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Trivializing God: The Don Quixote Demonology of Our Modern Church

by G. Richard Fisher

Ralph Kuiper once stated, "Cyclone experiences with the Lord may be just a lot of wind."

The teaching of exorcisms, warfare clichés, and demon-chasing has blossomed into a substantial movement within the Church over the past few decades. Its growth has come at the expense of a balanced and biblical view of Satan and demons taught by Scripture. Pop demonology long ago divorced itself from scriptural guidelines and was wedded to various forms of secular psychology. Manipulation of demons is now seen as a therapeutic tool.

The Adversary, The Bondage Breaker, Reclaiming Surrendered Ground, Unbroken Curses, Bothered? Bewildered? Bewitched?, Pigs in the Parlor, In the Name of Satan, Demon Possession and the Christian, and similar titles have become the new Bibles in the revival of an old pagan paradigm.

The current pursuit in experimental demonology (with its old worldview) trivializes God, demeans grace, nearly deifies man, and elevates Satan and



demons beyond what they deserve. In some cases, the information gleaned from those diagnosed as demonized is

supposed to have come from the demons themselves, who are not known for telling the truth.

TILTING AT WINDMILLS

Miguel de Cervantes' comical character Don Quixote, from the novel of the same name, wanders about battling imaginary foes, fighting silly crusades, and going on absurd adventures.¹ Today's demon-chasers are much like that character. One's enemy can be a figment of the imagination while the real enemy goes unhindered.

Instead of a well-balanced view of Satan and demons, the Church at large seems to have retreated into a new Zoroastrianism. Dualism or Zoroastrianism is based on the visions of Zoroaster in 1500 B.C. He taught that
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Editorials

NO, WE CAN'T ALL JUST GET ALONG

"Build a bridge" is a common theme among Charismatics. And what that means, in effect, is that doctrine is not important. *Charisma* editor J. Lee Grady tries his hand at bridge-building in his recent editorial, "Stop the Feud" (*Charisma*, July 2002, pg. 6). In the article, Grady tries to reconcile the doctrinal dispute between Oneness Pentecostals and Trinitarian Pentecostals.

Grady writes, "It all sounds like pointless doctrinal hair-splitting to us younger types. After all, who can explain the mystery of God's triune nature? Instead of fussing about terms or reducing the gospel to a baptismal formula, why can't we rally around our common belief that the Father sent His Son to save the world?" Grady flaunts his ignorance of theology with such a statement.

Oneness doctrine purports that Jesus *is* the Father *and* the Holy Spirit. This is incompatible with the Bible. It is not, as he calls it, "pointless doctrinal hair-splitting." He also writes, "What many of them [UPCs] preach is a toxic form of salvation by works." But that anti-biblical, different gospel concept doesn't seem to bother him either.

Grady does express concerns about Oneness Pentecostals, but his contention is apart from crucial doctrinal issues. "Oneness Pentecostals must join the 21st cen-

ture," he writes. "My calendar says this is 2002, yet the UPC still bans TV viewing and won't allow women to wear pants, makeup and short hairstyles."

Doctrine does divide. That is its purpose. It divides the Jehovah's Witnesses from orthodox Christians. It also divides Trinitarian believers from those holding to the Oneness position. Christians, including Grady or any of his Charismatic colleagues, should never build a bridge over such a theological chasm.

—MKG

REPROACH ON A PROPHET

In March 1995, Gordon B. Hinckley took the reins of leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. During his tenure as president, prophet, seer, and revelator of the Mormon church, Hinckley has kept a high profile. Interviews with Hinckley have appeared in major newspapers, magazines such as *Time* and *The New Yorker*, and on celebrated talk shows such as *Larry King Live* and *60 Minutes*.

In several of these interviews, Hinckley's remarks indicate that with regard to Mormon theology, the
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HINN'S FINANCIAL INTEGRITY QUESTIONED

More than two and one-half years have passed since faith healer Benny Hinn announced to the 17,000 faithful attending his Dallas crusade of his plans to build a \$30-million "World Healing Center." Now the *Dallas Morning News* is questioning Hinn's honesty for raising funds for a project that never happened.

According to the newspaper's report, the facility was to "include acres of lush gardens, a Gothic cathedral and virtual reality chapels featuring faith healers of the past." Hinn told his followers at his October 1999 Dallas Miracle Crusade that \$5 million was needed by 2000, and that another \$25 million had to be raised over the next two years. At the meeting, Hinn distributed donor cards to finance the project. The preprinted donation amounts on the cards started at \$1,500. Shortly thereafter, the undertaking vanished from Hinn's agenda of divinely inspired endeavors.

Apparently, the project never really made serious headway. In the summer of 1999, Cirrus Group, a Dallas real estate developer working for Hinn, agreed to purchase an 8.2-acre plot of land in Las Colinas-Irving, Texas. The firm put up \$40,000 to \$50,000 to hold the property for 60 days. Eventually the earnest money was forfeited, the Dallas newspaper reported.

Hinn's response to the derailed project is typical. His ministry stated, "Pastor Hinn felt God had revealed to him in prayer back in February 2000 that the timing was not right for the construction of the healing center portion of the development project in Texas, and he should wait." But God was not solely responsible for the delay. Hinn's spokesman, David Brokaw, told the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* that the ministry's donors wanted a larger parcel of land.

Although the "World Healing Center" will not be an immediate reality, a \$3 million "parsonage" for Hinn will be. Construction of the 7,200-square-foot mansion began two years ago in a gated community in Dana Point, Calif. According to the *Dallas Morning News*, the "two-story home will have seven bedrooms, seven bathrooms, three fireplaces, a library, a meditation room with a balcony and a five-car underground garage." The home, south of Los Angeles, overlooks the Pacific Ocean.

The newspaper disclosed that the "owner of the property is listed as Cove Holding Ltd., a partnership

formed six days before the Dana Point home site was purchased for \$450,000 in August 1997. Mr. Hinn is president of Cove Holding, which lists its address as his attorney's office in Irving, [Texas]." Cove Holding, said to be a tax-exempt, religious title-holding company, claims its board of directors wanted to build the residence as an investment. It also maintained that Hinn does not personally own the property, neither was he involved in the decision to build it. The newspaper, however, did not disclose who serves as directors on the organization's board.

—MKG

SUPREME COURT VICTORY FOR JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The Watchtower Society has prevailed over a Stratton, Ohio, ordinance that required its members to obtain a permit before conducting door-to-door proselytizing. In an 8-to-1 U.S. Supreme Court decision, the law was ruled too broad.

"It is offensive, not only to the values protected by the First Amendment, but to the very notion of a free society, that in the context of everyday public discourse a citizen must first inform the government of her desire to speak to her neighbors and then obtain a permit to do so," wrote Justice John Paul Stevens on behalf of the court's decision.

It was argued that the way the law stood, Girl Scouts selling cookies, political candidates campaigning, or students raising money for school projects would be subject to securing a permit. Prior to the June 17 Supreme Court ruling, earlier court decisions by the Federal District Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in Cincinnati ruled in favor of the city's ordinance.

The residents of Stratton, a community of 287, are said to have a contemptuous attitude toward Jehovah's Witnesses. According to the city's mayor, John M. Abdalla, many of his community's residents are retirees who have grown weary of the doorstep visits by Jehovah's Witnesses. According to a CNN report, "About 15 people have applied for the permits since the law took effect, and no one has been turned away. Jehovah's

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Behind Closed Doors of the Kingdom Halls

Charges of Child Molestation Mount Against Jehovah's Witness Elders

by M. Kurt Goedelman

Every two minutes, someone in America is sexually assaulted. Clergy members, elders, and spiritual leaders — those mandated by Scripture to be blameless and above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2-7) — should be helping the victims and assisting the police in investigating the charges. But in some cases, they are the very ones committing such evil deeds. Making their actions even more reprehensible is the fact that in some of these cases, the victims are children.

Child sexual abuse by leaders of various religious bodies has made far too many headlines of late. The Roman Catholic Church in the United States faces what Pope John Paul II calls a "grave scandal." The Pope also said the sex abuse cases have cast a "dark shadow of suspicion" over all priests. For years, the Catholic Church sought to keep the lid on revelations of widespread abuse. Although the lid has now been blown off, the extent of the damage has not been assessed. Catholic journalist Michael Rose, in his new blockbuster, *Goodbye, Good Men*, exposes the scope of the problem in Roman Catholic seminaries.

Charges of child sex abuse have led to the downfall of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness. Facing a \$400 million lawsuit over alleged sexual abuse by leaders at its schools, the Hare Krishna sect filed for protection last year under Chapter 11 of the federal bankruptcy law.

The 94 plaintiffs in the Krishna lawsuit claim to have been abused

while they were children living at its boarding schools in India and the United States during the 1970s and 1980s. Perhaps the group sought to ward off legal action by establishing the "ISKCON Office of Child Protection" in 1998 and devoting \$1 million to help the children of its members who suffered physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. However, the victims filed suit in Dallas and the sect opted for legal protection in hopes the lawsuit would be dismissed.

First Timothy 4:1-4 is a passage too long ignored. Romans 1 and its warnings are not to be taken lightly, either. We must never forget 2 Peter 2:12-14 and Jude 18-19, which remind us that a spinoff of heresy is pervasive immorality.

While the Krishnas have admitted a history of child molestation, the Catholic Church, as stated above, has not been so forthright. For more than a decade, Catholic bishops employed a cloak of secrecy. Now, allegations of repeated child abuse and cover-ups have been leveled against another religious sect and the details are being divulged. The religious leaders named in the new waves of indictments may shock some; others may not be so surprised. They are congregational leaders of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, known as Jehovah's Witness elders.

During the past several months, the news media has begun to examine

and disclose molestations by Jehovah's Witness elders. In late May, the Watchtower organization faced its greatest exposure of the scandal — a national report by NBC's *Dateline* program.¹ Even more horrific is that Watchtower leaders have conspired to bury the allegations and castigate or even try to destroy those who make them known.

Throughout the years, the Watchtower has employed a response to such charges that is identical to that of the Catholic Church: secrecy and cover-up. This led the Watchtower organization to come under scrutiny by and face resistance from some of its own members. In many cases, these frustrated and abused members became the basis for reports by both local and national media outlets, including the NBC broadcast. These members charged that Watchtower policy aided the pedophiles in the organization by allowing these child predators and their law-breaking to go unreported, thereby placing other members, their children, and the public at great risk.

Even more incredible is the fact that once reported, it was the victims who suffered the rebuke, disdain, and intimidation of Watchtower leadership, while the offender often was shielded and defended. As the *Dateline* program noted:

"The scenario of alleged abuse is much the same [as in the Catho-

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Astronomy:

THE PALL BEARER OF ASTROLOGY

by Alan C. Weissenbacher

In an age when we can probe the depths of the universe with orbiting telescopes and pinpoint the movement of celestial bodies so far away, it would take a man traveling at the speed of light many lifetimes to reach them, some people today still make daily decisions using a system based on long-outdated assumptions about the nature and makeup of the universe.

Christians need not go any farther than the Bible to find admonitions against using astrology. The entire notion of relying on the stars runs against the grain of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Isaiah 47:13 amounts to a taunt against those who would consult astrologers. Critiquing astrology from a scriptural standpoint can be done quite easily.¹

However, Christians are not the only people who doubt astrology, and Christians themselves must exercise a measure of faith. To some, a Christian critiquing astrology from a biblical basis is no more than the pot calling the kettle black. But Christians and non-Christians alike can examine astrology's theoretical claims in the light of astronomy. If astrology fails this test, then all other critiques are secondary. Even those who do not embrace Christianity will agree that astrology is based on falsehood.

ASTROLOGY DEFINED

According to *The Astrology Encyclopedia*, "Astrology literally means the study (or science, depending on how one translates the Greek word *logos*) of the stars (*astron*). Astrology differs from astronomy by confining its

attention to the study of correlations between celestial events and human events."²

Astrology claims that the position of the stars and planets at someone's time of birth determines hereditary, mental, and physical attributes, as well as the forces operating upon the life of that which was born. Astrology can be applied to an individual, a nation, or an organization — anything with a distinct time of birth. Astrology claims not to lay out a predetermined future, but helps a person understand the forces influencing a thing or someone's existence and helps a person come to greater knowledge of themselves.

Astrologers consider their practice to be both an art and a science: a science because it contains a system of calculation that can be learned by anybody and does not require psychic powers; an art in that it requires intuitive skill to interpret and assign meaning to the data.

MEANINGS OF THE PLANETS AND STARS

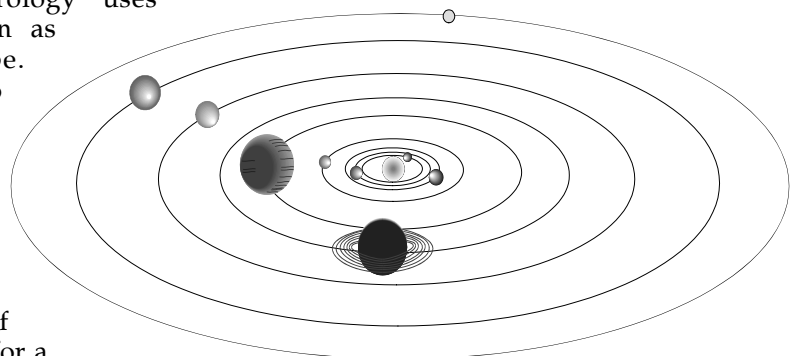
Modern astrology uses what is known as the horoscope. According to astrologer James Goodavage:

"Essentially, the horoscope is a map of the heavens for a

given moment in time from a specific location on the Earth. The patterns made by the planets and the aspects³ between them at the time of birth enable almost anyone who has studied the subject to deliver some remarkable interpretations of your character, personality, [and] individuality."⁴

It is these patterns that determine the differing aspects of one's life.

A horoscope is charted on the basis of the Ephemeris,⁵ which is an annual publication that lists where the sun, moon, planets, and constellations can be seen in the sky for every day of the year, often used to help navigate while sailing. Twelve constellations are used. They are called the signs of the Zodiac. A line is drawn through the center of the Earth, and a circle is centered upon the Earth against the backdrop of the stars. This circle is divided into twelve 30-degree segments, which form a band across the sky. Each segment is then given a name according to the constellations that one can see in this band: Aries the Ram, Taurus the Bull, Gemini the



Twins, Cancer the Crab, Leo the Lion, Virgo the Virgin, Libra the Scales, Scorpio the Scorpion, Sagittarius the Archer, Capricorn the Goat, Aquarius the Water Bearer, and Pisces the Fish.

The horoscope also involves the planets. There are also 12 fixed artificial divisions around the Earth called houses, which are used to keep track of the planets relative to the Earth. Each house indicates an area of life. Each planet is assigned its own personality and essential meaning, often similar to the characteristics of the Roman god it is named after. Each planet is said to exert different influences upon each house, depending upon which constellation it can be seen in at that time.⁶

The major astrological influences in addition to the constellations and planets are the sun, moon, ascendant sign, descendant sign, and the mid-heaven sign. The ascendant sign is the sign of the Zodiac on the eastern horizon and is said to affect appearance, outward traits, and possibly the personality.⁷ The descendant sign is the one on the western horizon and is said to affect the personality. The mid-heaven sign is the sign that is highest above the horizon and is said to influence work and career matters. Additionally, the angular relationship between various constellations and planets are said to be either hard (producing conflict) or soft (producing harmony) in a person's life. The sign of the Zodiac that the sun occupies when the horoscope is drawn is said to define the basic temperament of the individual. The sign that the moon is in is said to affect one's emotions and moods.⁸

After all the research is done to determine the exact positions of the horoscope, the work of the astrologer is then to interpret the information in order to form a reading.

ASTROLOGY'S ORIGINS

Western astrology began in Babylon around 3000 B.C.⁹ The Babylonian people held to the idea that the celestial bodies, stars, and planets were gods that influenced all aspects of people's lives. Everything in the sky was constantly changing and it

was thought that there existed a correspondence between the movements of the gods above and the movements that occurred below on the Earth.¹⁰ Astrology was mainly used by the priests. They used the stars to predict the fortunes of their countries as opposed to the practice today of determining individual fortunes.¹¹ The Chaldeans expanded this through their belief that the principle of life in the human body was also the same essence as the fires of heaven. From these fires, the soul received its qualities at birth, so the thought followed that the stars therefore determined the fate of the soul on Earth.¹²

It is not known how the Babylonians developed the characters of the Zodiac, since no Babylonian texts on this topic have been discovered.¹³ A prevailing theory is that the Babylonians originally traced the stars in patterns corresponding to yearly and seasonal events and thus provided the signs of the Zodiac, even though the Greeks later renamed many of them. The spring sign that was traced in the stars by the Babylonians was called the Hireling because that was the time for hiring laborers, but the Greeks changed the sign to the Ram — Aries — because spring was lambing time. Taurus (the bull) was created for April because that was when the bulls would seek mates. Gemini, representing married couples in Babylon (later becoming twins in Greece) was chosen for June because that was the traditional Babylonian time for marriages. Babylonian kings hunted lions in the summer, so Leo received a summer date. Aquarius the water carrier; Pisces the fish; and Capricorn, a goat with the tail of a fish, represented the rainy winter months in Babylon.¹⁴

Astrology was introduced into Greece around 280 B.C. by what is traditionally thought to be a Chaldean priest named Berosus. He taught the Greeks about the accumulated cuneiform writings of his home country.¹⁵ The conquest of the Near East by Alexander the Great also contributed to the uptake of astrology by the Hellenistic culture.¹⁶ The Greek worldview of the unity of the cosmos made acceptance of astrology easy because

it taught a correspondence between events in the heavens and events on the Earth. Ptolemy (A.D. 70-100), an influential astronomer who proposed the geocentric model of the universe, then did much to spread astrology throughout the empire by gathering and publishing the astrological lore of the preceding centuries.¹⁷

The Greeks introduced the Romans to astrology in the second century B.C. The Romans changed the names of the planets to that of the Roman gods, the same names that are used today. It was in Greece and Rome that the practice of making individual horoscopes began. Previously, horoscopes were applied only to the community or state.¹⁸

Astrology waned during the early Middle Ages because of the influence of the Church. Modern readers often think that astrology was commonplace during this time since the Latin terms *astronomia* and *astrologica* were used without distinction in the common vocabulary. What was then called either astrology or astronomy was almost exclusively what the modern reader would know as astronomy.¹⁹ The Church itself condemned astrology in the Council of Laodicea in A.D. 345.²⁰ Saint Augustine (354-430), one of the leading theologians of early Christianity, attacked astrology on the ground that it denied the sovereign will of God, personal free will, and personal responsibility.²¹ This attitude among Christians prevailed during the early Middle Ages.

When Christians came into contact with the Arab universities in Spain (10th-12th centuries), Arabic works of medicine, mathematics, science, and philosophy, which all included astrology, began to be translated into Latin.²² The Church even began to accept astrology, provided God's omnipotence and man's freedom continued to be recognized. This influence, along with the rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman authors through the Arabs, enabled astrology to flourish during the Renaissance (1400-1700).²³ Astrology began to be used as a tool for the common person and the casting of individual horoscopes as

we know them today began to develop.

Astrology fell into disfavor during the Enlightenment. Scientific reason and the re-emergence of astronomy as a serious discipline relegated astrology to pseudo-science. It was banned from universities and only survived in occult circles.

There was a significant astrological revival from 1800-1960 through the influence of several authors such as Robert Smith (1795-1832), author of *The Manual of Astrology*, and Aleister Crowley (1875-1947), author of *Magick in Theory and Practice*. Alice Bailey (1880-1949) was instrumental in astrological resurgence through her three-volume work, *A Treatise on the Seven Rays*. Carl Jung (1875-1961) used astrology in his counseling work, which helped to give credibility to astrological practice.²⁴

Today, the New Age movement has helped legitimize the belief in astrology and has tried to reconcile astrology with science by attempting to "psychologize" it, as was done in Jung's work.²⁵

Currently there are more than 10,000 professional astrologers in the United States, serving 20 million clients. In addition, millions read the daily horoscopes in the newspapers or magazines.²⁶ There are both large-scale astrology organizations as well as small, informal study groups.²⁷

THE WEAKNESS OF ASTROLOGY AND THE RESPONSE OF ASTRONOMY

Modern astrology is based upon the obsolete premise that the Earth is the center of the universe. This idea, called Ptolemaic astronomy, after the ancient astronomer Ptolemy, states that the stars and planets rotate around the Earth. This ancient concept was based on the observation that planets, the sun and moon, and stars appear to move across the sky. However, it is now common knowledge that the sun is the center of our solar system, that the solar system is a small part of one galaxy among many, and there is no center to the universe.²⁸ Therefore, astrology is based

upon a false premise, which in turn renders its conclusions false.

Astrology has responded by saying that the position of the stars is the location of where they "appear" to be as the Earth circles the sun. People on the Earth do not sense their own movement, so the heavenly bodies appear to travel around the Earth. However, even if the explanation tries to reconcile astrology with the sun being the center of the solar system, the entire astrological system remains based on this false geocentric premise. Additionally, appearance has nothing to do with actual position relative to the Earth, and because astrologers claim that it is the genuine positions of the stars and planets that affect a person, going by where constellations appear to be and not their true position contradicts their premise.

There is another way in which astrology disregards the actual position of the sun relative to the stars: the twelve signs of the Zodiac. The system of astrology is more than 2,000 years out of date.²⁹ The Zodiac is the strip of stars that the sun "travels through as it revolves around the Earth," or as re-interpreted for modern times, the strip of stars that the sun "appears" to travel through. Dividing this path into twelve sections made a clock to tell the relative months. The sun's position on the vernal equinox — the first day of spring — was the starting point for this calendar of the astrological year.³⁰ The year-clock of the ancients, however, has been running faster than the sun for the last 2,000 years.³¹ This is caused by a phenomenon called the "precession of the equinoxes." The Earth's axis of rotation has a slow conical movement that completes a circuit every 26,000 years.

Therefore, 2,200 years from the creation of the initial Zodiac chart, the position of the sun will be 1/12th out of sync (2,200/26,000), making everything one Zodiac sign off.³² Due to the clock being faster than the sun, all designations in the daily newspaper are off by a month. For example, the newspaper currently lists April 12 as being in the sign of the Ram, whereas it is actually in the sign Pisces.³³

Because the stars of the Zodiac are not where the astrological charts say they are on any given date, the very premise of astrology, that it is the positions of stars and planets that affect an individual, is false.

Astrologers traditionally hold that there are 12 signs, each 30 degrees long. The problem with this is that each constellation is not uniformly 30 degrees long, and many of them overlap one another.³⁴ Different constellations are larger or smaller relative to one another. Virgo is much larger than Libra, and Aries, Taurus, and Pisces occupy the same space.³⁵ The sun takes a different amount of time to appear to travel through different constellations of different sizes. To divide the Zodiac into 12 equal portions is inaccurate, and astrology does not take into account constellation overlap. Again, the actual position of the signs in no way corresponds with their placement on astrological charts.

Not only do the dates of the signs of the Zodiac fail to correspond with the actual position of constellations of the Zodiac, there is also disagreement as to the actual number of signs within the Zodiac. Traditional astrology has claimed 12.³⁶ There are other constellations in the arc of the Zodiac, however. An astronomy star-chart will reveal that Cetus, the Whale, lies between Pisces and Aries. Orion, the Hunter, and Auriga, the Charioteer, also lie within the band of the Zodiac. Additionally, the sun, moon, and planets have to travel through Ophiuchus, the Serpent Carrier, going from Scorpio to Sagittarius in the late fall. If any influence is being asserted in this time, it would be coming from Ophiuchus and not Sagittarius or Scorpio.³⁷

Some astrologers have tried to update the system, proposing to include Cetus and Ophiuchus, altering the dates of the other signs to make room for them.³⁸ These new proposals, however, are not likely to be adopted. This would amount to a tacit admission by astrologers that all previous astrological predictions were based on an inaccurate system, which was claimed to be an ancient and venerable science.

"They realize that in so fragile a structure as astrology, the slightest tremor may cause the whole thing to collapse like a house of cards," wrote one observer of modern day fortune-tellers.³⁹

Another difficulty arises when one realizes that the constellations are only patterns in the stars created in the minds of people, the Babylonians and Greeks, perhaps only to correspond with the seasons themselves and seasonal cultural events as discussed earlier. They have no existence in themselves. The stars in individual constellations are likely to be incredibly distant from each another and have their own independent movements. If these stars were viewed from any other vantage point in the universe, rather than upon the Earth, the stars' patterns, brightness, and spatial relationships would be entirely different.⁴⁰ Patterns created arbitrarily in the minds of observers cannot be said to be independently influencing the world at large as astrology would claim. Any normal person can trace any pattern in the stars that they want and it would be just as valid.

Additionally, there is no data to suggest that stars have more effect on the Earth grouped in arbitrarily created patterns than they do individually. If any stars were to have any influence on the events upon the planet Earth, one would likely think that it would be the biggest stars or the stars closest to Earth. However, not a single one of the ten brightest stars in the sky is a member of the Zodiac signs.⁴¹ Only two of the ten closest stars to the Earth are members of the Zodiac constellations.⁴² Neither the brightness nor the proximity to Earth of a star has any significance in the astrological worldview, whereas if one were to do astrology from a position of astronomy, it should.

Another problem arose in astrology after the late 18th century with the discovery of previously unknown planets: Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. Uranus is three times the size of Earth and can be seen with the naked eye in the night sky, but it was undiscovered as a planet until the advent of the telescope. These planets were named in an arbitrary manner. For example,

Uranus' discoverer, William Herschel, wanted to name the planet "Georgium Sidus" in recognition of his benefactor George III of England. Herschel's friends thought the planet should be called "Herschel."⁴³ The astronomers eventually decided to go with precedent and name them after Roman gods. After they were named, even though it was arbitrary, astrologers assigned them influences to go with their names. These planets take longer than the others to move through the constellations, so astrologers tend to describe them as having influences over generations instead of individuals. With regard to newly discovered planets, on the basis of astrology's claim of planetary influence, this would either mean that there was a source of error in all previous astrological predictions or there should be some mention of influences from unknown sources in the astrological literature prior to the discovery of those planets, of which there is not.

The influences assigned to the planets were the products of the mythologies assigned to the gods they represented in the pagan cultures from which astrology originated, and have no bearing on the planets themselves. Mars was the god of war and Venus was the god of love, so these war-like or loving characteristics have become associated with those born under the influence of Mars or Venus respectively. There is also no agreement among the characteristics of the planets in the pagan cultures. One would assume uniformity among planetary characteristics in various cultures that use astrology, if the claims were true. In Babylonian astrology, Saturn was considered a lucky influence; however, in the Roman world, Saturn was a malevolent influence.⁴⁴ Venus was considered bad luck among the Mayans, while the Greeks and Romans associated it with love.⁴⁵ According to Chinese astrology, Venus influences masculinity and war, a direct opposite to Western astrology's claims to it influencing feminine traits, love, and fertility.⁴⁶ The Babylonians, who founded astrology, gave the moon a male influence, while subsequent cultures made it female.⁴⁷ There is no

uniform agreement as to what the influences of the planets actually are.

CONCLUSION

Astrology is based upon a geocentric, or Earth-centered, model of the universe that has been proven false. Astrology also falsely assumes a static model of the universe in which everything remains fixed in its orbit around the Earth. The entire universe, however, is in motion. The stars in the constellations are not in the same positions from one moment to the next. There are additional constellations in the Zodiac which are ignored, and each constellation of the Zodiac is not uniformly 30 degrees long. Due to irregularities in the Earth's rotation, the very dates assigned to the Zodiac currently are about one month off.

The late discoveries of Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, previously unincorporated into the astrological system, gives added difficulty to the practice, as well as calling into question all previous predictions. Additionally, there is little to no agreement among different cultures, in fact disagreement, as to the effects that the planets have upon a person. There is also no mention of brightness or proximity to Earth of various stars, which is important in astronomy.

Finally, constellations only exist as patterns created in people's minds, much like seeing shapes in clouds. The stars, like the clouds, are there, but the shapes and patterns we see in them are products of our imagination. Because constellations only exist in the minds of those who observe them, basing a whole astrology system on these imagined patterns is erroneous. The stars in the constellations are, in fact, unrelated to one another.

The entire basis for astrology is false. The presented dates and positions for the stars, which form the basis of astrological casting, bear no relation to the actual positions of the stars, destroying astrology's claims to being based on astronomy as well as destroying its premise that it is the actual positions which affect someone. This and the fact that constellations are subjectively created in the imagination reveal the underlying premises

of astrology to be untrue, and therefore the practice itself is false.

Endnotes:

1. For further information regarding Astrology vs. the Bible, see Charles Strohmmer, *America's Fascination with Astrology: Is It Healthy?* (Emerald House), Andre Kole and Terry Holley, *Astrology and Psychic Phenomena* (Zondervan), and M. Kurt Goedelman, "Seeking Guidance from the Stars of Heaven — A Christian Examination of Astrology and Horoscopes," tract available from PFO (Saint Louis).
2. James Lewis, *The Astrology Encyclopedia*. Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1994, pg. xvii.
3. "The angular relationship between various points of a **horoscope**" writes James Lewis, in *The Astrology Encyclopedia*, op. cit., "Aspect," pg. 40.
4. Joseph Goodavage, *Write Your Own Horoscope*. New York: Penguin Books, 1990, pg. 45.
5. *The Ephemeris of the sun, Polaris, and other selected stars with companion data and tables for the year*. Prepared by the Nautical Almanac Office, United States Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C., G.P.D.
6. Michel Gauquelin, *Cosmic Influences on Human Behavior*. London: Garnstone Press, 1973, pp. 244-249.
7. *The Astrology Encyclopedia*, op. cit., "Ascendant," pg. 37.
8. Andre Kole and Terry Holly, *Astrology and Psychic Phenomena*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998, pg. 72.
9. *Ibid.*, pg. 67.
10. Franz Cumont, *Astrology and Religion*

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11. *Astrology and Psychic Phenomena*, op. cit., pg. 67.
 12. *Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans*, op. cit., pg. 20.
 13. Peter Whitfield, *Astrology: A History*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 2001, pg. 23.
 14. Kenneth Delano, *Astrology: Fact or Fiction*. Huntington, Ind.: My Sunday Visitor Inc., 1973, pp. 15-16.
 15. *Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans*, op. cit., pg. 33.
 16. *Astrology: Fact or Fiction*, op. cit., pg. 26.
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 18. Dane Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Personality*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Paperback, 1936, pg. 20.
 19. Jim Tester, *History of Western Astrology*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1987, pg. 103.
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 22. John Lynch, *The Coffee Table Book of Astrology*. New York: Viking Press, 1967, pg. 28.
 23. Richard Lemay, "The True Place of Astrology in Medieval Sciences and Philosophy," in *Astrology, Science, and Society: Historical Essays*. Suffolk, NH: Boydell Press, 1987, pg. 72.
 24. Frank McLynn, *Carl Gustav Jung*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997, pp. 492-493.
 25. Aidan Kelley, "Astrology in the New Age," J. Gordon Melton, editor, *New Age Encyclopedia*. Detroit: Gale Research Co.,

- 1990, pg. 42, cited in *Astrology and Psychic Phenomena*, op. cit., pg. 70.
26. *The Astrology Encyclopedia*, op. cit., pg. xxii, cited in *Astrology and Psychic Phenomena*, op. cit., pg. 70.
27. *Astrology and Psychic Phenomena*, op. cit., pg. 70.
28. Karen Kwitter in *McGraw Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1997, Vol. 19, "Universe," pg. 65.
29. *Astrology: Fact or Fiction*, op. cit., pg. 62.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*, pg. 63.
32. *Ibid.*, pg. 64.
33. *Ibid.*, pg. 63.
34. *Astrology: A History*, op. cit., pg. 22.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Louis MacNeice, *Astrology*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964, pg. 73.
37. *Astrology: Fact or Fiction*, op. cit., pg. 65.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
39. Richard Lewinsohn, *Science, Prophecy and Prediction*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961, pg. 98, cited in *Astrology: Fact or Fiction*, op. cit., pg. 66.
40. *Astrology: Fact or Fiction*, op. cit., pg. 67.
41. *Ibid.*, pg. 68.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Astrology*, op. cit., pg. 183.
44. *Astrology: Fact or Fiction*, op. cit., pg. 70.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *The Astrology Encyclopedia*, op. cit., "Chinese Astrology," pg. 116.
47. *Astrology*, op. cit., pg. 46.

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

(continued from page 4)

lic Church], but the consequences of coming forward, for people whose faith was the center of their lives, would be harsh and profound."²

Being in the Watchtower is like riding a roller coaster. As long as one hangs on tight, the ride can be enjoyable. But those who try to hold onto something else (sound doctrine or rejection of evil practices) will get hurt or even tossed out.

The Watchtower organization tried to nullify the *Dateline* allegations by saying it does alert legal authorities in states that require reports to be filed. In a news release, the Watchtower said:

"If child abuse becomes known to our church elders, they strictly comply with applicable child abuse reporting laws. We also encourage the wrongdoers to do everything they can to set the matter straight with authorities. Furthermore, we do not prohibit or discourage the victim or the victim's parents from reporting child abuse to the authorities even if the alleged perpetrator is one of Jehovah's Witnesses."³

However, the Watchtower does admit that in the states where laws do not require disclosure,⁴ it prefers to keep the matter confidential — between its elders and members — and initiate its own methods of protecting children.⁵ This attitude is certainly different from the facade the Watch-

tower wants to present to the public. Jehovah's Witnesses claim to be an "open and honest people, not suspiciously secretive."⁶ However, their track record, when it comes to issues which are embarrassing to their claim of being a well-adjusted and Bible-centered people, is less than honorable. Dr. Jerry Bergman notes the difficulties in deriving an accurate portrayal of the Watchtower:

"First of all, *Witnesses rarely cooperate with research which probes into their organization*, and if they did, would try to present the organization in the best possible light. They often feel that outsiders are trying to criticize them, and conclude that such studies are a waste of time anyhow. Their time in these last days

should be spent preaching to unbelievers, not doing worthless research.”⁷

Paul Carden, missionary and executive director for the Centers for Apologetics Research, further explains the Watchtower’s proneness to secrecy:

“There is a fortress mentality. ... The Watchtower Society is loath to admit wrongdoing of any sort. Because they portray themselves as being Jehovah’s sole mouthpiece to mankind, they have sought to present themselves as being above question.”⁸

While Jehovah’s Witnesses are boastful in the use of statistics that paint their organization in a positive light, they are less than forthcoming when the opposite is true. Prior to the news media’s involvement, the Watchtower presumably employed a “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil” system when dealing with pedophilia. William H. Bowen, a Jehovah’s Witness of 43 years who has spearheaded criticism against current Watchtower policy, describes the organization’s ostrich-like posture:

“Over one year ago when we first came forward, the leaders of the organization said the problem did not exist; when we produced over one thousand victims’ stories on the ‘silentlambs’ website, they were called liars.”⁹

Bowen resigned as a Watchtower elder in December 2000 in protest of the organization’s do-nothing policy toward accused molesters in its congregations.

Watchtower leaders, by refusing to be honest and open with the facts, may hope that their followers and the public regard this situation as inconsequential — just some bad press as the result of a very few. Their response surely argues that it is not as drastic as the revelations of sexual abuse by Catholic priests. However, Bowen contends otherwise. His findings might make the Catholic Church’s scandal pale in comparison:

“How bad is it? In my opinion, due to present church policy, my

religion has become saturated with pedophiles holding positions from top to bottom. In my forty-plus years as a member, I have yet to find one church among Jehovah’s Witnesses that does not have problems with child molestation.”¹⁰

Shockingly, Bowen’s web site announces, “Inside sources reveal, 23,720 and counting..... Child Molesters on file at the [Watchtower’s] home office in Patterson NY.”¹¹

The Witnesses boast of being the way to paradise, however the underbelly of the organization reveals another kind of paradise.

One Watchtower insider’s findings support Bowen’s allegations that the Watchtower is a “pedophile paradise.” The *Dateline* broadcast reported:

“This woman, Barbara Anderson, worked for a decade inside Jehovah’s Witness headquarters. When Anderson saw Bowen’s messages on the Internet, she says she realized she had to tell him there was much more to the story, involving children in many of the 11,000 congregations across the country.”¹²

This is a stunning and staggering revelation. The news story further detailed that:

“Anderson was a researcher at the Watchtower Society in the early 1990s when a senior official there asked her to look into the church’s handling of sexual abuse cases. What she found, she says, sickened her: hundreds of molestation cases on record, all kept secret in church files — secret not only from the outside world, but from the members themselves, the families, the mothers and fathers and children who trust the church is looking out for them.”¹³

Yet, one former high-ranking Jehovah’s Witness tries to minimize the wide-ranging nature and severity of child sexual abuse. Raymond Franz, who served on the Watchtower’s Governing Body until his excommunica-

tion from the sect in December 1981, said, “he doesn’t believe cases of pedophilia are any more prevalent in the denomination than in others. But the religion’s insularity leads to problems.”¹⁴ However, readers will recall that it is Franz who also says, “I believe about the same percentage among Jehovah’s Witnesses are true Christians as in any other church.”¹⁵ Apparently, Franz views the Watchtower as status quo, no matter what the concern, no matter what the evidence. Franz sounds flippant when he suggests that the Watchtower is no better or no worse than any other church organization. This kind of reasoning desensitizes one by normalizing the grossest of sins.

The response by Jehovah’s Witness leadership to the media reports has been typical Watchtower tyranny. First, the Watchtower impugns the character of those challenging organizational policy. *Newsweek* magazine reported that “[Watchtower spokesman J.R.] Brown points out that people who accuse the church are often lapsed Witnesses, and ‘open prey’ for exploiters.”¹⁶ Additionally, whistleblowers have no place within Jehovah’s Kingdom and members in good standing should have nothing to do with such gossips and troublemakers. Last May, Bowen spelled out the Watchtower’s method of dealing with members who speak to the media:

“After we filmed the *Dateline* program with extensive proof, local congregations directed by home office now decide to disfellowship lifetime members who have been filmed by *Dateline* shortly before the program is set to air at the end of May... Apparently it is being done to discourage church members to not tune in to this exposé [sic] because Jehovah’s Witness theology requires members not to listen to anything disfellowshipped members have to say about their church. If members refuse to obey, it could result in their being excommunicated as well.”¹⁷

So instead of evaluating the message, the response is always the same: kill the messenger. Lies, coverups,

blame-shifting, but no repentance and change.

A couple from New Jersey were two of those who suffered at the hands of the Watchtower hierarchy because they were part of the *Dateline* broadcast. The couple disclosed how their 12-year-old daughter was molested by her grandfather, an active Jehovah's Witness. Like Bowen, just days before *Dateline* aired, the Watchtower ax fell:

"Carl and Barbara Pandelo, the parents of the victim in the Bergen County case, say they were excommunicated two weeks ago for 'apostasy,' or forsaking their religious faith. But the former Maywood residents say they suspect the real reason is retaliation because they voiced their complaints on NBC's 'Dateline' program. The two other critics facing expulsion also went on 'Dateline.' ... Because Jehovah's Witnesses are prohibited from listening to anyone expelled from the church, the Pandelos say expulsion effectively forbids other members to watch the show. 'This was a preemptive strike,' said Carl Pandelo, ... 'Even rebellious members who do watch it won't be able to discuss it with church elders.'"18

The fourth Jehovah's Witness who faced disfellowshipping last May was Barbara Anderson, the former Watchtower insider who corroborated Bowen's allegations of widespread abuse. The Watchtower said the charge that these members were excommunicated because of their involvement with the *Dateline* program is "absurd."19 Yet the odds against key figures in a nationally broadcast news feature all being disfellowshipped within days of each other — and just before the airing of the program — are astronomical.

The Watchtower itself refused to respond to NBC on camera. The *Dateline* broadcast noted, "They declined a request for an on-camera interview, but spoke to us off camera, and provided us with a videotaped policy statement by spokesman J.R.

Brown."20 The Watchtower will not allow itself to get into a position where it lacks control of a situation. *Dateline* used only a brief excerpt from Brown's video response.

Erica Garza, a victim of sexual abuse by a Jehovah's Witness elder at her Othello, Wash., congregation, also was subjected to the Watchtower's indifference toward the victim and protection of the perpetrator. After approaching the elders and waiting five months for them to act upon the matter, she called the elders and said, "Look, I'm taking it to the police." The elder's response: "Don't. Or else." Garza told *Dateline*:

"I said, 'Or else what?' And he said, 'Just don't.' I said, 'What? I'll be disfellowshipped if I take it to the police? Is that what's going to happen to me?' And he said, 'Yes. You will be disfellowshipped.' And I was just, like, 'What? You're going to disfellowship me for being raped, yet the guy who raped me is still a Jehovah's Witness?' And they said, 'Don't. Don't take it to the police. You will be condemned by God.'"21

The Watchtower's dangerous and outrageous procedure stems from its inadequate and unbiblical policy on dealing with sin and sinners. While it uses biblical words like "repentance" and "forgiveness," permeated with Bible proof texts, this is really nothing more than Watchtower semantics, a redefined vocabulary, and the misapplication and misinterpretation of Scripture. "Repentance" is not just a word we utter to get people off our back, but rather must be accompanied by a serious demonstration of long-term change (Matthew 3:6, 2 Corinthians 7:9-11).

Reporter Peter Smith outlines the "Strict burden of proof needed for discipline" by Jehovah's Witnesses against one of their own:

"Taking a sexual abuse complaint to Jehovah's Witnesses church elders puts members in contact with a secretive church process that has a burden of proof that is much greater than

in a civil court. If a church member is accused of any offense, elders follow a strict biblical standard. They require either the member's confession or the testimony of at least two witnesses, including the accuser, to prove the member's guilt, according to church attorney [Mario] Moreno and church publications. This applies even in cases of sexual abuse, when there often are no 'outside' witnesses."22

Because sexual abuse usually occurs without multiple witnesses, Watchtower policy clearly places the offender at an advantage. All the accuser need do is deny the charge against him. *The Watchtower* magazine outlines the procedure Jehovah's Witnesses are then to observe:

"If the accusation is denied, the elders should explain to the accuser that nothing more can be done in a judicial way. And the congregation will continue to view the one accused as an innocent person. The Bible says that there must be two or three witnesses before judicial action can be taken."23

This policy was repeated to Bowen when he phoned the Legal Department of the Watchtower seeking counsel on the course of action to take with a suspected case of sexual abuse by a Jehovah's Witness father against his young daughter. Bowen was not told to bring legal authorities into the matter, but to merely question the father. Bowen recorded the conversation, and the Watchtower representative told him:

"You just ask him again, 'Now is there anything to this?' If he says, 'No,' then I would walk away from it. Leave it for Jehovah. He'll bring it out. But don't get yourself in a jam."24

Bowen challenged the Watchtower's policy in his resignation letter from the Society:

"The only way a person within the organization can be guilty of child molestation is by confession, conviction by a court of

law, or by the mouth of two witnesses who were there for the same event. For the individual who meets this criteria, the above information states the 'body of elders should not query individuals' and 'this information is not to be made available to those not involved.' For those who do not meet the above criteria, as in the case of a victim who accuses a person of molesting them, the code of silence is even more strictly enforced. What about potential victims, parents of children who do not know of these accusations? They are left in the dark without any knowledge that their children could be exposed to an accused sex offender on a regular basis."²⁵

The Watchtower's use and, more crucial, its restrictive interpretation of Bible passages such as 2 Corinthians 13:1 and 1 Timothy 5:19 benefit the transgressor. As stated above, the Watchtower requires, "the testimony of at least two witnesses, including the accuser, to prove the member's guilt." And this "two witnesses" is the requirement for each individual case.

So, according to Watchtower standards, even if multiple victims would come forward accusing the same offender of repeated molestations, Jehovah's Witness leaders would turn a deaf ear to them. This is because each is a separate incident without multiple witnesses. *The Watchtower* declares:

"Even if more than one person 'remembers' abuse by the same individual, the nature of these recalls is just too uncertain to base judicial decision on them without other supporting evidence."²⁶

This is as ludicrous as dismissing a murderer after ten different witnesses saw him murder ten different people because no two saw the same murder. Multiple witnesses of the same type or pattern of crime would certainly fit the biblical criteria, or some serial killers would walk. The Watchtower's contrived categories are an attempt to evade the obvious. Even a fingerprint

and semen-stained clothes could serve as "two witnesses." Hebrews 11:24 teaches us that blood "speaks" in some way as a witness (see Genesis 4:10). So do other body fluids and repetitive actions.

Just as biblically deficient is the Watchtower's claim of confidentiality. The former Jehovah's Witnesses (out because of disfellowshipping) are calling for Watchtower policy reform and correctly note that the organization's unwillingness to speak out against its own, puts other members and the public in harm's way. This selective protection program is always weighted in favor of the accused. They argue that "this is wrong" and "unethical and immoral to not protect children." They are right on that score and right in challenging the unbiblical concept of absolute confidentiality.

Marc Graham, a biblical counselor and pastor, warns of the "confidentiality trap" which those, including Jehovah's Witnesses, fall into when they misinterpret biblical doctrine and practice:

"A counselee who seeks absolute confidentiality may be attempting to cover-up his sin and/or escape its consequences. Proverbs 29:13 clearly declares that such a one shall not prosper. Often, God's process of correction requires that a sin be brought out into the open (II Sam. 12:11-12). Church discipline would be a further example of this (Matt. 18:15-18). Effective biblical counseling has a view of using the Word, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, to bring the counselee to repentance of sin. One of the marks of true repentance is a desire to do whatever it takes for God to be glorified and the matter to be settled (II Cor. 7:11)."²⁷

A pioneer of the biblical counseling movement, George Scipione, emphasizes that "Knowledge of certain serious sins does not allow for protection of confidentiality or secrecy."²⁸ Scipione also insists:

"When knowledge of crimes or potential crimes against God and neighbor come to light, the per-

son(s) must be exhorted to repent in order to restore or maintain biblically defined justice. ... When exhortation fails, contacting the appropriate God-ordained authorities for further exhortation and discipline is the appropriate action. These authorities are the family, church, and society — business or state."²⁹

To push confidentiality to an extreme would have us violate the command of Christ, if church discipline (Matthew 18) were needed. It would sacrifice a tool used for the protection of the Church.

The Watchtower is self-serving and establishes policies that are in its own best interest and promotion of its causes. It cares little for the victims. More importantly, it cares little for the Word of God and the biblical mandate of the moral purity of ministerial leadership. As long as a Witness is dedicated to championing the causes of "Jehovah's organization," the Watchtower hierarchy will turn a deaf ear to the many and serious charges and allegations.

Keith MacGregor, director of an apologetics ministry, targeted the heart of the issue when he responded to a Jehovah's Witness protesting the revelations of pedophilia within the Watchtower:

"Any person who commits any act of pedophilia or sexual misbehavior to any child at any time can not now or ever be part of the clergy, or leadership in this church or organization in any part of the world and will be turned over to the proper civil authorities to be tried and punished if guilty by the courts of the land. They will be on their own entirely to ask forgiveness and make their peace with God for their sins. If anyone in leadership positions is aware and covers up known acts they will be held accountable as accessories to the crime and never ever be allowed positions of leadership again."³⁰

The Watchtower fails once again in following the Bible. It also fails to

learn from history. The news reports have shown that many of those whom it has removed from positions of leadership and then later reinstated, after expressing Watchtower "repentance," are later discovered to be repeat offenders.

God has used many apologetics ministries to call attention to the damning theology of Jehovah's Witnesses. May He now continue to use these ministries, the critics from "within" the Watchtower's own organization, and the news media to call attention to its cruel and destructive practices of handling sin and subjecting children to repeated abuse.

One can picture the Watchtower's Brooklyn headquarters building with a huge millstone tied to it and made ready for a plunge into the Atlantic. As Jesus said, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

Endnotes:

1. John Larson, "Witness for the Prosecution," *Dateline*, NBC, May 28, 2002, video tape on file.
2. Jane Pauley, introduction to "Witness for the Prosecution," op. cit.

3. This statement and other quotations from Jehovah's Witness spokesmen are available on the "silentlambs" web site: www.silentlambs.org.
4. According to C.D. Bradley, "No silence of the Lambs," *The Paducah Sun*, Feb. 8, 2002, "Only 16 states, including Kentucky, require clergy to report accusations of sexual abuse to authorities." Also the *Dateline* report reprised: "Only 16 states require clergy members to report any and all suspected child abuse," "Witness for the Prosecution," op. cit.
5. Peter Smith, "Jehovah's Witnesses' policy on child molesters attacked," *The Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Ky.), Feb. 4, 2001.
6. *Kingdom Ministry*, July 1975, pg. 3.
7. Jerry Bergman, *The Mental Health of Jehovah's Witnesses*. Clayton, Calif.: Witness, Inc., 1987, pg. 25, italics in original.
8. Corrie Cutrer, "Witness Leaders Accused of Shielding Molesters," *Christianity Today*, March 5, 2001, pg. 23.
9. See "Press Release 5/07/02" on "silentlambs" web site, op. cit.
10. See "Press Packet" on "silentlambs" web site, op. cit.
11. Home page of "silentlambs" web site, op. cit. Figure based upon access date of 6/18/02.
12. "Witness for the Prosecution," op. cit.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Kimberly Hefling, "Elder resigns, protest faith's policy on abuse charges," Associated Press report, Feb. 11, 2001.
15. Raymond Franz, *In Search of Christian Freedom*. Atlanta: Commentary Press, 1991, pg. 703.

16. Julie Scelfo, "Witness To Shame," *Newsweek*, June 24, 2002, pg. 81.
17. "Press Release 5/07/02," op. cit.
18. John Chadwick, "A battle rises within Jehovah's Witnesses," *Bergen Record* (Bergen County, N.J.), May 27, 2002.
19. Dan Mangan, "Four Facing Jehovah Ouster," *New York Post*, May 9, 2002. See also, Mary Reeves, "Whistleblower could lose her church, family," *The Tullahoma [Tenn.] News*, May 11, 2002.
20. "Witness for the Prosecution," op. cit.
21. *Ibid.*
22. "Jehovah's Witnesses' policy on child molesters attacked," op. cit.
23. "Comfort for those with a 'stricken spirit'," *The Watchtower*, Nov. 1, 1995, pg. 28.
24. Tape-recorded segment of phone conversation featured on "Witness for the Prosecution," op. cit.
25. Resignation letter, William H. Bowen, Dec. 31, 2000.
26. "Comfort for those with a 'stricken spirit'," op. cit., pp. 28-29.
27. Marc Graham, "Beware of the Confidentiality Trap," *The Biblical Counselor*, May 1999, pp. 1-2.
28. George C. Scipione, "The Limits of Confidentiality in Counseling," *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*. Laverock, Pa.: Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, 1984, Vol. VII, no. 2, pg. 30.
29. *Ibid.*, pg. 32.
30. Keith MacGregor, MacGregor Ministries, 6/14/02 letter, copy on file. Since PFO was a third-party recipient of this correspondence, it is quoted by permission.

TRIVIALIZING GOD:

(continued from page 1)

"two divine forces, one good, one evil, which are continually at war with each other. ...that man can help tip the balance."² So, in this view there are two nearly equal powers: one light and the other darkness; one good and the other evil. Only man can tip the scales and determine a winner. While the new exorcists and pop demonologists do not follow dualism to the letter, they follow its central feature.

CHURCH ON THE PLAYGROUND

Imagine a see-saw where God is sitting on one end, and Satan and demons on the other. The direction it tips is up to mankind. People must be

involved in shifting things to God's side.

Meanwhile, many self-appointed experts shout instructions — sometimes contradictory — on how to mount the see-saw, how to stay on, or what to use while on it.

Peter Jones warned:

"A recent book appeared with the title, *The Changing of the Gods*. Its title describes what has happened in one generation. Many still believe in god, but they no longer believe in the God of the Bible. America is now 'One nation under many gods.'"³

EVERYBODY IS GETTING INTO THE ACT

The new dualism and its hold on moderns was illustrated in the news

during the week leading up to Super Bowl XXXVI. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* sports columnist Bernie Miklasz reported, "Fifteen minutes before kickoff of their Monday night game against the [New Orleans] Saints earlier this season, a buzz spread through the [Saint Louis] Rams locker room. A voodoo ceremony was being conducted on the field of the Superdome, and many of the Rams players were offended."⁴

Miklasz reported that quarterback Kurt Warner sprang into action declaring to teammates, "No one will put a curse on us, ... We should do something about it."⁵

The reporter then describes the team's action: "Warner, tight end Ernie Conwell, cornerback Aeneas Williams, linebackers Don Davis and

O.J. Brigance and team Pastor Ray Agnew formed a huddle. They joined hands. They read a couple of pertinent verses of scripture. And they prayed. ... 'We prayed over the field,' Davis said. 'We just wanted to be sure. If there were any demonic forces at work, we wanted to be safe. We wanted to shield ourselves. Cover ourselves.'"⁶

Apparently, no one thought to quote "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4), or "He that is born of God keeps himself and the wicked one does not touch him" (1 John 5:18). None of the players knew to affirm that Jesus disarmed the principalities and powers for the believer on the cross (Colossians 2:15). None of them knew that if they resisted the devil by faith, he would flee (James 4:7). They had to perform a ritual of their own to come against the purported voodoo curse. Worst of all, no one, except columnist Miklasz, thought to ask, *Does God really care who wins a football game?* One has to wonder about the nature of the instruction these Christian men are receiving and who is giving that instruction to them.

To make it even worse, linebacker Davis revealed a shocking view of God when he said: "That's why we praise God and bring his name up. And as we have been faithful and obedient to Him, he's been faithful and obedient to us."⁷ Just a few days after Miklasz reported Davis' comments, the Saint Louis team lost in its bid to become Super Bowl XXXVI champions.

GET OUTTA TOWN

Far away from Saint Louis, in Inglis, Fla., a whole town was piling on the see-saw. CNN reported on the goings-on:

"If he's thinking of visiting Florida's west coast, Satan might want to steer clear of Inglis. The mayor of this small fishing village has declared the Prince of Darkness persona non grata. 'Satan, ruler of darkness, giver of evil, destroyer of what is good and just, is not now, nor ever

again will be, a part of this town of Inglis,' Mayor Carolyn Risher says in a proclamation, which was issued on official town stationery."⁸

HIGH-TECH DEMONS

Even the Pope is jumping on the see-saw. A *World News* headline read, "Pope Notches Up Three Exorcisms." Father Gabriele Amorth reported that the wild goings-on were run-of-the-mill for exorcists. Then Amorth disclosed:

"I have seen many strange things ... objects such as nails spat out. The devil told a woman that he would make her spit out a transistor radio and lo and behold

possessed, and the making of the sign of the cross."¹¹

Jesus never held an exorcism, never touched a demon possessed person, and never spent hours or days repeating incantations and using holy water. With a word He set people free and did so instantaneously.

DON'T EXCLUDE SHEYKHS OR RABBIS

Even Muslims have exorcists. Yossi Halevi described a friend, an Islamic *sheykh* in Israel:

"He was always ready to travel, restless with activity. He took calls at all hours from desperate Palestinians whose family members were possessed by jinns, or

Jesus never held an exorcism, never touched a demon possessed person, and never spent hours or days repeating incantations and using holy water. With a word He set people free and did so instantaneously.

she started spitting out bits and pieces of a radio transistor."⁹

Amorth, though, did go on to confide that "the woman whom the Pope exorcised in September was still undergoing treatment. 'It's a very serious case. A series of curses.'"¹⁰ Perhaps the College of Cardinals needs to lend their weight to the teeter-totter, or was this just a very mentally and spiritually needy person who should have sought other kinds of treatment in the first place?

The article volunteered the means used in the new dualism:

"The official Roman Catholic exorcism starts with prayers, the blessing and sprinkling of holy water, the laying of hands on the

evil spirits; even now he carried two cell phones, which rang incessantly."¹²

Halevi also talked about numerous Muslim exorcists responding to calls from Arabs in Israel believing they were possessed by Hebrew-speaking demons, which he calls, "The ultimate Israeli occupation."¹³

Halevi reports that the Kabbala of the Middle Ages reported Jewish exorcisms:

"He retrieved a kabbalistic work from his chaotic bookshelves and asked Shuvayah to read aloud its description of an exorcism of a young girl. Ten scholars, read Shuvayah, circled the girl and chanted, '*Shalom aleichem*, out,

out, out.' The demon staggered, lifted the girl's left leg, and was expelled from her smallest toe."¹⁴

NEW DAFFYNITIONS

The new Zoroastrians try to get some traction by Scripture-twisting and myth-making. Clichés are repeated so many times that they begin to sound like the truth. Terms such as "strongholds," "territory," "taking authority," "satanic curses," "ancestral bondage," and "binding the evil one" all pile up.

Christians who use biblical words must make certain they are defining these words in a biblical way. Some think that the use of a biblical word makes a thing biblical. It is only truly biblical if the word and the definition agree with Scripture.

One can use the name Jesus and fill the word up with definitions and descriptions of Jesus that are clearly wrong. It becomes a fabricated Jesus. The "Jesus" of the Mormons, or The Way International, or the Jehovah's Witnesses is not the Jesus of the Bible.

Walter Martin, many years ago, dealt with the necessity of scaling the language barrier.¹⁵ One could talk of the resurrection of Christ, and then, like Jehovah's Witnesses, say it was an invisible, spiritual resurrection. That would be no resurrection at all and a clear violation of many passages about the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

LET GOD BE GOD!

An even greater issue is how God has been trivialized by putting Him on the other end of Satan's see-saw. Read again Genesis 1 or Isaiah 40, and realize that God will not be put on anyone's teeter-totter. He is, after all, Almighty God!

There are hundreds of Scriptures about the might and majesty of God. Moses knew the incredible power and might of God after seeing a sea open:

"The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is His name. ... Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O

LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces. And in the greatness of Your excellence You have overthrown those who rose against You. ... Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders? You stretched out your right hand; The earth swallowed them" (Exodus 15:3, 6-7, 11-12).

God is not even on the teeter-totter. He made it and is above it and could annihilate it with His breath. Moses further affirms:

"O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds?" (Deuteronomy 3:24).

Through Moses, God says:

"I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand" (Deuteronomy 32:39).

The Psalms are filled with statements regarding God's absolute might, power, strength, and grandeur. Isaiah said, "Trust in the LORD forever, for in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:4). Isaiah would not for a moment think to try to bring God down to the playground. When he saw the Lord "high and lifted up" he could only cry in repentance, "Woe is me, for I am undone!" (Isaiah 6:1, 5).

Satan and demons are only created beings, who are minuscule in comparison with the God of the Bible: all-powerful, almighty, omnipresent, Creator, Sustainer, Judge, and Sovereign. Satan is permitted to exist for a time and will fulfill God's will, design, and purpose (in spite of himself), and then be cast into hell (Revelation 20:7-10). Job 1 reveals that Satan only moves with God's permission. He may be a lion, but he is a lion on a leash. The defenses of prayer, Scripture, and fellowship are adequate. As Luther taught us, and in

keeping with Matthew 4, "one little word shall fell him."

WHAT ABOUT STRONGHOLDS?

The *stronghold* (used only once in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 10:4), is a metaphor used of philosophies and false beliefs. Strongholds are defined in verse 5 as imaginations and arguments, not demons. Demons are not part of that context. Linguist W.E. Vine defines stronghold (v. 4) as "those things in which mere human confidence is imposed."¹⁶

Vine further defines the imaginations of verse 5 as reasonings and evil thoughts and intentions. Paul calls it a high thing, or a barrier, or something antagonistic to Christian thinking. Pastor and author David Kirkwood calls them "strongholds of false belief" and "a battle against thoughts, or ideas that are contrary to the true knowledge of God."¹⁷ Kirkwood is right on when he says:

"...the primary battle ground in biblical spiritual warfare is our hearts and minds. Satan attacks with thoughts — evil suggestions, wrong ideas, false philosophies, temptations, various lies and so on. Our means of defense is knowing, believing, and acting upon God's Word."¹⁸

WHO IS THE STRONGMAN?

Then there is the *strongman* in Matthew 12:29. It may be a revelation to some, but the strongest strongman in Matthew 12 is Jesus. It is not us by any stretch of the imagination. Matthew 12:29 speaks of Satan as a strongman who can only be cast out by someone stronger. In Matthew 12:28, Jesus, speaking of Himself, says, "I cast out demons." He then uses verse 29 to elaborate on how much stronger *He is* than Satan. It is clear in Mark 3 that Jesus is (by the figure of the strongman being bound by someone stronger) referring to Himself as the strongest as He answers the critics.

LOST HIS LEASE

Within the current trends of show biz exorcisms there is a belief that in

the Fall of Adam, Satan was given a lease for the world. Because Satan is called the “god of this world,” it somehow proves Satan’s present ownership of our planet. Adam forfeited his original lease and authority over the earth. In some twisted forms of this pernicious doctrine, it is even taught that Adam lost his godhood to Satan.¹⁹

A careful reading of Genesis 3:14-15 shows that all the serpent got at the Fall was a curse. He gained nothing. Adam was never the “god of this world” and had nothing to forfeit to Satan anyway. Though Adam was given rule and dominion over animals and marine life (clearly stated in Genesis 1:28), he was not given a lease to the earth. Adam had no authority to pass to Satan, and the text never implies anything was passed.

Remembering that Jesus has “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18), the passage regarding Satan as god of this world must be interpreted with that in view.

Paul’s statement in 2 Corinthians 4:4 referring to Satan as the god of this world (or age) is limited by the direct context. Paul is speaking of the hold that Satan has on the *minds of the unsaved*.

The only global issue is the unsaved in the world. There are no “real estate” issues here at all. This is God’s world and all of it belongs to Him: “The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1).

What of Satan’s offer of the kingdoms of this world to Jesus (Matthew 4:8-9)? One must remember that the offer was made by *the Father of lies*. Because God Himself is Ruler over all mankind (Daniel 4:25, 32; 5:21) and the earth is the Lord’s, there is reason to suspect Satan’s offer. Satan cannot truly offer what God already owns.

We are left with only two possibilities: Either Satan was offering Christ some rule in his kingdom of darkness and within his realm — that is, rule over the lost in the world — or he was lying.

Kirkwood says of the “Satan’s gain theory:”

“Adam never had a lease to control the world. All he had was the authority to rule the animal kingdom. When he fell he didn’t lose that authority. Satan gained nothing at the fall of Adam except a curse from God and a promise of his ultimate, complete demise. ... God always has and always will have total and complete authority over the devil.”²⁰

GRANDPA’S DEMONS

One of the biggest bogey men of all is that some need to be set free from demons of our ancestors. It is unbelievable that an entire book industry, replete with spinoffs of exorcisms and counseling routines, has grown up around one misunderstood and misinterpreted phrase in the Bible. This phrase says absolutely nothing about demons, exorcists, or exorcisms. The phrase is “visiting the iniquity of the fathers to the third and fourth generations” (Exodus 20:5). Deliverance ministries have been launched on these 12 words.

It is not true that people will be punished and demonized for the sins of their ancestors. Ezekiel 18:19-20 declares, “the son will not bear the punishment for the father’s iniquity,” as does Jeremiah 31:30. Moses already taught them that “everyone will be put to death for his own sins” (Deuteronomy 24:16). The Bible clearly refutes the wrong interpretations of modern exorcists.

While people can suffer certain social consequences because of parental irresponsibility or be hurt by parental neglect, the parents are to blame, not their offspring or God. Those who use this verse to promote a “deliverance” agenda never finish it. God is speaking of ongoing generations that continue to hate Him and perpetuate their fathers’ idolatry. The verse is crystal-clear: “visiting the iniquity of the fathers *on the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.*” Any offspring who turns to God and abandons his father’s unbelief has a wonderful promise in the next verse:

“but showing mercy to those who love me and keep my commandments” (Exodus 20:6). It is not an exorcism and an expulsion of ancestral demons, but simply a turning from sin to God.

It is clear that any punishment is in relation to those who hate God, whoever they are. Linguists Johann Keil and Franz Delitzsch affirm:

“The words neither affirm that sinning fathers remain unpunished, nor that the sins of fathers are punished in the children and grandchildren without any fault of their own ... But when, on the other hand, the hating ceases, when the children forsake their fathers’ evil ways, the warmth of the divine wrath is turned into the warmth of love.”²¹

Whenever Old Testament characters confessed the “sins of the fathers” in their prayers, it is obvious from the context that they were confessing their own sins as well and admitting that they had continued on and committed those same sins which their fathers had. Linguist W.E. Vine observes:

“No generation, however, was to think that it bore God’s judgment for the ‘iniquity’ of another generation.”²²

TERRITORIAL SPIRITS

In the late 1980s, C. Peter Wagner introduced people to a whole new concept called territorial demons. Territorial spirits are supposed to be demons who rule certain areas of geography. Wagner and his kind teach that these demons can be swept out of an area with the right techniques. Some perform sweeping techniques in sanctuaries before services are held in them.

Three things never seem to dawn on the practitioners. First, if this were true, the Bible would say so. There is absolutely no Scripture at all that can justify a search for demons to locate them geographically. Paul did not free areas such as Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, or Thessalonica from these spirit rulers of the land. Rather he

spent his time evangelizing and preaching.

Second, logic dictates that if demons controlled particular territories, these experts could have rid our country of them years ago. It is amazing that *Christianity Today* magazine reported in 1998 that Wagner's spiritual mapping program (pinpointing the demon areas) was gaining acceptance and might even go mainstream.²³

Third, Wagner admits that he got his information from a psychologist who claimed revelatory words of knowledge. The facts are verified and documented by Mike Taylor. Taylor talks about the dangers of accepting information from presumed demons, and says:

"According to Dr. Wagner, Christian psychologist Rita Cabezas has accepted information from this source. Apparently symptoms of mental illness left a patient when she travelled to the USA and reappeared when she returned to Costa Rica. Rita Cabezas was told by one of the demons that they were limited to their territory and could not go to the USA."²⁴

Taylor continues:

"Presumably, the two sources of Cabezas' data are: i) alleged confessions of demons through their victims; and: ii) 'revelatory words of knowledge'. Whatever the sources, the Bible itself does not provide data to enable its readers to build up a comprehensive demonological picture. This is done for a reason, namely to facilitate the Christians' walking by faith rather than by sight."²⁵

Sin and hardness keep people blinded, not demon squatters downtown. Neither do people's sins invite demons to take over their city, as Thomas Ice and Robert Dean observe:

"This could be viewed as something similar to Christian ghost-busters. If there is something weird in your neighborhood, and if you know the right group to

call, you can exterminate your neighborhood of demons and evil spirits. With the devil and his crowd out of town, then you can get down to the important business of solving the world's problems. Whatever happened to simply preaching the gospel and trusting God the Holy Spirit to do His work?"²⁶

A WHOLE LOTTA BINDING GOIN' ON

Then there is the matter of binding Satan and demons. Televangelists regularly claim to bind demons. They shout, "We bind you, foul spirit," or "We bind you, spirit of infirmity." Often they bind all the demons in the auditorium or in the city. Cancer demons or arthritis demons are often ordered bound, totally confusing sicknesses with spirit entities.

Dr. Jay Adams points up how cavalier the modern exorcists can be and warns of the dangers:

"Jude is explicit in his words about Satan. In spite of his fall and degradation, Jude still ranks him among the 'glorious beings' and warns against making 'insulting accusations' against him (Jude 8, 9). Yet in many so-called 'deliverance' meetings today, preachers scream invectives at him, and laugh and poke fun at him in sermons. This is dangerous business, which in time may bring them into greater peril than if, like Michael the archangel, they treated him with respect (Jude 9). We have seen the fall of at least one of the televangelists who made it a practice to do these very things. By indulging themselves in such activities, they place themselves alongside these heretical persons against whom Jude warns — those who 'insult whatever they don't understand' (Jude 10)."²⁷

Ice and Dean concur:

"This is an example of ignorance of God's Word leading to wrong practice in the area of spiritual warfare. No wonder many Chris-

tians are growing weary and dropping out of the battle! Many are following leaders who are leading them on wild-goose chases through beliefs and practices that open them up to *attacks* from the enemy rather than the advertised protection from the enemy."²⁸

People soon forget that disgraced former evangelist Larry Lea, at the height of his career, had prayer meetings to bind and halt the work of Satan over the entire San Francisco Bay area. It sounded good at the time, but it just did not work. One attendee observed that "This group spends more time talking to Satan than to God!"²⁹

The binding and loosing in Matthew 18:15-20 have nothing at all to do with demons. The context of Matthew 18 is Church discipline and the Church's authority to carry it out. After the Church has followed through and disfellowshipped someone and they are pronounced an outsider (v. 17), God recognizes, blesses, and endorses that authoritative action (v. 18). Demons never appear in that chapter. There is a whole rabbinical background to the passage that needs to be studied, understood, and appreciated.³⁰

Some may ask about Peter's power to bind and loose in Matthew 16:19. This power was in conjunction with the "keys to the kingdom of heaven" (v. 19). Again, no demons are mentioned in the context. Any serious student of New Testament Greek would also know that Peter is to bind or loose what has already been bound or loosed by heaven. Peter and the Apostles would be the human foundation for the Church (Ephesians 2:20). They would launch the work of Christ, and through preaching, describe the way of entrance into heaven, which is Jesus. What had already been determined by heaven would now be enacted on earth. Peter and the Apostles would "allow" or "not allow" entrance into the kingdom based on the Gospel requirement.

Ice and Dean explain further:

“Peter was to set the standard on earth for entrance into the kingdom of heaven based upon the standard which God had already set in heaven. Peter was to be a mediator of the Word of God between God and man, and that standard is what Peter stated in Matthew 16:16, namely, that Jesus was ‘the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”³¹

WHAT ABOUT THE PAST?

Some believe that if one has been involved in occult practice in the past, it is a guarantee of a satanic curse and demonic struggles long into the Christian life. People who buy into this myth tend to view normal struggles in the light of direct personal satanic attacks; every struggle or difficulty is interpreted as demonic in origin. Paul dealt with a thorn in the flesh delivered by a messenger of Satan, but he still handled it with prayer and dependence on grace, not an exorcism. He also saw it as a means of delivery from pride.

Colossians 1:13 is clear that all believers at conversion have been “delivered from the power of darkness and conveyed ... into the kingdom of the Son of His love.” The idea of rescue is prominent in the word *deliverance*. This verse makes it clear that the Christian’s deliverance was in direct regard to hostile angelic powers.

The word *redeemed* means *set free*. If the doctrine of redemption means anything, it refutes the idea that past occult involvement makes one an unusual case needing unusual means of sanctification.

There are no degrees of lostness that people experience before conversion and therefore no requirement that some have greater spiritual struggles after conversion because of the acts in their pre-conversion life. Paul mentions sorcery in Galatians 5:20 along with numerous other sins showing that sin is sin. He does not single sorcery out as rendering one a hard or special case. Paul indicates that all the sins mentioned are to be dealt with

through knowing Christ, walking in the Spirit, and the putting on of the fruit of the Spirit (v. 22-25). Paul says to all the former sinners at Galatia “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free” (5:1).

In Acts 19, Paul did not have to do any curse breaking or special maneuvers once conversion occurred. Paul faithfully preached the Word of God and evangelized for two years in Ephesus. Paul also dismissed evil spirits from the unsaved through Apostolic miracles. Occult practitioners believed and repented of their past practices (v. 18), including the burning of their demonic paraphernalia (v. 19). This was not commanded by Paul, but volunteered by these new believers. Hardcore spiritists became committed Christians.

There is no mention of further steps to freedom or special rituals later, and when Paul is about to leave Ephesus, he puts the people under the care and discipleship of the elders and mentions no special provision (20:1). He later exhorts the Ephesian elders to take oversight, to guard against wolves and false teaching (20:28-29), and to build up the congregation with the Scriptures (v. 32). There are no special instructions for former occultists or warnings that they would be more vulnerable.

Paul does not sweep or cleanse the land and does not shout invectives at Satan or demons. Later, when Paul writes to the Ephesian church, he reminds all of them alike to keep putting on the armor of God, and to keep putting on the new man as they put off the old. No special instructions for special cases. Why not? It appears in the Epistle to the Ephesians that the ground rules for growth are the same for everyone in the Church.

Each Christian has a past. Each struggles with temptation. Every Christian needs prayer, Scripture, fellowship, the Church, and all the means of grace. All Christians are to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11) and not give Satan an opportunity to trip them up (Ephesians 4:27).

Christians need to set our affection on things above (Colossians 3:1) and not get demon-focused, lest they create symptoms, problems, and imagined attacks. The creation of special categories of Christians can lead to obsessions, invalid points of focus, and imagined symptoms. Christians may also miss the obvious and stop struggling against old habits in a biblical way.

WHERE IS THE REAL BATTLE?

It is sad for people to get caught up in the hype of various forms of exorcistic ritual and not realize that when they are tempted at home to speak wrongly, they are in spiritual warfare. When they are tempted to watch the wrong kind of television programs, they are in spiritual warfare. When they have opportunities to witness, they are involved in spiritual warfare. When they are having routine daily devotions, they are engaged in spiritual warfare. When they are tempted to be short-tempered and impatient, they are on the battle front. When they know they must give an employer an honest day’s work and struggle to do it, they are in the heat of battle. When they drive at safe speeds to the glory of God, they are winning in spiritual warfare. All of this is fought out on the canvas of everyday living.

Author and counselor David Powlison has given thought to this topic for years and helped people in the counseling room and in seminars to understand the Bible’s approach to spiritual warfare. Powlison views the exorcistic type of warfare as “semi occultic” as opposed to “true warfare.” Avoiding the hype and the bizarre, Powlison exhorts:

“Reclaiming spiritual warfare means learning afresh how God pursues his glory in our lives. It means gaining an understanding of progressive sanctification in a Christian culture habituated to look for quick fixes. It means learning to see heroic dramas played out in tiny corners of life. It means becoming human, renewed in the image of Jesus

Christ — the pioneer and perfecter of faith. It means learning how to become Christians.”³²

Powlison eloquently continues:

“All the surface appeal and short-term attraction is on the side of power encounters with demonic agents. Excitement, drama, the promise of all-out confrontation, and complete supernatural change — power encounters have them all. Engaging evil with truth, by contrast, seems dry, weak, dull, old-fashioned, and unspiritual. But surprise is always at the heart of the gospel. As in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the country Galilean, so in spiritual warfare today: strength is subverted by weakness, worldly wisdom by truth, riches by poverty — and the powers of darkness are best felled by the small, weak words and works of faith and obedience.”³³

A CHANCE TO BE DON QUIXOTE

I received a call from a distraught woman the day after she had buried her young child. She could smell flowers in her daughter’s room and wanted me to answer the question of whether it was her daughter making contact, or perhaps an impersonating demon. What would Neil Anderson have done? Bob Larson would have possibly had an exorcism for the house. This certainly seemed like evidence of something strange and paranormal. I prayed for wisdom.

I insisted on visiting and investigating the situation firsthand in an attempt to get all the facts. After visiting, talking, analyzing, and thinking through the situation, we were able to uncover the hidden “flower demon.”

The woman’s heavy woolen coat, which had hung in the funeral home for two days, had absorbed the smell of flowers and was pungent. It now hung, you guessed it, in the daughter’s bedroom closet behind louvered doors. So it goes. You will find what

you are looking for. Since I did not believe in visits from the dead or flower demons (the Bible does not teach either), I simply looked for the obvious.

Another lady in our congregation called me in a panic and relayed a tale that behind her house in a wooded area, teenagers were practicing witchcraft rituals and perhaps even sacrificing animals. I asked her how she knew for sure. She relayed that she had read a “Christian” book on the topic and it was happening all over (even in churches where they were breeding babies for sacrifice). She could see the fire at night through the trees and hear the teenagers talking, probably spell-binding.

Again, I decided that I better get all the facts that I possibly could. I went to her home. I could not persuade her to walk out with me into the lightly wooded area behind her home because she was afraid of “satanic ground.”

I walked out alone to make my survey of the “dreaded” location. The small area in question had no animal bones, no ashes, no evidence of animal cremations. There was no scorched earth. There were no pentagrams or occult graffiti. As I looked at a few small stumps on the ground, I could visualize the teenagers hanging out, sitting, talking. Then I saw the telltale marks as to why they sought out this secluded spot — cigarette butts! The fires came from the burnt matches used to light their smokes. No demons after all, but I could easily see how stories get started by imaginative and paranoid people who read the wrong kind of books and become obsessed with demons. Later the woman admitted the “fires” were very small and intermittent, but the kids had a way of maybe shielding them from sight. We do see what we want to see. I had the hardest time convincing her that Satan had not moved into her area and claimed ground, unless, of course, she wanted to believe in nicotine demons.

I had a Pentecostal woman come to me for counseling. She told me that every so many months, like clock-

work, she would neglect her housework, and leave her husband for extended periods of time. She urged me to believe that even though she was a professing believer, demons possessed her and made her leave. I then asked her why she went back home. She explained that she would go to her church to have the demons expelled. I explained to her that I had a hard time believing that demons would make her leave her home and her husband, and then make her go to a church so they could be expelled. It sounded like they were pretty stupid demons. If she had the volition to go to the church for a quick fix, she had the volition to stay home and just be responsible. Needless to say, she ended the counseling.

I was involved in a court case where a very rebellious teen accused her stepfather of molesting her in her bed at night. That this could have never happened was proven from the testimony of a sister sleeping in the same room and other incontrovertible evidence. Just prior to the jury finding the stepfather innocent, the girl attempted to convince both attorneys that a demon had impersonated the stepfather. I was very curious as to how she could have been familiar with information used at the Salem witch trials and a nuance of outdated demonic mythology. It turned out that the girl’s biological father, with whom she was staying, was involved in witchcraft, the history and paraphernalia of witchcraft, and had probably helped her spin the yarn for her story. In this devious way, she attempted to get the stepfather off the hook, as well as herself, once she knew her case was going to collapse.

How careful we must be so as to not jump to conclusions. Some years ago we had a teenaged boy in our church who began to have very violent epileptic seizures. He would have them in school, at home, on youth outings, or at church. On occasion he was hospitalized. For more than a year this went on. We were eventually able to find out from the doctors that they could find no cause for the seizures and absolutely nothing was showing up in the brain scans to account for them.

On occasion, people visiting or passing through the hospital would pray for healing or deliverance. Some were sure it was a demonic infestation, even though I knew the Scripture would not support demonization of a believer. Everyone was baffled. Were we really seeing a Mark 9:20 demon of seizures and convulsions? Still refusing to fold to the pragmatism and emotion of the issue, and knowing there was no biblical warrant for trying to cast a demon from a professing Christian, we held on, seeking God's wisdom and direction, while another year passed. The seizures intensified.

Then the big break — and what a shocker! No one for a moment ever dreamed or conceived the final outcome. Many small preliminary steps led up to the conclusion — and then it happened. The teen confessed first to me, then to his family, and then to the entire church he had been faking it! How it began and why he kept it up is another interesting story for another article, but repentance and forgiveness ended the cycle. No direct demon involvement, but the young man had lost the battle with temptation and given in to lying, deceiving, attention getting, irresponsibility, and so forth. It was all sin after all.

How many other stories are passed off as truth and the facts are never known? How many myths and urban legends are just handed down over and over? A number of the sources for demonic information have been exposed as frauds and discredited: Mike Warnke, Rebecca Brown, Lauren Stratford, and others.

This is not to say Satan and demons are not at work. They are. However, they are at work in much more subtle ways than we realize. Getting rid of the drama, display, and the sensational does not mean that evil is not out there. The Bible teaches us, though, that Satan is a master of disguise (2 Corinthians 11:14-15), and is crafty and subtle. He is not out there baiting us to confront him in outlandish displays of screaming, rebuking, and binding. Christians are all too often off on a distraction and

rabbit trail through those means. Looking for Satan in ancestors or on parcels of geography will distract us from his real work.

Satan is certainly at work tempting our flesh because he has something in us to appeal to. He may use the allurements in our world to cause us to let down our standard and be less than our best. The attacks are not always frontal, but may consist of subtle struggles in us and in our thought life. He is also at work in subtle ways in smug religious pride.

I have had more than one person from a "deliverance" church admit they would just go along with all the verbal cues and do whatever was expected, as well as respond in ways they knew they were supposed to. It was a drama that they had seen over and over, and now they got to be the leading actors. One can become hyper-suggestible in the presence of authority figures who manipulate.

I have heard of people making up silly subjective "tests" for demonic presence. Vomiting in a bag is one. I knew of someone that would lay out a tissue and watch for any movement of the tissue. These things become the new legends to pass on.

It seems that the difficulty that new converts from the occult have is in direct proportion to the kind of discipleship they receive and the things they are told to expect. If they are programmed that temptations to certain sins are demons (as in anger demons, cigarette demons, lust demons), they will respond accordingly. Some churches' "pediatric wards" are dangerous and unhealthy places.

Endnotes:

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20. *Modern Myths About Satan and Spiritual Warfare*, op. cit., pg. 46.
21. C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William Eerdmans Publishing, 1985, Book 1, Vol. II, pp. 117-118.
22. W.E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985, Old Testament section, pg. 122.
23. Art Moore, "Spiritual Mapping Gains Credibility Among Leaders," *Christianity Today*, Jan. 12, 1998, pg. 55.
24. Mike Taylor, *Do Demons Rule Your Town?* England: Grace Publications, 1993, pg. 104.
25. Ibid., pg. 108.
26. Thomas Ice and Robert Dean, Jr., *Overrun by Demons*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1990, pg. 182.
27. Jay E. Adams, *Winning the War Within*. Woodruff, SC: Timeless Texts, 2001, pg. 32.
28. *Overrun by Demons*, op. cit., pg. 168, italic in original.
29. Eric Villanueva, "Territorial Spirits and Spiritual Warfare: A Biblical Perspective," *Christian Research Journal*, "Viewpoint Column," Summer 1992, pg. 38.
30. See, for example, Alfred Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965, Vol. 2, pp. 84-85.
31. *Overrun by Demons*, op. cit., pg. 102.
32. David Powlison, *Power Encounters*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1995, pp. 151-152.
33. Ibid., pg. 152.

92-year-old Hinckley either has gone senile or is continuing to practice the kind of deception many of his predecessors did.

The latter determination is not surprising. Several years ago, PFO director Steve Cannon wrote in a *Quarterly Journal* article:

“In my day-to-day dealings with many Mormon people, I have found them to be, overall, a clean-living, hard-working, generally honest lot. But, strangely, when it comes to dealing with controversial aspects of their belief system, I have encountered obfuscation, half-truths and even deliberate mendacity. For a while I relegated this to just being doctrinally ill-informed. However, as I researched deeper into Mormon doctrine, I came to see that doctrinal and historical deception is a legacy that reaches all the way back to the first Prophet, Seer and Revelator: Joseph Smith himself” (October-December 1999, pg. 5).

In 1997, Hinckley was interviewed by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. In the article, Hinckley was asked by religion writer Don Lattin, “Don’t Mormons believe that God was once a man?” Hinckley responded, “I wouldn’t say that. There is a little couplet coined, ‘As man is, God once was. As God is, man may become.’ Now that’s more of a couplet than anything else. That gets into some pretty deep theology that we don’t know very much about” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, April 13, 1997).

Just a few months later, *Time* magazine posed the same question: “On whether his church still holds that God the Father was once a man, he sounded uncertain, ‘I don’t know that we teach it. I don’t know that we emphasize it ... I understand the philosophical background behind it, but I don’t know a lot about it, and I don’t think others know a lot about it’” (*Time*, Aug. 4, 1997, pg. 56).

More recently, *The New Yorker* probed along the same theological lines. Writer Lawrence Wright described his interview with Hinckley:

“In the Mormon scheme, every person is a potential divinity. The adage ‘As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may be’ expresses the Mormon belief that God was once a human being, with a wife and children. But Hinckley did not seem interested in discussing matters of theology” (*The New Yorker*, Jan. 21, 2002, pg. 44).

Wright then added:

“I asked whether Mormon theology was a form of polytheism. ‘I don’t have the remotest idea what you mean,’ he said impatiently. ‘More than one god,’ [Wright retorted]. ‘Yes, but that’s a very loose

term,’ he replied. ‘We believe in eternal progression’” (*ibid.*).

So, the current Mormon prophet is telling the public:

- He wouldn’t say God was once a man.
- That theological concept is but a mere “couplet.”
- It is “deep theology,” which he doesn’t know much about.
- He doesn’t know whether the LDS church teaches that God was once a man.
- He’s not interested to discuss matters of theology.
- He doesn’t have the “remotest idea” if Mormonism teaches polytheism.

It should be noted that Hinckley, in his position at the top of the LDS church, is more highly esteemed by Latter-day Saints than is the Pope by Catholics. Hinckley speaks *ex cathedra* with much more distinction than the Pope. As stated by the late Mormon Apostle, Bruce R. McConkie: “The President of the Church is the mouthpiece of God on earth. Thus saith the Lord: ‘*Thou shall give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith*’” (*Mormon Doctrine*, pg. 592).

Hinckley’s statements are remarkable when you consider the very bedrock of Mormon theology is that “*God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted Man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens*” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pg. 345). Consider the further words of Joseph Smith, Jr.:

“These are incomprehensible ideas to some, but they are simple. *It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the Character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth*” (*ibid.*, pp. 345-346; also found in the *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, pg. 3).

Other Mormon leaders had no difficulty accepting Smith’s theology. Milton R. Hunter wrote, “Mormon prophets have continuously taught the sublime truth that God the Eternal Father was once a mortal man” (*Gospel Through the Ages*, pg. 104). McConkie stated that “God is a holy Man, a Man who is perfect in counsel” (*Mormon Doctrine*, pg. 465).

So apparently that “sublime truth,” that “first principle of the Gospel,” is now being discounted by the current LDS prophet. Hinckley either is being dishonest or he does not truthfully know and understand the “simple” and “first principle” of the church he leads. Perhaps Hinckley is trying to make his church even more palatable to the “Christian” public — a road the LDS church has been traveling for decades. Whether or not

Hinckley is being deceitful, he is not — even by Mormon standards — qualified to be a prophet.

As the mouthpiece for God, Hinckley is expected to speak the truth. The 13th Article of Faith of the LDS church states, “We believe in being *honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men*” (emphasis added).

Perhaps Hinckley needs to be reminded of his own words. At the end of an address given at the Priesthood Session of the 166th Semiannual General Church Conference, James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the LDS church, quoted Hinckley:

“As President Gordon B. Hinckley has said, ‘Let the truth be taught by example and precept — that to steal is evil, that to cheat is wrong, that to lie is a reproach to anyone who indulges in it.’”

—MKG

NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

Witnesses did not apply because they considered the permit unconstitutional.”

The ruling did not affect other communities with restrictions on commercial solicitations. The Watchtower Society has a long history of fighting religious court battles that have helped shape modern interpretation of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

—MKG

A HAIR APPARENT?

Revival-watchers have been watching and waiting for the next claim of “Holy Spirit revival.” In the early 1990s, revival enthusiasts flocked to the “Toronto Blessing,” where they laughed and barked at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church. A few years later, they migrated south to Florida’s panhandle where they plunged into the “river” of the Brownsville Revival. Since that time, other meetings have dotted the landscape. There have been “gold dust” outpourings and “cornfield” revivals, but none the prominence of Toronto and Pensacola.

However, there may now be a “hair apparent” in line. PromiseLand Church in Austin, Texas, for the past two years, has been hosting what some have dubbed the “Toupee Revival.” Others are merely referring to the meeting as the “Austin Awakening.” Regardless of its moniker, proponents are saying that “the Holy Spirit is ushering in all kinds of miracles and blessings.”

The inception of this latest revival is traced back to June 4, 2000, when Pastor Kenneth Phillips — to the

shock of his congregation — removed his hairpiece during his morning sermon. According to the *Dallas Morning News*, “Pastor Phillips spoke about vanity and the sin of pride. He confessed that his fake hair had become a barrier with God.” “Worshippers gasped, then cheered, then broke out in prayer,” the newspaper reported.

During the past two years, PromiseLand Church members have canceled vacations, sold their sport cars, unplugged their televisions sets, and refashioned to a more modest style of dress in an effort to deal with the sin of pride. Church membership has grown by 25 percent during that time.

Associate Pastor John Ragsdale claims, “Worship has become more intimate and spiritual. Before, we were a church centered on performance. We had lights and sound and all this spectacular stuff. People would come to see our dramas.” “Now,” according to the *Dallas newspaper*, “they’re coming because the movement of God is there.”

Phillips and his church embrace Oneness theology, a fact that some say have kept the “revival” from receiving the national prominence of Toronto and Pensacola. Phillips’ son, Randy, is a member of the popular “Christian” recording trio, Phillips, Craig and Dean.

—MKG

MORE THAN JUST FIREWORKS

While one former Brownsville Assembly of God staff member announced that his “FIRE” was moving out of Florida (see accompanying news item below), crews from eight fire departments battled a two-alarm blaze at the Pensacola church on July 4.

According to the church’s web site, “Early in the evening a lightning storm passed over the church. A direct strike of lightning [sic] hit in the balcony stair well and traveled into the electrical components room causing a large fire in the roof.” Firefighters battled the blaze for seven hours. Even though the damage to the building was said to have been contained to a small area, it was stated to be “very costly.”

Church services will continue in an adjacent building while repairs are made to the sanctuary.

—MKG

FIRE TO MOVE FROM PENSACOLA

Claiming “a clear vision from God,” former Brownsville Revival theologian Dr. Michael L. Brown announced

plans to move his Fellowship of International Revival and Evangelism (FIRE) School of Ministry in Pensacola, Fla., to another location by autumn 2003. FIRE was launched by Brown in January 2001, following his expulsion the previous month as president of the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry. Estimates say that as many as half the students left BRSM with Brown to create the new institute.

Brown claims his prophetic direction was given to him and other FIRE ministers, including pastors Mike Bickle, Ché Ahn, and Larry Tomczak, during a Dallas prayer meeting in April. Brown further stated a divine prompting to start "The Call School of Ministry New York." The new ministry school opened this past Sept. 12, and Brown operates it in partnership with Ahn and his Harvest Ministries International of Pasadena, Calif.

While the "vision" was said to be "clear," Brown could not immediately say exactly where the FIRE school would relocate. Charlotte, N.C., is the primary first choice for the FIRE school relocation being researched by FIRE leadership, but no decision had been chosen by press time, according to the July issue of *Charisma*. "Brown," the magazine reported, "stated that he is simply obeying the Lord's call to move the school to a location that's more strategic for a missions training-and-sending organization such as FIRE."

—MKG

BOOKS IN REVIEW

(continued from page 24)

Alpena Mountain Home (chapter 8), are case studies in how not to run an organization.

The chapter, "Bill Gothard — Medicine Man" takes a frightening look at Gothard's troublesome and sometimes deadly teaching on health and medicine. It is amazing that he has not been sued for practicing without a license. Lawsuits may arise once victims abandon the notion that they are resisting "God's anointed one."

This reviewer's own encounters with Gothard by letter and phone revealed a man who will "rule or ruin." The authors of this book realize this and the risks they took in publishing it. I applaud them for their courage. Even when speaking the truth, money, bullying, and power are hard to stand up to. However, somebody has to do the job for the sake of the survivors and to warn future generations.

The authors have written an insightful and compassionate epilogue explaining why people have such a difficult, even grueling time exiting cultic groups. This information alone is worth the price of the book. It will give instruction to those coming out, as well as insight to assisting family members.

—GRF

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH — STATEMENT OF BELIEF

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



Books in Review

CHRISTIAN COUNTERFEITERS

by Lorri and Keith MacGregor

MacGregor Ministries, 116-minute video, \$19.95

This video is a wonderful tool and a great addition to the countercult arsenal. It is divided into four segments of approximately 30 minutes each. It is excellent for personal study, group study, a Sunday school class, or church viewing as a series. It spans the older mainline cults chronologically and investigates current Word-Faith aberrations.

It deals with cult leaders, cultic views of Jesus and the Bible, false prophecies, and peripheral doctrines.

In this day and age, we need to know what marks cults. The MacGregors provide not only written documentation, but also provide select audio and video segments to let viewers hear the shocking words of these cult leaders. Scripture references, as well, are plentiful to help us see how far off the biblical mark the heretics go.

Many, many hours of primary research have been invested in this production, saving us the laborious work of digging. Not only is this a great primer for new Christians, but it serves to alert everyone to the fact that all is not well in the world of "religion," and that the master counterfeiter (Satan) is hard at work.

—GRF

A MATTER OF BASIC PRINCIPLES

Bill Gothard and the Christian Life

by Don and Joy Veinot and Ron Henzel

21st Century Press, 368 pages, \$15.99

The authors have produced what is, to date, the definitive work on the history and teaching of Bill Gothard, founder of the Institute in Basic Life Principles. Gothard's institute offers seminars that are purported to present biblical principles that can be applied to family

life. Most people assume Gothard is a mainstream evangelical. In reality, he is a shadowy figure and a religious businessman who distorts Scripture and misleads believers, often with ruinous results.

Former board member and insider Dr. Samuel Schultz laments Gothard's "lack of submission to authority, his lack of accountability, and his failure to apply biblical principles to his own life." Dr. Earl Radmacher, President Emeritus of Western Seminary and longtime friend of the Gothard family, decries Gothard's "misuse and distortion of the teachings of God's Word."

The authors have managed to enter parts of Gothard's vast empire and have conducted lengthy interviews with him at his headquarters in Oak Brook, Ill.

This book contains top-notch research: religious investigative journalism and Bible exposition at its finest. Perhaps it will encourage others to start tracking the \$70 million-a-year empire. The trail of broken lives, wrecked marriages, and split churches which Gothard has left in his wake is unprecedented in modern times.

In the foreword, Dr. Ron Rhodes says the authors "demonstrate quite convincingly that Gothard wrongly defines grace and falls prey to legalism. They also take him to task for often citing biblical passages to argue points and principles that they do not prove" (pg. 14).

The authors have turned over a number of logs and exposed the ground beneath to the light of the Word of God. This book will be a comfort and vindication to many abused victims of Gothard's life-enslaving system. Gothard may explain away the broken survivors as "a few bad apples," but it is his barrel and there are more than a few. Gothard's often-used excuse that his followers misunderstood him falls apart when the authors show there is only one way to interpret his teachings.

In chapter 7, the authors liken Gothard's world to that of Orwell's *1984*. This and other analogies from life, fiction, television, and film help the reader understand Gothard's framework and makes the book easy to read. It further exposes Gothard's legalism, circumcision requirements, courtship requirements, and an organization that fails to live by the principles it preaches. Gothard's troubling and murky history of a huge sex scandal in the late-1970s to early-1980s (chapter 1), combined with the building code fiasco of the mid- to late-1990s at the

(continues on page 23)

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