹¹

He further elaborates:

"The exact opposite is true of the above two examples under the New Covenant. The ceremonial sign, or Sabbath, of the Old Covenant ceased when the covenant, of which it was a sign, was done away in Christ. The Seventh Commandment was changed by Christ, the new Lawgiver, and polygamy is now considered adultery. Polygamy was not a sin against the so-called 'moral law of God' according to the covenant under which David lived, but it is a sin according to the New Covenant under which a Christian lives today. The Bible defines moral duty according to the laws of the specific covenant under which an individual lives

and never by an imaginary code of 'unchanging moral law.'"¹²

The late founder of the Worldwide Church of God, Herbert W. Armstrong, popular Bible teacher Bill Gothard and others all have erred by arbitrarily imposing certain rules from the Old Testament. The mixing of law and grace for sanctification is the beginning of all kinds of legalism, error, bondage and manipulation. Gothard, for instance, regulates the times his followers may have sex relations in marriage from Leviticus 12 and 15, but does not insist on a purification ritual or any other number of rules and regulations which are also found in Leviticus. It is a pick-and-choose method that has Gothard's followers submitting to his "authority" alone.

Some may say that Christians are not under ceremonial law but under the moral law of the Old Testament. How then do we separate the moral law from its punishments? When did God drop the penalties attached to the violation of the moral laws of the Old Testament? To have one is to have the other. To try to help us out of the dilemma some will say that we are under the moral law, not for salvation, but only as a rule of life once saved. Simply stated, they say that now as Christians we are empowered to keep the moral law of the Old Testament.

The problem is the Scriptures. Luke 2:21-39 and Mark 7:8-13 show that the "Law of Moses" is the "Law of God" and is one law including moral, ceremonial and civil elements, all of which are inseparable from punishments and penalties. The law, the law of Moses and the Old Covenant are terms that are used interchangeably.

There are those who wrongly refer to Sunday as the "Christian Sabbath." The earliest post-apostolic writers, taking the lead from the apostolic pattern, testified that the Sabbath was done away. They clearly saw Sunday as the substitute and replacement for the Jewish Sabbath.¹³ Sunday was not seen as a mutation of the Sabbath but as a day standing on its own merits

with its own meaning.

The Apostle Paul takes up the law issue with the believers in Galatia. J.B. Lightfoot, the 19th century British scholar, describes the digression of the Galatians in wanting to go back under law this way:

“The pure and spiritual teaching of Christianity soon ceased to satisfy them. Their religious temperament, fostered by long habit, prompted them to seek a system more external and ritualistic.”¹⁴

GOODBYE HAGAR

Paul addresses the law system of the Old Covenant in Galatians 4:22-31. He presents two symbols: those of a free woman and the slave Hagar. He states “which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants” (v. 24). This is plain enough. The Old Covenant in total is Hagar, the slave woman. Paul then goes on, “These are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, *which is Hagar*” (v. 24). Remember Hagar equals the Old Covenant, which in turns equals bondage.

Paul then pictures the New Covenant in symbol as Isaac, a free son. Isaac is “persecuted” by Hagar (v. 29) and the two are incompatible. Then Paul’s startling statement: “*Cast out the bondwoman*” (v. 30). Paul reaffirms in the following verse: “*We are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*” It really cannot get any clearer than this. We may learn lessons from Hagar but she no longer tells us what to do. We are to cast her out, that is, get rid of her. Why turn to Hagar when you have Jesus?

The obvious outworking of this is stated in the next verse: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free and do not be entangled with a yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1). Some might say that Paul only had the rite of circumcision in mind but that is impossible to hold because he stated clearly that he was speaking of two covenants (4:24).

Lightfoot comments on the Hagar figure:

“The Law and the Gospel cannot co-exist; the Law must disappear before the Gospel. It is scarcely possible to estimate the strength of conviction and depth of prophetic insight which this declaration implies. The Apostle thus confidently sounds the death-knell of Judaism at a time when one-half of Christendom clung to the Mosaic law with a jealous affection little short of frenzy ... Having escaped from the slavery of Heathenism, they would fain bow to the slavery of Judaism.”¹⁵

Author and former pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, Dr. Harry A. Ironside, concludes that casting out the bondwoman means: “we have nothing to do with the legal covenant but we are the children of the covenant of grace.”¹⁶

BRING IN THE EXECUTIONER

This is not to say that God cannot and does not use the law to bring condemnation, guilt, and conviction to unbelievers. This is an ongoing function of the law (1 Timothy 1:9-10). The law kills (2 Corinthians 3 and Romans 7:9-13) and it is only Christ and the Spirit who give life. Once being made alive, we are not then delivered back to our executioner. Our allegiance is now to our Deliverer.

The false objection to the above is that talk like that means one is a lawless libertine living in license. But we do not continue in sin because we are under grace. Anyone saying that simply does not understand life under grace or New Testament sanctification. Before that is explained, consider a few more telling points.

Paul was accused of being a libertine (Romans 6). That Paul’s enemies accused him of promoting iniquity proves that he insisted that both the ritual and moral demands of the Old Testament, as a covenant, were done away. Because of this he was accused of encouraging sin (Romans 3:8, Galatians 2:17, 5:13).

Hebrews 8 speaks of a better covenant (v. 6). It is better in its com-

mands, has a superior Mediator and is better in its empowerment by grace and the Holy Spirit. There is no denying that Hebrews 8:8-13 teaches that we are under a new and superior covenant. In fact, all of the Book of Hebrews shows that to mix the two covenants is to regress, not progress. Hebrews 12:18-24 dramatically states that we have not come to the Old Covenant and Sinai, but to the new and far superior covenant.

NO MORE PENCILS, NO MORE BOOKS

To consider another figure used by the Apostle Paul, we turn to Galatians 3 where Paul likens the Old Covenant to a tutor (v. 24, “the law *was* our tutor”). Then with clarity Paul declares; “After faith has come we are *no longer under a tutor*” (v. 25). Whether it be old “Hagar” or the “tutor,” they no longer have to have a governing relationship over us. We are no longer underneath (Greek: *hupokato*) the law. Jesus has interposed Himself between us and the law and we are now “under” Him as we’ll see.

The misunderstanding many Christians have in their thinking is that without the law we are lawless. They then begin a frustrating exercise of willy-nilly picking and choosing what they subjectively and arbitrarily think would apply from the Old Testament. Again, this is to misunderstand the New Testament teachings of life under grace and in the Spirit and cause incredible confusion as well as legalism and division.

Ironside spells out the implications of no longer being under the law as the tutor or schoolmaster:

“We are here told that we are not only freed from the law as a means of attempting to secure justification, but are also freed from that law as a means of sanctification, for we have so much higher a standard in Christ risen from the dead, and are to be occupied with Him. ... Anyone having the wonderful teaching that came from the lips of the

Lord Jesus Christ, and the marvelous unfolding of the epistles showing what a Christian ought to be, has this new standard of holiness, which is not the law given at Sinai, but the risen Christ at God's right hand, and as I am walking in obedience to Him my life will be a righteous life, and so, 'after that faith is come we are no longer under the pedagogue.'"17

GETTING IT RIGHT

Paul states a principle in 1 Corinthians 9 (noted by Ironside), that starts us on a road of understanding the life under grace. Under grace we are not lawless or without law. Verse 21 states, "to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ)." The words "under law toward Christ" are literally enlabeled to Christ.

Christ established a New Covenant in His blood. He is the new Moses and certainly has established enough commands and guidelines in the New Covenant to help us live and grow. Jesus is our law and lawgiver. The New Covenant is our Declaration of Independence and that covenant comes with motivating and enabling power of grace.

Former professor of Greek at Dallas Theological Seminary, Charles Ryrie, elaborates on being enlabeled to Christ:

"This does not mean that there is no law in this age of grace. Quite the contrary is true, for the New Testament Epistles speak of the 'perfect law of liberty' (Jas. 1:25), the 'royal law' (Jas. 2:8), the 'law of Christ' (Gal. 6:2), and the 'law of the spirit of life' (Rom. 8:2). It is the commands contained in these Epistles which compose the law of Christ, and it will be recognized immediately that there are hundreds of such commands covering every area of Christian living. Not only are these teachings extensive but they are so definite that they may be termed a law."18

As believers we are enlabeled to Christ. We are given grace and the Holy Spirit to empower and motivate us to respond lovingly and willingly to *His New Covenant* laws. This incredible provision of grace "teaches us that denying ungodliness and world lusts we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

We are disciplined by grace if we are responding correctly to the New Covenant and to the Holy Spirit. Grace is our teacher (Greek: *paideuo*), our trainer and our instructor. We now obey our new instructor because we want to.

In interpreting Titus 2:12, author John Strombeck writes:

"The truth that the grace of God, the very same grace which brings salvation, also teaches those who are saved how to live pleasing unto God, seems to have been entirely overlooked by many. ... Even among those who accept grace as the only means of salvation, exclusive of any works or merit on the part of man, there is regrettable neglect of emphasis on the fact that the spiritual life can be sustained, developed, and brought to perfection *only* by the operation of the same grace. Growth in spiritual life comes only by the grace of God. Peter admonished, 'Grow in grace' (2 Pet. 3:18). ... All impartation of spiritual truth, all instruction, all reproof, all admonition, all exhortation, and all chastening are elements of the discipline by grace. ... To reject the law as a teacher is not to say that there are no standards set for Christian conduct. Grace also sets standards but these are on a much higher plane. Those of the law are on a high human plane; those of grace on a divine plane. Furthermore, grace supplies that which is needed to live according to these ideals."19

A woman who worked for a man would serve him to be paid. How

different if she married him. She would then love him and serve him out of her heart, not for a paycheck. That roughly illustrates the two covenants. Far from being lawless, the woman in that love relationship would serve even more faithfully. She probably would be doing some of the same things done under the old arrangement but only because they are abiding things that become part of the new arrangement. She does them in relation to their place in the marriage not as a commitment to the old way as we'll see.

Strombeck further states:

"The discipline of grace brings to the mind and soul the goodness and beauty of God, His unending love, and His all inclusive provision."20

The New Covenant has laws and directives plus grace and Holy Spirit empowerment and these are what make the New Covenant so superior.

It is clear that the New Testament writers, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had the task of formulating the commands, directives and ethics of the New Covenant. The Apostles' doctrines form part of the foundation of the new "law."

Suppose a citizen of a totalitarian country immigrated to the United States and became a citizen. Having chosen his new country of freedom, he would be a proud, well-motivated, joyful follower of the new laws of his new country and feel no constraint to go back to the past bondage. It would also follow that some of the same laws and ethics exist in both countries but that would not mean he was in any way obligated to the old country.

Jesus tells us to keep *His commandments* (John 14:15). The context, and especially verse 24, identifies the content of those commandments as the *words of Jesus* (see also John 12:48).

Consider the New Covenant precept as addressed by Peter: "That you be mindful of the words which were before spoken by the holy Prophets and of the *commandment* of us, the

Apostles of the Lord and Savior" (2 Peter 3:2).

We can be mindful of the Old Covenant and certainly we can see in it both negative and positive examples (1 Corinthians 10:6) from which we can learn but we are no longer under its commands as citizens of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19).

Consider these other verses that tell us about life under grace:

- 1 Corinthians 15:10 — "But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."
- 2 Corinthians 9:8 — "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."
- 2 Timothy 2:1 — "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."
- Hebrews 12:28 — "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."
- Hebrews 13:9 — "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace."

SEEING IT RIGHTLY

We now are to relate to the Old Covenant in a different way. Its fulfilled prophecies and types are instructive and illuminating and it is illustrative in many ways. Although the Old Testament people are examples of prayer and patience to us (James 5:11, 17 and Hebrews 11), it does not necessarily follow that we are under all their commands and specific law structure. We can learn much from Noah's faith and persistence yet we do not build boats.

In 2 Chronicles 33:15, Manassah removed idols, which serves as an example and illustration that we need to cast down mental idols and idols of materialism. We can pray like Nehemiah but it does not follow that we take building materials to Jerusalem as he was directed.

Seeing God's people from Adam to Malachi as general examples is not the same as thinking we are under all the specifics of their commands and law structure. We can emulate their faith and trust in the context of our covenant while the specifics of our obedience are different than theirs and spelled out clearly in that New Covenant. Seeing Old Testament saints as both positive and negative examples is not the same as going back to a slavish legalistic bondage to a former dispensation.

As we read the Psalms, for instance, we realize the difference between a primary interpretation and a secondary application. We identify with the Psalmist in our trust of the unchanging God of the Psalms. And the Lord is still powerful on our behalf in whatever setting we find ourselves. Yet we realize that we are not in a theocracy like David. Going beyond Psalms as principles could get one in a real dilemma when it comes to the imprecatory (judgment) Psalms. The old adage: *All Scripture is to us — but not all Scripture is for us* is helpful to remember.

We also can revel in all the Old Testament passages that describe the nature, character and attributes of God (Psalm 145, for example) because He never changes (Hebrews 13:8). Our doctrine of God is built on His revelation of Himself throughout both Testaments. The Old Testament is valuable for many reasons other than being a partial law code for the believer.

God also continues to use the Commandments as an instrument of conviction to drive sinners to seek a Savior, as we have stated.

We also affirm that both Jesus and the Apostles quoted from the Old

Testament for various reasons. Some of the quotes were to show specific fulfillment of prophecies and other of the quotes were to bring timeless morals into the New Covenant. These morals then stand on their own as a vital part of the New Testament.

WHY NOT STONE FALSE PROPHETS?

Another way we can use the Old Testament legitimately is for definition and example. For instance, Jesus and Peter both spoke of false prophets. We can use Deuteronomy 13 and 18 for an expanded definition and example of a false prophet. Certainly Jesus and Peter would not mean anything different than that. God has not changed the dictionary and false prophets continue to be what they were in ancient times.

However, we no longer stone false prophets as the law commands, but we can and should excommunicate them for divisiveness, lying and unbecoming behavior (Matthew 18:17, Romans 16:17-18).

Additionally, the definition does not change when New Testament writers speak of heresy. We can illustrate, define and amplify heresy from all over the Old Testament. It does not follow that after doing so that we necessarily have to go back under its law structure.

The Old Covenant is our needed foundation but we now live in the house (New Covenant) and not the basement, as important as it is. If we use the basement or go back into the basement because of storage or for other reasons, we still do not live there and we understand why visits to the basement are sometimes appropriate.

Thomas McComiskey summarizes well the relationship of the Old and New Covenants:

"The new covenant discriminates among the aspects of the divine will set forth in the Old Testament and authoritatively asserts that the promise-oath is still in force. It indicates the aspects of the Mosaic covenant that were not intended for its specific era

and shows which aspects have continuing force. In the light of this valid covenantal function, one cannot affirm an authority for the New Testament that supersedes the authority of the Old. The Old Testament speaks to us today with an undiminished force. Even in those areas where the husk has been removed to reveal the true spiritual kernel, the typological and apologetic value of the types and shadows lends a function to the Old Testament that attests to its continuing power and application."²¹

McComisky goes on to show that our only hope for a correct drawing from the Old Testament is the specific statements in the New:

"The New Testament limits and redefines elements in the old covenant that do not apply in the same way today. But the Old Testament possesses a similar function in relation to the New Testament. It too defines and limits. It defines the nature of faith. Paul's concept of justification by faith was carefully confined to what the Old Testament revealed. The nature of God is compatible with that concept in the Old Testament, even in his judgmental activity. The Old Testament sets forth the historical ground from which spring such New Testament concepts as the spiritual priesthood and the land."²²

OLD BECOMES NEW

The safest and least arbitrary and subjective way to deal with the Old Covenant is to understand clearly what is quoted from the Old in the New and why, and accept any timeless principles reinforced in the New Covenant from the Old. We must see these transfers as part of the New Covenant *alone* and resist the temptation to start arbitrarily imposing Old Testament laws on believers or to take single Old Testament quotes made by Jesus and the Apostles and think we have to pile

them and others on believers. The New Testament writers (occasional, selective and understandable) use of the Old Testament is not a license for us to subjectively impose our ideas about laying other Old Testament rules on the Church.

Seeing it this way (inspired writers making Spirit-led choices of Old Testament timeless principles and making them part of the New) gets us out of the dilemma posed by Westerholm²³ of seeing Paul as an inconstant antinomian. Some accuse Paul of being contradictory, inconsistent, confused, and in error by so often emphatically rejecting the law and at other times upholding small portions here and there. The confusion is cleared up by an understanding of Spirit-inspired, Spirit-led selectivity by the writers of the New Testament.

John Reisinger, when speaking of the Ten Commandments, wisely observes:

"Nine of the ten are repeated in the New Testament Scriptures and are therefore just as binding on a Christian as they were on an Israelite. The Ten Commandments, *as given at Mt. Sinai*, are not the rule of life for a Christian today simply because they are not a *high enough standard*. The Ten Commandments, *as interpreted and applied by Christ*, are a very important part of the Christian's rule of life. However, our new Lawgiver has given new and higher laws in addition to interpreting the Ten Commandments in terms of the kingdom of grace."²⁴

GIVEN THE "WANT TO"

There are many positive and negative precepts all over the pages of the New Testament. Paul calls his teachings, "the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37). With precepts and principles, filled and motivated with empowerment and grace, the Christian is not lawless and not slavishly legalistic. Grace and the indwelling Spirit give us the "want to" and the New Testament gives us

the "how to!" We now have the means and the directions.

Well-known Bible expositor and pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church, John MacArthur, reminds us:

"...our obedience to God must not be a conformity to rules and regulations out of fear or legalistic pride. It is instead a conformity to righteousness out of gratitude and a deep love for Christ. Our desire to be worthy children is a result of understanding and appreciating all He has done for us."²⁵

Acts 2:42 clearly states that the early Church followed not Old Testament rules but "the Apostles' doctrine." The New Testament and the Book of Acts in particular, express that some practices were only temporary, such as communal living, which existed for a time because of local problems. Worshiping in the Temple continued for a period of time. Temple attendance and other law practices in Acts were temporary until the temple and temple rituals were finally obliterated in A.D. 70. (See Hebrews 8:13, where we are told that the Old Testament system with its temple and priesthood is old, literally obsolete, and is ready to vanish.)

We must see parts of the Gospels and the Book of Acts as a transition period between dispensations of law and grace. We can think of two circles overlapping. Of necessity the right and left edges of both circles mingle and share things. If a red circle overlapped edges with a white circle, the center pink portion represents the necessary transition and brief mingling of the Old and New Covenants.

Alva McClain says that understanding the transitional nature of the Book of Acts helps us unravel some of the complexities of that period:

"The period covered by the Book of Acts, therefore, while a genuine segment of the present Church age, has nevertheless a character which differs markedly from the area of time following the destruction of Jerusalem."²⁶

Fenton Hort describes the temporary, transitional overlap of Acts and the problems of not seeing that distinction:

“The whole course of Church History is full of beliefs, practices, institutions, and the like, which rest on misconceptions of the true nature of the Gospel dispensation, and are in effect a falling back after the coming of Christ to a state of things which His coming was intended to supersede, a return, as St. Paul would have said, to the weak and beggarly elements. ... Of this character is the eclectic appropriation of Levitical laws for the regulation of the customs of Christians, and eventually for the positive legislation of churches. ... ideal Christianity is what is called Christianity without Judaism. ... It ascribes perpetuity to the Jewish Law, with more or less modification; thus confounding the conditions providentially imposed for a time on the people of God when it was only a single nation, the people inhabiting Palestine, — confounding these Providential conditions with God’s government of His people after its national limits were broken down and it had become universal. Judaistic Christianity, in this the true sense of the term, might with at least equal propriety be called Christian Judaism. ... Till the voice of God was heard in quite other accents, a Palestinian Church could not but be more or less a Judaic Church. This *temporary* duality within Christendom is constantly overlooked or misunderstood: but, if we think a little of the circumstances of the case, we must see that it was inevitable.”²⁷

Paul warns in Colossians 2:16-23 about going back into Old Testament rules and regulations and the bondage of law-keeping that has nothing to do with God’s New Covenant in Christ. So many try to push the right circle back over the left circle and totally superimpose it or mostly so. To do so is to: 1) miss the historical

transition of some of the Gospels and Acts, 2) underestimate the sufficiency of the New Covenant on its own, and 3) garble law and grace.

John Reisinger in his book, *But I Say Unto You, ...*, explains it this way:

“This whole subject is as clear as crystal the moment we see that Christ established a New Covenant that replaces the Old Covenant, and that the New Covenant brings with it new and higher laws of conduct that are based entirely on grace. These new laws are just as objective as any law under the Old Covenant. These objective commands can demand a kind of behavior that Moses could never demand simply because these new laws are based on the truth and power of grace.”²⁸

In Romans 6:14, Paul states that *as believers* we are “no longer under law but under grace.” This clearly teaches that law, as either a saving principle or a sanctifying principle, is not our reference point. Some wrongly misinterpret this and have us believe that it says “you are not under the law for salvation but are under the law for sanctification.” This is to misuse Scripture and ignore the context. Paul is addressing *Christians* and the topic is their continuing growth right up to glorification in Chapter 8.

BY OR IN? THAT IS THE QUESTION

Then in Romans 8:4 we are taught that the righteous requirements of the law are “fulfilled *in* us.” All the righteous requirements of the law are not fulfilled *by* us but fulfilled *in* (Greek: *en*) us by Jesus. Christ has fulfilled the law (Matthew 5:17) for, and fulfills it in, every believer. There are no more of its demands required of us. The Greek word “fulfill” is *pleroo* and means “to complete fully.” Christ completed fully every righteous requirement of the Old Covenant and gives that victory and standing to His children.

Paul could not be talking of believers having to fulfill the law or the law

being fulfilled *by* us or it would negate all that he taught. The twin truth is that we could never fulfill the law short of being perfect.

Twentieth-century Swedish scholar, Anders Nygren, beautifully unwraps the implications of Romans 8:4:

“Thus the deepest purpose of the law has been fulfilled. Against sin the law rises up in condemnation. But as to the life which is lived under ‘the righteousness of God,’ Paul says, ‘Against such there is no law’ (Gal. 5:23). When we are ‘in Christ,’ the law’s positive purpose, its *dikaïoma* [righteousness], is fulfilled in us, not by our keeping of the law, but through Christ, and by the fact that we ‘are in Him.’ Here we see the consequences of what Paul said in chapter 7, that Christ does not merely give us power to fulfill the demands of righteousness, but that He is Himself our righteousness. He is ‘the righteousness from God’ which, by faith, becomes our righteousness. They who are ‘in Christ’ are by that very fact righteous, and not by a keeping of the law made possible by that fact. Their righteousness consists in the fact, pure and simple, that they no longer live of themselves but ‘are in Christ.’ *Therein, and not through any keeping of the law is the dikaïoma of the law fulfilled.*”²⁹

The Old Testament reaches its intended goal in Christ and that fullness and fulfillment is given to believers by virtue of Christ in them.

Scottish scholar F.F. Bruce, in his *The Epistle of Paul To The Romans*, comments on Romans 8 and the “new heart” given to believers in the New Covenant:

“Christian holiness is not a matter of painstaking conformity to the individual precepts of an external law-code; it is rather a question of the Holy Spirit’s producing His fruit in the life, reproducing those graces which were seen in perfection in the life of Christ.”³⁰

MOVING INTO A BRAND NEW HOUSE

In Ephesians 2:20-21, Paul teaches that we have a new foundation in the Apostles and Prophets. In Ephesians 3:1-2, he tells us:

“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles — if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given me for you.”

The word “dispensation” helps us to understand so much in regard to life under grace. The Greek word, *oikonomia*, literally means management of a household, house rule or house law. We are now Christ’s household, not the household of Moses (Hebrews 3:4-5). Christ’s household is governed by grace. Christ’s house is to be run and ruled lovingly and willingly according to His rules and His house order. The Jews ran their house in one way; Jesus rules His in another.

People grow up under the rules of their parents and were subject to them. The house rules then were their parents’ rules. People grow up, marry and establish their own homes with their own house rules. They probably learned from their parents’ rules and bring influences from the past but are no longer directly ruled and governed by those things. Their children become subject to their house rules, not the rules of their parents’ childhood.

DRAWING THE LINE

Lewis Sperry Chafer, author and founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, expresses his views on the present grace economy:

“Among these revelations is the rule of conduct regarding the daily life of those who are saved by grace in this dispensation which occupies the time between the cross and the second coming of Christ. This gracious rule of life is complete in itself and stands alone in the Scriptures, dissociated from any other and uncomplicated. It is the teachings of grace.”³¹

Having established grace as a sufficient and superior system, Chafer goes on:

“The pernicious practice of attempting to merge the two legal systems with the teachings of grace results in a forceless law and a defeated grace. The student’s problem is not one of striking an average between law and grace, but rather that of separating these systems to the end that each may retain its intended effectiveness.”³²

Then on the superiority of grace, Chafer says:

“These teachings surpass the standards of the Law of Moses in the measure in which infinity surpasses the finite.”³³

Chafer shows that nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated numerous times in the New Testament. The Sabbath day commandment is not. Whatever God puts into the new house order, simply becomes the new issues of life and service for the Christian. God becomes the final word on what is included or excluded in the new house order. Chafer further shows:

“The Ten Commandments require no life of prayer, no Christian service, no evangelism, no missionary effort, no gospel preaching, no life and walk in the Spirit, no Fatherhood of God, no union with Christ, no fellowship of saints, no hope of salvation, and no hope of heaven. If it is asserted that we have all these because we have both the law and grace, it is replied that the law adds nothing to grace but confusion and contradiction, and that there is the most faithful warning in the Scriptures against this admixture. A few times the teachings of the law are referred to by the writers of the Epistles by way of illustration. Having stated the obligation under grace, they cite the fact that this same principle obtained under the law. There is, however, no basis here for a commingling of these two

governing systems. The law of Moses presents a covenant of works to be wrought in the energy of the flesh; the teachings of grace present a covenant of faith to be wrought in the energy of the Spirit.”³⁴

ALL I NEED

We do not have to apologize for being under the New Covenant alone as a way of life. It is a superior covenant with a superior Priest as Hebrews eloquently states. It has a superior outreach to all the world and functions through a superior motivation and power by indwelling grace. It has superior commands and a superior morality that goes down even to thought life and the intents of the heart. The New Covenant gives much more, not less.

Added to that is the very indwelling of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, and the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. Why go back to less? Why go back to Hagar and bondage? Why go back to a shadow when we have the substance?

I would not kneel down and try to embrace a shadow when I had the loved one who was behind the shadow right in front of me (Colossians 2:16-17). With the examples, prophecies and types of the Old Covenant and the commands, principles and empowerment of the New Covenant, we have all we will ever need. Goodbye Hagar.

Acclaimed Greek scholar and former professor at Moody Bible Institute, Kenneth Wuest, elevates grace as the believer’s way of life:

“But grace is never lenient. It is far stricter than law ever could be. It is a far greater deterrent of evil than law ever was. A half dozen motorcycle policemen with their motors tuned up, are a far greater deterrent to speeding, than any number of placards along the road indicating the speed limit. The Holy Spirit, indwelling the believer, takes notice of the slightest sin and convicts him of it, whereas the law could act only generally and then only

when the conscience of the individual cooperated with it. Grace not only forgives, but teaches (Titus 2:11-14).³⁵

Wuest concludes:

“Just because the believer now is scot free from the law, does not mean that he can sin with impunity. There is a new propelling and compelling deterrent to sin, divine love, produced in the believer’s being which causes him to hate sin and obey the Word of God (Gal. 5:13, John 14:21-24).”³⁶

Endnotes:

1. Dave Breese, *Know The Marks of Cults*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1975, pg. 14.
2. Stephen Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and The Church’s Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988, pg. 2.
3. Thomas McComisky, *The Covenants of Promise*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1985, pg. 108, italic in original.
4. *Ibid.*, pg. 109.
5. Theonomy or reconstructionism is the belief system whose objective is to reestablish society according to the strict and explicit guidelines set forth in the Old Testament law. For more information on Christian Reconstructionism see, Bruce Barron, *Heaven on Earth?* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992.

- Also H. Wayne House and Thomas Ice, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?*. Portland, Ore.: Multnomah Press, 1988.
6. For more information on this pseudo-Christian sect, see Philip Schaff, *History Of The Christian Church*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1910, Vol. 2, pp. 428-434. Also see, “Here Come the Ebionites,” PFO Newsletter, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 2, 7.
 7. George Williams, *The Radical Reformation*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962, pg. xxviii, Introduction.
 8. Mart DeHaan, *Times Of Discovery*, “Been Thinking About ... Torah.” Grand Rapids, Mich.: Radio Bible Class, February 1998, pp. 1-2.
 9. Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of The Kingdom*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1968, pg. 65.
 10. John Reisinger, *Tablets of Stone*. Southbridge, Mass.: Crowne Publications, Inc., 1989, pg. 26.
 11. *Ibid.*, pg 27, italic in original.
 12. *Ibid.*
 13. See further, Schaff, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 201-205.
 14. J.B. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, no date, pg. 17.
 15. *Ibid.*, pp. 184, 185.
 16. Harry A. Ironside, *Epistle To The Galatians*. Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., 1970, pg. 174.
 17. *Ibid.*, pp. 127, 128.
 18. Charles Ryrie, *The Grace of God*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1966, pg. 96.

19. John Strombeck, *Disciplined By Grace — Studies In Christian Conduct*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregal Resources, 1991, pp. 10, 11, 13, italic in original.
20. *Ibid.*, pg. 36.
21. McComisky, op. cit., pg. 227.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Westerholm, op. cit., pg. 96.
24. Reisinger, op. cit., pp. 99-100, italic in original.
25. John MacArthur, Jr., *Strength For Today*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1997, entry for January 2, pg. 2.
26. McClain, op. cit., pg. 430.
27. Fenton Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1894, pp. 1-2, 4, 5, 83, emphasis added.
28. John Reisinger, *But I Say Unto You*. Southbridge, Mass.: Crowne Publications, Inc., 1989, pg. 73.
29. Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans*. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949, pp. 319-320, emphasis in original.
30. F.F. Bruce, *Tyndale Bible Commentaries—The Epistle Of Paul To The Romans*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963, Vol. 6, pg. 162.
31. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*. Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948, Vol. 4, pg. 180.
32. *Ibid.*, pg. 185.
33. *Ibid.*, pg. 187.
34. *Ibid.*, pg. 211.
35. Kenneth Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies From the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988, Vol. 1, Romans, pg. 109.
36. *Ibid.*

EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

become — are a denial of a personal, Holy Father God who will call all men into account for their sins. The human potential movement anesthetizes people to their real need of forgiveness and a Savior.

3) *The decidedly postmodern perspective of our culture and the Church*. Postmodernism posits that there are no fixed truths or real moral values. Everyone’s truth is truth. It is a pragmatic and subjective approach to life. The demise of doctrine in most Christian churches may be the reason so many believers are so undiscerningly buying and reading this series.

Some teaching (like the theology of Jehovah’s Witnesses and Latter-day Saints) is downright destructive to the soul. Other teaching is like junk food with no real nourishment for the soul. The Apostle Paul warns: “Charge some that they teach no other doctrine. ... if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:3, 10). The word “sound” (Greek:

hugias) is literally healthy or vibrant in health. There is the good doctrine of Scripture that promotes spiritual health and then there is unscriptural and New Age teaching that makes people spiritually sick. The latter is the unhealthy doctrine warned of by Paul. We are mandated to teach “healthy” doctrine and stay away from poisonous or junk food doctrine.

Paul further directs these sober words to Timothy that say it all: “If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings” (1 Timothy 6:3-4).

Christians should avoid the non-nourishing mix found in the “Chicken Soup” series. Moreover, Christian booksellers would do well to forgo the profits made from selling this popular series by discontinuing its sales and then affirming to become more discerning in the material they make available to their customers.

—GRF

Beginning in June 1995, the leadership of the Pensacola church has claimed an unplanned, last-days revival and outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Since that time, more than 2 million people have attended the revival services and it is claimed that more than 120,000 people have made decisions for Christ. The newspaper contends, however, that the revival is not the result of an extemporaneous move of God, but was carefully planned and orchestrated by the church's leadership.

The *News Journal* further showed that claims by the church's staff were fabricated and falsified to enhance the revival's reputation, an allegation leveled by apologetic ministries such as PFO. Also documented were embellishments by the church's evangelist, Stephen Hill, as to his own personal conversion to the Christian faith as detailed in his biographical volume, *Stone Cold Heart*.

The newspaper traced the by-products of the enormous money trail generated by the revival through its donations and sale of books, audio and video tapes, and other revival materials. Each of the key leaders of the revival has independent ministries established apart from the church that acquire hundreds of thousands of dollars from resource and literature sales.

The paper also showed the considerable effect the pecuniary windfall has had for the church's pastor, John Kilpatrick. Despite Kilpatrick's claim that, "I have always strived to set an example by not living above the means of my people," it was documented that the pastor is currently building a \$340,000 luxury home across the Alabama state line and his ministry recently purchased a \$310,000 motor coach in which to chauffeur him around. Also, Hill's ministry has spent nearly \$900,000 on property and buildings, including a home for the evangelist in Alabama.

Other fiscal discrepancies also plagued the church as its claimed expenditures on missions failed to add up. Hill told the newspaper that his ministry had given over \$600,000 to foreign and domestic mission work. The paper showed his ministry's IRS return reported only \$102,212 outgoing donations for mission work. Only 2.2% of the church's \$6.6 million budget is devoted to assist missions, the paper said. Brownsville's Associate Pastor Carey Robertson told the *News Journal*, "If you wonder where the money is going, then don't give it. ... once it becomes a gift, it is ours to use. It is nobody's business how we use it."

The paper also describes how its city's Social Services have been overburdened primarily because of the influx of needy people coming into the area unrealistically thinking the church would miraculously change their circumstances and because of the church's lack of response to social concerns.

The church's leadership responded by taking a near two-page advertisement in the paper the Sunday follow-

ing the series of articles. The church's Web site also posted the response. The ad charged that newspaper reporters had fabricated stories and twisted facts, not the church and that statements, such as the one attributed to Robertson, were lifted from its context.

Yet, despite the church's attempt to state the "facts" and deny the newspaper's charges, its efforts were, at best, evasive. *World* magazine "tried to obtain from the church more information that would refute the press accusations, but without success." The Christian magazine was told that "Church officials have declared there will be no further statements to the press beyond what appears on the Web site." The weekly periodical spotlighted the newspaper's accusations in its Dec. 20, 1997, issue.

—MKG

NEW AGE LEADER DISCLOSES AILMENT

Elizabeth Clare Prophet, New Age guru and former president of the Church Universal and Triumphant, recently revealed that she is suffering from a neurological disorder and epilepsy. The 58-year-old Prophet told followers of her condition at a church conference in Texas. The church, headquartered in Corwin Springs, Mont., also released a statement concerning her ailments.

According to the Associated Press, church spokesman Chris Kelly expressed "confidence in her ability to continue to lead the church." Prophet's physician, Dr. Ilo Leppik, indicated that her ailment "is characterized by memory loss that inhibits her ability to accurately recall past and recent events and interferes with new learning."

The Church Universal and Triumphant was founded in 1958 by Mark L. Prophet. In 1961, he was joined by Elizabeth, whom he later married. She assumed command and leadership of the sect following his death in 1973. The church's teachings reflect an amalgamation of Christian, Hindu and Buddhist beliefs. It claims 230 congregations in 30 countries.

—MKG

CHURCH OF SATAN FOUNDER DIES

The man who founded the Church of Satan and played the devil in the 1968 occult movie classic, "Rosemary's Baby," is dead. Anton Szandor LaVey died Oct. 29 of pulmonary edema following years of heart problems. He was 67. The onetime lion trainer and professional organist began his church in 1966, gaining national attention when he performed a satanic wedding and baptized his first daughter in the church. His appetite for

entertainment remained throughout his years as head of the Church of Satan, playing bizarre organ music for hours each day and, for a time, keeping a lion as a pet.

LaVey's version of Satanism was more contempt for Christianity, rather than the typically accepted traditions of human and animal sacrifice associated by some with devil worship. "My father was considered by some as the world's most dangerous man, but he would never hurt a living thing. My father loved animals and children," his daughter, Karla LaVey, told the Associated Press.

In 1969, he published *The Satanic Bible*, a work that sold briskly in secular bookshops for many years. He wrote and published three other volumes, with a fifth book to be published posthumously this year. LaVey's family stated they "will continue in his footsteps to do as he directed to keep the Church of Satan going and keep it strong."

—MKG

INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF CHRIST SCORES PARTIAL VICTORY

The International Church of Christ's Singapore congregation, Central Christian Church, prevailed on one of five points in defamation suits filed against *The New Paper*; the Chinese-language evening paper, *Lianhe Wanbao*; and the Christian magazine, *Impact*.

In a Nov. 23, 1991, report, the newspapers called the group a cult. The CCC sought damages totaling \$3.25 million (Singapore): \$2.25 million from the editors of the two newspapers and \$1 million from the magazine's editor. *Impact* was named in the suit because it was used as a source by the two newspapers.

Justice Warren Khoo, who presided over the 18-day trial last July, threw out four of the five suits, saying the publications had been fair in their report. However, he said a front-page headline in *The New Paper* that read "2 Cults Exposed" amounted to sensationalism. He issued his ruling last November.

Khoo said that the defendants had failed to establish a basis for calling the CCC a cult. He said he found no evidence that the sect was a "half-crazed people" or a "secret organisation run by persons with an agenda" and that its members are permitted to leave the group if they desire.

The ICC had never sued one of its critics before. One ICC public document says: "How do you respond to critics who equate discipling with 'mind control' or 'brain washing'? We try to respond with forbearance and love, for Christians have always been misunderstood and persecuted" (*Media and Law*, August 1, 1994).

Adrian van Leen, director of Concerned Christians Growth Ministries in Australia, was an expert witness called by the defense. Gordon Melton of The Institute for the Study of American Religion was the expert witness for the plaintiffs. Melton said the ICC is not a cult and further declined to label groups such as the People's Temple (Jim Jones), the Church of Scientology, Japan's Sum Supreme Truth, and several other sects as cults.

The amount for settlement of the defamatory headline will be determined later in a separate hearing.

—MKG

RUSSIAN LDS VIDEO AVAILABLE

After several years in production, a Russian language version of Personal Freedom Outreach's video presentation, *Mormonism: The Christian View*, is now available. The production was a joint effort between PFO and the Jesus Film Project.

Following the decline of communism, the opportunity to take the Gospel to the people in the former block of Soviet Union countries became a reachable goal. Unfortunately, freedom for cults to preach a false gospel also availed. In an attempt to minimize the Latter-day Saint church's influence in this new territory on the foreign mission field, the Jesus Film Project contacted PFO about revising and translating its video for the Russian speaking people. Late last year the undertaking became a reality.

The video is available in both PAL and VHS formats. The cost is \$19.95 per copy (plus \$1.50 postage). Contact PFO Saint Louis for more information or to order.

—MKG

MASS SUICIDE PLOT FOILED

In what could have been called "Heaven's Gate II," police in Spain prevented a plan in which cult leader Heide Fittkau-Garthe orchestrated the mass suicide of herself and 32 of her followers. The 57-year-old Fittkau-Garthe, a German psychologist, was charged Jan. 10 with attempted murder and ordered held without bail. She was arrested Jan. 7 at her chalet on the Spanish resort island of Tenerife during what police described as the group's "last supper."

Officials stated they were alerted to the suicide pact by the cult leader's brother, a businessman from Düsseldorf. Police said they discovered poisonous chemicals at her home.

According to a Reuters News Service report, Fittkau-Garthe and her followers believed that a UFO "would

rescue their souls from the summit of the Teide volcano and take them to a new world." Members of the sect have refused to cooperate in the investigation by authorities.

—MKG

SCIENTOLOGY SETTLEMENT REVEALED

The Church of Scientology revealed in early January that it had paid the Internal Revenue Service \$12.5 million in a 1993 settlement that established its tax-exempt status. Called a "closure agreement," the multi-million dollar settlement concluded a battle between the two entities which began in 1967. The IRS had maintained that the church should forfeit its tax-exempt status because they said it was a "for-profit business" that benefited church officials. The church responded by filing more than 2,000 lawsuits against the IRS.

Mark Rathbun, the church's director of Religious Technology, confirmed to the Associated Press previously undisclosed information regarding the erstwhile arrangement first reported by *The Wall Street Journal*.

Under the settlement, the church agreed to dismiss its suits and pay the \$12.5 million to satisfy any tax liability previous to 1993. And while additional compensation is possible, the IRS said it would forgo any outstanding audits of the church and its organizations. It also stated that its ruling to grant tax-exempt status to the church

was "based upon voluminous information provided by the church to the IRS regarding its financial and other operations."

Church members will be permitted to deduct from their personal income taxes the fees they incur for "auditing." Auditing is a Scientology procedure which, the church says, frees a person of false brain programming and purges negative thoughts.

The Church of Scientology was founded by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard in 1954. He died in 1986.

—MKG

BOOKS IN REVIEW

(continued from page 24)

Readers become acquainted not only with the dominant cultic forces prevalent today, but with a handful of self-appointed prophets sowing their seeds of confusion within the Church. This latter group includes: Harold Camping, Edgar Whisenant and John Hinkle. Abanes' work could have been further enhanced by adding the unscriptural declarations and biblical eisegesis of other well-known visionaries, including Benny Hinn.

The volume's extensive endnotes, as well as its Scripture and Subject Indexes, help to make the book a valuable apologetic resource.

—MKG

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH — STATEMENT OF BELIEF

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



Books in Review

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF BIBLE ANSWERS

by Ron Rhodes

Harvest House Publishers, 395 pages, \$11.99

Apparently, someone has locked apologist Ron Rhodes in a room with a computer. He is writing and he can't stop! In the past couple years, the Southern California researcher and writer has virtually become a "Book of the Month Club." But his high volume of output has not affected the quality. His writings are some of the best in their field and are much needed by a Church that continues to lose its desire and ability to discern.

One of his latest offerings is *The Complete Book of Bible Answers*. From the authority of God's Word to the nature of God (and Jesus Christ) to man's sinfulness, salvation and future existence, Rhodes tackles some of what can be difficult objections posed by unbelievers and cultists. He even surveys areas of theological disagreement between believers of different denominations, such as baptism and observance of the Lord's Supper.

The book also contains critiques of New Age, Word Faith, hyper-Charismatic (such as "holy laughter") and other cultic teachings and practices. A subject index enables quick location of topics.

The book's style is in a question-and-answer format. And while Rhodes' responses are not protracted, they are deliberate, to the point and insightful. While the book's title "The Complete Book..." might be a bit of an oversell, it remains a welcome addition to the Christian's arsenal of defense for the faith.

—MKG

735 BAFFLING BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

by Larry Richards

Fleming H. Revell, 390 pages, \$12.99

Witnessing to skeptics and cynics of the Bible can be one of the most formidable ordeals a Christian can face.

Thanks to Larry Richards' *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* the experience can now be far less intimidating.

The volume proceeds through Scripture, book by book, exploring its many difficult passages and purported discrepancies — excerpts that have become suitable grist for the critic's mill. Richards responds to various objections and suspected textual problems in every book of the Bible (except Nehemiah). A brief survey of each Bible book's author, theme and issues acts as introductory commentary for each chapter.

Prophecy, archaeology, Old Testament customs and practices, New Testament principles, and a whole lot more fill this book. The questions you know to ask are there — and some you've probably never even thought to ask. For example, on page 228, Richards considers the question of how many young children were actually killed in Bethlehem by Herod's soldiers during the slaughter of the innocents.

The paperback volume is a reissue of a work published five years ago under the title, *Bible Difficulties Solved*. Fleming H. Revell should be commended for returning this excellent resource to the availability of Christians.

—MKG

DEFENDING THE FAITH

by Richard Abanes

Baker Book House, 240 pages, \$14.99

Defined as "a beginner's guide to cults and new religions," Rich Abanes' recent publication is that and a whole lot more. His defense of and reasons for the Christian faith are not beneficial just to the novice cult-watcher. They're a great refresher course for even the well-versed apologist.

In the book's four parts (12 chapters), Abanes surveys the major doctrines of Christianity and therein infuses his study of the heretical pronouncements of cults, new religions and aberrational teachers. He exposes the counterfeit with the genuine. All the major tenets of the Christian faith are covered, including the inspiration and reliability of Scripture, the triune nature of God, the uniqueness of Christ, His vicarious atonement and bodily resurrection, man's destiny, and endtime speculation.

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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.