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EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

Tommy Tenney and "The God Chasers" Aren't They Really Just Chasing After the Wind?

by G. Richard Fisher

"I'm afraid that we have satiated our hunger for Him by reading old love letters from Him to the churches in the Epistles of the New Testament," writes Tommy Tenney in the opening pages of his best-seller, *The God Chasers*.¹

Some books catch on. Marketing and promotion, a catchy title, sensational claims, overblown promises and a slick cover can all contribute to success. For example, *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*, Benny Hinn's first book for Thomas Nelson Publishers, was a phenomenal best-seller. Hinn has not been able to repeat the success with any of his subsequent volumes.

However, a decade later, Tommy Tenney is having success of his own. His books, including *The God Chasers*, *The God Catchers*, *God's Dream Team*, *God's Favorite House* and others have captured the Charismatic population. Appearances at the Brownsville Revival and on the cover of *Charisma* magazine have added to his exposure. He has become a very marketable commodity. Because of his success, Tenney has hired 15 people to assist him and receives up to 500 invitations a month to speak.²



Tenney doesn't stop with books, either. One can buy a God Chaser hat (\$17.99), a God Chaser shirt (from

\$16.99 to \$18.99) and even a God Chaser license plate holder (\$6.99). He's even got the younger generation covered. For \$99.99, there's *The Young God Chasers*, a 13-week curriculum containing stories, lessons and songs for children ages 5-11. For teenagers there is *Extreme God Chasers*.

Tenney was brought up in a white clapboard house at 114 Slack Street in West Monroe, La.³ He does not claim any formal higher education. His biographical sketch says:

"The youngest voice of three generations of ministry, Tommy was born in 1956 and began preaching at age 16. He has spent almost 10 years pastoring and more than 17 years in mobile ministry, traveling to more than 30 nations and most states. Tommy is a well-known revivalist and has been used to both

(continues on page 11)

Inside this Issue:

IT JUST DOESN'T ADD UP.....	PAGE 2
O'HAIR MYSTERY FINALLY SOLVED	PAGE 3
THE MASONIC LODGE: COMPATIBLE WITH CHRISTIANITY?	PAGE 4

Editorials

IT JUST DOESN'T ADD UP

The leadership of Jehovah's Witnesses has long been obsessed with numbers. To them, like most other religious people, hefty numbers are a sign of God's approval — a divine stamp of approval.

The late Bill Cetnar, who was a PFO director, told of an incident that occurred in the 1950s while he was a Jehovah's Witness at Bethel, the organization's headquarters in Brooklyn. Cetnar told of how he, along with a couple others from the Bethel staff, were in an automobile with Watchtower president Nathan H. Knorr. Knorr was hushing Cetnar and the other occupants as he tried to find the broadcast of Billy Graham on the car's radio. Graham was in New York for a crusade at Yankee Stadium.

Why was Knorr frantically trying to locate Graham on the car radio? Was it to find out what message was being proclaimed by one of the more popular vanguards of "Babylon the Great?" No, nothing that profound. Knorr, Cetnar said, was trying to find out how many were attending Graham's meeting. It seems Knorr was consumed with the ambition to address a larger audience when he spoke at Yankee Stadium, where the Watchtower would host one of its international conventions.

Each year, the Jehovah's Witnesses release statistics on their active membership and the number of hours their members spend in "field service." Field service for a

Jehovah's Witnesses is "Door-to-door literature distribution, return visits, home Bible studies, and other activity reportable to the organization" (see *Jehovah-Talk* by David Reed, pg. 72).

The January 1, 2001, issue of *The Watchtower* contains four pages detailing the "2000 Service Year Report Of Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide" (pp. 18-21). The numbers are, as they are every year, staggering.

In the United States alone, it was reported that 945,000 Jehovah's Witnesses spent more than 181 million hours in field service. Worldwide, more than 6 million Jehovah's Witnesses spent nearly 1.2 billion hours in the Society's field service. Yet, in all of this, there are some figures that are even more remarkable — but go unreported (perhaps even hidden) by the Watchtower organization. Those are the statistics that would show how long it takes to recruit one new baptized Jehovah's Witness.

In the United States last year, the Watchtower reported 30,290 baptisms. Take that number and divide it into the number of hours of field service. The result is 5,991 hours of field service per convert. Based on that figure, it would take a Jehovah's Witness who spent 40 hours per week in field service 150 weeks — nearly three years — to make one baptized convert.

Worldwide, the figures are better, but still astounding. The Watchtower reported 288,907 baptisms worldwide. This number divided into the nearly 1.2 billion hours of
(continues on page 22)

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News Updates

O'HAIR MYSTERY FINALLY SOLVED

The concluding chapter in the five-year search for missing atheist leader, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, and two relatives has been written. In late January, human skulls and other bones, including parts of a prosthetic hip, were dug up by federal investigators. The remains were found buried in a shallow grave on a 5,000-acre ranch in Camp Wood, Texas, 100 miles west of San Antonio.

In September 1995, O'Hair, her son Jon Garth Murray and her adopted granddaughter Robin Murray O'Hair all mysteriously disappeared. For years speculation and rumors circulated as to their whereabouts. The national media, including "Nightline" and "America's Most Wanted," profiled the threesome's disappearance.

The search of the ranch in January marked authorities' fourth attempt to find the bodies since April 1999. The investigators' success in their latest effort resulted from a special plea bargain with the man they believed was the catalyst behind the plot to "kidnap, extort and ultimately murder" the O'Hair family. David Roland Waters, a former office manager for O'Hair's atheist organization, agreed to lead authorities to the remains in exchange for a reduced prison term. A federal judge sealed the exact details of his plea bargain.

According to a report in the *Austin American-Statesman*, "Investigators believed that Waters, the family's former office manager, kidnapped the three and held them hostage in a San Antonio hotel. Aided by two friends, Gary Paul Karr and Danny Fry, Waters extorted \$600,000 from the family, investigators say. The three victims were then killed, dismembered in a North Austin storage unit and buried on the Camp Wood ranch, investigators say."

Even prior to sending the remains to Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos for positive identification, authorities believed the bones were the O'Hair family. O'Hair had undergone hip replacement surgery in 1993, two years before she disappeared.

—MKG

THE GOLDEN ARTIST

Gold dust is everywhere. You can find it in lip gloss, hand sanitizer, body lotions and all over Charismatic sculptor Max Greiner Jr. During the creation of his latest sculpture, *The Coming King*, a life-size, 18-foot bronze statue of Jesus on a white horse, the artist claimed gold-colored dust appeared. According to a news item in the February issue of *Charisma*, "Golden particles also

covered his skin and clothing. He stored the shirt, shoes and socks he was wearing to prove the incident occurred."

The magazine acknowledged Greiner "has been embroiled in controversy" over the claim. A sample of the purported "gold" was sent to Texas A&M University for testing. The results showed the substance was not gold, but appeared to be "plastic with a thin metal coating similar to glitter." Other specimens were "a nickel metal flake" and "a weathered flake of the mineral mica." *Charisma* further reported that Greiner's "charismatic church had already asked him to leave after he spoke about gold dust appearing in his studio earlier that year."

Greiner is undaunted by the criticism. "We're leading hundreds of people to Christ with it. ... God has anointed it and is using it to lead people to [salvation] is pretty unique," he told *Charisma* magazine.

Greiner is no stranger to controversy and boastful claims. The Texas-based sculptor asserts that in 1986, God audibly spoke to him and told him to create *The Divine Servant*, a sculpture of Jesus washing Peter's feet. Greiner said he hoped that his statue would "introduce Christians and non-Christians alike to a divine Servant — the God who stripped Himself of His own deity." There is a copy of the statue at Dallas Theological Seminary. Greiner has further claimed that people have been healed because of the sculpture.

Greiner's latest work was commissioned by Paul Crouch of the Trinity Broadcasting Network. It will be placed outside TBN's headquarters in Southern California.

—MKG

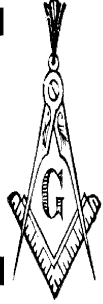
THE RIVER DIVIDES

The man labeled as the resident theologian of the Brownsville (Assembly of God) Revival has been ousted as the president of its Brownsville Revival School of Ministry. Dr. Michael L. Brown was voted out Dec. 17, 2000, by the school's board after a clash over an "acceptable means of accountability." *Charisma News Service* claimed a "major rift has emerged at the heart of the Brownsville revival" in its report of the dispute.

According to the news service, the Assemblies of God denomination made a considerable loan to the school for the acquisition of its current campus. The loan was solicited by the Rev. John Kilpatrick, pastor of the Pensacola-based church. In return, denomination leaders

(continues on page 23)

THE MASONIC LODGE:



Is It Compatible with Christianity?

by Steven Tsoukalas

Allen E. Roberts, in his *The Craft and Its Symbols*, writes, "You have entered a new world. Symbolically and spiritually you have been reborn. This started the moment you were prepared to become a Freemason."¹

In his 1952 address to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Grand Master Thomas S. Roy set the stage for modern Masonic apologetics. He stated:

"We have none of the marks of a religion. We have no creed, and no confession of faith in a doctrinal statement. We have no theology. We have no ritual of worship. We have no symbols that are religious in the sense of the symbols found in church and synagogue. Our symbols are related to the development of the character of the relationship of man to man. They are working tools to be used in the building of a life. Our purpose is not that of a religion. We are not primarily interested in the redemption of man."²

Many Masons and non-Masons presume that Freemasonry (also known as the Masonic Lodge, the Lodge, Masonry, and the Craft) is simply a fraternal order. Consequently they view Masonry as posing no threat to Christian doctrine. In a sense, Freemasonry is one of the best-kept secrets in town.

Despite Masonic claims to the contrary, Freemasonry is not compatible

with Christianity. Freemasonry *has* a theology, *is* interested in the relationship of man with *God*, and *is* interested in the redemption of man.

THE STRUCTURE OF FREEMASONRY

Freemasonry began in 1717 with the formation of the Grand Lodge in England and slowly developed into a specific organizational structure. It consists of Blue Lodge Masonry³ (the first three foundational degrees: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master), Scottish Rite and York Rite Masonry (for those who have attained the Master Mason degree), and the Shrine (or Shriners, for many years limited to those who have completed the Scottish or York Rites.⁴) I shall concentrate only on the Blue Lodge degrees, for they are foundational and every Mason wishing to proceed to the other Rites must complete Blue Lodge. In other words, every man, in order to be called a Mason, must first enter Blue Lodge.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

How one goes about the study of Freemasonry and *how* one forms an approach to reach Masons with the truth is vitally important. As Christians, we not only want to do our homework, but also be able to present our findings to Masons in an impeccable way. In short, we want to make

our approach to Masons as airtight as possible.

The sources herein used for documenting Masonic teaching are Blue Lodge rituals and monitors from various Grand Lodges. Rituals (sometimes called "ciphers") contain ritual initiation procedures, secret handgrips and obligations, prayers and charges, and teachings pertaining to each degree of initiation. Many portions of the rituals are written in secret code, though portions of the teachings of the degrees often are spelled out. Monitors (sometimes called textbooks or manuals) are not coded (thus lacking the secret handgrips and obligations), but contain the ritual's symbolic lessons and lectures, prayers and charges of each degree, ceremonies of dedication and installation of Lodge officers, burial services, etc.

There is a reason for using rituals and monitors. The highest authorities in Freemasonry are individual Grand Lodges for each state, province, or geographic area. For example, the highest authority for Masons in Missouri is the Grand Lodge of Missouri; for Masons in Florida, the Grand Lodge of Florida, and so on. In turn, the highest authorities produce rituals and monitors for Masons within their jurisdictions.⁵

Therefore, there are no better sources from which to draw than Masonic rituals and monitors from various Grand Lodges. Indeed, here we stand on the safest ground pos-

sible, and in this sense the rituals and monitors are the “canon” of the Craft. Ritual is the heart of Freemasonry. Take it away and there is no Freemasonry. C. Fred Kleinknecht, Sovereign Grand Commander of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, Southern Masonic Jurisdiction, agrees: “The performance of the Ritual, the conferring of Degrees, is the only real business of Masonry. All the rest — the charities, the educational programs, the fun and fellowship — are *outgrowths* of the lessons taught in those Rituals.”⁶

At this point the reader might assume that there would be great diversity of teaching among Grand Lodges. Such is not the case. We can expect a unified body of teaching in Blue Lodge rituals and monitors even though individual Grand Lodges produce them. Though they differ minutely in wording, in essence there is great uniformity. Thus we can safely say that although the Grand Lodges are individual authorities, Freemasonry as a worldwide institution has great uniformity in its teachings.

It now remains to address how one is to use rituals and monitors in conjunction with the conclusions of Masonic scholars who write books on Freemasonry. In the past, as well as in the present, the Christian apologetic for the most part began with the quoting of various Masonic authors’ works, then ended with refutation based on the Bible. Though the latter must always remain, the former should change. The Christian should start with Masonic rituals and monitors, then proceed to biblical refutation.⁷ The educated opinions of Masonic scholars, then, should be cited to buttress conclusions and the teachings of ritual. There is a reason for this. All too often, Masons, when confronted with conclusions of certain of their brethren who are vastly more learned in Craft studies than they, push these conclusions away by stating, “that’s his opinion.” By directly citing Masonic ritual, the Mason must either face the official citation head on or ignore the obvious.

Lastly, two things should be noted. First, if a Mason does not claim to be

a Christian, use the time with him by sharing the Gospel. Generally speaking, a non-Christian will not be concerned with how the Bible contradicts Freemasonry. If, however, a Mason professes Christ, then compare the teachings of Freemasonry with the Bible. And second, focus the discussion on the institution of Freemasonry rather than the individual. In other words, since Masons who profess Christianity often read Christian theology into the teachings of the Craft, we need to propose to them that the institution is not doing this. Rather, the institution is teaching about God and salvation to every Mason regardless of his personal religious persuasion.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Before we begin a Christian theological critique of the Masonic Lodge, let us consider some fundamental principles that are crucial to the Christian approach. First, in order to be made a Mason, a man must profess belief in a Supreme Being.⁸ Second, to the institution of Freemasonry, it does not matter what god it is. It can be Krishna, Allah, Jesus, Brahman, Vishnu, Jehovah, the Great First Cause, etc.⁹ Third, men who do not believe in the biblical Christ do not have a relationship with the true and living God and are not going to heaven unless they place their trust in the biblical Christ (see John 8:24¹⁰ and John 14:6). Fourth (and here is the crux of the matter), even in light of the above, the Masonic Lodge gives to its initiates an all-encompassing Masonic Deity and a plan of salvation. Let’s move now to the god of Freemasonry.

THE GOD OF THE LODGE

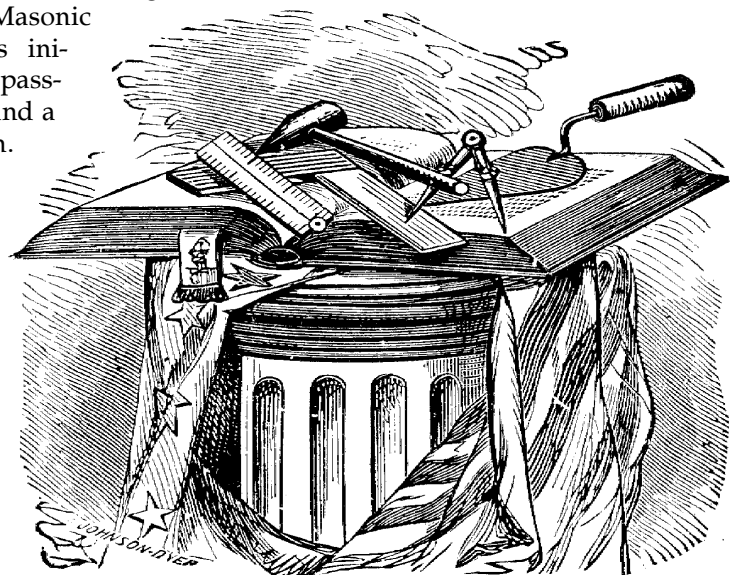
The issue of the Masonic god obviously is fundamental to our discussion. Freemasonry has a theology. The

word “theology” means “a word about God.”¹¹ Thus, theology is the discipline of making statements about God.

Though Freemasonry allows its initiates their individual deities (as a prerequisite to admittance), corporately or institutionally Masonry has a “Deity” within which all these individual deities may be subsumed — The Great Architect of the Universe (GAOTU). In Masonic ritual, GAOTU is described and addressed as one Mason leads all the rest in prayer to this one deity, and all the Masons assembled find their individual deities within GAOTU. Note the following prayer in the opening of the Master Mason degree (also note that this is just one example of several prayers offered to GAOTU in the ritual of Freemasonry):

“Most Holy and Glorious Lord God! The Great Architect of the Universe, the giver of all good gifts and graces. ... In Thy name we assemble. ... And we beseech thee, O Lord God, to bless our present assembling, and to illuminate our minds, that we may walk in the light of thy countenance; and when the trials of our probationary state are over, be admitted into THE TEMPLE not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”¹²

Thus, when Christians, Hindus, Jews, and Unitarians are gathered in



the Masonic Lodge for ritual, they all combine to pray to GAOTU. Because of this practice in ritual, Masonic authors are able to state:

"In his private devotions a man may petition God or Jehovah, Allah or Buddha, Mohammed or Jesus; he may call upon the God of Israel or the Great First Cause. In the Masonic Lodge he hears humble petition to the Great Architect of the Universe, finding his own deity under that name."¹³

Further,

"You have learned that Freemasonry calls God 'The Great Architect of the Universe.' This is the Freemason's special name for God, because He is universal. He belongs to all men regardless of their religious persuasion. All wise men acknowledge His authority. In his private devotions a Mason will pray to Jehovah, Mohammed, Allah, Jesus, or the Deity of his choice. In a Masonic Lodge, however, the Mason will find the name of his Deity within the Great Architect of the Universe."¹⁴

We gather from ritual (and it is buttressed by Masonic scholars) that GAOTU is a canopy deity, able to subsume all the different deities of Masons into himself. This is far removed from the biblical triune God, who is exclusively Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Some Masonic apologists have criticized Christian apologists who make an issue of the phrase GAOTU, stating that Calvin used "Architect" to describe God.¹⁵ Though Calvin and Freemasonry use the phrase, the issue is the content of the phrase, not the phrase itself. Calvin obviously defined Architect vastly different from that of Masonry. His was the one true and living God who exists eternally as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Freemasonry's god is able to include within himself Vishnu, Brahman, the Great First Cause, Jesus, Allah and any other deity a man may confess.

Having discussed just who the Ma-

sonic god is, it now solicits the question, "What does this god offer?"

THE LODGE AND SALVATION

An apologetic often cited by Masons to escape the criticism that the Craft is a religion is that it offers no way of salvation: "Since Freemasonry is not a religion, and does not think of itself as a religion, it does not make pronouncements on the specifics of salvation any more than the U.S. Congress or the Boy Scouts of America."¹⁶ But Freemasonry makes pronouncements on the specifics of salvation, is interested in the relationship of man to God, and in the redemption of man. Later on I will show that it even makes pronouncements that deceased Masons are in the Celestial Lodge above.

IN SEARCH OF LIGHT

These specifics of salvation are given to Masons after they acknowledge that they are in darkness and in need of further light. Therefore, the quest for Masonic "light" first of all commands our attention.

Every Mason knows that Freemasonry is a search for "light." In ritual he is asked what he most desires. He answers "light" (Entered Apprentice degree), "more light" and "further light" (Fellow Craft and Master Mason degrees). He states this, at the command of the Lodge, because he is in darkness. But what kind of darkness is it? Physical? Moral? Spiritual? Let us examine ritual to seek the answer.

For the Entered Apprentice degree, the candidate is blindfolded (or "hoodwinked"), symbolizing he is in darkness and in need of light. He then is led, still blindfolded, to the Masonic altar, upon which rest the Three Great Lights in Masonry: the Volume of the Sacred Law,¹⁷ Square, and Compass(es). After kneeling before the altar and swearing an obligation in the presence of "almighty God," the blindfold is removed, symbolizing that he has come into light.

The Volume of the Sacred Law contains spiritual and moral light ("to rule and govern our faith"¹⁸). The

Square symbolizes moral light (symbolizing the "squaring of actions"), and the Compass moral light as well ("the Compass to circumscribe our desires and keep our passions within due bounds with all mankind, most especially with our Brothers in Freemasonry"¹⁹). If the candidate's blindfold is removed in the presence of the Three Great Lights, and these emit moral and spiritual light, then conversely the darkness the candidate is said to be in is moral and spiritual.

For Masons claiming to follow Christ, this presents a contradiction to the teachings of the Master and His apostles. Having been justified by faith in Christ, the Christian no longer is in darkness. Christ calls His own the light of the world because they are beacons of light to a lost and dying world (Matthew 5:14-16). Paul wrote that we were once darkness, but now we are light in the Lord. As a result we are to walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8). Following Christ means no longer walking in darkness (John 8:12). But right off the bat in the first degree, the Mason who professes Christ is admitting he is in darkness.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

Sometimes Masons, because they themselves do not detect the salvation teachings of the Lodge, assure concerned Christians that "light" simply means the teachings of Freemasonry. But it still demands the question, "What *are* the teachings of Freemasonry?" Consider the following Masonic lessons that specifically refer to the afterlife.

First is a lesson given to Masons at or sometime after they are presented with a white Lambskin Apron:

"The Lamb has in all ages been deemed an emblem of innocence. He, therefore, who wears the Lambskin, as a badge of Masonry, is thereby continually reminded of that purity of life and rectitude of conduct which is essentially necessary to his gaining admission into the Celestial Lodge above where the Supreme

Architect of the Universe presides."²⁰

Second is the lesson of the Common Gavel:

"The Common Gavel is an instrument made use of by operative Masons to break off the rough and superfluous parts of stones, the better to fit them for the builder's use; but we, as Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting our hearts and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life; thereby fitting our minds as living stones, for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."²¹

In our first quotation, we have a sacred object (the Lambskin Apron) that, when worn, reminds the Mason of purity of life and conduct which is essential to gaining admission into the Celestial Lodge above. In the greater context of Masonry, which promulgates a god other than the true and living God, this can in no way square with Christian theology. Masonry as an institution here implies that if a Mason, whether he be Hindu, Buddhist, Unitarian or Muslim, leads a pure life he may enter heaven. Biblically, however, only those who believe in Christ will enter heaven, with works following that are brought about by God through Christ (Ephesians 2:8-10). In short, Freemasonry errs when it applies the lesson of the Apron to those who reject Christ, for Christ is the only way (John 14:6).

Masons may argue that even though a man rejects Christ, it is true for him that he is going to heaven. That, they say, is all the Lodge is affirming. But the Bible teaches that none who reject Christ will go to heaven. Thus, Freemasonry's lesson of the Lambskin Apron is a false lesson. It undercuts the Gospel of Christ and in effect denies the purpose of Christ's incarnation by applying this lesson to those who reject Him.

The lesson of the Common Gavel presents further theological problems for the Lodge, and when we interpret

it we see that the Lodge is not affirming what its initiates deem true for themselves. Rather, the Lodge is affirming what it, as an institution, deems true.

The Common Gavel lesson lays out a way of salvation, the specifics of salvation, and again Christ is nowhere mentioned. Consider its use of "thereby" ("thereby fitting our minds as living stones...") in the above citation. This is an adverb and serves grammatically to make the "divesting [of Masons'] hearts and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life" necessary for the fitting for heaven! Suppose I were to say, "Today I went to the hardware store and purchased mortar and stones, thereby enabling me to build a stone wall." In this statement the adverb "thereby" signals to us that in order to fulfill my goal of building a stone wall, it was necessary that I purchase mortar and stones. So, how do Masons get to heaven? By "divesting our hearts and consciences of the vices and superfluities of life," says the Lodge.

Further, Masonry applies this lesson to those who reject the biblical Christ. The two biblical verses alluded to in this Masonic lesson are 1 Peter 2:5 ("You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ," NIV) and 2 Corinthians 5:1 ("Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands," NIV).

In these verses, belief in Christ must first occur if anyone is to become a living stone and possess the hope of that spiritual building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Freemasonry has wrenched two Christ-centered passages from their contexts in the name of Masonic non-sectarianism. Christians are the living stones and the holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). In the 2 Corinthians passage, the pronouns "our" (specifically in the Greek) and "we" (implied in the Greek verb) do not signify all people, but only those

who know Christ. Note also the introductions to both of these letters. They are addressed to Christians (2 Corinthians 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

Moving on, the third section of the Master Mason degree contains a lecture on the symbolism of the Three Steps. They are emblematic of three stages of human life: youth, manhood and old age.

"In Youth, as Entered Apprentices, we ought industriously to occupy our minds in the attainment of useful knowledge; in Manhood, as Fellow Crafts, we should apply our knowledge to the discharge of our respective duties to God, our neighbor, and ourselves; so that, in Age, as Master Masons, we may enjoy the happy reflection consequent on a well-spent life, and die in the hope of a glorious immortality."²²

In the above, the phrase "so that" signals a resultant clause. Dying in the hope of a glorious immortality is the result of all that precedes in this particular lecture. Thus, this is akin to the lesson of the Common Gavel. It lays out for the Mason the specifics of salvation (or the hope of salvation) by pronouncing what a man should do to obtain it. And it does so to those who reject the biblical Christ.

MORE TEACHINGS OF SALVATION

Following are more statements from rituals and monitors regarding salvation:

"The Covering of a Lodge is no less than the clouded canopy, or star-decked heaven, where all good Freemasons hope at last to arrive..."²³

"By the Rough Ashlar [stone] we are reminded of our rude and imperfect state by nature; by the Perfect Ashlar, of that state of perfection at which we hope to arrive..."²⁴

"Yet that ALL-SEEING EYE [an emblem for GAOTU] Whom the sun, moon and stars obey, and under whose watchful care even

comets perform their stupendous revolutions, pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, and will reward us according to our merits."²⁵

THE LEGEND OF HIRAM ABIF

As mentioned before, Freemasonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. We have examined some of the symbolism of the Craft. Now let us examine the central allegory and symbolic legend of the Masonic system of salvation — the Legend of Hiram Abif. So important is this Legend, so necessary is its adaptation into the Mason's life, that it is considered "the most important and significant of the legendary symbols of Freemasonry."²⁶

The biblical Hiram (or Hiram) Abif is mentioned in 1 Kings 7:13-45 and 2 Chronicles 2:13-14; 4:16. Freemasonry follows the biblical record by mentioning that Hiram helped King Solomon build the Temple of Yahweh. Masonry, however, departs from the biblical record in what follows.

Masonic legend informs us that Hiram, during the construction of King Solomon's Temple, was assassinated by three "ruffians." These ruffians demanded that Hiram give them the secrets of a Master Mason.²⁷ It was Hiram's refusal to betray the secrets of Masonry that caused his death. The ruffians then buried the body in the rubbish of the Temple until "low twelve" (midnight). They then took the body on a westerly course and buried it on a hill west of Mount Moriah, in a grave dug due east and west.

They completed the process by placing a "Sprig of Acacia"²⁸ (or evergreen) on top of the grave. Meanwhile, a search party had been sent out to search for Hiram. Seeing the Sprig, and how easily it was pulled up out of the ground, signaled to the party that something was not right. The ruffians then were captured and executed by King Solomon, and the search party returned to dig up the putrid remains of Hiram. As they attempted to raise Hiram's corpse out of the grave, they failed because the handgrips (the secret handgrips of

Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft) used to clasp Hiram's hand slipped, due to the rotting of his flesh. But the third grip (the "strong grip" of a Master Mason, or the "Lion's Paw of the Tribe of Judah"²⁹) succeeded in raising Hiram up. Finally, the remains of Hiram were taken to a place near the Sanctum Sanctorum (or Holy of Holies of Solomon's Temple) and buried once again.

During the third (Master Mason) degree, the candidate plays Hiram Abif in a drama put on by the Lodge. Wearing a blindfold, he is accosted by three Masons playing the ruffians, and symbolically killed by a blow to the head (he is tapped on the head with a soft instrument, pushed over, caught on a sheet, and instructed to lie motionless on the floor). A prayer is then offered to God:

"Thou, O God, knowest our down-sitting and our up-rising, and understandest our thoughts afar off. ... Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down. ... For there is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. But man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost and where is he? ... Yet, O Lord! have compassion on the children of Thy creation; administer them comfort in time of trouble, and save them with an everlasting salvation. Amen."³⁰

Finally, he is "raised" up by the strong grip.

What are we to make of this? All Masonic scholars and Grand Lodges see in the allegorical Legend of Hiram either the teaching of the immortality of the soul (majority view³¹) or the resurrection of the body (minority view³²). The Legend of Hiram should not be discarded by the Mason, for its allegory is designed to impress upon the mind something far more than mere play in the Lodge room. Masonic scholar Allen Roberts writes:

"The lessons found in the Legend of Hiram Abif reach to the

roots of the soul and spirit. They are instilled in the heart forever. You were an active participant, so that these lessons would be deeply implanted, never to be lost."³³

With this statement, Roberts should receive a loud Masonic "Amen" or "So Mote It Be," for with the completion of the drama of the life, death, and "raising" of Hiram, the initiate identifies with Hiram. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts states that the candidate "identifies himself with the Master [Hiram] and, to that extent, becomes immortal."³⁴ Hiram is the great figure of Freemasonry. During the ceremony of dedicating a Masonic Temple in Massachusetts, a song may be sung, part of which reads, "And ever remind us of Him who was slain; Like Him may we suffer, like Him when we die, Be raised from the grave into glory again."³⁵ In the greater context of Masonry and its non-sectarianism, who else could this be but Hiram? Hiram is such a central figure in the Masonic scheme of salvation that a few Grand Lodges have boldly stated,

"Then let us imitate the good man [Hiram] in his virtuous and amiable conduct; in his unfeigned piety to God; in his inflexible fidelity to his trust; that we may welcome the grim tyrant Death, and receive him as a kind messenger sent from our Supreme Grand Master, to translate us from this imperfect to that all-perfect, glorious and celestial Lodge above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides."³⁶

The Grand Lodge of Kentucky at one time saw in this "identification" with Hiram something that should raise the eyebrows of every Christian. In the introductory section of the 1946 edition of the *Kentucky Monitor* we read,

"All [antiquity] believed in a future life, to be attained by purification and trials; in a state or successive states of reward and punishment; and in a Mediator or Redeemer, by whom the

Evil Principle was to be overcome and the Supreme Deity reconciled to His creatures. ... The Hindus called him Krishna; the Chinese, Kioun-tse; the Persians, Sosiosch; the Chaldeans, Dhovanai; the Egyptians, Horus; Plato, Love; the Scandinavians, Balder; the Christians, Jesus; Masons, Hiram."³⁷

Further issues rise to the surface regarding this Masonic drama play. For example, the similarities of Masonic Hiram Legend drama play with the drama plays of the ancient pagan Mystery Religions have been noted by more than one Masonic scholar.³⁸ And non-Masonic writers have documented the ancient Mysteries and their legends of the life, death and subsequent palingenesis (rebirth) of cult deities or heroes.³⁹ Scenic and dramatic plays were re-enacted by adherents, representing generally that even though death will take the initiate, he can nonetheless die with better hopes. It therefore comes as no shock to read:

"The presence in the modern Masonic system, of many of the emblems, symbols and allegories of the ancient Temples of Initiation, as well as certain rites performed therein, has persuaded the most learned among Masonic scholars to conclude that Masonry is of very ancient origin, and is, in some aspects, the modern successor of, and heir to, the sublime Mysteries of the Temple of Solomon, and of the Temples of India, Chaldea, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as well as the basic doctrine of the Essenes, Gnostics and other mystic Orders."⁴⁰

"THEREFORE..." MASONIC FUNERAL AND MEMORIAL SERVICES

In the United States it is the practice of every Lodge to perform Masonic funeral services and memorial services for deceased brethren. These take place in funeral homes, at gravesites and in Masonic Temples. Most Grand Lodges limit the honor only to deceased Master Masons.⁴¹ Some, however, will honor any

Mason who dies while in good standing with his Lodge.

Given the teachings of Freemasonry that have been documented in this article, it should not surprise us to find statements in Masonic funeral and memorial services to the effect that brother so-and-so, whether he be Hindu, Muslim, Jew, Buddhist, Unitarian or Christian, is in the Celestial Lodge above. I often ask Masons this question: "On what grounds do Grand Lodges affirm that deceased Masons have ascended to the Celestial Lodge above?"

After close examination of ritual, there can be only one answer — the system of works righteousness (and salvation apart from Christ) that is taught within the ritualistic system of Masonry and the identification of the initiate with Hiram Abif.

Following are short quotations from funeral and memorial services of 14 Grand Lodges.⁴²

"Most Glorious God ... after our departure hence in peace and Thy favor, we may be received into Thine everlasting kingdom, and there join in union with our friend."⁴³

"He [deceased] has passed out of the love of human hearts to a higher, better love; out of the dim lights of the lodge on earth to the brighter, glorious Lodge above."⁴⁴

"... we have the assurance that Thou hast taken to Thyself his soul. ... Masons believe sincerely that when life on earth comes to a close, the soul is translated from the imperfections of this mortal sphere to that all-perfect glorious and celestial Lodge above."⁴⁵

"We commit the body of our brother to the kindly embrace of mother earth ... but his spirit has winged its flight to that blissful Lodge which will remain open during the endless ages of eternity."⁴⁶

"We firmly believe our Brother has but heard the invitation — 'come thou blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.'"⁴⁷

"Farewell, brother! Our faith, our hope, our assurance is that we shall meet again around that celestial altar, where with songs of praise we unite to hail the Supreme Grand Master."⁴⁸

"... life on earth is but a phase of that abounding and eternal life which we share with thee [God]."⁴⁹

"In memory of our departed brethren, I deposit these white flowers, emblematical of that pure life to which they have been called."⁵⁰

"Unto Almighty God we commend the soul of our departed Brother; we commit his body to the ground; ... earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection unto eternal life."⁵¹

"Let us express our respect and esteem for these Brethren who have laid down their working tools of life and have been admitted with that the [sic] Temple of the Celestial Lodge above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides."⁵²

"As we mourn the departure of our Brother from the circle of our Fraternity, we believe that he has entered into a higher Brotherhood, to find rest from earthly labors and refreshment from earthly cares."⁵³

CONCLUSION

Freemasonry takes men of different religions, initiates them into its spiritual fold in the name of GAOTU, provides for them a way of salvation and, as we have seen in more than a few cases, declares that its deceased brethren have entered the Celestial Lodge above. Since belief in Christ is absolutely necessary for one to be saved, Freemasonry, if it continues to promulgate such teachings, will always be at odds with the Christian faith. Christians, therefore, should have nothing to do with Freemasonry because it undercuts the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Churches and denominations should educate themselves regarding Masonry and take a stand against it.

Endnotes:

1. Allen E. Roberts, *The Craft and Its Symbols: Opening the Door to Masonic Symbolism*. Richmond, Va.: Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., 1974, pg. 3.

2. Cited in Alphonse Cerza, *Let There Be Light: A Study in Anti-Masonry*. Silver Spring, Md.: The Masonic Service Association, 1983, pg. 41.

3. Blue Lodge Masonry is sometimes called Symbolic Lodge Masonry or Craft Masonry.

4. The requirement that only full Scottish Rite Masons and full York Rite Masons can become Shriners has recently changed. The 128-year-old rule was voted out by delegates at the July 2000 Imperial Council Session for the Shrine of North America. Now candidates for the Shrine may simply be Blue Lodge Freemasons. See "Shrine Votes to Change Rules for Admission," *The Northern Light*, August 2000, pg. 17.

5. There is no one central governing Grand Lodge for all Freemasonry worldwide. Individual Grand Lodges are the authorities.

6. C. Fred Kleinknecht, "Reality and Ritual," *Scottish Rite Journal*, February 1995, pg. 6, emphasis added.

7. Rituals and monitors can be found in some used bookstores and from some ex-Masons. Also, you may contact Christian ministries who specialize in Freemasonry (write to Ephesians 5:11, Inc., P.O. Box 291, Fishers, IN 46038 or Sound Doctrine Ministries, P.O. Box 1962, Exeter, NH 03833).

8. In all Blue Lodge rituals, the candidate is asked, "In whom do you place your trust?" The candidate answers, "In God."

9. See William A. Carpenter, *The Exemplar: A Guide to a Mason's Actions*. Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania, 1985, reprinted 1995, pg. 9.

10. Christ demands absolute belief in *who* He is. Consider John 8:24 and the "I am" statement: "If you should deny that I am, you will die in your sins." The same phrase (Greek *hoti ego eimi*, that I am) is found in the LXX of Deuteronomy 32:39 and Isaiah 43:10. Just as Yahweh demanded acknowledgment and belief in who he is, and stated so to the Israelites, the children of Abraham, so does the Son of God demand the same (in the immediate context) of the descendants of Abraham. By making such a statement, Christ surely applies to Himself the majestic glory that is due only to Yahweh. Carrying this to our present situation, all must acknowledge what Christ claimed to be if they are to have eternal life. And since we worship the true and living God through Christ, come to the Father through Christ, and can truly love God only through and in Christ, if Christ is defined outside the biblical witness, the result is a christ not of

the Father, a counterfeit christ (see 2 Corinthians 11:3-4), a christ not able to save.

11. From the Greek *theos* (God) and *logos* (word). Taken from G.W. Bromiley, ed. *The International Bible Standard Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988, s.v. "Theology," vol. 4, pg. 826.

12. Henry Pirtle, arr., *Kentucky Monitor*, Grand Lodge of Kentucky, 1990, pp. 214-215.

13. Carl H. Claudy, *Introduction to Freemasonry*. Washington, D.C.: The Temple Publishers, 1959, vol. 1, pg. 37.

14. *The Craft and Its Symbols*, op. cit., pg. 6.

15. See Gary Leazer, *Fundamentalism & Freemasonry: The Southern Baptist Investigation of the Fraternal Order*. New York: M. Evans and Co., 1995, pp. 156-157. Leazer quotes from Wallace McLeod's *The Grand Design*. Des Moines: Iowa Research Lodge No. 2, 1991, pg. 108.

16. *Fundamentalism & Freemasonry*, op. cit., pg. 174.

17. This may be the Bible or any other "holy book" the candidate chooses. The Hindu may choose the Upanishads, the Muslim the Quran, etc. Thus, Freemasonry as an institution does not regard the Bible as the only holy book. See, *The Exemplar: A Guide to a Mason's Actions*, op. cit., pg. 57.

18. *The Work* [ritual]. Grand Lodge of Ontario, 1967, pp. 84-85.

19. The symbolism of the Square and that of the Compass are taken from the *Official Cipher*. Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts, 1989, pg. 30, decoded.

20. Glen R. Abshire, ed., *Murrow Masonic Monitor*. Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Oklahoma, reprinted 1988, pg. 37.

21. *Official Cipher*. Grand Lodge of New Hampshire, F. & A.M., third printing, 1987, pg. 20.

22. *Florida Masonic Monitor*. The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Florida, 1992, pg. 119.

23. *Missouri Cipher*. Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Missouri, 1993, pg. 55. Contained in the Entered Apprentice degree.

24. *Ibid.*, pg. 57.

25. *Monitor of the Lodge*. Grand Lodge of Texas, A.F. & A.M., reprinted 1992, pg. 90.

26. Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*. Revised and enlarged by Robert I. Clegg. Richmond, Va.: Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., 1946, vol. 1, pg. 577.

27. One of these secrets is the true understanding and pronunciation of the Divine Name (YHWH). With the death of Hiram this was lost. Thus it became what Masonry calls "The Lost Word." Consequently, for the adept Mason, his quest is to seek after this Word.

28. "But, when we look forward to the

acacia, which budded and bloomed at the head of the grave, we are reminded of the immortal part, the spirit or soul of man, which will live when time shall be no more" (*California Cipher*. Richmond, Va.: Allen Publishing Co., 1990, pg. 178, decoded).

29. That this is a reference only to Christ (see Revelation 5:5) is masonically far-fetched. Such sectarianism would not be part of the true Masonic system: "The expression does not, of necessity, refer to Jesus of Nazareth, though the Christian Mason may so interpret the name if he desires. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah also describes the Messiah of the Jewish Mason or the mediator of some of the ancient religions of the East" (*Mentor's Manual*. Grand Lodge of Georgia, reprinted 1982, pg. 59).

30. *Manual of the Miami Valley Lodge*. Dayton, Ohio: Free and Accepted Masons of Dayton, Ohio, 1920, no. 660, pp. 50-51. This prayer is the same in essence in all rituals.

31. The majority view of the immortality of the soul is held, for example, by Albert Mackey (*The Symbolism of Freemasonry*. Chicago: The Charles T. Pownor Co., 1975, pp. 233-234), Carl Claudy (*Foreign Countries*. Richmond, Va.: Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., 1971, pp. 136, 11), Joseph Fort Newton (*The Builders*. Lexington, Mass.: The Supreme Council, 33rd Degree, A. A. S. R., Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, United States of America, 1973, pp. 262-263), the Grand Lodges of Louisiana (G.C. Huckaby, comp., *The Louisiana Monitor*. Walker, La: Lavergne's River Parish Press, 1988, pg. 134), Texas (*Monitor of the Lodge*, pg. 78), Washington (Thomas Milburne Reed, comp., *Washington Monitor and Freemason's Guide*. Grand Lodge of Washington, 1983, pg. 67), Alberta, Canada (*Lodge Plan for Masonic Education: Mentor's Guide*. The Grand Lodge of Alberta, A.F. & A.M., 1993, pg. 66), and New York (*The Standard Work and Lectures of Ancient Craft Masonry*. The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York, 1964, pg. 222, decoded).

32. The minority view of resurrection is held, for example, by Roberts (*The Craft and Its Symbols*, pg. 87), the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma (*Murrow Masonic Monitor*, pg. 94), and the Grand Lodge of Missouri (*Missouri Cipher*, pg. 114).

33. *The Craft and Its Symbols*, op. cit., pg. 81.

34. William F. Carr, et al., *Freemasonry in Massachusetts: A Handbook for Members*. Boston: The Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts, 1996, pg. 54.

35. *Masonic Trestle-Board* [monitor]. Boston: Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1979, pg. 134.

36. *North Dakota Monitor*. Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M. of North Dakota, 1965, pg.

144-147. Also found in the monitors of Florida, New Mexico and Louisiana.

37. Henry Pirtle, arr., *Kentucky Monitor*. Louisville: The Standard Printing Co., 13th ed., 1946, pg. xv. This is no longer printed in current editions of the *Kentucky Monitor*. We, however, must still ask the question to Masons: "Why was it at one time included?"

38. See, for example, *The Symbolism of Freemasonry*, op. cit., pp. 39-44, 228-246, and W.L. Wilmshurst's *The Meaning of Masonry*. New York: Bell Publishing Co., 1980, pp. 170-216.

39. See Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 2, 11-12, 21, 23, 41-42, 45-46 (on pp. 41-42 Burkert specifically mentions the Masons); Samuel Angus, *The Mystery-Religions*. New York: Dover Publications, 1975, pp. 39-41, 45-75; Franz Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*. New York: Dover Publications, 1956, pg. 161. See also Steven Tsoukalas, *Masonic Rites and Wrongs*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1995, pp. 84-90.

40. *Monitor of the Lodge*, Grand Lodge of Texas, pg. xiv. I agree that there are tremendous similarities with the ancient Mysteries, thereby rendering Freemasonry

a "modern Mystery Religion" and the spiritual kin of the ancient Mysteries, but I caution readers that there is no definite historical evidence linking Freemasonry in any definite organizational way with the ancient Mysteries.

41. Thus, interestingly, only those who have undergone the drama of the Hiram Legend!

42. The quotation from n. 43 is found also in Harris Bullock, Earl D. Harris, and James E. Moseley, *Masonic Manual of the Grand Lodge of Georgia*. Grand Lodge of Georgia, Free and Accepted Masons, 1983, pg. 161, and *Masonic Memorial and Funeral Services*, Grand Lodge of Indiana, 1976, pg. 1. The quotation from n. 46 is found also in Oregon's *Standard Manual*, Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Oregon, 1991, pg. 49.

43. *Florida Masonic Monitor*, op. cit., pg. 205.

44. *Louisiana Masonic Monitor*, op. cit., pp. 177-178.

45. *Maine Masonic Text Book*. Maine Printing Exchange, 1992, pp. 104, 105.

46. *Washington Monitor and Freemason's Guide*, op. cit., pg. 143.

47. *Official Monitor and Ceremonies*. Grand Lodge of New Mexico, 1992, pg. 212. Note

the omission of "of my Father" from the biblical citation (Matthew 25:34).

48. *Blue Lodge Text-Book*, Official Publication of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, Free and Accepted Masons, 1978, pg. 73.


49. Massachusetts, *Masonic Trestle-Board*, op. cit., pg. 118.

50. Oklahoma, *Murrow Masonic Monitor*, op. cit., pg. 156.

51. *North Dakota Monitor*, op. cit., pp. 240-241.

52. *Annual Memorial Service*, Grand Lodge of Connecticut, n.d., vol. 1.

53. Texas, *Monitor of the Lodge*, op. cit., pg. 217.

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TOMMY TENNEY

(continued from page 1)

spark and fuel the fires of revival. He has experienced the miraculous, but more importantly, he knows the value of intimacy with and humility before God."⁴

People around West Monroe really like Tommy Tenney. One person from the local Assembly of God church told PFO: "Tommy Tenney is a wonderful man. He's a humble man. He's been back a few times and he brings all churches together."⁵

The goal of this article is not to pass judgment on Tenney's character, ecumenical prowess or humility, but rather to see if his teachings stand up under the scrutiny of the Scriptures.

PROMISES, PROMISES!

Tenney's books are in a genre that is wildly popular with Charismatics. It could be called the "carrot and stick" genre. The new prophets and apostles hold out the carrot of an

imminent and virtually present miracle period that they seem to know about by divine revelations, prophecies and discernment of omens. The stick is veiled or open threats of blaspheming the Spirit or some plague or curse on the house of any critics.

This outbreak of the divine Presence is "just around the corner" or "just over the next hill." It is about to arrive, break forth, burst on the scene, all with creative miracles and mass revival.

More importantly, we can make it happen. It is the "new thing" or the "day of visitation" as the prophet assures the followers that if they will heed his words (that is, "seed" their money with him and buy his books and tapes), he will take them there. It sounds suspiciously like promises of the Second Coming and bodily resurrection but they say it will all precede those events in one miracle or glory blast. The above is a generalization but it captures the various nuances of the new prophetic claims.

ANCIENT HISTORY — REPEATED

We were promised the new glory period in the Latter Rain Movement of the 1940s and again in the Charismatic/Ecumenical Movement of the 1960s. It was promised by the Vineyard Movement and John Wimber. John Arnott declared its nearness when he "baptized" the outbreak of animal noises in his Toronto church. It has been promised through the laughing "revival" of Rodney Howard Browne and then later by Brownsville's "Pensacola Outpouring," but it has not shown up yet. It was proclaimed in the brief run of plastic gold glitter and alleged dental miracles of the late Ruth Ward Heflin. It is always being promised by Benny Hinn, who claims that Kathryn Kuhlman promised it.

In this new age of "just ahead" miracles, all things will be possible. The dead will be raised, limbs will grow, the supernatural will be natural. It will be heaven on earth. It is not the Second Coming of Jesus, or the

resurrection to glorified bodies, or the removal of the curse — it is just a promise from the new gnostics who are in the know with claimed new revelations and demon-corralling techniques. “Trust me” is their by-word.

The new prophets and apostles have created a new *Zeitgeist* for their followers. A *Zeitgeist*, as explained by author Uwe Seimon Netto, “serves as a beacon in the vagueness and uncertainty of modern society; it serves modern society with a point of reference, albeit finite and fickle; it gives individuals who are afloat in that sea of instability the ‘correct’ position on which to orient themselves — for the time being.”⁶ Since the Bible is no longer seen as all that relevant and as new revelations are advanced, this new *Zeitgeist* (foundational view or paradigm) makes people ripe for error and easy to mislead. Sound judgment is surrendered to emotions and manifestations.

In this vein, Tenney promises:

“Another wave of God’s presence is about to hit the shore of the church and the nations. It has happened before in differing times and seasons. I’ve carefully studied the history of revival in America and around the world, but another wave is coming that is going to be different — if we cooperate.”⁷

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

One thing that the success of the Tenney books illustrates is that the Charismatic propensity for seeking emotional experiences and spiritual highs leaves one empty and disappointed but primed for another round of seeking even more thrills. God chasing feeds that never-ending up and down cycle. It can produce as well as perpetuate it.

Matthew Klam observes:

“The more aggressively you search for the most profound experience of your life, the more rigid, narrowing, dispiriting and routine it becomes.”⁸

Apparently, as a professing Charismatic Christian, Tenney became totally dispirited and dissatisfied with Christianity, the Bible, being Spirit-filled, preaching, praying and going to church — really sick of it all. He describes for readers his plight:

“The gnawing vacuum of emptiness in the midst of my accomplishments just got worse. I was in a frustrating funk, a divine depression of destiny. ... I am a fourth generation Spirit-filled Christian, three generations deep into ministry, but I must be honest with you: I was sick of church. ... There had to be more. I was desperate for a God encounter (of the closest kind).”⁹

the birth of the Christ, he had no words to describe it — he just said ‘some...*thing* is going to come.’ ... And that’s what he (Tommy) believes is happening right now. ... *some *thing* is going to come. ... That God wants to draw us under his wings ... so he can ‘overshadow’ us.*”¹⁰

The article goes on to discuss Luke 1:35 and the overshadowing of Mary to conceive and bring forth Jesus and criticizes Tenney’s implications:

“In this instance, therefore, the overshadowing refers to an act of spiritual marriage and union (consummation) where Christians and the Glory merge so

*“God is everywhere in everything.
He is the composite of everything,
both the glue that holds the pieces
of the universe together and the
pieces themselves!”*

—Tommy Tenney



So it was not a serious, sober searching of God’s Word that launched Tenney into his search, but discontent, desperation and depression.

Tenney caught the ire of one apologetic ministry for his views of “overshadowing” and its cultic parallels. The critique found on the organization’s web site evaluates a message that Tenney delivered on Dec. 7, 1997, to a congregation at Immanuel’s Church in Silver Spring, Md.:

“[Tommy Tenney] said we are in the year of *Jubilee*, and that God isn’t going to let a generation go by without letting them see his glory at least once. Hence the outpouring of his Spirit at this time. He said that when Gabriel was giving Mary the news about

closely that Tommy Tenney’s ‘something’ is born of their union.”¹¹

Another very troubling teaching by Tenney is his muddled and garbled view of who — or what — God is. He says of God:

“The phrase, ‘omnipresence of God,’ refers to the fact that He is everywhere all the time. He is that ‘particle’ in the atomic nucleus that nuclear physicists cannot see and can only track. ... God is everywhere in everything. He is the composite of everything, both the glue that holds the pieces of the universe together and the pieces themselves!”¹²

Here Tenney is confusing the Creator with the creation. Scripture does

speak to the “omnipresence of God,” but that means everything is in God’s presence, not God is present in everything. There is a major difference — the distinction between Creator and creation — which Tenney fails to teach.

Consider what Norman Geisler says about the heresy of pantheism:

“*Pantheism* means all (‘pan’) is God (‘theism’). It is the worldview held by most Hindus, many Buddhists, and other New Age religions. It is also the worldview of Christian Science, Unity, and Scientology. According to pantheism, God ‘is all in all.’ God pervades all things, contains all things, subsumes all things, and is found within all things. Nothing exists apart from God, and all things are in some way identified with God. The world is God, and God is the world. But more precisely, in pantheism all is God, and God is all.”¹³

Additionally, William Evans says of the omnipresence of God:

“By the omnipresence of God is meant that God is everywhere present. This attribute is closely connected with the omniscience and omnipotence of God, for if God is everywhere present He is everywhere active and possesses full knowledge of all that transpires in every place. This does not mean that God is everywhere present in a bodily sense, nor even in the same sense; for there is a sense in which He may be in heaven, His dwelling place, in which He cannot be said to be elsewhere. We must guard against the pantheistic idea which claims that God *is* everything, while maintaining the Scriptural doctrine that He is everywhere present in all things. ... God is everywhere and in every place; His center is everywhere; His circumference nowhere. But this presence is a spiritual and not a material presence; yet it is a real presence.”¹⁴

We could just chalk Tenney’s pantheism up to imprecision or lack of

Bible training, but remember: here is a man who claims he has chased God and been caught by Him.

TENNEY CHASERS

Tenney’s views and writings have also met the disapproval of other apologetic and counter-cult organizations for other reasons. Paramount among the concerns is Tenney’s Oneness Pentecostal (United Pentecostal Church) background. Bob Liichow of Inner-City Christian Discernment Ministry explains:

“Several months ago *Truth Matters* dealt with the UPC and its derivatives, a.k.a. ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals. We proved that the UPC is a bible-based **cult**. Without going into great detail suffice it to say that the UPC believes in salvation by works, that one can lose [sic] their salvation, that one must be baptized by immersion in Jesus’ name only and speak in other tongues in order to be ‘fully saved.’”¹⁵

The so-called Jesus Only group has a neo-modalistic interpretation of the Trinity, reducing Jesus to an actor who played three parts. They speak of the persons of the Trinity as “manifestations.” The group was born in 1913 at a camp meeting in California when one John G. Schaefer claimed a new revelation. The ancient Sabellians¹⁶ taught that only God the Father was the one true God.

Regarding Sabellianism, Charles Hodge stated that, “The same person is at once Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”¹⁷

In a new twist from ancient Sabellianism, Schaefer insisted that Jesus was the *one* and *only* true God, thereby denying the real personhood and distinct personality of Father and Holy Spirit.

Concerning the history of Jesus Only modalism today, Robert Morey writes:

“In order to justify this new ‘revelation,’ it was not long before R.E. McAlister, John Schaefer, Frank Ewart, Glen Cook, and many others came to the conclu-

sion that Jesus was the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These events soon developed into a ‘Jesus Only’ or ‘Oneness Pentecostal’ movement. A great deal of controversy was created, until the Oneness people were cast out of the Assemblies of God.”¹⁸

Walter Bjorck and James Bjornstad penetrate the serious errors of the Oneness Movement and point up:

“The most serious weakness in the modalistic system of the ‘Jesus Only’ movement is their failure to recognize the subject-object relationship among the members of the Godhead. All reality in the realm of personality is based upon this commonly accepted fact. For if there is no object in a given conversation, then there is no meaningful dialogue. One is merely talking to oneself!”¹⁹

Though Tenney is said by some to have left the UPC, Liichow observes that “Mr. Tenney has not publicly recanted his former UPC beliefs.”²⁰ By his own account, Tenney left the UPC because he “‘couldn’t enforce some of the views’ of the UPC — including rules that to this day forbid pastors in the group from owning televisions.”²¹

While Tenney insists “I am not ‘Jesus only,’” he subscribes to a vague modalism, which sounds very close to Sabellianism. Tenney told *Charisma* editor Lee Grady: “I believe God revealed Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”²² Sabellius would be happy with such an explanation.²³

LOVE LETTERS IN THE SAND

Tenney’s church connections (or lack thereof) and obviously incorrect view of the Godhead are serious and are the beginning of the problem. He has a less-than-orthodox view of the Scriptures as well. In Tenney’s insistence on a mystical principle of immediate, personal, direct revelations to every person, he seriously denigrates the Bible. Tenney may commit in

principle to the inerrancy of Scripture but in reality does not believe in the total sufficiency of Scripture for life and practice:

“The coming revival is not going to be about *sermons and information*; it is going to be about *worship and impartation*.”²⁴

Concern over Tenney’s disregard of Scripture has been expressed by pastor Bill Randles in his two-page review of *The God Chasers*:

“Between the various personal experiences recounted by Tenney and his attempts at whetting the spiritual appetite for which the book calls, glimpses of the author’s theology can be seen. Tenney has a curious view of the Word of God as ‘old love letters’: ‘I’m afraid that we have satiated our hunger for Him by reading old love letters from Him to the churches in the Epistles of the New Testament. These are good, holy, and necessary, but we never have intimacy with Him.’ This is mere lip service given to God’s Word, granting that it is still ‘good, holy, and necessary,’ while at the same time delegating it to the status of ‘old love letters’ — inadequate for the purpose of current intimacy with God. This is a subtle but effective denial of the sufficiency of Scripture. Jesus never contrasted the knowledge of Scripture with intimacy with God, but rather equated it: *And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.* (Luke 4:4)”²⁵

Nowhere in the Bible do we find Scripture referred to as an “old love letter.” God’s Word is held up as a lamp, a light, as being quick and powerful, as bread for the soul and meat for the spirit. It can comfort and illumine, guide and direct, instruct and reprove. It is not old and outdated but alive (Matthew 24:35; Hebrews 4:12). It is our source for good doctrine (2 Timothy 3:16). It is truth (John 17:17). Randles is right on target regarding Tenney’s denigration of Scripture. Believers ought to decry

such things. It seems that Tenney has been chasing and catching false doctrine and chasing serious error in regard to the Scriptures. Chasing experiences apart from the Scripture is really chasing mysticism and subjectivism.

THE NEW MYSTICS

Over a decade ago, Norman Geisler was on the cutting-edge when he wrote:

“A mystical maze has settled on our land. Fuzzy thinking is the order of the day. The Good Ship Evangelicalism is sailing without rational rudders in the hazy sea of subjectivity.”²⁶

Addressing the subject of mysticism, Arthur Johnson says:

“At a time when the entire world seems to be turning away from using rational understanding toward a reliance on mystical means as the basis for life, Christians seem unaware of the implications of this trend for the faith. Mysticism, if my understanding of the Bible and of history are [sic] correct, is both anti-Scriptural and a contradiction of the evangelical view that the Bible is the one and only ultimate criterion of truth about God and our relation to Him.”²⁷

Tenney, in his introduction to *The God Chasers*, amazingly puts heretic and mystic Madame Jeanne Guyon²⁸ on the same level as Abraham, Moses and David. Incredible!

The kind of immediate revelations endorsed by Tenney under the rubric of God chasing have always been a problem in the Church and a means of deception and false doctrine as Arthur Clement observes:

“Church history records many individuals and groups who claimed personal, direct, inner revelation from the Holy Spirit, also referred to as an ‘internal’ word. Not infrequently, those who claimed to have such ‘immediate’ revelations from God also disclaimed the Holy Scriptures as the agency of the Holy

Spirit. The teaching of the Eucharites, or Mesalians, a sect of Mesopotamia and Syria in the fourth century, is an example of this false doctrine. The members sought to know God and to communicate with him through an internal light. They expected the operation of God’s grace without an external means of grace. They considered Holy Scripture to be of only minor importance. Schools of mysticism have made similar claims from time to time.”²⁹

Charles Hodge has written extensively on mysticism and confronts his readers with the simple logic that a man has no real objective way to test his inner impulses and “revelations” to know if they are from the Spirit of God, his own heart or Satan as an angel of light. Hodge further reminds us that:

“Our Lord says of men, ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’ The same rule of judgment applies to doctrines. Mysticism has always been productive of evil. It has led to the neglect or undervaluing of divine institutions, — of the Church, of the ministry, of the sacraments, of the Sabbath, and of the Scriptures.”³⁰

The words of Proverbs advise us: “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:5-6). Ephesians 6:17 reminds us that the Word of God is “the sword of the Spirit,” so without it we are defenseless.

Tenney unashamedly keeps moving away from Scripture and calls for “open Heaven” encounters.³¹ He sets up a straw man, saying that somehow if we take the Bible too seriously, we may worship it:

“We all need to read and study God’s Word daily, but we don’t need to worship past revelation to the exclusion of all new revelation. ... I believe that God is constantly giving us new revela-

tions of His Person. This is partly because our unchanging God is continually moving and working among His ever-changing people. The ungodly part comes in when people begin to say, 'Our paw print is the only track in the forest,' or 'Our revelation is the final revelation.'"³²

Tenney frames his ideas around the illustration of being in a dark room. We may have some truth now but without the manifest presence of God and direct Divine encounters, we will never have enough light to see the way.³³ This hardly says much about the light of Scripture.

WHAT IS IT — REALLY?

Tenney's watchword and signature is "chasing God." Consider for a moment the implications.

First, that a real, deep and intimate experience of God cannot be found in the Scripture ("we will never have intimacy" with "old love letters") but that God is "out there" somewhere to be chased, caught or discovered by some formula in a Tenney book. And it only costs the price of a \$12 book (\$35 more if you buy the T-shirt and baseball cap). Sharing instruction from Scripture is one thing, but selling a formula for a sure-fire route to the manifest presence of God is another. When Simon the Sorcerer sought to buy intimacy with the Holy Spirit, Peter blasted him with "your money perish with you" (Acts 8:20). Selling solutions to intimacy with God has a strange and unsettling ring to it.

Secondly, by implication, God is not all that available to the average Christian who just serves God in his local church, walks in the Spirit and reads his Bible faithfully every day. There is something more to be chased. Tenney is an elitist teaching a two-tiered Christianity. Tenney says that true God chasers "are not interested in camping out on some dusty truth."³⁴

Tenney not only downplays the Word of God but totally ignores the Holy Spirit and His worldwide ministry of conviction and illumination of the Word (John 16:8-15). Tenney casts

God in the role of being somewhat unavailable or at least hiding:

"God is still hiding from the world because He cannot flow through the streets until the Church takes its place and begins to filter the glory."³⁵

However, the Apostle Paul says just the opposite. Paul concludes that God is near and that deep experiences of Him are available in a relationship with Christ and a laying hold of Bible doctrine. Unfortunately, most Christians today are not familiar enough with their Bible to know that. Jay Adams perceptively addresses this very issue:

"It is because Christians want something more or something different, as we saw in the section on worldly influence, that they often go for false teachings. One of the major reasons that they hunger for more is because they have so little. Not that there is little in the Bible, but that there is so little of the Bible in them. They do not study the Scriptures in a serious fashion. The Spirit God gave you does not need to impart truth to you that He has already given to you in the Bible! He will enlighten you to the meaning and application of the Scriptures when you are willing to spend time prayerfully digging deeply into their meaning."³⁶

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, is clear:

"But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way. 'Do not say in your heart, "who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or "who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)': But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith we preach). ... So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:6-9, 17).

Anders Nygren gives us the impact of Paul's words: "Through the *incarnation* and the *resurrection* Christ is near us; He is immediately with us."³⁷

W.H. Griffith Thomas offers:

"Christ has neither to be brought down from heaven, not to be raised again from the dead; everything has been accomplished, and all that is left is to accept in trustful thankfulness. Faith has not to acquire or win a Savior, but to accept One Who has already accomplished the work of redemption. God's righteousness is not distant and difficult, but near and easy."³⁸

Jeremiah "ate" the Word of God and reports: "Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jeremiah 15:16). Jesus expounded the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms to the Emmaus Road disciples and their "eyes were opened" and "they said to one another, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road and He opened to us the Scriptures?'" (Luke 24:31-32). Paul spoke of the "comfort of the Word" (Romans 15:4). Read through Psalm 119 and note the wonderful things the Word of God does for us and gives to us.

Christians should be greatly offended when they hear one such as Tenney speak of the Bible as "the moldy pages of what God has done."³⁹

TOTALLY CONFUSED

We need to ask three important questions: 1) What does chasing God mean? 2) How do you do it? and 3) How do you know if you have caught Him?

In response to the first inquiry, Tenney offers that, "If you want to recognize a real God chaser, think of a whooping, barking, tail-pounding dog trembling with excitement." Tenney also says they are "like bloodhounds on a trail" and further concludes it is one who is "arriving at the point of revelation where He presently exists."⁴⁰

It does become increasingly unclear to really understand what God chas-

ing is when Tenney defines and describes it in a number of different ways. One definition is: "By 'chasing God,' I am referring to our pursuit of Him as our chief aim and very reason for being — *after salvation*."⁴¹ It also seems to take a lot of intense effort on our part: "I sometimes think to myself, *If I can just get my hands in the crack and pry it or pray it open, maybe the glory of God will come down to-night*."⁴²

So it is an out-of-control dog, a point of revelation and our pursuit of God. It's like prying open an elevator door. On the back cover of *The God Chasers*, we read another view: "A God chaser is a person whose passion for God's presence presses him to chase the impossible in hopes that the uncatchable might catch him."

One can't be sure if Tenney is certain what God chasing is or if he's just making it up as he goes along. He writes:

"The pursuit and 'capture' of God is a process. ... Some people take offense at my use of the term *God Chaser*, saying, 'You don't have to chase God.' I understand but I don't agree. ... You may be content just to be in God's house, but I want to be in His lap! I do agree that none of us can ever really catch Him. That much is obvious. ... Your worship essentially sets a 'lover's entrapment' for Him."⁴⁴

So you can and you can't. You will and you won't. It is some kind of entrapment of God.

ning bolts on the head and being hit with a power line is only the beginning.

Tenney elaborates as to what God chasing amounts to:

"God was there; of that there was no doubt. But more of Him kept coming in the place until, as in Isaiah, it literally filled the building. At times the air was so rarefied that it became almost unbreathable. Oxygen came in short gasps, seemingly. Muffled sobs broke through the room."⁴⁷

God in the above is reduced to an "it" that chokes people and causes them to hyperventilate. However, it gets worse as more incredible claims are put forth:

"In that instant, I heard what sounded like a thunderclap echo through the building, and the pastor was literally picked up and thrown backward about ten feet, effectively separating him from the pulpit. When he went backward, the pulpit fell forward. The beautiful flower arrangement positioned in front of it fell to the ground, but *by the time the pulpit hit the ground*, it was already in two pieces. It had split into two pieces almost as if lightning had hit it! At that instant the tangible terror of the presence of God filled that room."⁴⁸

Tenney claims that the high-tech acrylic pulpit was able to withstand tens of thousands of pounds of pressure per square inch,⁴⁹ making the claimed destruction of it even more awesome. The oxygen-stealing, people-throwing, pulpit-smashing God seems to revel in out-of-control craziness as well:

"I've never seen such an altar call. It was pure pandemonium. People shoved one another out of the way. They wouldn't wait for the aisles to clear; they climbed over pews, businessmen tore their ties off, and they were literally stacked on top of one

"If you want to recognize a real God chaser, think of a whooping, barking, tail-pounding dog trembling with excitement."

—Tommy Tenney



Tenney comes at it in yet another way:

"The difference between the anointing of God and the glory of God is like the difference between the tiny blue spark of static electricity and the raw power of a 440-volt power line overhead or a lightning strike on your head! We are so busy rubbing our feet across the carpet of God's promises and giving one another tiny blue sparks of anointing that we don't realize God wants to jolt us with His 440-volt glory line from Heaven. The one will thrill you a little, but you get the feeling the other might kill you or change your life forever."⁴³

Then Tenney surprises and confuses us once again: "The 'catching' will come if you can ever get to that point of weary desperation where you just say, 'Oh, Daddy!'"⁴⁵ And this: "It should be obvious that no one can really 'catch' God, but you can capture His heart. Once you do that, God allows you to pull Him into your dimension."⁴⁶ The reader gets to the point of wondering whether Tenney has any idea what he is talking about.

Tenney's answer to the second and third inquiry amounts to getting to a point where one is out-of-control, willing to do anything, even experience altered states of consciousness and entertain poltergeistic activity and be thrown around like a rag doll. Prying open the elevator door, light-

another, in the most horribly harmonious sound of repentance you ever heard. ... worship was rampant and uninhibited. Grown men were ballet dancing; little children were weeping in repentance."⁵⁰

God chasers appear to be wild and crazy guys. Even the outsiders couldn't escape the spiritual cyclone that was engulfing the whole area:

"As people drove onto the parking lot, they sensed the presence of God so strongly that some began to weep uncontrollably. They just found themselves driving up onto the parking lot or into the grass not knowing what was going on. Some started to get out of their cars and barely managed to stagger across the parking lot. Some came inside the building only to fall on the floor just inside the doors. The hard-pressed ushers had to literally pull the helpless people away from the doors and stack them up along the walls of the hallways to clear the entrance."⁵¹

In light of the above, it is truly amazing to hear Tenney himself condemning people for being addicted to anointings and having "Uncontrolled Cravings for Cheap Spiritual Thrills," which he labels as "Spiritual Pornography."⁵²

He then is so bold to say, as the Apostles in Acts 2 were accused of "being falling-down drunks," that "We need to see that happen in some of our services. I'd love to see God's anointing wreck us and wreck the church. I'd love to see people stagger out of the building just dripping with oil."⁵³

Tenney constantly talks about intimacy but just as some people mistake many emotional relationships for intimacy or even sexual encounters for intimacy, he is mistaken in thinking that carnal emotions, fleshly manifestations, mindless ecstasy and altered states are intimacy with God.

The question now becomes, which God are we to chase? Is it the

pantheistic God who is in every atom and every particle — both glue and pieces? Or is it the God who is an actor playing three roles or modes? Or is it the God who delights in knocking His people around and then stacking them like cordwood along the walls? Is it the God who makes His people staggering drunk acting like idiots? Is it the God who delights in being a house wrecker? What is it that people are catching?

SEEKING OR CHASING?

Someone might ask, "Isn't chasing God the same as seeking Him? Are we not told to seek Him?" The answer is that they are not the same. The above description by Tenney makes that abundantly clear. Tenney certainly goes far beyond the Bible in his teachings.

We seek God because we know Him and have Him in our lives, not because we are trying to catch Him. Seeking Him in Scripture means to seek His blessing, among other things. The difference may elude some.

One of the Hebrew words for seek is *baqas*. It is used throughout the Old Testament about 220 times. It means to seek, search or consult. Seeking God's face in prayer does not mean trying to find Him but simply inquiring of and consulting Him. It also can mean to accomplish a plan or pursue such things as wisdom. W.E. Vine speaks of *baqas* and explains:

"Theologically, this verb can be used not only 'to seek' a location before the Lord (to stand before Him in the temple and seek to secure His blessing), but it may also be used of a state of mind: 'But if from thence thou shall seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him [*daras*] with all thy heart and with all thy soul' (Deut. 4:29)."⁵⁴

The other Hebrew word *daras*, used 160 times, like *baqas* (and is often synonymous or parallel) means to seek, inquire, consult, ask, or require. It does not involve spiritual gymnastics, thrills, chills, emotional orgies or strange manifestations. Vine again

says:

"This word is often used to describe the 'seeking of' the Lord in the sense of entering into covenantal relationship with Him. The prophets often used *daras* as they called on the people to make an about-face in living and instead 'seek ye the Lord while he may be found...' (Isa. 55:6)."⁵⁵

Thus Vine shows that seeking the Lord may also mean repentance and confession of sin.

So prayer, petition, intercession, calling on God for wisdom and grace, and especially repentance are all seen as "seeking God." This we can do because He is there for us and with us. Christ is in us as our hope of glory (Colossians 1:27) and is our Emmanuel. God is with us. We are complete in Christ (Colossians 2:9-10).

Even the panting or thirsting after God in Psalm 42:1 cannot be twisted to fit the Tenney mold. The context is clear that the Psalmist was longing for the house of God — God's sanctuary. The writer did not conclude, "Now let me fall on the floor and convulse uncontrollably as I chase God."

As Hebrew scholars Keil and Delitzsch explain:

"The composer ... finds himself, against his will, at a great distance from the sanctuary on Zion, the resting-place of the divine presence and manifestation, surrounded by an ungodly people, who mock at him as one forsaken of God, and he comforts his sorrowful soul, looking longingly back upon that which it has lost, with the prospect of God's help which will soon appear. ... David's yearning after the house of God in Ps. xxiii., xxvi., lv., lxiii., finds its echo here. ... The spot where this God reveals Himself to him who seeks Him is the sanctuary on Zion."⁵⁶

God has now revealed Himself and is tabernacled in Christ. The frenzied mayhem and pandemonium de-

scribed by Tenney just does not fit the biblical picture. Tenney's activity sounds more like the desperate out-of-control prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:26-29).

BREATHING IN CULTURE'S POLLUTED AIR

The fanfare being generated by the popularity of Tenney's books, with their blatant misuse and denigration of Scripture, points up that the Church at large has imbibed a post-modern trend that developed in the 1960s called deconstructionism. The new prophets are marked by this. Deborah Lipstadt explains this emerging trend and its disregard for history and context:

"Various scholars began to argue that texts had no fixed meaning. The reader's interpretation, not the author's intention, determined meaning. ... it opened the doors of the academy, and of society at large, to an array of farfetched notions that could no longer be dismissed out of hand simply because they were absurd. ... it also fostered an atmosphere in which it became harder to say that an idea was beyond the pale of rational thought. ... This relativistic approach to the truth has permeated the arena of popular culture, where there is an increasing fascination with, and acceptance of, the irrational."⁵⁷

Tenney can be commended for wanting to see cities repent as did Nineveh,⁵⁸ but it is doubtful this will happen if people make fools of themselves and are out-of-control. What Tenney calls "old love letters" is the very thing that God wants to use to bring men to repentance. The Gospel is God's means of bringing men to faith. Paul calls it the "power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16-17, 10:17).

Having laid aside the "old love letters," Tenney thinks that God can be coaxed and coerced by our intensity and by ganging up:

"I believe that when the conglomerate prayers of God's

people gather together and finally reach a crescendo of power, hunger, and intensity, it finally gets to be 'too much' for God to delay any longer. At that point He finally says, "That's it. I won't wait any longer. It is time!"⁵⁹

So it appears it is a matter of just wearing God down. This, however, does not fit the model of Jonah and Nineveh in any respect. It was a reluctant Jonah and a Sovereign God in that event. God had to "coerce" Jonah, not the opposite.

In spite of Tenney's disclaimer,⁶⁰ his disrespect of Scripture shows through repeatedly. He says of the New Testament believers:

"They didn't even have the Old Testament Scriptures because those expensive scrolls were locked up in synagogues. The only Scriptures they had were the verses from the law, the Psalms, and the prophets that had been passed down orally from grandfathers and grandmothers — and that only if they were Jewish believers. So what *did* they have? They walked and talked with *Him* in such a rich level of intimacy that it wasn't necessary for them to pore over dusty love letters that were written long ago. They had God's love notes freshly written on their hearts."⁶¹

Nothing could be more misleading or further from the truth. George Mackie corrects the Tenney distortion in his *Bible Manners and Customs*:

"Children are sent to school almost in infancy, and remained till the twelfth or thirteenth year. ... The school among the Jews is called 'the house of the book' — that is the Bible, especially the Pentateuch. In the reading of the Bible and the Jewish Prayer-book a knowledge of manuscript Hebrew writing is also taught."⁶²

So Jewish children had biblical instruction all through the week at school, in the synagogue on the Sabbath and from parents at home dur-

ing the off hours. On the feast days, biblical history was drilled into their minds. They took seriously Psalm 1:2 and delighted in and meditated upon God's Word. They had Scriptures on their door post (in a *mezuzah*) and at other times wore it on their forehead and arms (in their *phylacteries*).⁶³

Alfred Edersheim says:

"The familiarity from earliest childhood with the Scriptures in the Hebrew original also explains how at the age of twelve Jesus could be found 'in the Temple; sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions.'"⁶⁴

The early Church in Jerusalem was composed of virtually all Jewish believers who were steeped in the Old Testament, as can be seen in the recorded messages of Peter and Paul in the Book of Acts. Paul reminded Timothy: "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:14-15).

New Testament believers continued in the Apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42) and were very familiar with the writings of Peter and Paul (2 Peter 3:15-16). They did not rely on faulty memories but had deep respect and high regard for what Tenney calls dusty love letters. In Acts 17, the Bereans "searched the Scriptures daily" (v. 11).

Gentile believers had the Old Testament in a Greek version called the Septuagint, so Tenney is totally wrong in suggesting they did not. Paul relied heavily on that translation as he preached in Gentile cities.

David exclaimed: "For you have magnified your word above all Your name" (Psalm 138:2). We cannot make a false dichotomy between God and His Word as if they are opposed to one another. Love for God is love

for His Word. Intimacy with God is intimacy with His Word. Obedience to God is obedience to His Word. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). When two people are in love, they relish reading one another's correspondence.

DRIVING STAKES — AND ILLUSIONS

Tenney also endorses spiritual staking, which is described as going around the perimeters of a city and hammering literal stakes into the ground. Somehow, this drives out demons and wins the city.⁶⁵ This staking of cities, according to Tenney, is "bold acts of outright aggression without apology or hesitation. We're telling the devil, 'We have declared this before God, and now we are telling you, "We will take the city!"'"⁶⁶ This all came to Tenney through a "stirring of the Lord" in California.⁶⁷ He realized that during the Gold Rush, men would stake a claim. So, by deduction, this was God's Word to Tenney for the new staking procedure. Since that time there have been no major cities won for Christ.

Tenney suggests a new form of evangelism called "presence evangelism."⁶⁸ This is yet another mystical happening where one is so saturated with the "residue of God" that it "creates a *divine radiation zone* of the manifest presence of God, so much so that it affects those around you."⁶⁹

Through this residue of God we will be doing even more than Jesus was able to do. Tenney claims, "He wants to finish what He was unable to start in Nazareth when He said, 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears' (Lk. 4:21b)."⁷⁰ People around you will be profoundly revolutionized by the residue, "we won't have to beg people to come to the Lord in repentance. They will run to the altar when His glory breaks their bondage (and they can't come any other way!),"⁷¹ Tenney maintains.

Jesus' Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), which is evangelism, is still the biblical way to reach others.

PROPHETIC WEATHERMEN

Like many other hyper-Charismatic teachers and leaders, Tenney finds signs and direction in all kinds of mundane things. A weatherman in California triggered a prophetic message in Tenney:

"As I prepared for the meeting that night, I listened to the local news and heard the weatherman in Los Angeles say something that struck a prophetic nerve in me. He said, 'This is not the last storm. Actually, *they are stacking up* out in the Pacific *like waves*, one against another.' Then he added, 'They're just going to

Using Exodus 33:17-18,20, Tenney insists, "Dead Men See His Face — The secret path to His presence."⁷⁴

When God said: "You cannot see my face; for no man can see me and live," He was speaking of His pure essence and being. Tenney, on the other hand, sets forth an elaborate narrative of Moses and his quest to see God's glory:

"We need to look closely at the 1,500-year pursuit of God's glory by the ancient patriarch, Moses. As we noted earlier in Chapter 4, when Moses told God, 'Show me Your glory,' the Lord said, 'You can't, Moses. Only dead men can

Like many other hyper-Charismatic teachers and leaders, Tenney finds signs and direction in all kinds of mundane things.



keep coming,' and explained that the source of those waves of rain was El Niño. El Niño in Spanish means 'the babe' and is used to refer to the babe of Bethlehem! That weatherman didn't realize that he was prophesying, but he was talking about the 'Christ child,' the Source of all the waves of glory about to sweep over the planet."⁷²

Tenney works his imagination overtime on omens. Richard Kennedy defines them:

"Signs which are believed to signal good or bad events to come. The practices of *magic* and *divination* rely heavily on the interpretation of omens."⁷³

DEAD MAN SEEING?

Tenney tries to make the Scripture say things it does not say or teach.

see My face.' ... That God-birthing prayer from Moses' heart was an eternal thing that knew no limits in time. It didn't die the day Moses took his last breath on earth; it continued to echo through the throne room of God until the moment that prayer was granted."⁷⁵

When, according to Tenney, was Moses' prayer finally answered? At the Transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:28-34). Tenney's outlandish tale continues:

"In that moment [at the Transfiguration], it is as if He said, 'Okay now, Michael, Gabriel (the two archangels), *go get Moses*. It is time for him to see My glory now.' In the halls of Heaven they dusted off Jacob's ladder and extended it to the earth and Moses walked down to a place

where he'd never been before — the promised land of his people. ... On this day, 1,500 years after his death, after the unforgettable prayer of Moses had echoed in God's ears unceasingly day after day, Moses 'the dead man walking' saw the glory of God unveiled."⁷⁶

All this angelic activity is a figment of Tenney's fertile mind. Moreover, Tenney misses on two points here. Moses did not see the "face of God" or the pure essence of God but a brief appearance of a glorified Christ in His coming kingdom.

Charles Ryrie writes,

"The transfiguration gave the three disciples a preview of Jesus' future exaltation and the coming kingdom. The Lord was seen in His body of glory."⁷⁷

Secondly, Moses was not called there because of a prior prayer and there is nothing in the text to support Tenney's wild scenario. Greek scholar and exegete Randolph O. Yeager comments:

"Jesus Christ is the Righteousness of God incarnate in human flesh. Before He came He was foretold by both the law and the prophets. Moses, a representative of the law and Elias, a representative of the prophets, now appear with Him of Whom they witnessed in former days."⁷⁸

The Transfiguration was a revelation of the glory of the Son of God and His kingdom, now confirming what the Law (signified by Moses) and the Prophets (signified by Elijah) had proclaimed centuries earlier.

When the Apostle Peter looks back to the Transfiguration (and he was there), he says nothing about the "face of God" but rather points to the *Word of God*. Peter states that after his preview encounter of the power and coming of the Lord and witnessing the power, majesty and glory of Christ (2 Peter 1:16-17), he still did not rely or want his hearers to rely on experiences. He forcefully states: "*We have the prophetic word made more sure*

to which you do well to pay attention as a lamp shining in a dark place" (v. 19). Peter says we must opt for the Word over the experience.

In all of this, Tenney has no idea where his teaching leads:

"God is out to redefine the Church. He is sending His fire to burn away everything that isn't from Him anyway, so you have nothing to lose...but your flesh. ... As God redefines the Church, it is highly likely that the Church that emerges from the cloud of His glory will look very different from what you and I think the Church should look like. This will happen because God is repossessing the Church and drawing it close to Him. ... We can take the risk of something dying in us as we dare to draw close to His glory, or we can turn and run back to our traditions of men and the safety of religious legalism and man-operated church services. *Seeker-friendly is fine; Spirit-friendly is fire!*"⁷⁹

Tenney has stacked the deck here. Apparently, if it is not his way, it must be "tradition" or "legalism" or "man-operated." In reality, there are options between these extremes.

Tenney says the Church "will look very different" but offers no definitive word on what or how. The truth is we have all that we need regarding how the Church should look in the definitive commands and structure for Church life as found throughout Paul's Epistles. To depart from that stated structure would be as serious as the Old Testament people constructing God's Tabernacle any way they pleased.

He also misses all that we have in our position in Christ. He has missed Paul's words, "But *we all* with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). Paul's words apply to all, not just some special spiritual elite called

"God chasers." All we need to see and know about God has been given us in the Savior.

We are joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17) and Paul further states, "For it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). Tenney is selling the Church short in his quest for Spirit-friendly fire!

A CLEAR PICTURE

If the Church continues to go down the road of distorted Bible interpretation, mysticism, esoteric experiences, neo-gnosticism and fleshly experiments, we know where it will all lead and how the Church will look. The Church will be turned from truth to fables (2 Timothy 4:4) and be led into more error and confusion. It will chase myths and weird revelations. It will look more and more cultic being driven by every wind of false doctrine. It will not look like Christ or Christianity but be a distorted image reflecting only the latest revelations of the new prophets and apostles or the latest "new truth" from its deceived leaders. We can know for sure what the Church will look like, because its growing deformity is already very obvious. What is being "birthed" by the new prophets is a deformed and grotesque offspring. God help us not to chase myths and human ideas *about God* but to "chase" after truth as revealed in God's unchanging Word of truth.

Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, did not escape the judgment of God when they offered "strange fire" on the sacrificial altar (Leviticus 10:1-2). God had dictated a specific way and His words were to be followed and obeyed. The sons of Aaron did not conform to God's stated will and directives. Departure from the Word of God was disaster and death. They did not need "now-words"; they needed obedience to revealed truth. They ignored the "old paw prints" and were devoured by the roaring lion.

Remember, too, that Nadab and Abihu were “God-catchers” and had seen the glory of God, the sapphire stones, and heaven along with Moses and Aaron (Exodus 24:9-11). They chose to ignore God’s Word and were judged with death. Ongoing obedience to God’s stated Word is what was and is needed.

Adam Clarke observes:

“In the preceding chapter [Leviticus 9] we have seen how God intended that every part of his service should be conducted; and that every sacrifice might be acceptable to him, he sent his *own fire* as the emblem of his presence, and the means of consuming the sacrifice. — Here we find Aaron’s sons neglecting the Divine ordinance, ... Every part of the religion of God is Divine. He alone knew what he designed by its rites and ceremonies, ... He therefore who *altered* any part of this representative system, who *omitted* or *added* any thing, assumed a prerogative which belonged to God alone, and was certainly guilty of a very high offense against the wisdom, justice, and righteousness of his Maker.”⁸⁰

What Tenney describes as “putting God in a box,” God calls obedience. It should be pointed out that God put Himself on a box when He dwelt in the Holy of Holies on the Ark of the Covenant. God today dwells in Christ because He can put Himself wherever He chooses. Our task is to obey Him and live dedicated lives. God has chosen to live within us which should evoke our praise and gratitude.

Tenney may induce some people to seek God and that could be a good thing. However, if his teaching as a whole is followed, it could hurtle some into an endless seeking of emotional highs and ecstatic and bizarre experiences.

It should not go without notice that another of Tenney’s books is called *God’s Dream Team*. Dreams are not reality and some dreams turn to nightmares. Concocting any practices not prescribed or directed by God’s

Word and will is dangerous. “Chasing God,” as Tenney outlines it, is “strange fire.”

Consider the words of Jesus, “Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

God invites us not to whip up human frenzies and strange fire but just to come to Him and come boldly to His throne of grace:

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need” (Hebrews 4:14-16).

There is a torn veil, there is an open heaven and an open Book. There is a throne of grace and there is a God who is available. Faith, trust, prayer, dependence keep us always in His Presence (Psalm 139). We have been “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). We do not have to chase what we already have.

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EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

service means 4,054 hours are required worldwide per convert. Based on 40 hours of field service per week, that's still 101 weeks — nearly two years — per a baptized convert.

And there's a component in all of this that hasn't been taken into account: internal growth (that is, children who grow up in Watchtower families and are baptized into their parents' religion). If 25 percent of all Watchtower baptisms are the result of internal growth, then another year of field service has been added to the amount necessary to produce a baptized convert.

One reason it takes so long for the Watchtower to produce one convert is that the work is accomplished solely through human effort. Absent is the work of the Holy Spirit, whose mission is to glorify our Risen Savior, convict the world of sin, and bring illumination to the Word of God (John 16:5-14).

The Watchtower, in relying upon human effort, also restricts God's ability to save and regenerate. Through the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ, God can (and does) set free sinners instantaneously. No need to study a Watchtower book or two, no months of attending Kingdom Hall meetings and no 80 questions to answer in order to become a "Christian." A simple faith in the person and work of Christ is the biblical requirement.

The late professor of evangelism, Paul E. Little, describes for the Christian God's role in bringing one to faith:

"When we tell others about Jesus Christ, we study the Word of God with new eyes to sharpen our ability to communicate its message. We pray to God in specific name-address-phone-number terms for our friends in whose lives we are involved. We ask God to illumine them specifically, to introduce them to the Savior and a new life. With anticipation we watch God answer prayer. We will see indifference or antagonism ebb and interest grow. Meanwhile, the Bible becomes increasingly alive when we see others respond to its truth. Passages that once seemed dry and extraneous take on new meaning. When we see the Holy Spirit transform the life of another, we will know we are on the cutting edge of supernaturalism. We can relate not only to our own story of God's work but also the updated events of God's work in the lives of others" (*How to Give Your Faith Away*, pg. 36).

Jehovah's Witnesses may boast of their quarter-million-plus baptisms last year. However, their converts are a result of their own human efforts; hand-dug cisterns that are wells of stagnant, polluted water. Sadly, they are missing the connection to the pure, clean, fresh water that Jesus gives: the "living water" of the Holy Spirit (John 4:14; 7:38-39). When one is united with the Jesus of Scripture, the "living water" inside him becomes a spring so that he will become a source of life for other people.

For Jehovah's Witnesses, it just doesn't add up. They can plant and sow for billions of hours on end. But any harvest is their own doing. God is not the One who gives the increase to their labor.

—MKG

requested "some form of simple accountability ... to respect their interests." *Charisma* reported, "It was suggested that Brown hold Assemblies of God credentials while president of the school, but [Brown] felt that would be a compromise."

After an alternative solution making Kilpatrick executive president was suggested, Brown "expressed concern at the agreement and asked that the school be released to him." Brown's request was denied by the BRSM board and it further "determined unanimously to release Dr. Brown as president of BRSM."

Following his dismissal, Brown announced plans to start a new ministry school in Pensacola. In a Dec. 30 statement, Brown said: "I, along with eight core faculty members, have established the F.I.R.E. School of Ministry. ... Since my dismissal came in the middle of a school year, and because of our many commitments made to the BRSM student body, the leadership of the F.I.R.E. School of Ministry felt strongly led to begin classes immediately, without missing a semester, right here in Pensacola." F.I.R.E. is the acronym for the Fellowship for International Revival and Evangelism.

At the time of Brown's ouster, more than 1,100 students made up the BRSM's enrollment. BRSM opened in January 1997 with 120 students.

With Brown's dismissal, only two of the key figures of the "Pensacola Outpouring" remain: Kilpatrick, and worship and music leader Lindell Cooley. Stephen Hill, the revival's evangelist, quit last June after a five-year stint.

—MKG

LDS SEEK GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY AT OLYMPICS

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are gearing up for the 2002 Winter Olympics, which will be held in Salt Lake City. While church President Gordon B. Hinckley has stated that proselytizing efforts should not extend beyond their normal bounds, members are hoping to share — and even abate common misconceptions about — the Mormon faith with the hundreds of thousands of anticipated spectators.

The LDS' Olympic Coordinating Committee has been notified by church leaders to instruct all church members who volunteer at Olympic events not to proselytize. "We don't want to bang anyone over the head with the Book of Mormon," Marjorie Draper Conder told the Associated Press. Conder is the curator of Salt Lake City's LDS Museum of Church History and Art.

Yet, the Mormon influence will not go unnoticed. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir will perform during the Winter Games and Hinckley has pledged to deliver an "extravaganza." However, church leaders are remaining tight-lipped as to the particulars of the promised production. The church already has initiated a campaign on its web site to educate non-Mormons planning to come to Salt Lake City for the prestigious international event.

Others also are working to make the hosting city more palatable to the expected deluge of visitors. The AP reported, "State officials also eased some of Utah's arcane liquor laws in anticipation of the Olympics, a decision the church did not oppose." Mormons are taught that abstinence from alcohol (along with tea, coffee and tobacco) are regarded as "a measuring rod to determine in part the personal worthiness of church members."

Utah is 70 percent Mormon. The LDS church claims 11 million members worldwide.

—MKG

BOOKS IN REVIEW

(continued from page 24)

many Muslims, any attempt to destroy the shrines of Al-Aqsa is a sign that the Hour is at hand" (pg. 14).

The dust jacket informs us: "Adroitly portraying former-hippies-turned-true-believers, American radio-evangelists of the End, radical Palestinian sheikhs, and Israeli ex-terrorists, Gorenberg weaves a story that stretches from California churches to West Bank settlements."

Gorenberg's aim in writing the book is squarely laid out: "Belief in the approaching End has influenced crucial events in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Time and again, it has been the rationale behind apparently irrational bloodshed, and undermined efforts at peace-making. In the worst case, desire for history's finale has the potential to spark all-out war in the Middle East. And here's the paradox: The world's resolute refusal to end doesn't mute expectations; it turns them up. In the years to come, therefore, hope for the End will continue to exert political influence — and its potential to set off violence will only increase. That hope is more than a fantasy; it has the power to affect our world. The purpose of this book is to show why" (pp. 3-4).

While we all may want to support Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East, Gorenberg shows us things that may make us think twice before investing directly in any way in plans and efforts for rebuilding a Third Temple. I cannot recommend this book highly enough for an in-depth treatment of Middle East tensions and for an understanding of how Christian fundamentalism may be exacerbating that tension.

—GRF



Books in Review

MODERN MYTHS ABOUT SATAN AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

by David Kirkwood

Ethnos Press, 166 pages, \$7.95

Every so often a volume comes along that misses the recognition it deserves. David Kirkwood's book just may be one of those volumes. (It was first published in 1994 and seems to have gone undetected.) With so much superstition, mythology and even error in print about Satan and demons, it is a very welcome study.

Kirkwood takes on all the unproven and unbiblical clichés thrown around in the world by deliverance ministers. He writes:

"Unfortunately much of what is being taught contradicts what Scripture teaches. Consequently, many Christians are practicing a kind of spiritual warfare that the Bible never prescribes. As I have read some of the popular literature on the subject of spiritual warfare, I am often utterly amazed at how far some teachers have deviated from the Bible" (pg. 9).

Did Adam lose to Satan his lease to control the world? Does Satan control all human governments and natural disaster? Can we pull down demonic strongholds in the atmosphere? What does the Bible say the strongholds are? The biblical answers to these questions may surprise you. What about territorial demons and spiritual mapping? Can a demon occupy a Christian's body? What about generational curses and satanic curses? Does involvement in the occult assure that hosts of invading demons will inhabit the former practitioner? Kirkwood answers all these and much, much more.

The author systematizes and summarizes large portions of the Bible to give us sane, sober and solid guidance through the maze of deliverance errors. It is a welcome relief to the imbalance and extremism of modern-day exorcists. This book can be read straight through or in individual sections.

God gives teachers to the Church (Acts 8:31; Ephesians 4:11-12) and at times gives them specific areas of insight

and specialty. Kirkwood's volume is one such work. We hope it receives the wide reading it deserves.

—GRF

THE END OF DAYS Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount

by Gershom Gorenberg

Free Press, 273 pages, \$25.00

If there is ever a current book that everyone should read, it is this one. At times it reads like a mystery thriller. Gershom Gorenberg, who lives in Jerusalem and is a columnist for *The New Republic* and *The Jerusalem Report*, does a masterful job of giving us insight into the Jewish, Moslem and Christian views of the end times and the struggle to rebuild the Third Temple. It is not written from a Christian perspective, but it is a cutting-edge and informative book. We often talk of a "must-read" but this one is a fast-paced, must, must read.

Understanding where Gorenberg is coming from as a Jew and understanding his cynicism because of radical futuristic date-setters and cults, we can learn much from his book about the current Israeli scene and not be affected by his less-than-evangelical view of Scripture.

In this compelling analysis, we meet a cast of players familiar to us and some not so familiar: Tim LaHaye, Jerry Falwell, Hal Lindsey, Zola Levitt, Randy Price, Chuck Missler, Chuck Smith and even the red heifer are there along with all the rightist and extremist Jews plotting and planning and praying for a rebuilt temple. Gorenberg separates the fiction and mythology from the truth and helps us to fully understand why the temple complex in Jerusalem is such a tinderbox.

Gorenberg explains why the Temple Mount is so volatile an issue and gives us deep insights into current events in Israel. He helps us understand why Christians, Jews, and Moslems are so intertwined when it comes to the rebuilding of the Third Temple: "For a small but growing group of Jews on the Israeli religious right, every day since 1967 has been a missed opportunity to begin building the Third Temple. For a larger number of conservative Christians elsewhere in the world — and particularly in the United States — building that Temple is an essential condition for the Second Coming. And for

(continues on page 23)

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