

The Quarterly Journal



THE NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION OF PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

VOL. 20, NO. 4

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2000

EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

Potter Mania: What's It All About?

A Look at the Orphaned Boy with Wizard Powers

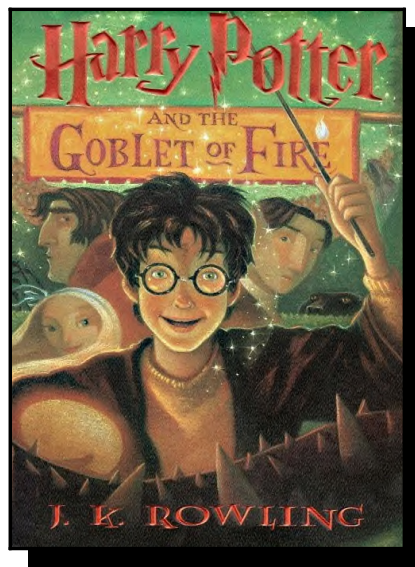
by James Bjornstad

It would be unusual these days for one not to have heard of Harry Potter. The release of the latest Harry Potter book has been heralded on television news programs and in national magazines, such as *Newsweek*. Children stood in lines for hours on end on the day of the book's release.

Lyn Blake, general manager of Amazon.com, the Internet bookseller, said: "I haven't seen a book like this ever. This is over seven times the largest pre-order we ever had."¹ Amazon.com reported it had pre-sold more than 313,000 copies of the fourth installment of the Harry Potter book series, which was released in early July.

Other booksellers likewise battled to cash in on Potter mania. Displays of Potter books are in bookstores everywhere. Praise from readers has appeared in news reports. And there are still more books to come. Harry Potter "presence" is almost ubiquitous as children with purple thunderbolts on their foreheads are seen everywhere.

Warner Bros., the motion picture company, already has cast and se-



lected an 11-year-old boy from Britain for the lead role in the movie version of the first Harry Potter book, *Harry*

Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (film title: "Harry Potter: Magic Will Happen"). While the film is not scheduled for release until November 2001, Hollywood is already claiming a stake of Potter mania. So, if not already, the name Harry Potter is well on its way to becoming a household word.

However, despite all the hoopla, some still may not be familiar with Harry. For those who have missed the hype, Harry is the central character in the extremely popular and best-selling series of books — more than 40 million copies in print — written by British teacher turned novelist Joanne Kathleen Rowling.

Rowling, who is known to her readers as J.K. Rowling, started working on the series when she was a single mother, jobless and on welfare.

(continues on page 16)

Inside this Issue:

| | |
|--|--------|
| THE DISTURBING LEGACY OF CHARISMA MAGAZINE | PAGE 2 |
| WATCHTOWER DENIES BLOOD DOCTRINE CHANGE | PAGE 3 |
| THE HIGHER LIFE OF RICK JOYNER..... | PAGE 4 |

Editorials

THE DISTURBING LEGACY OF CHARISMA MAGAZINE

The August 2000 issue of *Charisma* celebrated the magazine's 25th anniversary. The issue revisited 25 people featured on its covers during its 2-1/2 decades of publication.

Apologist and researcher Jackie Alnor writes: "Charisma magazine's 25th Anniversary edition looks at the legacy of those who have graced its covers. The list is a Who's Who of people who have brought shame to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This self-tribute is the biggest compilation of evidence against the charismatic renewal ever put to paper. Stephen Strang (founding editor) and Lee Grady (editor-in-chief) have unknowingly demonstrated what a miserable lack of accountability exists in their ranks."

The discerning reader of *Charisma* may question whether Strang and Co. are genuinely ignorant in their lack of accountability or if they just don't care. Strang is on record as criticizing *Inside Edition's* exposé of Benny Hinn saying, "I was appalled at their lack of journalistic integrity in 'faking' a healing" ("Practicing What We Preach," June 1993, pg. 10).

Yet, Hinn routinely "fakes" healings at crusade after crusade. He has said he emptied a hospital in Canada and has raised people from the dead. These claims have been debunked. Strang's lack of outrage at Hinn is

curious. While *Inside Edition* did fake a healing, it was for the express purpose of showing Hinn is the fake. Hinn should be so forthright about his claims, which are nothing more than a device to finance his ministry and extravagant lifestyle.

In 1993, PFO twice contacted Strang about statements in *Charisma* that had misrepresented PFO's research and writing on Hinn. Strang had allowed his magazine to foster the myth of Hinn's father being the mayor of Jaffa, Israel. PFO asked Strang to "Please show us with whom, for whom, and over whom Costandi Hinn functioned as mayor." Four months and two letters later, PFO received a reply in which Strang concluded, "I am not interested in engaging in a debate over Benny or the validity or the lack thereof of your claims."

Additionally, Strang described in a 1995 editorial the standards that made up the magazine's advertising policies. Among the policies were ones that said advertisements "should be in good taste," "should not promise what they cannot prove that they can deliver," or "promise that people will receive special anointings" ("Thoughts About Advertising," July 1995, pg. 108).

Yet, advertisements in *Charisma* repeatedly have violated Strang's own standards. For example, on the back of the anniversary edition, Rod Parsley advertises "anointing" and "impartation" at his "Raise the Standard 2000" conference. "Receive impartation and instruction to propel you into a new millennium of ministry," the Parsley advertisement promises.

(continues on page 20)

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

MISSOURI

P.O. Box 26062
Saint Louis, MO 63136
(314) 921-9800

NEW JERSEY

P.O. Box 514
Bricktown, NJ 08723
(732) 477-6577

PENNSYLVANIA

Route 3 - Box 127
Kunkletown, PA 18058
(610) 381-3661

ARIZONA

P.O. Box 11512
Glendale, AZ 85312
(623) 825-3150

BOARD of DIRECTORS:

| | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| James Bjornstad | Cedarville, OH | Stephen F. Cannon | Glendale, AZ |
| Joan C. Cetnar | Kunkletown, PA | Philip C. Cetnar | Mount Laurel, NJ |
| G. Richard Fisher | Bricktown, NJ | M. Kurt Goedelman | Saint Louis, MO |
| Keith A. Morse | Denver, CO | | |

BOARD of REFERENCE:

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Dr. Jay E. Adams | Enoree, SC | Dr. Norman L. Geisler | Charlotte, NC |
| Dr. Edmond C. Gruss | Newhall, CA | Dr. John P. Juedes | Highland, CA |

© 2000-PFO. All rights reserved. These articles may not be stored on BBS or Internet sites without permission. ISSN: 1083-6853. *The Quarterly Journal* is the newsletter publication of PFO. Published by Personal Freedom Outreach, P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, MO 63136. PFO's *Journal* files may also be obtained on floppy diskette for IBM-compatible computers by subscription from PFO-Missouri. Visit PFO's Web Site at: <http://www.pfo.org>.

WATCHTOWER DENIES CHANGE IN BLOOD TRANSFUSION DOCTRINE

A news report first appearing in the *Times of London* stating that Jehovah's Witnesses have changed their position on blood transfusions "is incorrect" according to Watchtower headquarters in Brooklyn. The June 14 *Times* article was carried by the *BBC News* with the headline "Jehovah's Witnesses drop transfusion ban" and stated: "Leaders of the Jehovah's Witnesses movement have revoked a strict ruling that their members automatically face excommunication if they accept blood transfusions." The *Times* made its report based on comments told to them by a London Bethel Watchtower representative.

According to the report, the "controversial decision" to change its doctrine came "at a secret meeting in New York, following years of recrimination from ex-members and non-Jehovah's Witnesses over the ban." The Watchtower organization immediately issued a letter to its "Hospital Liaison Committee" members, reiterating several points of the sect's blood transfusion beliefs and repeatedly charging that its "position has not changed."

Critics of the Watchtower blood doctrine, including some Watchtower members in good standing, argue that the leadership's rebuttal statements are "disingenuous." Addressing the HLC correspondence, a statement from the web site of "Associated Jehovah's Witnesses for Reform on Blood" contends "the letter thrice reminds HLC members that the WTS position has not changed when it clearly has as anyone vaguely acquainted with Jehovah's Witnesses realizes."

The primary change, it appears, comes not to the doctrine itself but in the Watchtower's treatment of its members who permit or accept a blood transfusion. The AJWRB group noted "that JWs who accept blood transfusions would no longer be subject to investigation by congregation judicial committees." Heretofore, a member who received blood would be subject to a hearing by a judicial committee (made up of Jehovah's Witness elders) and promptly disfellowshipped from the sect. The *BBC News* report states that the new procedure establishes that, "If a member has a transfusion, they will, by their actions disassociate themselves from the religion" rather than undergo a disfellowshipping hearing.

The AJWRB believes "that this procedural change coupled with the WTS new blood policy as announced in the June 15, 2000 *Watchtower* is a strong indication that the WTS has in fact decided that the policy is in error

and is taking steps to reform the policy, minimize the death toll and limit liability."

These internal critics also conclude that, "It is also possible that the WTS is attempting to deflect some of the criticism it has been receiving in medical journals in recent months over the contradictions and inconsistencies in the policy and improve its position with some European governments who feel that the WTS is a dangerous sect."

—MKG

LAST SECRET OF FATIMA REVEALED

The Vatican has finally disclosed the details of the third and final mystery of Fatima. In 1917, three young children in Portugal announced they were receiving visions of the Virgin Mary. It was claimed that as the mother of Jesus appeared to these children, she gave them three secrets of future events. During the more than 80 years that have elapsed since the alleged appearances, details of the first two secrets have been revealed. These were said to have foretold information surrounding the two World Wars and the fall of Soviet communism.

Many expected the third and final revelation to be momentous, perhaps even unveiling end-time events or the specifics of Jesus Christ's return. The Associated Press reported that "Fatima fanatics have held hunger strikes — one even hijacked a plane — to try to coerce the Vatican to disclose the secret." In the conclusion, however, the last prophecy said nothing as to the end of the world or the Second Coming. The secret only professed to disclose an event which already happened nearly two decades ago.

According to Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the text of the Fatima secret "contains a prophetic vision similar to those found in sacred Scripture, which do not describe with photographic clarity the details of future events, but rather synthesize and condense against a unified background of events spread out over time in succession and a duration which are not specified. As a result, the text must be interpreted in a symbolic key."

After establishing such clouded perimeters for understanding the prophecy, it was declared that the secret foretold the May 1981 assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II by a Turkish gunman at the Vatican. Sodano said the interpretation had been "confirmed" by Sister

(continues on page 20)

The Higher Life of Rick Joyner

CHASING THE DELUSION OF POWER AND DOMINION

by G. Richard Fisher

"[Rick] Joyner is one of a new breed of 'super-prophet' in our day, a breed which desires nothing less than to redefine biblical Christianity in these last days of the church."¹

Any well-taught, well-grounded Christian finds it ludicrous to think that believers ever will get to the place where they no longer need the words of Jesus Christ and the teachings of Scripture.

Yet, there is a growing group of teachers who are self-proclaimed prophets and self-anointed apostles insinuating in many ways that Scripture is outdated and no longer applies. Though these teachings are not along the lines of "Get rid of the Bible," the prophecies and revelations are touted as fresh, exciting and what is really needed today. These teachers also promote a false gospel of self-aggrandizement and empire-building. Someday, they promise, the wicked will forfeit all their wealth to Christians.

An example of this disregard for Scripture is popular author Tommy Tenney. Tenney is from a Oneness² background and brazenly states in his best-selling book, *The God Chasers*, that: "A true God chaser is not happy with just past truth. He must have present truth. God chasers don't want to just study from the moldy pages of what God has done; they're anxious to see what God is doing."³ Tenney has emerged as one of the notable celebrities within the Charismatic

world and has been promoted by *Charisma* magazine and at the Pensacola Revival.

So God's Word is denigrated and characterized by Tenney as "moldy pages of what God has done." This is but one example of how God's Word is trashed by these new apostles. They would have us believe that Scripture is passé and no longer relevant for our day. At times they speak out of both sides of their mouths and may play up the Bible so as to not alarm their more conservative followers. However, the way they exalt their prophecies and revelations makes the Bible seem uninteresting in comparison.

Any serious reading of 1 Timothy 4 and 2 Timothy 3 would show us that this is what we can expect as the present age wears on. The one revival we can expect is not one of "super prophets and apostles" but of heresy, deception and confusion.

Such thoughts of demoting the Bible and elevating man's imagined prophecies of dominion have their origin in the heresies of the Latter Rain Movement originating in the 1940s⁴. The bizarre ideas of Latter Rain were rejected by most thinking Pentecostals, including the Assemblies of God, but today many who once denounced such teachings now embrace them.

AN INCREASE IN PROPHETS

Rick Joyner, founder and Executive Director of MorningStar Publications

and Ministries in North Carolina, is another proponent of these ideas of a new breed of super prophets and end-time restorationists. Joyner says his conversion to Christianity came in 1971 and from that time has "an ability to foresee certain future events accurately" and "occasionally look at people and know details about them such as problems they were having or spiritual callings on their life."⁵ He associates with other self-proclaimed prophets such as Paul Cain and Mike Bickle.

Despite his "prophetic" calling and service in full-time ministry, Joyner acknowledged that he "was shallow in [his] personal relationship to the Lord" and his "lack of intimacy with the Lord had caused [him] to lean more on formulas and procedures than the anointing that is essential to giving life to truth."⁶ This crisis of conscience caused him to leave the ministry in 1980 as he "drifted from the Lord" until 1987, when he "was again called back into ministry by the Lord with the word that [his] commission would be given to another if [he] did not return at that time."⁷

MORE PROPHETABLE THAN SCRIPTURE

Joyner leaves no doubt as to where he thinks the "Voice of the Lord" is found and it is not in Scripture:

"It is typical of our Western mind-set to want a clear formula for how to get to know the voice of the Lord. There must at least

be an obvious 'how to' in the Scriptures, we think. Many have attempted to wrestle one out of the Word, but it is not there. The only way we can come to know the voice of the Lord is the same way that the sheep came to know their shepherd's voice — through time spent in His presence."⁸

Joyner further disparages the Bible by teaching that while Scripture is used for constituting doctrine, it is unable to provide wisdom and counsel in our daily lives. He states:

"The Scriptures alone are used for establishing doctrine, while 'the voice of the Lord' is used to give us day-to-day guidance as well as revealing the strategic will of the Lord. The Bible does not address some of the most important decisions we must all make — whom we should marry, our choice of professions, where we should live."⁹

Joyner is far afield here. Every Epistle gives us direct commands or principles for every single aspect of living. The Apostle Paul was forthright that Scripture was not just for doctrine but for "reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Psalmist also records for us a truth which every elementary Sunday school student has memorized: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).¹⁰

Joyner puts Christians on a slippery slope by disparaging the Reformation and encouraging believers to follow "dreams and visions."¹¹ His advice is reckless when he suggests:

"...many Protestant and Reformed theologies not only hinder, but actually prohibit, Christians from knowing God's voice. These theologies can be traced to the extreme interpretation of the prime Reformation motto *sola scriptura*, which means 'Scripture alone.'¹²

Joyner sows even more confusion by admitting, "We all would like to have a basic formula for interpreting

dreams, but there simply is none."¹³ *There is none?* This is as bad as the old quip that says: "There are only two ways to please a woman — and nobody knows what they are!" God help us when we lock people into impossible dilemmas and offer them "guidance" with no map or chart. In the end Joyner offers a quagmire.

The *Wilkes Journal Patriot*, a newspaper that publishes three times a week in North Wilkesboro, N.C., featured several articles on Joyner and his MorningStar ministry. These detailed reports provided insight into the mystical environment and activity of Joyner. One of the articles revealed:

"MorningStar already has bought over 300 acres in the [Pores Knob, N.C.] community with moving its headquarters there from Charlotte. Joyner and his family moved to a house near the intersection of Price and Broyhill roads in late 1997 and there are plans to provide housing for 40 to 50 other families moving here with MorningStar ... Joyner has said events leading to the move to the Pores Knob community began with a man in Kansas City dreaming Joyner moved to a place in North Carolina ... The man also dreams Joyner would meet recording star Ricky Skaggs. A few weeks later, Joyner met Skaggs. ... Skaggs is on the MorningStar's board. ... Joyner said he felt God was leading him to visit the Pores Knob section of Moravian Falls and he did so in 1989. ... Joyner said it caught his attention when he learned that Moravian Falls was a center of newspaper publishing around the turn of the century and that one of the early newspapers was called *The Morning Star*."¹⁴

SHARING THE PROFITS

Joyner recently had a hand in relaunching the

career of failed and then jailed televangelist, Jim Bakker. *Charisma* magazine reported:

"Jim Bakker, who says he is 'nearly 100 percent healed' from the PTL downfall and his subsequent prison term, now wants to help restore other ministers who have fallen or who suffer from stress or burnout. Thanks to a donation of property by Rick Joyner's MorningStar Ministries, Bakker and his wife, Lori Beth, will get that chance. Joyner's ministry donated a 17,000-square-foot log lodge in Charlotte, N.C., to the Bakkers' New Covenant Fellowship Ministry in May."¹⁵

...AND DISBURSING THE PROPHETIC

True to the modern-day prophetic movement, Joyner claims he is led by dreams, visions and revelations as well as Jesus Himself. In the Introduction to *The Harvest* he tells his readers:

"Some of the revelation came in 'open visions.' These were visible, external visions that were like watching a cinema screen. Others were gentle, internal visions that are like having the 'eyes of your heart' opened. I now have frequent visions and dreams that are filled with symbolism requiring interpretation like most of the biblical visions,



but these were not that way; many of the details that you read in this book I actually saw in the visions. ... Some of the understanding shared in this book came in literal conversation with the Lord. I did not hear His voice audibly but it was more intimate and real than I could ever remember knowing before."¹⁶

Yet, ironically, Joyner warns us about "The Wizard Spirit." He identifies wizards as "one of the primary forms of false prophets who try to infiltrate the body of Christ. They will usually have a clean, professional appearance, and will often establish their credibility by 'prophesying' information that they know in the natural."¹⁷

Joyner is not really much of a prophet and it appears that the following must have been done "in the natural." In the late 1990s, Joyner jumped onto the Y2K bandwagon as he claimed that the Lord "finally did begin to speak" about the issue. According to Joyner, God supposedly revealed that, "The most severe difficulties will come from the panic generated by the situation" and "The Lord told me to observe the problems that Y2K will cause in the natural world as a reflection of the problems we have in the body of Christ."¹⁸

Thus, according to Joyner's revelation, the Church must not have had problems since Y2K was a non-event. Was God wrong or was Joyner just pretending and speculating "in the natural"?

On the Joyner organization's web site, the *MorningStar Prophetic Bulletin* is advertised as a publication "devoted to the distribution of strategic prophetic words, dreams and visions that have critical timeliness."¹⁹ Many of these are nothing more than Joyner's sermonettes hyped up as "prophetic words."

The vague and general nature of Joyner's revelation is illustrated in a portion of his "prophetic" word for New Zealand in 1991: "Your name is prophetic - there is a NEW ZEAL that will arise from the church in New Zealand. This zeal for the Lord and

His purposes will help to bring conviction upon the worldwide body of Christ for her Laodicean spirit of lukewarmness. ... Your zeal will be a NEW zeal," and so on.²⁰

Joyner offers the worn and faulty cliché predominant among Charismatic superstars such as Benny Hinn and others when their theological ignorance begins to show or their prophecies fail. Joyner says of himself: "Even though I have not been able to go to journalism school, or even Bible school, in many ways I would not trade my education for anyone's. Like Paul, I can say that what I received I did not receive from men."²¹ Scripture anticipated these self-assuming prophets and warned of their foolish rationale (Zechariah 13:4-5).

Even with that, Joyner leaves himself a back door by suggesting that New Testament prophets are different than Old Testament ones and make mistakes and are not infallible. In reality the whole thing dissolves since it is anyone's guess when the prophet is right or when he is wrong. It really is a speculative subjective guessing game after all.²²

Joyner and others in the modern prophetic movement have created a huge fiction that New Testament prophets can be right some of the time and wrong some of the time. Using 1 Corinthians 14:29 ("Let the others judge"), they say the message has to be sifted and evaluated and the good taken from the bad. This is a blatant misunderstanding of the text as Paul is actually saying that they must discern between *true* and *false* prophets.

New Testament professor Thomas Edgar states that "there are no direct statements of Scripture to support the 'fallible prophet' concept" and says of the 1 Corinthians 14:29 passage:

"In any case, how this [passage] can indicate that New Testament prophets are inferior to Old Testament prophets is not clear, since the entire congregation of Israel was also told to scrutinize their prophets (Deut. 18:22). ... The word *diakrino* does not imply

that there is both good and bad to be sifted out. It is often used in a context such as this in reference to rendering judgment between two people, that is, determining which one is right and which one is wrong. ... [D.A.] Carson's statement that 'discern' refers to judging the prophecy itself, if correct, would mean to judge whether the entire prophecy were true or false. It would mean not to sift out the good from the bad and consider the good parts as from God and the prophet as a genuine prophet. This is contrary to biblical practice. ... It does not imply that there are true and false statements in all New Testament prophecy or that a genuine prophet may give false prophecies."²³

Even if one takes the liberty to judge the prophet and his message, you are labeled a "pharisee," or worse yet possess a "religious" and "Jezebel spirit." PFO director Steve Cannon points out a recurrent theme in Joyner's writings, a concept called "The Two Ministries."²⁴ Joyner describes the second of the two ministries as "faultfinders" and says they are a "destructive force." Cannon maintains, "This doctrine ... is used, I think, to intimidate any who may criticize, into thinking that by doing so, they are operating under the spirit of Satan."

Joyner also incorrectly employs Jesus' instruction for confronting a brother who has sinned against you (Matthew 18:15-17) as a way to squelch questioning of his erroneous doctrine.²⁵

His use of Matthew 18 (albeit out-of-context) is a tactic that PFO has encountered again and again and responded to in this *Journal*.²⁶ Those, such as Joyner, who assert that they should be approached privately — rather than have their doctrine and practice exposed publicly — are really not willing to do so. It is merely a smokescreen. They hide behind legions of assistants and make themselves unavailable for contact. PFO

personally encountered this in early 1999 when we tried to make contact with Joyner.

In January 1999, PFO director Cannon telephoned MorningStar Ministries to try to get an interview with Joyner. Cannon's call was put through to James Arquit, one of Joyner's assistants. Arquit was told of the purpose of the call. Cannon was told that Joyner was out-of-town at that moment, that he was a very busy man, and that the best way to secure an interview was to submit the request in writing.

This PFO did on Jan. 7, 1999.²⁷ That letter was followed up with a phone call two weeks later. As this article is published (more than a year and a half later), PFO has yet to receive a response to the request.

DIAMETRIC DOCTRINES

Though Joyner's doctrinal statement is a rather standard one, we will see that in many places his writings and books contradict and undermine it. One can only wonder if his doctrinal statement is merely window dressing and subterfuge; or if perhaps his allegiance to a movement which views itself as a superlative extension of the Church has moved him away from a more stable and orthodox foundation. Joyner is like a child musician playing many sour notes with the good ones while telling us he is an accomplished prodigy. When we object, he will call attention to the few good notes. Joyner's trumpet is off-key and giving out an "uncertain sound" (1 Corinthians 14:7-8). Had he lived in the Old Testament era, he would have been stoned by now (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:20-22).

Joyner unabashedly promotes his more bizarre and unrealistic ideas this way:

"In the near future the church will not be looking back at the first century church with envy because of the great exploits of those days, but all will be saying that He certainly did save His best wine for last. The most glorious times in all of history have now come upon us. You

who have dreamed of one day being able to talk with Peter, John and Paul are going to be surprised to find that they have all been waiting to talk to you! You have been chosen to see the harvest, the fruit of the seeds that they were planting."²⁸

Joyner is so bold to state that nations will be overwhelmed by the newly appointed apostles and that "Miracles which exceed even some of the most spectacular biblical marvels will cause whole nations to acknowledge Jesus. ... The appearances of angels will be so common that they will cease to be related as significant

and soon this will become a major emphasis. There will be almost a general openness to this as men of true apostolic authority, with a true apostolic lifestyle, take their place in leadership."³¹

Glaringly absent from Joyner's agenda is any biblical warrant for his words. There is no Scripture offered as proof for this self-serving illusion. Ephesians is clear that the Church is built on "the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets" (Ephesians 2:19). Why would God have to lay the foundation all over again? The Church, since the time of Paul, is described as "God's building"

Joyner is like a child musician playing many sour notes with the good ones while telling us he is an accomplished prodigy. When we object, he will call attention to the few good notes.

events. The Lord Himself will appear to councils of apostles and elders to give them directives."²⁹

Author Hank Hanegraaff reviews Joyner's doctrine and practice and gives him the status of a "Counterfeit Revival leader."³⁰

RESTORATION ATTRACTION

Joyner has two major obsessions: "Prophetic Restoration" and "Apostolic Restoration." He explains these as follows:

"A new wave of ministries is about to be released with extraordinary prophetic gifts. Others with revelatory gifting who were sidetracked because of controversy, or other problems, are about to get back on the fast track. ... The apostolic ministry that opened the church age will be raised up at the end to complete it. The Lord is restoring the apostolic authority to the church,

(1 Corinthians 3:9-10). A building, especially God's Church, is not in need of another foundation. No wonder Joyner gives no Scripture for his grandiose imaginings.

Joyner asserts that his book, *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*, was "the result of the last ten years of hearing from the Lord both in visions and revelations."³² He claims that the Lord said, "I have allowed you to see a little into the future."³³ Joyner further makes the breathtaking claim: "At the end of the vision in *The Call*, I saw the glory of all ages in a single moment."³⁴

Joyner's ideas of ongoing revelation and prophecy bears a striking resemblance to the "continuing revelation" of the Latter-day Saints (Mormons) as journalists Richard and Joan Ostling define:

"Religious authority, in Mormonism, includes the concept of con-

tinuing revelation through the current church president, who holds the titles of seer, prophet, and revelator. Earlier doctrine may evolve, but a previous prophet, though superseded, is not 'wrong.'³⁵

BASEBALL HERMENEUTICS

However, Joyner does not just get messages directly from the Lord but sees omens and mystical meanings in all kind of strange things and at strange places. Imagine getting "prophetic" truth from a ballgame. It may sound silly but Joyner unashamedly teaches just that:

"In the spring of 1995, Bob Jones, a prophetic friend, told a number of us that the Atlanta Braves baseball team was going to win the World Series that year as a message for the church in America. This prophecy was fulfilled, and there indeed was a message in it. ... I think it was also significant that it was David Justice who hit that home run. He is a black man, and I do expect young, black 'Davids' to arise and slay the spiritual Goliaths who have been intimidating and holding back the armies of God in America. ... In the spring of 1996, Bob Jones received a word that the Braves would not win the World Series again that year and that this would be a message. When I was offered tickets to go to Game Five of the 1996 World Series in Atlanta, I knew that the Lord was going to show me something important. I was not disappointed."³⁶

We will not go on with the silliness. Would Paul have thought it spiritual to predict the winners of the Greek games? Do you think he ever sat at the Corinthian games to try to discern God's messages and directions? Did he go to the Coliseum in Rome and try to discern truth and the will of God as the chariots whizzed by, asking himself what the event might have meant? Joyner makes a travesty of the concept of biblical prophecy. The message for America is still Christ and the Scriptures, not who

won last year's World Series.

UNCIVIL WAR

One of Joyner's other major themes, addressed in the apologetic newsletter *Vanguard*, is the "CIVIL WAR." In an article titled "Rick Joyner: Christian Gnostic," author Neil Richardson zeroes in on one of Joyner's major themes. Richardson writes:

'His 'big thing' is **The Great Christian Civil War**: Like the American Civil War, the coming spiritual civil war will also be between the Blue and the Gray. In dreams and visions, blue often represents heavenly mindedness — the sky is blue; and gray speaks of those who live by the power of their minds — the brain is often called gray matter. This will be a conflict between those who may be genuine Christians, but who live mostly according to their own natural minds and human wisdom, and those who follow the Holy Spirit. (*The Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin*, May 1996, 2).³⁷

Joyner's prognostications about the upcoming Christian "civil war" are many and various. The most widespread publication of these is in his books, *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century* and *The Final Quest*.³⁸

CRN Journal ponders and summarizes Joyner's intent:

"The violent images Joyner adopts are, it seems, to be directed, *not* against liberals in the church, as we might suppose, but *against* those who are 'not open' to the new visions and prophecies — those who 'religiously' stand on the *written* Word alone."³⁹

So the railing of Joyner is not against heresy or false teaching but against believers who disagree. Moreover, Joyner teaches that demons direct and ride Christians who think, reason and discern.⁴⁰

NEW PACKAGE, SAME OLD HERESIES

Joyner's concepts are not just repackaged Latter Rain ideas but have

even deeper roots. Though the prophetic and apostolic movement is being called new, most people are not aware that this whole move of super apostles and super prophets is not new at all. Satan constantly puts new window dressing on old errors. Every heresy (even the repackaged ones) has been met and refuted by the early Church.

The Apostle Paul faced this very thing in Corinth as we see in 2 Corinthians 11. He confronted men who boasted that they were super apostles. Frederick Dale Brunner explains the situation as described by Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:5-15:

"For the first time in this letter Paul ventures a name for the new evangelists in Corinth: they are 'superlative apostles' (*hyperlian apostoloi*, v. 5). They were spiritual 'hupermen.' They were superlative because they claimed to go beyond Paul (and others) in both message and life. Paul made Christians in name, they made Christians in Spirit; Paul accented a crucified Messiah who gave grace, they brought a glorified Messiah who gave power; Paul brought the Spirit, but they brought him fully; Paul, in other words, brought something of the gospel, but they brought the full gospel. Yet Paul now declares — and the fact that he must even say it strikes us as somehow pathetic — 'I think that I am not the least inferior to these' (II Cor. 11:5)! However, his commendable self-control will not last much longer."⁴¹

Brunner continues:

"Paul finally explodes: those who found him worldly because weak, less Christ's because less their 'more,' and who knew how to make full what he only knew how to begin, i.e., to over-*(huper)*-do him, he must now call by name: they are not only super-apostles, they are 'sham apostles' (*pseudapostoloi*) and 'crooked in all their practices, masquerading as apostles of Christ' (11:13 NEB)."⁴²

So the new pseudo-apostles step on and disregard God's Word and promise not only new revelations but dominion over the unsaved world through their promises of utopia. They claim to be greater than Paul and the biblical prophets.

At the "New Millennium Apostolic Council of Prophetic Elders" held November 30, 1999, 12 "prophecies" were brought forth, some as muddled as the television psychics or the supermarket tabloids about floods and earthquakes. The "Apostolic Council" present consisted of C. Peter Wagner, Cindy Jacobs, Dutch Sheets, Tommy Tenney, Mike Bickle and Jim Goll. (Other members not present but on the council include Paul Cain, James Ryle, John and Paula Sanford, Bill Hammond and Gwen Shaw.)

A report submitted by council member Goll included:

"This move of God will be so powerful that the church will gather in stadiums to worship, both the church in given regions as well as some local churches which will grow so large that they will fill stadiums for their celebration worship services. ... The Government of God [sic] kingdom will be established through the apostolic and prophetic authorities in cities and nations. ... We will see tremendous transfers of wealth into the Kingdom of God through the ministry of market apostles (those with apostolic anointing for business and other areas of society)."⁴³

Surely these are strong delusions of grandeur.

There is no doubt that Joyner has aligned with the growing chorus of those who malign and destroy biblical authority and set themselves above the Word of God. Their agenda seems to be — get rid of Scripture and scriptural authority since something new and more direct has come. This they do by exulting their self-proclaimed "prophecies" as a way of finding truth and direction today. Even though they may drop in a line at times about following the Scrip-

tures, it seems to be only gratuitous against the larger agenda.

Joyner's stated view is that we will need this direct revelation and prophecy "to accomplish the last-day mandate of the church."⁴⁴ The Church has found the Scripture adequate for its mission for 2,000 years (2 Timothy 3:15-17), however that is no longer good enough for doctrine and practice according to this new message. We now have a more up-to-date and immediate "prophetic vision for the 21st century" given by Joyner.

Why bother with the Bible when we have men with a direct pipeline to heaven? Joyner reiterates in his 1999 *Prophetic Vision* the claim he made a decade earlier:

"I have experienced a considerable amount of prophecy in my own life. After my conversion in 1971, I have had, at times, an ability to foresee certain future events accurately, but usually in a very general sense. I could also occasionally look at people and know details about them, such as problems they were having or spiritual callings on their life."⁴⁵

Joyner here sounds like a garden-variety fortune teller, tea leaf reader or hotline psychic.

In 1994, Joyner offered another example of his "buckshot" prophecy:

"These great prayer movements will result in such extraordinary advances for the church, and deliverance for the world, that the world's great and mighty will come to the church for prayer. Even the public schools in the United States will beg for prayers to be made in their halls again."⁴⁶

The indefinite time frame adds to the aura of the prognostication.

During his hiatus "from the Lord," Joyner's prophetic skills likewise abated. Joyner describes to his readers the resurgence of his revelatory abilities:

"Then, after seven years with no prophetic revelation, I had a three-day prophetic experience in

which I felt the Lord tried to catch me up on all I had missed. ... Since then, I have had other visions and revelations that were published in books like *The Final Quest* and *The Call*. ... All of a sudden, I knew many details about future events, as though they had been poured into me. In all of this, I have been trying to determine God's call on my life and His purpose for His church."⁴⁷

How sad that a Christian leader would try to determine God's call and God's purpose for His Church apart from Scripture. All that Joyner talks about could be produced by sleep loss, a vivid imagination, Satan or deceiving spirits, emotions run riot, drugs, hallucinations or just out and out deception. Man's emotions and experiences are no determiner of truth since "God's Word is truth" (John 8:32, 17:17). "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God," the Apostle Paul declared (Romans 10:17).

Joyner also overstates the role of apostleship in saying, "Because apostles are called to be evangelists, prophets, pastors and teachers, they usually have a more balanced nature, and are given for the purpose of keeping the Church on the right path."⁴⁸ The twelve apostles did not fit into all these categories and there is no Scripture teaching that they did. Ephesians 4:11 is clear that some can fill any one of these offices but no one is all of them. By Joyner's own definition ("keeping the Church on the right path"), he cannot be an apostle because as this article demonstrates, he has led us down many wrong paths.

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT

We need to pause to deal with the fundamental concern as to whether we ever will get beyond the need of the Scriptures at any point in time. Consider Christ's "Great Commission" which is really the marching orders of the Church. Having "all authority in heaven and on earth" Jesus commands His apostles and followers in Matthew 28:20 to teach new disciples "all things that I have

commanded you." This is the ongoing job of the Church, that is to teach the teachings of Christ to others — *all of His teaching*.

How long is the Church to do this? It becomes clear when we listen to Jesus and take His words seriously. He says, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (v. 20). Jesus is clear that this commission is age-long. As long as we are in the age of grace and until Jesus comes, we are to keep teaching His Word and commands. These are only found in the Bible so we conclude that we are to teach the Bible until the Second Com-

and comes up with weird subjective interpretations. The interpretations are esoteric, off the mark and ignore the cultural setting and context. Everything is twisted to fit into the Dominion message. His ideas have been variously labeled as Joel's Army, Kingdom Now and Dominion Theology, although it is more gnostic ramblings than theology. So much of the repackaged Latter Rain teaching demotes Christ and the Scriptures and deifies man.

One of the keys to understanding Joyner is realizing that his earlier books were more conservative, bibli-

Joseph Chambers, concurs and says of Joyner's books:

"Reading his material is similar to reading New Age materials. His approach is to take anything in Scripture and make it mean anything that suits his theological aims. There is no faithfulness to established facts of interpretation. It is a smorgasbord of ideas loosely connected with the generous use of out-of-text Scripture to prove his point."⁵⁰

Joyner also twists Scripture to teach a convoluted view of two "gospels." He is very confused as he bends to the breaking point the statement of Hebrews 6:5 concerning, "the good word of God and the powers of the age to come." Joyner claims that "the good word of God and the powers of the age to come" were preached both by John the Baptist and Jesus but became obscured after the first century A.D. He then connects this message willy-nilly to Revelation 11:15 and says this true message "will soon be released in the church."⁵¹

In reality, "the good word of God and the powers of the age to come" is something believers have already tasted. Joyner connects this to the recovered message of the new prophets causing the Church to be equipped to do exploits, like the ability to "walk on water" and even "walking on air,"⁵² though they are not doing that just yet.

The Apostle Paul declared: "I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). We cannot improve on that and that message has never been lost. Even a superficial study of the Church Fathers shows a continuity of message. Though muddled during the Middle Ages, the Reformation corrected the course.

The idea that the true Gospel message has finally been found by Rick Joyner after 1900 years is no different than the position of every quasi-Christian group of the past two centu-

We must never make a "spiritual" premise at the price of proper interpretation of Scripture. Using this type of interpretation, one can make the Scripture say or mean anything.

ing. There is no question. Who would dare to supplant and usurp the sayings of Jesus? Only the arrogant new apostles and prophets.

Further Paul warns: "If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing. ... from such withdraw yourself" (1 Timothy 6:3-5).

Still further Paul says his words (in the Word) are the commands of God (1 Corinthians 14:37), as does Peter (2 Peter 3:2). It is clear what the new prophets are up to. Paul commanded the emotionally driven Corinthians "not to think beyond what is written" (1 Corinthians 4:16).

DOING THE TWIST

Even when Joyner does handle the Word of God, he distorts it terribly

cal and mainstream. In fact, in his 1992 book, *The Journey Begins*, he has three pages on the "Fundamentals of Bible Interpretation." His ideas have definitely evolved or more correctly devolved since then.

Joyner is at times reckless in his use of Scripture. He sets up a most unlikely scenario that the Apostle Peter equals the early Church, Paul equals Church History until now and the Apostle John equals the end time prophetic move preparing the Church for Christ's return.⁴⁹ This kind of spiritualizing or allegorizing the biblical text is pathetic. We must never make a "spiritual" premise at the price of proper interpretation of Scripture. Using this type of interpretation, one can make the Scripture say or mean anything. It is just a made up and self-serving eisegesis.

Pentecostal minister and host of the *Open Bible Dialogue* radio broadcast,

ries. Mary Baker Eddy, Joseph Smith Jr., Ellen G. White, Charles Taze Russell and Herbert W. Armstrong have claimed the same thing.

Joyner says that "the church will be a great hospital with the power to heal every kind of wound and disease. She will have a cure for every plague,"⁵³ though they are not doing that either.

Unfortunately for Joyner, the concept of "the world to come" was a common well-known phrase in the first century and is still known by orthodox Jews today. It is a synonym for the Messiah's millennial reign and the new heaven and new earth or the golden age of the Messiah. The "age to come" will not be the work of Rick Joyner, his prophetic colleagues, or any other human as Greek scholar and linguist Kenneth Wuest explains:

"The age to come is the Millennial Age. What a change there will be when God the Son reigns on earth personally, and His Chosen People are saved. These Hebrews had seen attesting miracles performed, the performance of which proved to them that the New Testament was from God. This was another factor which made their guilt so enormous. It is interesting to note in passing that attesting miracles will again be performed in the Millennial Age when the Lord Jesus comes back to earth."⁵⁴

Most commentators agree that the age to come is just that — the age to come and identify it with the Millennium or heaven or both.⁵⁵ The age to come will not be ushered in by kings of the earth but by the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16). Joyner is confusing his ambitions with the return of Christ. The first century world had a "taste" of the "age to come" in Christ and His miracles. We have a "taste" of the age to come in the recorded events of Christ and the Apostles as well as all the biblical promises of a bright and glorious future at the return of Jesus (Romans 8:23, Philippians 3:21, 1 Thessalonians

4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15). The Christian's urgent message is the Gospel (Romans 1), not *Millennium Now* or heaven on earth.

POSTMILLENNIALISM GONE SOUTH

The old historic postmillennial position attributed to Daniel Whitby (1638-1726) and the classical variations of postmillennialism⁵⁶ all dreamt of an evangelized, Christianized world before the return of Christ. They taught that this would be accomplished by the spread of Christianity through Gospel preaching.

According to the postmillennial view, the Gospel of Christ is still the power of God unto salvation and the old foundations are recognized. Additionally, this preaching would produce a world of peace and universal virtues of the fruit of the Spirit with no more wars (Isaiah, chapters 2 and 11). All of this was to usher in the return of Jesus in the typical postmillennial framework.

Sounding almost like he has a touch of megalomania and for no apparent reason, Joyner states that we are to preach the last trump message of Revelation 11:15. He writes:

"Those who live in the reality and power of His kingdom *now* will preach the message of the kingdom. We do not wait for the millennium for Jesus to reign over us. His kingdom is already *'at hand.'*"⁵⁷

He then claims that God instructed him that in building his Moravian Falls Community: "What you build will need to last for a thousand years!"⁵⁸

This "kingdom now" message, according to Joyner is bigger than any other message:

"His message was *the kingdom*, and this is the message we have been given to preach. This does not belittle the importance of our salvation, nor negate the high place of the church in His plan. However, the message of the kingdom is bigger than these."⁵⁹

Joyner's emphasis on the kingdom is noticeably similar to the gospel message of Jehovah's Witnesses, who ignore the King in their quest for the kingdom. However, strikingly different from the Watchtower is that this radical charismatic postmillennialism has created an illusionary scenario where miracle workers take over society and the wealth of the world through the power of signs, wonders and creative miracles. The sheer miracle power and dynamism of Joyner's prophetic "blues" will obliterate the opposition. Nevertheless, Joyner has yet to walk on water, raise the dead or multiply food to authenticate his *Millennium Now* message.

At times Joyner sounds a lot like metaphysician E.W. Kenyon, who was a follower of New Thought heresies. Metaphysicians, like Kenyon, believe in tapping into "spiritual laws" for dramatic results. Joyner teaches in true metaphysical fashion that:

"There are spiritual principles at work in the spiritual realm just as there are natural laws at work in the natural realm. These spiritual principles will work for anyone that uses them. In fact Satan's power is completely dependent upon God-ordained principles of spiritual power."⁶⁰

D.R. McConnell speaks of Kenyon in words that could apply directly to Joyner:

"Through his 'Revelation Knowledge,' Kenyon hoped to create 'supermen,' a master race of Christians no longer bound by 'Sense Knowledge' or by demons, disease and poverty. This hope is a central thrust of all Kenyon's writings."⁶¹

MANY MORE QUIRKS

Joyner teaches that one's personal prophecies do not have to be connected to the Scriptures at all. For example, he claims that, "Some argue that personal prophecy should always come as confirmation based on the Scripture. ... This misconception is simply the result of faulty hermeneu-

tics.”⁶² Knowingly or unknowingly, he is degrading and disrespecting God’s Word and putting impressions, mystical leadings, promptings and imagination above it.

Still going further afield, Joyner warns that cult research is dangerous and ought not to be pursued. This would surely keep the discerning off his case. As much warning as there is in the Bible against false religions and heresies (e.g., “test the spirits,” 1 John 4:1), Joyner’s words are ill-advised and foolish:

“Few who devote themselves to studying cults or deviant doctrines are able to distinguish the true word of the Lord, and usually their hearts are ultimately darkened by the very evil they seek to expose. We will be changed into that which we are beholding (II Corinthians 3:18). There is an implied warning in the Lord’s message to the church in Thyatira about **‘knowing the deep things of Satan’ (Revelation 2:24)**. The more we focus on what is wrong, or the practices of the evil one, the more we, ourselves, will be changed into the nature of what we are seeing.”⁶³

Thus, according to Joyner, to be discerning — to be a Berean — is to go into darkness. That’s what Jehovah’s Witnesses say of Bible study apart from their literature — they too discourage any type of discernment. Once again Joyner sounds more cultic than Christian.

Moreover, in the above citation, Joyner demonstrates yet another example of his frightful handling of God’s Word. The people of Thyatira did not “know [know by experience] the depths of Satan,” which in the context was idolatry and sexual immorality (Revelation 2:20), simply because they were discerning! They did not practice these things since they were able to discern their evil nature and avoid them. Knowing the depth of Satan is not the study of false teachers like Joyner but the *practice* (knowing by experience) and promotion of immorality and idolatry.

A PROPHET WITHOUT DISCERNMENT

Though Joyner claims to be a prophet, at times he seems to be just winging it and is really unaware of the misinformation he is disseminating. Joyner would have us believe that one of the models of discernment and truth was Germany’s Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945). Bonhoeffer, a German theologian, was part of the resistance movement against Hitler in the early 1940s.⁶⁴ He was involved in a failed plan to assassinate Hitler, was sent to prison and was hanged there for treason. At age 39, Bonhoeffer, just before going to prison, proposed marriage to a 17-year-old parishioner.⁶⁵ His story is very sad. From a human standpoint he was justified in helping Jews and being against fascism but that is not the problem.

Joyner applauds Bonhoeffer for having “an extraordinary grip on the truth” and goes on to say:

“Bonhoeffer’s life is one of the twentieth century’s greatest examples of how a few who hold to the truth without compromise, standing against the most powerful political and military machines in history with nothing but spiritual power, will ultimately prevail. What was said of the righteous Abel can now be said of Bonhoeffer, ‘Though he is dead, he still speaks.’”⁶⁶

Did Bonhoeffer have a “grip on the truth”? Did he “hold to truth without compromise”? What kind of legacy did Bonhoeffer leave in his books?

By Bonhoeffer’s own admission (in his writings), he did not hold to biblical truth. He was ambiguous about the resurrection of Jesus and outspoken in his denials of major fundamental doctrines of the faith.

In an article, “Dietrich Bonhoeffer Rejected Classical Christianity,” David Becker investigates the writing of Bonhoeffer and states:

“I don’t mean to be critical of people, but I do want to speak the truth in love, and one of my

pet peeves is when I see people, especially those who consider themselves to be, and present themselves as, theologically conservative, praise Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer espoused a so-called religionless Christianity, and expressed doubt about God as a working hypothesis. He was a father of the so-called ‘death of God’ ‘fad’ of a few years ago. He wrote a lot and also wrote some things that sounded orthodox but he consistently had a low view of the Bible, considering a lot of it myth.”⁶⁷

In reviewing one of Bonhoeffer’s books, Becker writes:

“In his book, *Christ the Center* (1960, Harper & Row), Bonhoeffer wrote: ‘So if we speak of Jesus Christ as God, we may not speak of him as the representative of an idea of God who possesses the properties of omniscience and omnipotence (there is no such thing as this abstract divine nature!)’ (p. 108). So Bonhoeffer didn’t really believe that Jesus is God. ... Bonhoeffer didn’t think that Jesus is sinless either. ‘The assertion of the sinlessness of Jesus fails if it has in mind observable acts of Jesus. His deeds are done in the likeness of flesh. They are not sinless, but ambiguous. One can and should see good and bad in them’ (p. 113). ... So Bonhoeffer rejected classical christology, had a low view of the Bible, denied the deity of Christ, doubted the virgin birth of Christ, denied the sinlessness of Christ, and doubted the physical resurrection of Christ.”⁶⁸

How can Joyner be trusted when he upholds someone as a paragon of discernment, virtue and truth and that person does not even hold to the essentials of the Christian faith? Joyner is a flawed false prophet with no discernment or wisdom. His claims and boasted position are false. No wonder he discourages discernment among his followers.

FORGIVENESS WITHOUT REPENTANCE

Apparently Joyner believes that some can be saved apart from repentance and confession of sin. Some can be saved apart from the preaching of the Gospel. Unlike Joyner, the Apostle John declared that forgiveness and cleansing were based on confession of sin (1 John 1:7).

Is anyone automatically forgiven somehow? Joyner teaches:

“Jesus looked down from the cross at His tormentors without wrath or retaliation ... but with mercy. He prayed, **‘Father forgive them; they don’t know what they’re doing’** (Luke 23:34). These were not idle words — He meant it! He is not waiting until He comes again to get even. He forgave them.”⁶⁹

It is unhealthy and totally misses the point to even use the words “waiting to come again to get even.” The opposite of that is not forgiveness since Christ does not have to “get even” as an alternative. However, the larger and more important question is, did Jesus automatically forgive those who crucified Him? Is it true that “He forgave them”? If not, then what did He really mean?

It is unlikely that Jesus would have forgiven them and then taken it back, yet Peter says to those very people in Jerusalem: “Him ... you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death” (Acts 2:23). He then calls on them to “repent,” in verse 28. If they were already forgiven, as Joyner suggests, why do they have to repent for crucifying Jesus? According to Peter, they were not forgiven but needed to be forgiven and saved.

The only possible way to understand the words of Jesus in Luke 23:34 is to understand them from the standpoint of potential forgiveness. All sins can be forgiven, even one as heinous as consenting and even participating in the very death of Jesus. Jesus held out hope to them and a potential forgiveness that was realized on the day of Pentecost and based on their repentance and acceptance of

Christ. Even Christ killers can find forgiveness. This is the only understanding that fits with the rest of Scripture. We must be careful to properly define the true meaning of “forgiveness.” It is a common misconception that as Christians we are “to forgive and forget” even if our forgiveness is not sought. We need remember that “forgiveness” is a transaction (1 John 1:9).

In a chapter titled, “Forgiveness is Conditional,” Dr. Jay Adams delves into the issue of Christ’s prayer on the cross:

“If, indeed, Jesus unconditionally forgave those who crucified Him, then, of course, that would mean they had been forgiven without hearing or believing the Gospel. Clearly that teaching is heretical. ... On the cross, Jesus did not forgive; He prayed. The same is true of Steven. If forgiveness is unconditional, Jesus, Stephen, and others would have *forgiven* their murderers rather than use what, if true, would be a round-about way to do so. ...we believe also that His prayer was answered. How could that be? Not apart from the means, but *by* them. Jesus’ prayer was answered in the response to the preaching of Peter and the apostles on the day of Pentecost, ... They were not forgiven the sin of crucifying the Saviour apart from believing that He was dying for their sins, but precisely by doing so in response to the faithful preaching of the Gospel in Jerusalem. We do not have to resort to some strange doctrine of the forgiveness of sins apart from faith in Christ in order to explain Christ’s prayer.”⁷⁰

MANIFEST SONS OF SATAN

It is chilling to hear Joyner use words that apply to and are addressed to Satan and address them to believers. Isaiah 14:13-14 reveals the awful pride and arrogance of Lucifer:

“I will ascend to heaven. I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the

mount of assembly in the sides of the north. I will ascend the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

To be like God was the delusion held out to Eve by the serpent in the garden (Genesis 3:5). Yet Joyner, after having addressed the prideful inclinations of Satan and the deception of Eve, without a blush says:

“Let us understand, the Lord *wants* us to ascend to heaven; He *wants* us to sit on the mount of the assembly; He *wants* us to be raised above the heights of the clouds, *and He wants us to be like Him* (to have His nature).”⁷¹

Here Joyner gives away his orientation toward Manifest Sons and Little God doctrines. Why was what was off-limits to the devil any less off-limits to us? Ezekiel 28 gives God’s answer to Lucifer and the five “I wills” of Isaiah 14 are responded with the five “I wills” of God’s judgment for wanting to usurp the very throne of God and become like God.

DENIAL OF THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Joyner’s false teachings abound and multiply. It may be sloppy writing or unclear theology but it becomes even more serious as Joyner slips into teachings that would be welcome in a Kingdom Hall.

How should we view Jesus? We should view Him as the Bible does. John 2:21-22 and Luke 24:39 make it abundantly clear that Jesus arose in His physical body. The bodily resurrection is a foundational truth in the Christian faith. Jesus, as our mediator, exists in a glorified resurrected body. He is forever the *God-man*.

This truth of the two natures of Christ is called the hypostatic union and has always been defended by the Church. Christ exists in two natures, human and divine (Philippians 2:6-7).

Apparently Joyner either denies this or simply does not understand it. He proposes:

“There is a tendency to continue relating to Him as **‘the MAN**

from Galilee.' Jesus is not a man. He was and is Spirit. He took the form of a servant and became a man for a brief time."⁷²

Joyner couldn't be clearer in his declaration: "Jesus is *not* a man. He was and *is Spirit*" (emphasis added). Joyner finds himself closely aligned with Gnosticism, one of the most threatening heresies of the early Church. More specifically, he is bordering on a form of Docetism, a view which denies Christ's true humanity by saying that Christ only appeared to have a physical body. However, based on a multitude of Scriptures, theologian Louis Berkhof summarizes the view of historical orthodoxy:

"The incarnation constituted Him a complex person, constituted of two natures. He is the God-man. ... The one divine person, who possessed a divine nature from eternity, assumed a human nature, and now has both."⁷³

Surely no true prophet of God would deny the human nature of Christ or that Jesus is in a resurrected glorified body. Paul reminds us in 1 Timothy 2:5, "There is one Mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus." How can Joyner say, "Jesus is not a man"? If we accept Prophet Joyner, then we have eroded the doctrinal truths that separate Christianity from the cults.

AND IT JUST DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER

Joyner may not know much about neo-Orthodoxy and Karl Barth but his view of faith is amazingly close to it and biblically off the mark. He takes us down the path to neo-Orthodoxy or what is called new liberalism.

While Joyner contends that "True faith can *only* come with spiritual vision,"⁷⁴ God says that "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). Our faith is founded on the Word of God and flourishes and grows on God's Word. Faith is trust in God's Word.

Joyner would deny this and says, "Faith is not just believing the words

of the Lord, but believing the Word Himself."⁷⁵ Again, Joyner demeans the Scriptures and sets up a false dichotomy between Jesus as the Word and the written Word. He plays this incorrect dichotomy out when he says that, "It would be impossible to put a value on this most marvelous gift the Lord has given to us, but the Bible was given to lead us *to* Jesus, *not* to take His place."⁷⁶

How can we separate the words of the Lord in Scripture from the Word (Jesus) since the words in Scripture are His words and he uttered them. If you love someone, you love their words as well and there is no false distinction between the two. Joyner is subtly suggesting that we can get a fresher word, a more up-to-date word right now and directly from the Spirit Jesus in an unmediated way. So again the Bible is belittled.

Joyner also parallels neo-Orthodoxy and Karl Barth in Barth's demeaning Scripture with his view of God creating a contact point in man where He can give special direct divine revelation. Barth's separation of the Word (the Bible) from the Word (Jesus) is similar, if not the same as Joyner's emphasis.⁷⁷

All the words that Jesus spoke will judge us in the last day: "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). The Church has always looked upon the Scriptures as God's means of grace. Joyner is trying to rob us of that means.

It is truly amazing to hear Joyner say the following:

"The Church must be ruled and guided by the Head rather than by formulas. He is purposely vague concerning even important issues so that we have to seek Him. The New Testament is full of the best counsel the world has ever heard, but the Lord and His apostles were careful not to lay down many general rules and regulations for the churches. They knew that every rule could

prevent that church from seeking the Lord for themselves."⁷⁸

In 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul states the purpose of his letter:

"I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

Jesus' message — His "rules and regulations" — to the churches is given in Revelation 1-3. Matthew 18 gives us directives for discipline and conflict resolution. First Corinthians gives rules and confronts error helping to straighten out their doctrine. The book of Titus structures church life some more. Every Epistle is designed to direct the Church in some way. It is appalling to hear Joyner claim, "the Lord and the Apostles were careful not to lay down many general rules." Joyner misses also that when God directs, He also gives grace as motivation and empowerment to obey.

THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE CONCLUSION

Rick Joyner is neither a true prophet nor apostle. He teaches too much error to be either. He holds out (by his many books) an appearance of taking us to higher ground when in reality he robs us of a rich doctrinal heritage as well as the Bible. His dominionism is false and utopian and he confuses the resurrection and reign of Christ with the present state of the Church, thereby misleading Christians with false hope.

Joyner's claims of revelation knowledge produce a dulling effect in regard to a desire for the Scriptures. He is a "broken reed" and will pass away like other purveyors of error. He will leave them with nothing but "rabbit trails," distractions and illusions. Our Bibles are a far safer bet. Joyner's books are a jumble of confusion. One has to wade through a lot of sludge to find a few nuggets of truth.


The *CRN Journal* says that Joyner is peddling a "dark mysticism" and they conclude:

"Joyner leaves us no middle way. Either we treat him as God's chosen super-prophet for the end-times, or we treat him as a man in the grip of evil deceit and seek to expose him as such."⁷⁹

Endnotes:

1. Peter Glover, "Rick Joyner: Prophet of the New Christianity," *CRN Journal*, Issue 7, Winter 1999/2000, pg. 28.
2. Oneness theology is a heretical view of God, also called modalism or Sabellianism. This doctrine teaches that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three distinct persons but rather only modes or manifestation of the one God. See further, "The Oneness Doctrine: Full Gospel or Fool Gospel?," *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 1, 9-11.
3. Tommy Tenney, *The God Chasers*. Shipensburg, Pa.: Destiny Image, 1998, Introduction, italics in original.
4. See further, "The Latter Rain Movement — Showering Heresy on the Church for Nearly Fifty Years," *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 4, 10-12.
5. Rick Joyner, *The Harvest*. New Kensington, Pa.: Whitaker House, 1989, pg. 7.
6. *Ibid.*, pg. 8.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
8. Rick Joyner, *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*. Nashville: Nelson Publishers, 1999, pg. 75.
9. *Ibid.*, pg. 79.
10. For a biblically based understanding of guidance in our daily lives, see Garry Friesen, *Decision Making and the Will of God* (Multnomah Publishers); James C. Petty, *Step by Step* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers); and Jay E. Adams, *The Christian's Guide to Guidance* (Timeless Texts). These books are all available through Personal Freedom Outreach (Saint Louis).
11. *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*, op. cit., pg. 86.
12. *Ibid.*, pg. 80.
13. *Ibid.*, pg. 88.
14. Jule Hubbard, "Researchers Challenge Ministry Leaders," *Wilkes Journal Patriot*, Feb. 2, 1998, pg. 2.
15. Billy Bruce, "Jim Bakker Returns to Charlotte to Launch Ministry," *Charisma*, August 1999, pg. 17.
16. *The Harvest*, op. cit., pp. 9-10.
17. *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*, op. cit., pp. 242-243.
18. *Ibid.*, pg. 49, 52.
19. See web page: <http://www.morningstarministries.org/mspb.htm>.
20. Rick Joyner, "A Word for New Zealand," reprinted from the *MorningStar Journal* on the web site of the *New Zealand Revival Bulletin*, <http://crash.ihug.co.nz/~revival/word.html>.

21. *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*, op. cit., pg. 73.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141.
23. Thomas R. Edgar, *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregal Resources, 1996, pp. 80-81.
24. Joyner's "The Two Ministries" concept is found in several of his publications including *The Harvest* (pp. 207-209), *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century* (pp. 38-46) and on his ministry's web site.
25. See, for example, Rick Joyner, "The Two Ministries," *MorningStar Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1.
26. See "Revisiting Public Criticism," *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 2, 21-22.
27. Letter on file.
28. *The Harvest*, op. cit., pg. 26.
29. *Ibid.*, pg. 33.
30. See Hank Hanegraaff, *Counterfeit Revival*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1997, esp. pg. 128.
31. Rick Joyner, *Mobilizing the Army of God*. New Kensington, Pa.: Whitaker House, 1994, pp. 214-215.
32. *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*, op. cit., pg. 10.
33. *Ibid.*, pg. 9.
34. *Ibid.*, pg. 15.
35. Richard and Joan Ostling, *Mormon America*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1999, pg. 72.
36. *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*, op. cit., pp. 34-36.
37. Neil Richardson, "Rick Joyner: Christian Gnostic," *Vanguard*, September 1998, pg. 20.
38. *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*, op. cit., pp. 178-191. Rick Joyner, *The Final Quest*. New Kensington, Pa.: Whitaker House, 1996, pp. 22-25.
39. "Rick Joyner: Prophet of the New Christianity," op. cit., pg. 29.
40. *The Final Quest*, op. cit., pp. 17-21.
41. Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publisher, 1970, pg. 309.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Jim Goll, "Entering The New Millennium." Available from the *End Time Prophetic Vision* web site, <http://www.do-you-love-me.org/wsomers/enewmill.html>
44. *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*, op. cit., pg. 3.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Mobilizing the Army of God*, op. cit., pg. 211.
47. *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*, op. cit., pg. 5.
48. Rick Joyner, *There Were Two Trees in the Garden*. New Kensington, Pa.: Whitaker House, 1992, pg. 170.
49. *Mobilizing the Army of God*, op. cit., pp. 11-21.
50. Joseph R. Chambers, "The False Teachings Of Rick Joyner." Charlotte,

- N.C.: Paw Creek Ministries, pamphlet #373, no date, pg. 2.
51. *Mobilizing the Army of God*, op. cit., pg. 45.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 55.
53. *Ibid.*, pg. 146.
54. Kenneth Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies From the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966, pp. 116-117.
55. See, Jerry Vines, *The Believer's Guide to Hebrews*. Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux Brothers, 1993, pg. 91, and Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregal Publishers, 1975, pg. 1266.
56. See further John Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981, pp. 14-39.
57. *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*, op. cit., pg. 163, italics in original.
58. *Ibid.*, pg. 165.
59. *Ibid.*, pg. 166.
60. *There Were Two Trees in the Garden*, op. cit., pg. 65.
61. D.R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishing, 1988, pg. 21.
62. *Mobilizing the Army of God*, op. cit., pp. 154-155.
63. *Ibid.*, pg. 156, bold in original.
64. See further, J.D. Douglas, editor, *Twentieth Century Dictionary of Christian Biography*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1995, pp. 63-64.
65. *Bonhoeffer: Agent of Grace*, PBS Presentation, June 17, 2000, video on file.
66. *There Were Two Trees in the Garden*, op. cit., pg. 19.
67. David Becker, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer Rejected Classic Christology," *The Christian News*, June 5, 2000, pg. 7.
68. *Ibid.*
69. *There Were Two Trees in the Garden*, op. cit., pg. 30, ellipsis and bold in original.
70. Jay Adams, *From Forgiven to Forgiving*. Amityville, N.Y.: Calvary Press, 1994, pp. 28-29.
71. *There Were Two Trees in the Garden*, op. cit., pg. 54, italics in original.
72. *Ibid.*, pg. 59, bold in original.
73. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976, pg. 322.
74. *There Were Two Trees in the Garden*, op. cit., pg. 64, emphasis added.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*, pg. 177, italics in original.
77. See further, Norman Geisler, *Baker's Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1999, pp. 69-71.
78. *There Were Two Trees in the Garden*, op. cit., pg. 177.
79. "Rick Joyner: Prophet of the New Christianity," op. cit., pg. 30. 

Following a brief marriage, she divorced her husband, a Portuguese television journalist, in 1993 and moved with her 3-month-old daughter to her native Britain. The concept for Harry Potter had come to her a few years earlier. Back in Britain and struggling to get Harry Potter onto paper and into print, she solicited a grant from the Scottish Arts Council. They responded to her request with 8,000 pounds (more than \$11,000). It

“Muggles,” which Rowling uses in the Potter series.³ Stouffer published a book in the mid-1980s titled, *The Legend of Rah and Muggles*.

Seven books have been planned, one for each year that young Harry is at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Thus far, four have been released: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, and *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. The newest volume weighs in at an astounding 752 pages — quite a reading feat for children,

world. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis are often brought up as examples. But are Tolkien and Lewis the standard for discernment? Even so, Lewis did not endorse the occult. And if Tolkien did, does that make it okay? (When I was an astrologer, my witch clients and friends loved Tolkien, by the way). Yes, Lewis and Tolkien wrote fantasy novels that included magical elements, but the question for Christians should be, is the fantasy (in any story) centered on the occult, and what does God say about the occult?⁴

MORE ABOUT HARRY

Depicted as a skinny boy having knobby knees, Harry has a thin face, black hair, and bright green eyes. He wears round glasses that are held together with tape. He has an unusual lightning-bolt shaped scar on his forehead, the result of his encounter with the Dark Lord Voldemort at age one. His picture appears on the cover of each book.

Harry’s parents, James and Lily Potter, were killed by Voldemort when Harry was a year old. Harry inherited his magical abilities from his father who was a wizard. His mother, however, was muggle-born. A Muggle, in the Potter novels, is a term used to identify any person who does not possess magical powers or is an ordinary person and not a witch.

Harry is being raised by the family of his mother’s sister, the Dursleys. Uncle Vernon, Aunt Petunia, and a spoiled-brat Cousin Dudley are his only living relatives. He does have a godfather, Sirius, who has become his confidant. Because of his involvement in magic, which the Dursleys hate, “Harry was about as welcome in their house as dry rot.”⁵ To the Dursleys’ credit, they did provide a home or a room for him, but it is very obvious that they are more concerned about themselves than Harry.

Harry is an underage wizard who attends Hogwarts, a very special

Christians should take serious note not just because of the worldview presented in the books but because Rowling is compared to the likes of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien.

was an investment that would show remarkable dividends. According to business writer Paul Katzeff:

“...she believed she knew how to write, and she was determined to give it her all. Rowling settled into an apartment in Edinburgh, Scotland, near her sister Di. On winter days she fled her unheated flat. She’d walk until [her daughter] Jessica fell asleep in her pram and then rush[ed] them both into a warm cafe. While Jessica napped, she’d write on napkins from the cafe. In these two-hour snippets, she composed a novel that became the first one of the most successful children’s series ever.”²

Yet, not all are claiming that the books’ ideas are the sole product of the mind of Rowling. Nancy Stouffer of Camp Hill, Pa., asserts that she owns the rights to the term

the audience for which it is written. In all, the Potter series has been translated into 35 languages, according to *The New York Times*. Readers of all ages are already eagerly looking forward to the next installment.

These books are creatively written, easily read, and delightfully entertaining. The plot gradually unfolds, drawing the reader into the story, and builds to the climax.

Christians should take serious note not just because of the worldview presented in the books but because Rowling is compared to the likes of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien.

Former astrologer Marcia Montenegro suggests that the parallel needs closer scrutiny:

“One defense, or minimization of the sorcery in the Harry Potter books, is that the stories are just a normal part of a child’s fantasy

school. There he is learning about sorcery, developing magical abilities, and working his way through the levels of wizardry. Following his first year at Hogwarts, Harry is just counting the days until he can return. As Harry leaves for school, the story moves into the extraordinary world of magic and sorcery, where the excitement is and the climax occurs.

In the latest offering, Harry is now 14 years old and has just completed his fourth year at the school. He has learned much, used his wand successfully, and attempted many spells. Next year he will take his O.W.L. (Ordinary Wizarding Level) exam.

Uncle Vernon loves to explain Harry's long absence by telling everyone that Harry was at "St. Brutus's Secure Center for Incurable Criminal Boys," indicating something of his contempt for both Harry and Hogwarts. When the school year ends, Harry returns home to the Dursleys and back to the ordinary world.

The major conflict is between Harry and Voldemort, his archenemy. After the initial clash between the two, when Harry's parents were killed, Voldemort turns his wand on Harry and performs a curse that has killed many a wizard, but it did not work on Harry. The curse rebounds on Voldemort, greatly diminishing his power. Voldemort is regaining his power and the conflict is becoming more intense with each book. Voldemort is intent on destroying Harry.

Despite being bitter enemies, Harry and Voldemort are similar in several ways. They are both "half-bloods" who were orphaned and raised by Muggles. In addition, Harry and Voldemort are both Parselmouths; they have the ability to speak to snakes.⁶ But throughout, Harry is presented as a good wizard or sorcerer and Voldemort as the most powerful dark wizard. Witches and wizards fear Voldemort, and abstain from even mentioning his name. Instead, they refer to him as "You-know-who."

As those who have read any of the

Harry Potter books can attest, there is something about Harry that draws people to him. Perhaps it is that he is presented in some fashion as a geek who is misunderstood and bullied, or that he is an underdog who, with help from his friends and from magic and sorcery, is able to triumph over his situation. Whatever the reason, readers definitely consider Harry to be cool.

HOGWARTS SCHOOL OF WITCHCRAFT AND WIZARDRY

On his eleventh birthday, Harry is told, "yer a wizard." He also learns that he has been "accepted" to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, a school which "was founded over a thousand years ago — the precise date is uncertain — by the four greatest witches and wizards of the age. The four school Houses are named after them: Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, and Salazar Slytherin."⁷ A sorting hat is used to decide which of these houses an incoming student goes into. For Harry, the hat chose Gryffindor. When Harry arrives at Hogwarts, he is truly amazed that so many in the sorcery world know his name.

Hogwarts is a vocational institution of learning that trains junior and senior high school-age students to become sorcerers. It exists in the ordinary world, but it is magically camouflaged ("bewitched") so ordinary people are not aware of it. Perhaps it is best understood as a magical world-within-the-world. Hermione explains this concept by saying that Muggles do not see Hogwarts as it is. Instead, what they see is a "moldering old ruin with a sign over the entrance saying DANGER, DO NOT ENTER, UNSAFE."⁸

Then there is also the gigantic World Cup Stadium, with its immense gold walls surrounding the field. At times it is filled with 100,000 witches and wizards from all over the world who are there for the championship Quidditch games. It is also

best understood as a magical world-within-the-world. Instead of camouflage, like that used at Hogswart, the stadium is protected in a different way. Hermione explains that Muggles know nothing about the stadium or the games nor could they see it because it is protected by "Muggle Repelling Charms." "Every time Muggles have got anywhere near here all year, they've suddenly remembered urgent appointments and had to dash away again," Harry is told.⁹

The curriculum at Hogwarts specializes in aspects related to the occult. It includes such courses as the History of Magic, Divination, Spells, Charms, Care of Magical Creatures, and Defense Against Dark Arts. But Hogwarts is to be differentiated from other institutions of witchcraft and wizardry. It aligns itself on the side of good sorcery or white witchcraft, a benevolent kind of magic through which good ends can be achieved and evil spells undone. At Hogwarts, students are told not to use the dark arts or black magic. Rather, they are taught how to defend against it when it is used on them.

SOME OBSERVATIONS

First of all, behind all the interest in the Harry Potter series may lie a yearning in our age for something beyond this world, a fascination with the mysterious that our daily experience does not satisfy. Education in the everyday "Muggle" world seems to be so "anti" anything beyond the natural world that many may be realizing the insufficiency of such a worldview. They may have come to the conclusion that not everything is explainable in terms of matter and the natural world nor by reason.

These books may provide for many a welcomed alternative in their way of perceiving things to naturalism and humanism. Our prayers should be that those who begin perceiving something beyond the natural will not stop there but continue to the supernatural, where they can discover the mystery and majesty of God and experience the forgiveness of sins that

comes only through a personal relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ.

OCCULT PARADIGM

Second, from all reports, there seems to be a growing interest in the occult and witchcraft these days, particularly among the younger generation. The worldview expressed in these books is compatible with their interests and with the paradigm presented by the occult and witchcraft today. Witchcraft is not perceived as supernatural but as a super-science in which power exists that can be tapped into. This power is taken to be neutral and can be used for good or evil.

Students at Hogwarts understand this to be true. Power for wizards and witches is gained through inheritance and also through learning. Harry, whose father was a wizard, is learning to be a good wizard, using this power in a good way. Voldemort, on the other hand, whose mother was a witch, has gone over to the dark side. He uses power in a bad way, for evil purposes.¹⁰

As such, the worldview espoused in the Harry Potter series is at odds with the Christian worldview because it ignores the existence of an all-powerful God. He is the Creator and is sovereign over creation. He is also a moral God, having created man as a moral being and giving him the Bible by which he can know right from wrong. The Bible claims that the power itself in magic and sorcery is evil. Involvement in magic and sorcery are consistently forbidden.

Young Harry seems to make magic and occultism so benign, yet in Deuteronomy 18:9-14, practically all the types of magic prevalent at that time and presently in the Harry Potter books are forbidden. This would include divination, spells and charms, witchcraft and wizardry, and all forms of spiritism. Scripture forbids studying the movements of the planets to apply to one's life the findings. Consider God's admonition recorded by the prophet Isaiah:

"All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you. Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame. Here are no coals to warm anyone; here is no fire to sit by" (Isaiah 47:13-14).

And another warning from Scripture comes through the prophet Jeremiah:

"This is what the LORD says: 'Do not learn the ways of the nations or be terrified by signs in the sky, though the nations are terrified by them'" (Jeremiah 10:2).

Simply put, the occult begins with a rejection of God and then offers some poor substitutes, a variety of magical practices, in His place.

DANGEROUS SOURCES

Third, the author has considerable knowledge of the occult in order to bring factual and folklore elements from it together with fiction as she does so well in these books. Rowling uses ideas from folklore such as witches riding broomsticks, terms such as divination to gain extra-natural knowledge or knowledge about the future, and concepts such as scrying or crystallo-mancy to find lost objects, and she portrays them accurately in her books.

She also has knowledge of some of the famous occultists of the past. An example of this is her reference in her first book to Nicolas Flamel as the partner of Albus Dumbledore, the greatest headmaster of Hogwarts ever.¹¹ Dumbledore is fictional, but Flamel is not. Even if one considers the Stouffer lawsuit against Rowling frivolous, not every other thing in Harry Potter is from the imagination of Rowling. She has had to research or most certainly has been exposed to occultic writings and practices.

As the story develops, Harry and his friends research Flamel in the library. They discover that he was the only known maker of the Sorcerer's Stone. The Elixir of Life, which gives immortality, is associated with the Stone. Flamel, now 665 years old, appears to have gained immortality, but only as long as the Stone exists. When Dumbledore destroys the Stone, Flamel and his wife Perenelle die.¹²

Flamel actually was a 14th century alchemist. It is said that he was able to turn mercury into gold and that he did discover the Elixir of Life.¹³

GLARING DISSIMILARITIES

Fourth, at first glance, the thought that the author draws upon the legacy of fellow British writer, C.S. Lewis, and his popular children's books about the land of Narnia seems plausible as mentioned earlier. Like Lewis, Rowling has created a fantasy world involving young British children who encounter magical creatures. There are good characters and evil villains in both series. As Lewis wrote seven books in his series, so Rowling has planned for seven books in her series. But that is about as far as the Lewis-Rowling similarities go.

The Harry Potter series is simply not Christian allegory, and the fantasy world in it is very different from Narnia. In Narnia, Jesus is presented in the character of Aslan the great lion. He is the creator and sovereign ruler of the land. No comparable character exists in the Harry Potter books (even though some see Harry's mother as Christ-like in that she gave her life for her son, and a few have predicted that Harry may yet be "messianic"). Regarding power, in Narnia, good power comes from Aslan [Jesus] and is used in accordance with his will. Evil power is that which is seized or conjured up.

In the Harry Potter books, power simply exists and is used for good and for evil purposes. Apart from pragmatism, there appears to be no basis for good and evil in any absolute sense.

UNWELCOME MOTIFS

Finally, given the impressionable nature of so many young readers, there are some recurring themes in these books that are bothersome. One is the low view of "Muggles," those who do not use magic. They are portrayed negatively and considered to be ignorant. They rely on electricity and batteries, and on computers and radar, instead of magic. In contrast, sorcery is presented positively and exalted. By extension, could Christians committed to a biblical world view be seen as "Muggles" or at least seen negatively as uninformed and not with it?

Another is the focus on the use of magic to get back at someone or to overcome difficult challenges. A good example of the first would be the time when Harry caused every part of his Uncle Vernon's sister Marge's body to inflate. His comment is: "She deserves it."¹⁴ An example of the latter can be seen in *Goblet of Fire* when Harry employs his magical arts as he takes on the three tasks in the Triwizard Tournament.¹⁵

WHAT'S A CHRISTIAN TO DO?

Many Christians and Christian organizations have taken a strong stand against the Harry Potter series because of its occult worldview and content. Some flatly state that it is pagan and not Christian and should not be read. They fear that readers might realize the reality of sorcery and desire it, thereby using the books as a springboard into actual practice. They see these books as being a very real primer for the occult. Another concern is that the books may desensitize children to the occult.

Yet, others hail from the opposite end of the spectrum, asserting the works are just plain fiction and fantasy. As such, it is claimed, very little, if any, caution should be raised.

An alternative response might be to read one of the Potter books with a child to help him develop his ability to use the Bible to discern right from

wrong. As you read it together, explain to him how its worldview and specific content are contrary to Scripture. Then let him try to note what he can and explain it to you. Teaching discernment to any Christian, and especially to those in the younger generation, is definitely a goal worth pursuing.

Marcia Montenegro offers similar counsel:

"Harry Potter glorifies the occult. God condemns the occult. Should we take a book lightly that endorses what God has so

MarketWatch.com, July 6, 2000.

2. Paul Katzeff, "Children's Author J.K. Rowling - Determination Pushed Jobless Single Mom From Poverty To Best-Seller List," *Investor's Business Daily*, August 7, 2000, pg. A4.

3. Larry Neumeister, "'Potter' Case To Be Decided in NYC," *Yahoo! News*, August 15, 2000.

4. Marcia Montenegro, "Harry Potter, Sorcery And Fantasy," CANA (Christian Answers for the New Age) web site, http://cana.userworld.com/cana_harrypotter.html.

5. J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., Arthur A. Levine Books, 2000, pg. 19.

6. J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. New York: Scholastic,

An alternative response might be to read one of the Potter books with a child to help him develop his ability to use the Bible to discern right from wrong.

seriously forbidden? If your children are already reading these books, then use the books as a tool to teach them from God's word what He says about the occult. Teach them how to share this information gently and lovingly with their friends. It is essential that they be equipped to deal with the increasing acceptance of occultism in our culture."¹⁶

As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, so may we do today:

"Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22).

Endnotes:

1. Kristen Gerencher, "There's something about Harry - Retailers race to be first to market with instant bestseller," *CBS*

Inc., Arthur A. Levine Books, 1999, pg. 317.

7. *Ibid.*, pg. 150.

8. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, op. cit., pg. 166.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

10. J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., Arthur A. Levine Books, 1998, pg. 54. Also see *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, op. cit., pg. 646.


11. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, op. cit., pp. 102-103, 219.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220, 297.

13. See further, Jacques Sadoul, *Alchemists and Gold*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1970, pg. 243, cited by Montenegro in "Harry Potter, Sorcery And Fantasy," op. cit.

14. J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., Arthur A. Levine Books, 1999, pp. 29-30.

15. See *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, op. cit., chapters 20, 26, 31.

16. "Harry Potter, Sorcery And Fantasy," op. cit. 

Another advertisement promotes a “campmeeting” with Bob Shattles, which claims that “Gold Dust comes upon him when he preaches.”

It’s not just the advertising in *Charisma* that demonstrates a lack of accountability. Articles in the anniversary edition repeatedly gloss over facts, exclude information that would undermine their philosophy and present half-truths. In a piece on John Wimber, details of the late “Power Evangelism” advocate’s ongoing struggles with cancer, strokes and heart disease are absent. Wimber taught a “signs and wonders” Christianity, but failed to achieve in his own life what he taught. One wouldn’t know it from reading the *Charisma* piece.

Another story examined the disgraced ministry of televangelist Robert Tilton through the eyes of his ex-wife, Marte. A photograph with the article contains a caption that says, “Tilton was often criticized in the 1980s for his prosperity message.”

Tilton’s messages went far beyond a simple “prosperity message” to shameless financial exploitation of his audience. Tilton frequently used spiritual intimidation as he demanded money from his viewers.

“[You say,] ‘Well, I want to give a hundred’ or ‘I want to give two hundred and fifty,’ he would often say. ‘Nope. Nope. Let me tell you something, if you don’t have faith to make a vow of faith to God for a thousand dollars and believe that He’s going to show you where to get the seed to pay on it or pay it the best you can, it won’t work.’”

In addition, the focus of the criticism that brought about his ruin was not his “prosperity” theology but his illegal and unethical fund-raising activities — accusations that Marte denies in the article. Repentance from a lavish lifestyle, lawsuits, and divorces are all missing from the magazine’s report.

The periodical also devoted three pages in its anniversary issue to Hinn, the faith healer who twice was featured on the cover. *Charisma* offered readers a sampling of Hinn’s prophecies:

Hinn predicts that a group of Israeli rabbis will see a vision of Jesus so magnificent that they will preach the gospel in their synagogues; within two years there will be a new pope; a young Egyptian male converted from Islam will preach the gospel so well that hundreds of thousands of Muslims will accept Christ.

Yet, by virtue of a series of prophecies Hinn made on Dec. 31, 1989, he already had proved himself a false prophet by *Charisma’s* own standards in Strang’s March 1999 editorial, “The Vital Gift of Prophecy.”

Editor J. Lee Grady, in his “First Word” editorial, concedes that in the 1980s the Charismatic movement had problems. He writes: “We sought the Holy Spirit’s touch so we could claim *our* anointing and *our* divine prosperity. Some evangelists even taught us to ‘write *our*

own tickets with God’ by demanding that He fulfill all our materialistic desires. What began as sincere Christian faith became infected with nauseating selfishness. At that point, I believe the Lord withdrew His blessing and moved on.”

However, one reading *Charisma* in the 1980s never would have suspected that “the Lord withdrew His blessing and moved on.” It has always been business as usual in its articles and advertisements, which foster a spiritual elitism of “anointed” men and women while glossing over sin and ignoring false doctrine and false prophecy.

Even today, as Grady denounces as “nauseating selfishness” the idea that we can “write our own tickets with God,” *Charisma* profiles and honors Kenneth Hagin Sr., the evangelist who taught his followers “how to write your own ticket with God,” without ever noting the inconsistency.

Hagin contended that the basis of his “You can have what you say” theology came by direct revelation from Jesus Christ. Hagin told his readers, “Then the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to me. I saw him as clearly as I would see you” as Jesus gave him the four points of how to write your own ticket with God. The *Charisma* tribute passes over this and other of Hagin’s unorthodox theology claiming, “Though he has his share of critics — including some who have called him a heretic — Hagin ignores them and says he would not change a thing about what he has taught through the years.”

Regrettably, for most of its 25 years, the *Charisma* legacy — like that of its electronic counterpart, Trinity Broadcasting Network — has been one of an unabashed advancement of men and women who undermine the authority and sufficiency of God’s Word, quash scriptural discernment, distort proper biblical understanding for their own gain, and bring reproach upon the Gospel with undisciplined lives and heretical theologies.

—MKG

NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

Lucia de Jesus dos Santos, now 93, who is the last of the Fatima visionaries living. The revelation was said to state, “the ‘bishop clothed in white’ ... makes his way with great effort toward the cross amid the corpses of those who were martyred (bishops, priests, men and women religious, and many lay persons), he too falls to the ground, apparently dead, under a burst of gunfire.”

Despite the Nostradamus-like style of the prophecy, writer Frank Morriss, in the Catholic publication *Wanderer*, charged that “these revelations of Fatima so guaranteed by prophecy specifically fulfilled should surely be something for a needed reflection by the large portion of Christianity that withdrew from the Catholic tradition. Does not Protestantism need to wonder

whether it has denied a source of religious understanding by its virtual abandonment of Mary?"

Sodano added: "After the assassination attempt of May 13, 1981, it appeared evident to His Holiness that it was 'a motherly hand which guided the bullet's path,' enabling the 'dying Pope' to halt 'at the threshold of death.'" Since the time of the assassination attempt, John Paul II had repeatedly given credit to "Our Lady of Fatima" for saving his life. The pontiff's would-be, now penitent, assassin has also indicated a devotion to Mary. Upon his soon release from his Italian prison, his immediate plans include travel to Fatima to express thanks to the Virgin Mary for her intervention of his assassination plot against the pope.

The date May 13 is significant to the Fatima revelations. In addition to being the date of the assassination attempt against the pope, it was the day in 1917 which the three children received their first of six professed visions of the Virgin Mary. It now also marks the day in which the remaining secret was revealed.

The disclosure of this last vision was in conjunction with the pontiff's visit to Fatima. His recent trip to Portugal was to beatify Francisco Marto and his younger sister Jacinta, the two deceased Fatima visionaries. In Catholicism, beatification is the last formal act prior to being "canonized" or declared to be a "Saint." It can only be conferred after a person's death. According to the Associated Press report, "The Vatican said the two are the first children who did not die as martyrs to be so honored." The children both died as a result of the "Spanish influenza" epidemic within a few years of their purported Marian visions. Francisco died in 1919 at age 10, Jacinta the following year at age 9.

The current pope has expressed an ongoing devotion to Mary. Sodano said in his prepared speech that the pontiff "wishes his pilgrimage [to Fatima] to be a renewed gesture of gratitude to our Lady for her protection during these years of his papacy." He concluded his remarks with, "Let us thank Our Lady of Fatima for her protection. To her maternal intercession let us entrust the Church of the Third Millennium."

It was in October 1930 when the Catholic church sanctioned and supported the apparitions of Fatima, saying they were worthy of belief and endorsed devotion to "Our Lady of Fatima."

—MKG

NO "FREE PARKING" FOR JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

A Jehovah's Witness who questioned certain financial practices by the Watchtower at its conventions in Tacoma, Wash., has been disfellowshipped from the sect.

Bruce Baker, 51, was a lifelong Jehovah's Witness and for several years served on the local Watchtower Convention Committee. The Tacoma WCC oversees various functions of Watchtower conventions, which are held at the Tacoma Dome during the summer.

Baker's dilemma began in January when he learned from a fellow member of the committee that the Watchtower's contract with the Tacoma Dome explicitly prohibits fees from being charged for parking. Baker told the *Tacoma Reporter* that "Jehovah's Witnesses are frequently told that to not pay the parking 'contribution' would be a sin." According to the newspaper's associate editor, Bryan Winchell, "With over 10,000 attendees at the three-day convention, the Watchtower Society collects over \$120,000 from the parking 'donations' of one convention."

The New York-based headquarters of the sect apparently sanctioned the "parking contribution." A February letter to the Tacoma WCC stated, "Parking Department attendants should be on hand in full force when the lots open each morning. Otherwise delegates [Jehovah's Witnesses] park and do not contribute, which is unfair to those who come later and make a contribution."

Baker also suggested that Watchtower leadership is not beyond strong-arm tactics to keep its current policy enforced. In a letter to various city officials, he stated that the New York headquarters has "strongly intimated that if the Dome tries to flex with pricing at all they will pull out and go somewhere else."

Baker, in his crisis of conscience, also has begun to question the Watchtower Society's claim of being the only true channel of communication to God. His excommunication has led to being shunned by his oldest daughter and son-in-law and loss of contact with his 19-month-old granddaughter. Other friends who are still active Jehovah's Witnesses also have ostracized him.

—MKG

HINN'S CHURCH ANNOUNCES MERGER

Final closure was brought to Benny Hinn's career as the pastor of the World Outreach Church when it was announced that Clint Brown and his Faith World Church would merge with Hinn's former church.

According to a report in the August issue of *Charisma* magazine, "Hinn hammered out a plan for Brown to purchase WOC's church facilities and to relocate Brown's 1,300-member Faith World to the more centrally located WOC campus north of downtown Orlando." Brown and Faith World receive WOC's facilities and 30 acres of

property and will assume its \$5.7 million debt. Both Hinn and Brown say they "loathe" the suggestion that Hinn "sold" his congregation.

Brown and his Faith World Church already had bought 21 acres of land and were within a week of laying a foundation for a new facility when the call came from Hinn soliciting the merger. Brown determined Hinn's call to be "one from the Lord" and altered the church's plans from building to merging. Brown moved to Florida and founded Faith World in 1993 after being the worship leader for Rod Parsley's World Harvest Church in Columbus, Ohio, for six years.

Hinn unveiled plans and broke ground for the Orlando Christian Center in 1983. It later became known as the World Outreach Center, then World Outreach Church. During the late 1990s, he began several major relocations. He first moved his television production and then his family to Southern California. Then last year, he said God told him to move his ministry's operations to the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

—MKG

TBN MOVIE DRAWS COPYRIGHT SUIT

A suit filed in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles alleges that parts of Trinity Broadcasting Network's movie *The Omega Code* were plagiarized. Sylvia Fleener, a West Virginia minister, charges that Paul and Jan Crouch "willfully copied" sections of her novel, *The Omega Syndrome* which she wrote in 1989 and copyrighted in 1996.

The suit claims Fleener financially supported TBN for a number of years. She gave a copy of her book to the Southern California-based television ministry by way of "mutual friends and associates" prior to the production of the film according to a report in *The Orange County (Calif.) Register*. Fleener's work is said to have "many similarities" in "story, plot, characters and themes" to the TBN movie. She is seeking \$40 million in damages.

Daniel Quisenberry, attorney for Fleener, told the newspaper that his client "was told 3½ years ago that she would live only two years. She feels that she has been preserved to bring the matter forward." TBN's attorney, Colby May, responded that "Challenging the independent development of 'The Omega Code' is flat wrong." He added, "Be clear that 'The Omega Code' was an original work which Trinity [Broadcasting Network] had separately commissioned."

TBN's motion picture was released to theaters across the country in October 1999 and earned a respectable share of attendance ratings for the fall season. Earlier this year, it moved to the home video market where it

received similar acceptance and profitability. The film cost \$7 million to produce. A sequel, *The Omega Code II* is currently in production.

—MKG

VINEYARD GETS NEW LEADER

The man who assumed the leadership of the Association of Vineyard Churches following the death of "signs and wonders" guru John Wimber, has resigned. Todd Hunter announced his resignation via e-mail to fellow Vineyard pastors on May 3. He held the office of national director and board president since January 1998. Wimber, the movement's initial leader since 1979, died in November 1997.

During Wimber's tenure, Hunter was an advocate of the manifestations displayed at celebrated Vineyard churches, including those at the former Airport Vineyard in Toronto, pastored by John Arnott. During a 1994 worship service held at the Mission Viejo, Calif., Vineyard church, Hunter proclaimed among the unrestrained shrieks and wild pandemonium, "This is normal Christianity."

According to a news item in *Charisma* magazine, "Though Hunter is relinquishing his leadership duties, he is not leaving the Vineyard movement." The report also indicated that the Vineyard had grown under Hunter's leadership, planting new churches and concentrating upon ministry to younger people. Kevin Springer, Wimber's coauthor, said, "Todd did a great job of taking us to the next step."

Berten Waggoner, a former Assembly of God minister, was chosen by the Vineyard's National Board to succeed Hunter. Waggoner has been a pastor in the Vineyard movement since 1989 and said he does not want the appointment to be permanent.

—MKG

HUBBARD-BASED FILM BOMBS

Battlefield Earth, a major motion picture based on the science-fiction novel of the same name by Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard, was pummeled with scathing reviews shortly after its release in May and staggered at the box office. Film critic Roger Ebert said the movie was "like taking a bus trip with someone who has needed a bath for a long time. It's not merely bad; it's unpleasant in a hostile way."

The \$80 million film was spearheaded by actor John Travolta, who used his influence in Hollywood to get the

movie made. "I can get things done that a studio might not normally do," Travolta told the *New York Daily News*.

Travolta has long professed Scientology and has reached its highest rank: "Operating Thetan." People of such rank purportedly can control "matter, energy, space, time, form and life," but apparently not film reviews.

Initial fears that the film would be a recruiting tool for the Church of Scientology proved exaggerated. The movie contains traces of Scientology beliefs, but its lackluster showing mitigated even that small opportunity for influence.

—MKG

NO MURDER CONVICTION IN O'HAIR CASE

Without the bodies of notorious atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair or her son or granddaughter, prosecutors were unable to get the kidnapping and murder convictions they had sought. Following four days of deliberation, a jury acquitted Gary Karr on June 2 of conspiracy to kidnap, but found him guilty on four counts of extorting money from the atheist leader and her organization's bank accounts. He was sentenced Aug. 4.

O'Hair, her son, Jon Garth Murray, and granddaughter, Robin Murray O'Hair, all vanished in August 1995.

Shortly after their disappearance, rumors began to circulate. Some believed the threesome had been murdered. Others suggested they had depleted the organization's bank accounts themselves and fled the country.

Prosecutors claimed O'Hair and her family members were kidnapped and she was made to transfer over a half-million dollars of organization funds to a coin dealer who in turn converted it to gold coins. Cash withdrawals on the family's credit cards also showed up dating just before the disappearance.

During the two-week trial, Federal Bureau of Investigation agents gave evidence that linked Karr to the alleged murders. Additionally, prosecutors presented fellow inmates of Karr who testified that he had boasted about his involvement in the murders. During the investigation, Karr was in a Detroit prison and is said to have confessed to participating in the murders. He supposedly drew a map to show authorities where to locate the bodies. Karr's lawyer disputed the charge his client had implicated himself. Several searches by authorities failed to locate the bodies, which they claim may have washed away or been eaten by wild animals.

Karr's defense included witnesses who said they saw the O'Hair family members alive after the disappearance and alleged murders. Officials believe Karr worked together with David Waters and two others. Waters, who had served time in prison with Karr, was a former office manager for O'Hair and her atheist group.

—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

FIND IT FAST IN THE BIBLE

by Ron Rhodes

Harvest House Publishers, 303 pages, \$11.99

Apologist Ron Rhodes' latest book is a Bible reference tool with more than 8,000 Scripture passage addresses speaking to more than 1,000 subjects. It is a great resource to retrieve biblical information and quotations on a wide variety of subject matter. Because of the breadth of topics Rhodes includes, his volume is a worthier effort than other similar works.

The entries are listed alphabetically and each contains a brief description of the Scripture reference cited. This framework allows for a swift (hence the book's title) and more effective retrieval of biblical passages being searched on a particular item. Many entries contain association to other corresponding topics (for example, under "Infanticide" the reader is also told to "See Abortion"). From "Anger" to "Zeal" or from "Athletics" to the "Zodiac," this work's range of subjects is prolific.

The volume will benefit every Christian. Its worth includes not only great apologetic value but will aid one's own personal study of the Scriptures and in the counseling of others with the Word.

—MKG

THE COMING LAST DAYS TEMPLE

by Randall Price

Harvest House Publishers, 732 pages, \$14.99

A book of this caliber is indeed rare. I do not think I have ever seen this much information for so little a cost — even by yesterday's standards. While not agreeing with everything in the book, the overall value and the massive amount of information make that a minor issue.

Randall Price's book is everything you ever wanted to know about the Temple and Temple Mount, as well as things you never even thought of asking. He brings his archaeological background and his times spent in Israel to this study. He presents a sweeping and comprehensive treatment of the Jewish Temple, past, present and future.

The complex issue of Islam's ownership of the Temple Mount is discussed as well as the history of Muslim commitment to the site. The Temple Mount's status as a political tinderbox is thoroughly analyzed. His chapters on "The Hunt for the Holy Heifer" and "Preparing a Priesthood" are insights into the Orthodox Jewish obsession with building a Temple and their present-day dilemmas and roadblocks. The story of the foundation stone for a rebuilt temple is fascinating. The preparations of harps and vessels are elaborated upon.

Though the book is decidedly dispensational and pretribulation, the history of the Temple and Temple area and the information on the current climate with modern-day Jewish organizations pushing to rebuild will be an education for all prophetic persuasions. The recent re-emergence of the right wing in Israel gives this book more timeliness and immediacy than ever.

The book includes many charts and illustrations as well as a 23-page chronology of the Temple's history from 2,000 B.C. to a projected millennial Temple. Price provides 60 pages of endnotes and a "Directory of Temple Organizations," complete with phone numbers and e-mail addresses. There is a 22-page listing of resources for further Temple study along with a subject index, a Scripture index and a Jewish text index. This book is a mini-dictionary and encyclopedia of Temple studies. These sections alone are worth the price of the book.

This reviewer owns a number of books on the Temple Mount written from various persuasions but none has the scope and range of this new volume. It is a treasure showing enormous time and research.

Seldom do books bring together biblical understanding and archaeological savvy, along with a balanced, well-documented understanding of current events, without being sensationalistic. Price does well as he weaves past history with current political tensions in Israel.

If this future Temple — the Jewish right says not "if" but "when" — is going to be built for the evil Antichrist, why would anyone be interested in helping or even want to see it built? Are the Christian groups involved in this really off the mark? Price has some interesting answers to this and other thorny questions that may surprise the readers.

Regardless of your prophetic persuasion, this book is a worthwhile read.

—GRF

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.