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The Gospel of Self-Esteem

Are We Really Better Than We Think?

by David M. Tyler

Archie, a bi-vocational pastor, sought counseling. At the first session, he gave a synopsis of his problem:

Archie said his whole life had been one problem after another. His parents divorced when he was 10 years old. His father verbally abused both him and his mother. He never had many friends in school and felt lonely. Archie thought things would get better after he got married, but said things have not changed very much. Unfortunately, Archie said, he and his wife have been having marital problems for the past six years. Archie maintained he has always felt inferior. He had no self-esteem. He asked how he could expect anyone to love him if he didn't love himself. Archie said he needed to learn to love himself so he could have normal relationships and a happy life.

Archie's account said a lot about what he believes regarding the nature of man. Archie's words convey the belief that:

- Self-esteem is a vital element of human personality.
- Self-esteem is a feeling and not a thought process.



- Self-love is a prerequisite to being loved by others and loving others, including God.

- A person must fix his poor self-image.

Archie and his wife, Edith, serve the Lord at a nearby Baptist church. They met while they were attending a Bible college in the Midwest. Archie believes in the inerrancy of God's Word and is very orthodox when it comes to his preaching and teaching ministry. However, when it comes to solving life's problems, Archie is very unorthodox.

Archie is like many believers who have no practical or "everyday" theology. Archie has taught others the doctrines of sin, salvation, and the connection between faith and works. He has preached at Bible conferences and revival meetings. Unfortunately,

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- Being mistreated by others can cause a person's self-image to deteriorate and/or not develop properly.

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Editorials

BLOWN TO SMITHEREENS!

David asked the question in Psalm 11:3, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" David may have been referring to Saul's defection or the corruption of the priestly leaders, but he was stricken and alarmed by defection and corruption at the top. The question is shouting for an answer today.

On July 22, 1946, the extremist Jewish underground led by Menachem Begin, blew up the south wing of the King David Hotel, which housed the headquarters of the British government in what was then Palestine. The Secretariat building was the administrative nerve center for the thousands of British troops trying to keep peace between Jews and Arabs. Hundreds of pounds of explosives were smuggled into the lower Regence Cafe in large metal milk containers and placed against four pillars that were the foundation of the entire six-story southern wing.

The infiltrators were disguised as Arab workers and appeared familiar. Around 12:40 p.m. the building shuddered and was brought down with a massive roar heard miles away. The aftermath was reported by the *Palestine Post*: 41 dead, 53 injured, 52 missing. This was the beginning of the end for British rule.

A similar outrage has overtaken the Church via Charismatic extremism. Disguised as sheep, infiltrators have crept in. Pillars are being undermined. If they are

blown away, we will be left standing in the rubble, crying out the words of David: "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Unfortunately, though the Jewish underground called in bomb warnings to the King David Hotel, no one took it seriously and no one responded. *Then it was too late.* Will the Church at large just keep waiting and just keep quiet?

Sadly, many "leaders" from the mainstream aid and abet the collapse by either indifference or tacit endorsement with appearances on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, mingling in the midst of heresies of the worst kind. Their silence is their approval. Many times it is exchanged for book endorsements.

The four pillars under attack are:

1. *The concept of the sufficiency of Scripture.* The extremists are constantly touting "new words," "now words," or "fresh words," as if the Scriptures have no relevance. They may give the Bible lip service, but know their followers want prophecies, visions, stories, angelic appearances, dreams, voices, and visions. The new stuff makes the Bible pale in comparison. Scripture is twisted and made to say things it never was intended to say.

2. *Honesty and integrity.* Healings are claimed, but follow-up shows no healings; many of those purportedly healed actually have died with their disease. But to those who are entertained by these "miraculous" shows, the
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PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

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News Updates

THIS TIME HE DIDN'T COME BACK

Kenneth E. Hagin Sr., described by some as the father of the Word-Faith movement, has died. He was 86. He entered a cardiac intensive care unit after collapsing at home last Sept. 14 and died five days later. Newspaper reports said, "an exact cause of death was not immediately known."

Hagin was reared in a Southern Baptist household. He began preaching at age 17 in a church consisting primarily of Southern Baptists. His emphasis on the miraculous appealed more to Pentecostals, and he soon became an Assemblies of God minister.

In 1974, he founded Rhema Bible Training Center in Tulsa, Okla., which now operates in 14 countries and has 23,000 alumni. Rhema churches are located in more than 110 nations.

Hagin said he became a Christian at age 15 when he died and descended into hell. In his booklet, *I Went to Hell*, he wrote that his heart stopped and he "was pulled toward hell just like a magnet pulls metal unto itself." He said he "began to pray, 'O God! I come to You in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I ask You to forgive me of my sins and to cleanse me from all sin.' ... So I was born again ... and I've been saved ever since."

He claimed to have received the spiritual gifts of healing, prophecy, and discerning of spirits. He also claimed to have had personal visions of Jesus.

Hagin said his theology unfolded from a revelation. However, critics have shown that he, in part, developed and plagiarized his teachings from the writings of E.W. Kenyon, a Bible teacher and author with metaphysical leanings who died in 1948.

—MKG

EUROPEAN REVIVAL PROPHESED

Promises of the "greatest revival ever" long have been used to entice those looking for the next move of God. Toronto, Pensacola, and Smithton are just a few locations that have attracted throngs of devotees during the past decade alone. Now, two American evangelists have proclaimed that "the greatest revival of the Spirit" is coming to Germany.

During Benny Hinn's crusade held last August in Berlin, Germany, the faith healer invited to the platform Gwen Shaw, founder of the End-Time Handmaidens organization. As Hinn asked Shaw to pray for revival to come to Germany, Shaw said to him and his audience, "It will begin here, it will begin here." When Hinn inquired, "Are you prophesying now, that the revival will begin in Berlin?" Shaw responded, "I am speaking it by the Holy Spirit. ... The Lord said that the revival would begin with this crusade. ... Pastor Benny, you got no idea how important it is that you're here."

Shaw went on to declare that Hinn's Berlin meetings would spark many fires "going throughout all of Germany and all of Europe." Hinn's crusade audience cheered with loud enthusiasm at Shaw's alleged divine revelation.

However, "prophetic" words — such as Shaw's — speak only to the moment and to tantalize the naive and undiscerning. When they go unfulfilled, there is nary a cry of "false prophecy" or charge of bearing false witness against the Holy Spirit. The "prophetic word" is merely ignored, forgotten, or spiritualized. For example, in the 1990s, modern-day "prophets" in the United States said that the greatest outpouring of the Holy Ghost anywhere in the nation would occur in St. Louis and a 50-mile surrounding area. That Holy Ghost outpouring never took place and no one even thinks of holding the "prophets" accountable. Regrettably, Hinn and Shaw will meet the same reaction when the "greatest revival" fails to manifest in Europe.

Hinn's endorsement of Shaw, her ministry, and her spurious prophecy of revival continues to demonstrate his lack of spiritual discernment. Hinn has a sustained history of sanctioning questionable — and even unorthodox — women, including Kathryn Kuhlman, Aimee Semple McPherson, Maria Woodworth-Etter, and Unity School of Christianity-trained minister Johnnie Colemon.

—MKG

JUST A LOT OF SMOKE?

Finding images in the curls of smoke rising from a disaster scene long has been a staple of supermarket tabloids and some newspapers. For example, a number of papers ran photographs of both the fiery destruction of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, and the collapse of the World Trade Center buildings in New

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IS GOD “SHOWING UP” TODAY?

The Claims and Confusion of R.T. Kendall

by G. Richard Fisher

The notion of God “showing up” has become a Charismatic cliché, and the idea that it is desirable is evident from the title and subtitle of R.T. Kendall’s book, *When God Shows Up - Staying Ready for the Unexpected*.

Others, as well, think that God “showing up” is a possibility and say so in their accolades for the book. Its back cover bears praise from the likes of Stephen Strang, John Arnott, Mike Bickle, and Paul Cain.

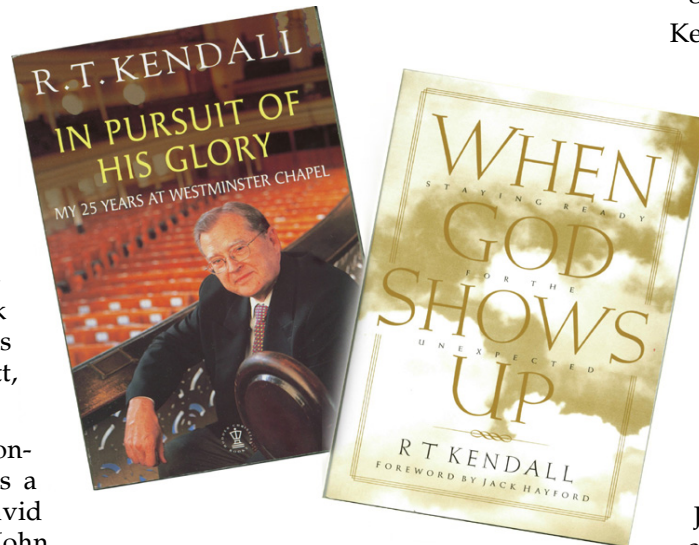
Some in Charismatic and conservative camps see Kendall as a theological heavyweight. David Yonggi Cho, Jim Bakker, and John Stott all endorse him. Even Dr. James Dobson says, “I am privileged to call this good man my friend.”¹

It is not that everything Kendall says in *When God Shows Up* is wrong, but so much of it is. Thus the reader must decide if the good can outweigh the bad. Sometimes, the negative aspects of a book can so overshadow the rest that the reader must discount it entirely.

Foursquare pastor Jack Hayford, in his praises of Kendall, tries to give us a clue as to what God “showing up” means:

“God is ‘showing up’ today! He’s revealing Himself and manifesting His power in remarkable and amazing ways — and hungry souls are the primary candidates for experiencing His arrival after that fashion.”²

So, according to Hayford, God “showing up” is an amazing



manifestation of God’s power. It is God’s “arrival.” One starts to think that God “showing up” can mean anything.

Hayford goes on to say this pursuit leaves one paying a price “of being stuck between the fanatic and the formalist” and causes one to “enter the collision zone” and be “lifted to the heavens.”³ Such unclear statements end up sounding subjective and mystical.

WHO IS KENDALL?

R.T. Kendall is the recently retired pastor at Westminster Chapel in London and the author of a number of other books, including a book on tithing, and one entitled *The Word and the Spirit*, written with Kansas City “prophet” Paul Cain. According to Kendall’s own chronology, he met Cain in 1990.⁴ Cain then became

almost a resident prophet to Kendall’s congregation in the 1990s.⁵

Kendall’s book, *Total Forgiveness*, has what might be seen as psycho-babble concepts of forgiving oneself and forgiving God. These ideas can nowhere be found in Scripture.

Kendall began his ministry at Westminster Chapel in February 1977 and served as pastor for 25 years before retiring in February 2002. Westminster Chapel has a history of eminently capable expositors from G. Campbell Morgan (1904-1917 and 1933-1943) to Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1943-1968). Kendall was able to live off their capital while departing seriously from their theology and practice.

In the 1980s, Kendall became enamored with Arthur Blessitt, a Floridian with a Baptist background who gained fame as the man who walked around the world carrying a 12-foot wooden cross. Blessitt also walked away from his first wife, Sherry, and has remarried. In 1990, upon announcing his divorce, “Blessitt said he felt this was God’s will for him at this time” and asked “that people not judge.”⁶

Following Blessitt, Kendall moved on to introduce his congregation to “Paul Cain, John Arnott, Randy Clark, [and] Rodney Howard-Browne,”⁷ men who represent a further erosion of the orthodox foundation of Westminster Chapel. The biggest change came in 1991 when Kendall and his wife spent time at a Vineyard conference with John Wimber, Mike Bickle,

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Benny Hinn: How Great Thou Aren't Orchestrating a Mighty Visitation of the Holy Spirit

by Angela M. Goedelman with M. Kurt Goedelman

Considering all that has been written about Benny Hinn in *The Quarterly Journal*, it should be noted that PFO researchers have made attendance at some of his "Miracle Crusades" part of the analysis. To see Hinn in operation is a sight to behold. His *This Is Your Day* broadcasts are a carefully edited, sanitized, and propagandized edition of what takes place at these meetings. The whole process, which begins months before the event, is remarkable.

Last summer an announcement from Benny Hinn Ministries arrived stating that a *Miracle Crusade* would take place Sept. 11-12 in Springfield, Mo. Our invitation said:

"The Church is experiencing the greatest move of God in world history! ... For years we have been told the greatest days are ahead, but I am convinced that they are here! ... If you have a need, come expecting your miracle! ... I'm expecting a mighty visitation of the Holy Spirit at the Springfield, Missouri Miracle Crusade. Whatever you do, don't miss it!"¹

Hinn's ministry even enclosed 15 "Special Guest Passes." The invitation also included the instructions to immediately call a phone number "to receive special admission for you, and your friends at the Springfield, Missouri Miracle Crusade." We complied. The passes also included the important notice that we were to "Present this pass at the Partner's entrance before 5:00 p.m. for special admission for your family, friends and loved ones."²

We followed the instructions and arrived at Hammons Coliseum around 4:45 p.m. Only one set of doors to the coliseum was open — there was no special "Partner's entrance" designated — as the crowd entered the auditorium. The left side of the entrance was for those attending the crusade in wheelchairs. However, the wheelchair line had come to a standstill and an attendant was turning people away, saying that there was no more room in the wheelchair section. So much for Hinn's call to "come expecting your miracle!"

By the time we actually made it inside the building, we could see only a few rows of empty seats in the very back of the auditorium. And standing between us and those seats were people pressed shoulder to shoulder, all with the same idea: get to those empty seats!

We also found ourselves standing between those seats and a concession stand. People who already had seats were coming our way to buy hot dogs, nachos, pretzels, popcorn, candy, and soft drinks. (Yes, apparently a concession stand is an important staple at a "Miracle Crusade.") Some who already had bought their refreshments were pushing themselves through those trying to get to the remaining seats. One woman bulldozed her way through the crowd, holding her nachos in one hand and gesturing "Get outta my way!" with the other. We wondered which fruit of the Spirit she was manifesting.

After close to an hour of being pushed, shoved, and squeezed, we

finally located a pair of empty seats — at the very back of the auditorium in the bleachers. The Miracle Crusade Guest Passes, with their promise that we would "enjoy special admission," were of no use. They weren't even collected.

However, some did enjoy "special" seating. There were many empty chairs on the main floor, but ushers and guards turned away unauthorized persons. This area was being held for select people and filled just before the start of the service. This is a gimmick Hinn adopted from Kathryn Kuhlman. Years ago, Hinn reported that a Kuhlman confidant told him, "Kathryn was so sensitive to the Holy Spirit, that if one person sat on the front row who was not of the same spirit, he would kill the service."³

Apparently Hinn didn't want to take any chances, either. However, his practice is contrary to the Word of God (James 2:1-4).

A crusade representative indicated that the coliseum held 9500 people. This is a far cry from other arenas hosting Benny Hinn crusades, where at least double that amount attend. This could indicate that Hinn is having to play to smaller venues to keep his ministry lucrative.

William Lobdell, staff writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, reported, "Donations dipped by 12% for the first quarter of [2003], say ministry officials, a result of bad publicity and the weak economy that has hurt other nonprofits."⁴ The bad publicity spoken of includes the December 2002 *Dateline NBC* special, which again

brought a national spotlight on Hinn's unsubstantiated claims of healing and charges of misuse of funds by his ministry.

As we waited for the crusade to officially begin, we watched the crowd. People continued to flock to the concession stands and restrooms, climbing over and around us, up and down the narrow aisles and steep steps.⁵ Numerous cameras were in position and readied to record the crusade with all the detail of a professional sporting event.

Of particular note was those who had come for their "healing." We paid close attention to those in wheelchairs who could be seen from our seats. We saw a blind man, white cane in hand, who crawled to a seat in the section next to us. A man in the row behind us had no left ear. A woman across the aisle from us had a visible cyst at the neckline of her dress. It is likely that all those who came for healing had received the same form letter telling them to come expecting their miracle.

However, like the thousands who attend Hinn's crusades elsewhere, these three left with the same infirmities with which they came. If they came expecting a miracle, they left disappointed.

At 7:00 p.m., the choir and orchestra were in full force with audience participation. Hinn's musical celebrities for this crusade included Judy Jacobs, Jimmie McDonald (who gained success singing at Kuhlman's meetings for 15 years), and Hinn's crusade mainstay, Steve Brock.

After only 15 minutes, the audience was led in a thundering rendition of the beloved hymn, "How Great Thou Art."⁶ And this could mean only one thing: the star of the evening was about to take center stage. And right on cue, during the crowd's exuberant singing of the chorus' "How great thou art, how great thou art," Hinn appeared on stage, the arena's spotlights focused and blazing on the faith healer in his tailored white Nehru suit.

The grand entrance during the chorus of "How Great Thou Art" is

another stage maneuver Hinn appropriated from Kuhlman. During her own healing crusades in the 1960s and 70s, Kuhlman would glide back and forth across the stage, with the bell-shaped sleeves of her long white dress floating in the breeze, while the faithful resounded with choruses of "How Great Thou Art."

Hinn now took the reins and led the faithful in worship with a variety of traditional hymns and contemporary spiritual songs. During this time of continued praise and worship, it was interesting to observe that one woman who had been sitting in a wheelchair rose to her feet and stood while singing. She did not appear to have any problems in doing so.

Jacobs and McDonald both performed solos, and Hinn told the audience about the many opportunities he is having to "preach the Gospel" throughout the world. He then offered a message of and invitation for salvation. Regrettably, the orthodoxy of the message and call would be undermined by his sermon soon to come. The final order of business — before the healing campaign began — was the offering. Ushers flooded the auditorium with hundreds of buckets to collect the offering envelopes.

On the offering envelopes, there were sections for present supporters to increase their "current monthly Partner commitment" by \$50, \$100, \$150, or \$250. Hinn also solicited those who would make a "Special Outreach Commitment" with a faith pledge in the next 30 days of \$10,000, \$5,000, \$2,000, down to \$250.

While Hinn told the people that they were not buying their miracle, he really was soliciting donations with promises of "give to get." It's a Christianized version of Las Vegas or the lottery. Followers hope and pray that if they keep playing the numbers — contributing to Hinn to spread the Gospel — their winning lot will soon come their way and they'll cash in. For those who forgot to bring cash or their checkbook, Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express were accepted.

Having concluded the formalities of singing, announcements, an altar call, and the all-important offering, it was now time to begin the Miracle Service.

It long has been said that Hinn delivers false hope to his gullible followers. The great danger and misfortune in this is that he does so at the expense of Scripture. There are those who assert that Hinn, more recently, has become a better or more reliable exegete of Scripture. Yet, throughout the years, Hinn has routinely mangled biblical texts. At the Springfield crusade, he fared no better and his impoverished exegesis was on display.

The spiritually and physically debilitating consequences of his 20-minute sermonette on healing that followed, and which set the stage for the showcasing of his healing testimonials, were the real tragedy.

Hinn's defenders who argue for his ascent into orthodox doctrine and entry into the mainstream would do well to consider his words in Springfield. Hinn told his faithful:

"Ladies and gentlemen, forgiveness of sin and the healing of the body always go together. Always go together, they're not separate. Tonight you saw many accept the fact that Jesus died on the cross for them. Their sins were forgiven. They went back to their seats with joy, knowing, having the assurance, salvation is theirs. And so it is. Of course, He didn't [just] die for sin, but He suffered for disease. He was wounded for transgressions, and bruised for iniquities, and chastised that we may — we might have peace. But it doesn't end there, for it says with His stripes we are healed. With His stripes we are healed. Those of you sick in body, this is your moment."⁷

Hinn continued his message:

"Salvation, that divine grace we call salvation, comes in twofold dynamics. There is the front of the cross and there is the back of the cross. So many preach the front, they forget the back. They see Jesus on the cross and say 'Come into my heart.' But if ever

you walk and look at the back of that cross, you'll see His stripes. You [should] never forget the back of that cross. The front will give you salvation, but His back will give your healing. It's a twofold salvation."⁸

Hinn next proclaimed:

"In the communion we have the bread and the wine — or the grape juice in some churches. ... The bread was broken for your body, the blood was shed for your soul. It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul, the Bible says. ... The blood was not shed to heal your body. Hear this. The blood was shed to cleanse you from sin. But the body, what about the body? ... The body was broken that your body might be put back together. His body was broken, His body was broken that your body might be healed."⁹

And then Hinn brought his eisegesis to a head:

"I'm telling you that the Scripture says that Jesus Christ not only died to save you, He suffered to heal your body. He is the savior of the soul and the savior of the body. Redemption, your redemption, in it your healing is included. The healing of the body is included in the work of redemption. That is a fact — an eternal fact. ... I'm here in Springfield, Missouri, to tell you Jesus still heals. He still heals. And He will heal you tonight! ... So let's not receive half, let's receive the whole thing tonight. ... But now God Almighty has always given both together. What is required is faith. Remember this, it took faith to save you. You didn't feel nothing [sic], you just believed it. You know how it feels to be — to get saved? You just said, you said, 'Jesus, I'm sorry I've sinned. Come into my heart.' Bang! You're saved. It's just that easy to get healed. Just that easy to get healed. You don't have to pray, you don't have to pray a loooooonnnng King James prayer. You just have to say, 'Help!'"¹⁰

In just a few short minutes, Hinn delivered a litany of faulty biblical interpretations that would require a separate article for full analysis. However, a few critical points warrant an immediate response.

First is his assertion that salvation is twofold: "forgiveness of sin and the healing of the body always go together." That would be a wonderful promise if true, but sadly it isn't. The idea comes not from Scripture, but from the imagination of Hinn (and other Word Faith teachers), and herein lies the harmful effects of false teaching.

Those who buy into Hinn's novel premise are in for a disaster. Hinn *rightly* promises that salvation and forgiveness of sin are by the merits of Christ's death upon Calvary's cross. But he undermines this biblical truth by *wrongly* promising that healing of our physical body is by the merits of Christ's suffering. Scripture declares that Jesus was made sin (or a sin offering) on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21). Nowhere is it ever declared in God's Word that Jesus was made *sickness* for us. First Corinthians 15 is clear that "Christ died for our sins" (v. 3). It does not say, "Christ suffered for our sickness." In no uncertain terms, Hinn adds to the Gospel message preached by Paul which he received from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The "Catch-22" for Hinn's devotees is that because, according to him, both redemption and healing are guaranteed as a result of the suffering and death of Christ, then there can be no certainty about salvation (eternal life) when there is no healing. The web Hinn weaves and which entangles his faithful is that when their physical healing is not realized, then any assurance that their salvation is secure is equally suspect. Taken to its logical conclusion, Hinn's theology surmises if God is not faithful when He has promised to heal one physically, how can He be trusted as faithful to save one?

Richard Mayhue addresses Hinn's unbiblical proposition:

"...if healing is in the atonement and if it applies physically today, those who ask by faith for physi-

cal healing and are not healed have no logical right to be assured of their salvation. In contrast, God says that if we are saved, we have every right to believe in our salvation. So if physical healing were in the atonement and if we ask to be healed and are not, not only do we lose our assurance of the physical, but we should also lose our assurance of the spiritual. Fortunately, such an unbiblical conclusion can be reached only if we have first taken a wrong approach to what the atonement is really all about — the forgiveness of our sins."¹¹

Hinn draws and declares his erroneous theology by reading into the text of Isaiah 53 a promise that is not there. The emphasis contained in the whole of Isaiah 53 is directed toward spiritual healing — not physical healing as a second and equal dynamic of salvation. The repetitive theme found in the Isaiah passage is the absolution of sin:

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ... For the transgressions of My people He was stricken" (Isaiah 53:5-6, 8b).

Hinn wrongly capitalizes on the phrase, "by His stripes we are healed," found in the latter part of verse 5. Hinn argues that the sufferings of Christ guarantee physical healing, and that the death of Christ guarantees spiritual healing (or forgiveness of sin). Yet Isaiah proclaims, Christ was *wounded* for our *transgressions*, He was *bruised* for our *iniquities*. Clear and simple, the "wounded" and "bruised" speak to the eradication of our "transgressions" and "iniquities," not to physical healing.

Those who look to Hinn for extraordinary biblical understanding get more Scripture twisting. Consider Hinn's statement that Christ's "body was broken that your body might be

put back together. His body was broken, His body was broken that your body might be healed." Hinn again makes a declaration foreign to — and contradicted by — the Scriptures. The body of Jesus was not "broken." In fact, the Bible says the requirement for a sacrificial lamb was just the opposite (Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:11-12).

Of Jesus' body, John wrote: "But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. ... For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken'" (John 19:33, 36).

Once again, Hinn has established his false "healing in the atonement" theology by reading into the Bible's text and, more dreadfully, has made Jesus to say something He did not say. Hinn told his Springfield audience that, "[Jesus] said to His disciples, 'Take, eat my broken body. Broken for you.'" No such statement by Jesus can be found in the Bible.

While Hinn may contend his point can be argued from 1 Corinthians 11:24, it cannot. The Apostle Paul, in citing Jesus' command when He celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples (e.g., Luke 22:19), does not exegete our Lord's words into a "twofold dynamics" theory of salvation. Moreover, the word "broken" in the phrase "This is my body which is broken for you" from the King James Version (and New King James Version) is not supported by any other ancient texts or by comparison with other passages in the KJV. A.T. Robertson states of 1 Corinthians 11:24:

"*Klomenon* (broken) of the *Textus Receptus* (King James Version) is clearly not genuine. Luke (22:19) has *didomenon* (given), which is the real idea here. As a matter of fact the body of Jesus was not broken (John 19:36). The bread was broken, but not the body of Jesus."¹²

Additionally, it must be stated that the problem in Hinn's proclamation comes not from the use or citation of the word *broken* from the KJV passage. There are many good Christians who use 1 Corinthians 11:24 from the

KJV. The issue of concern here is that Hinn develops or bolsters the unbiblical concept of physical healing from the word imported into the passage. This is far afield from those noted above and is more at home with the biblical interpretations of cults which build an elaborate doctrine upon an unqualified verse in Scripture. But Hinn *must* employ such a poor hermeneutic (here and in Isaiah 53) for his message of "physical healing" is the foundation of his whole ministry. Without it, there would be no packed arenas, no television broadcasts with "signs and wonders," no best-selling books on the miraculous — and no deluge of donations to his ministry.

As Hinn wrapped up his healing sermon, he began to orchestrate the miraculous with nearly another half-hour of praise singing, this time interspersed with brief narrations of biblical healing accounts and personal explicit admonitions including:

"You on wheelchairs tonight, I have news for you. God Almighty paid for your healing. Don't stay in that wheelchair tonight."

"That wheelchair is not God's plan for your life."

"You in those wheelchairs, you don't have to stay in those wheelchairs."

"Now listen: The job is done, the price is paid. You don't have to be sick anymore."

"Come out of your wheelchair in Jesus' name."

"Remember: whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered not only from sin, but from diseases and infirmities."

"As you call upon His name, miracles happen."

"Lift your hands and receive your healing now."

Then as the music and the orders to "receive your healing" reached a crescendo, Hinn began calling out the miraculous left and right:

"Someone's just been healed of lung cancer. I rebuke that lung cancer in Jesus' name."

"Lift your hands and ask Him to heal you. Don't wait for me to call out your healing."

"Somebody's neck has just been healed."

"Somebody with bad circulation, you have something the matter with your blood circulation. The Lord's healing you right now!"

"Somebody's ears are being healed."

"Stomach cancer is being healed. I rebuke it in the name of the Lord."

"Arthritis is being healed. Someone with arthritis to my right. ... Pick up that right leg that has been stiff with arthritis. I rebuke that arthritis in Jesus' mighty name."

"A skin condition has been healed to my right."

"Somebody's eyes are being healed way up there in the balcony, way up and to my left somebody's eyes have just been healed."

"Somebody with a tumor under the right arm. The tumor is disappearing."

And the healings just kept coming. "So many healings, I can hardly keep up with the Holy Spirit," Hinn lamented. Blindness, cancers, muscle conditions, deafness, bone diseases, ulcers, even varicose veins could not withstand Hinn's claimed revelation knowledge and divine healing.

As Hinn continued working the crowd, calling out a barrage of healings, Steve Brock and ministry representatives made their way onto the main floor to cultivate those in the audience for their healing. As Hinn continued to announce the healings, ushers thrust multiple empty wheelchairs onto the stage. The audience roared at the sight. Yet, for all the empty wheelchairs and all the words of knowledge of divine healing, it seemed to have taken quite a while for individuals to come forward and testify of their miracle. Where were all the people who once were seated in these wheelchairs?

One recipient of a “healing” was the woman in the wheelchair who had stood up during the singing. She claimed to have been healed from arthritis and was allowed on the platform with Hinn. Hinn entertained the crowd by “slaying her in the Spirit.”

One who was not as fortunate to make it to the platform was a severely crippled young man. A woman, possibly his mother, worked fruitlessly with him to straighten up. He struggled up and down the aisle, only to finally fall back into his wheelchair.

No doubt, their predicament was one that was repeated all over the auditorium — and in other cities where Hinn takes his Miracle Crusades. People who leave suffering from the same infirmity with which they arrived surely must struggle with an eventual shipwrecked faith. Many will leave the arena with not only a physical problem, but now thinking there’s something spiritually askew. How cruel, unconscionable, and utterly heartless it is for one like Hinn to offer a false hope which leaves in its wake devastating guilt and severe depression. This is the prevalent downside few realize and which is never presented on his *This Is Your Day* broadcasts.

At 10:30 p.m. — and after showcasing only a handful of anticlimactic “miracles” — the crusade came to an abrupt halt. Where were all the dramatic healings that had been proclaimed by Hinn? Although there were a handful of people remaining on the stage, Hinn dismissed the crowd with a reminder of how powerfully God’s Spirit had moved this evening and with a plug for the next morning’s “anointing” campaign. He quickly left the stage, with no indication of an encore — at least not tonight.

As many of the people left the building and walked (or were pushed in their wheelchairs) toward their cars, they passed four large tractor-trailer trucks. Three of these trucks had brought the lighting, sound, video, and stage equipment. The fourth one housed the video production command center for the crusade. For such a show as this, much is needed and hauled from city to city. In just a little over 24 hours, those trucks would again be loaded and soon on their way to another city, once again to create “a mighty visitation of the Holy Spirit.”

Endnotes:

1. Benny Hinn, Benny Hinn Ministries form letter, no date, copy on file.

2. The “before 5:00 p.m.” summoned attendees to be present more than two hours before the “Miracle Service,” which was scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m.
3. Benny Hinn, *Benny Hinn Testimony*, Orlando Christian Center, July 19, 1987, audio tape on file.
4. William Lobdell, “The Price of Healing,” *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, July 27, 2003, pg. 30.
5. Throughout the entire time of the crusade, but most notably when a few soloists sang either during the offering or between the sermon for salvation and the sermon for healing, people were coming and going incessantly to the refreshment stand. This was obviously very odd, although it fit perfectly into the “performance” aspect of things.
6. Hinn’s appearance on stage less than 20 minutes after the start of the service was a deviation from previous crusades we had attended in the 1990s. During those crusades, the crowds were allured with a much longer duration of group dynamics through the music prior to Hinn’s arrival on stage.
7. Benny Hinn, sermon on healing at Springfield, Mo. Miracle Crusade, Sept. 11, 2003, transcript on file.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. Richard Mayhue, *The Healing Promise*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1991, pg. 121.
12. A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931, Vol. IV, Epistles of Paul, pg. 164.

Is God “Showing Up” Today?

(continued from page 4)

Jack Deere, and a coterie of “Kansas City Prophets.”⁸ One of Kendall’s friends and former deacons acknowledges: “Some evangelicals believe that R.T. in his pursuit of the glory of God has gone too far.”⁹

When examining Kendall’s life, one is tempted to ask, “Will the real R.T. Kendall please stand up?” He was born in Ashland, Ky., in 1935 to Nazarene parents. He reports he saw Christ and heard His voice on a trip to heaven in October 1955.¹⁰ His alliances constantly shifted and changed. He admits, “I have always been an ambitious man.”¹¹

Kendall became a Nazarene minister for a time, then became an Orthodox Presbyterian minister for a time, then became a Southern Baptist minister, and describes himself as a “four-and-a-half-point Calvinist.”¹² All Kendall’s past personas were left behind when he came under the strong hand and shadow of the still dominant but aging Lloyd-Jones at Westminster. Lloyd-Jones vetted much of Kendall’s ministry. Kendall admits for a time he tried to sound like Lloyd-Jones.¹³

Kendall had his “blessed” Blessitt phase, his “raising Cain” phase, and then for a time Kendall says of Rodney Howard-Browne: “I probably became Rodney’s number one apologist.”¹⁴ At last he joined the outer fringes of what some have called the

counterfeit revival. Kendall has reinvented himself more times than Al Gore. There could really be a book done on the many faces of R.T.

SHOWING UP OR SHOWING OFF?

Kendall says in *When God Shows Up* that God “manifests Himself,” but if we are not paying attention, “we could completely miss seeing His glory — right before our eyes — and we would not even know He had shown up!”¹⁵ If God “showing up” is anything like what happened to Paul on the Damascus Road (Acts 9) or Isaiah seeing God high and lifted up (Isaiah 6) or John’s vision of the glorified Jesus (Revelation 1) it is difficult to imagine such a thing being

missed. Ezekiel certainly did not miss it, nor did Daniel.

It appears then that whatever God “showing up” means, believers must be prepared and attentive if they are to recognize it. This does strongly suggest that there is much of us, self and emotion, in this experiential process, and maybe less of God Himself.

Some would argue, and rightly so, that to suggest such a thing as God “showing up” is to deny, or at least seriously undermine, the whole concept of Jesus Christ coming to earth in the incarnation. *God has already shown up.* Matthew records: “Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

Expositor and professor Charles R. Erdman comments on the truth of Emmanuel:

“The ancient prophet may not have had in mind either a miracle or an event of the distant future, but the writer of the Gospel saw that the true meaning of his prediction was realized in the birth of Jesus, for he was no mere pledge of divine deliverance but himself a divine Saviour, not only was his name a token of the presence of God, but he himself was manifest deity.”¹⁶

John further affirms: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Paul declares: “God was manifested in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16) and the writer of Hebrews affirms: “God, who at various times and in various ways, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Zacharias declared, “the dayspring from on high visited us” (Luke 1:78).

Believers who commit to the omnipresence of God realize that God does not have to show up because He is already here (Psalm 139). They realize

also that He is here in the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Christians are in some sense always *in* the presence of God. Jesus said, “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20). God is also there in a wonderful way when we open the pages of the Scripture. In Scripture, Calvin suggested that God stands before us, contemporary with us. God has not gone anywhere, so He does not need to show up.

Clichés about God “showing up” are perhaps just examples of sensational and contrived terminology invented by Kendall and others. It does a disservice to the incarnation and work of God in and through Emmanuel, the Lord Jesus Christ. It minimizes the very real presence of Christ in a believer’s life as one who never leaves or forsakes. It seriously undermines the doctrine of omnipresence. The whole premise is sub-Christian. Paul says, “in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). There is no escape from God, whether darkness or distance.

SAME OLD, SAME OLD

Kendall may have come up with a catchy book title, but it sets up a scenario in which *we need something more than God has already done and is doing.* It convolutes the doctrine of sanctification and makes the Christian life at times a series of emotional experiences, bodily manifestations, and a hunt for altered states of consciousness. It confuses the doctrine of direct divine revelation (in the giving of Scripture), tries to reproduce a completed process, and manipulates people into ecstatic experiences. It is another buzz word, putting people at the mercy of Toronto “blessings,” Pensacola “outpourings,” and God-chasing spasms.

There is no doubt that Kendall tries to open people up to the bizarre. He suggests that *like* the Pharisees, we might “miss God’s Messiah,” so we must be ready to let God manifest Himself in ways He “has never done before.” He goes so far as to say, “I felt I must prepare the people for the unusual — should God want to show

up in a strange sort of way.” Kendall’s premise is: “He loves to show up in a way that offends the sophisticated!”¹⁷ These phrases cause people to be open to manipulation by anyone occupying the stage. The “unusual” and the “strange” are now claimed to be of God. However, both of these can be produced by the flesh and/or the demonic.

ROTTEN ROOTS

Kendall details that his seeking of the strange began when reports from Toronto and Holy Trinity Brompton in England came his way. There was no careful searching of Scripture, as had been promised in the preface of his book. Regarding Toronto, Kendall’s friend Charlie said to have “felt fairly certain it was of the Holy Spirit, although he was aware of how strange it all seemed.”¹⁸ So it was Charlie’s word and not God’s Word that carried the day, even though Charlie was only “fairly certain.”

Kendall then presents the Toronto Blessing as “an illustration of what I meant by being open to the manner in which God *chooses* to show up.”¹⁹ Kendall admits that in “October 1995” the “‘Toronto Blessing’ came to Westminster Chapel.”²⁰

Here, finally, we find that God “showing up” is really shorthand for warmed-over Toronto Blessing. We remember Toronto introduced convulsions, comas, animal noises, and altered states to its revival services in the early 1990s.²¹ Kendall disingenuously states his “book is not about the Toronto Blessing, which, nonetheless, serves as an illustration of what I mean by being ready for the way God can show up.”²² Kendall’s protestations seem hollow. *This is about the “Toronto Blessing.”* This is nothing more than cloning the experiences of others and saying that it is God. Toronto is the illustration, the model, and the paradigm. While the extreme wing of the Charismatic movement boasts of the “new” and the “now,” it is just warmed-over Toronto.

It is hard to understand why the “classic expositional approach that is so historic in British tradition,” which

is promised in the book, is totally ignored.²³ Kendall takes the historic Palm Sunday event regarding Jesus fulfilling prophecy (riding into Jerusalem on a donkey) and contrives the following:

“Countless incidents in the Bible tell of the Lord showing up when He wasn’t expected, although He should have been, and showing up in a manner that was surprising. God continues to do this today, and we must be open to the unexpected time and the unexpected manner of His coming. For we may be surprised to find that He has been around and we haven’t recognized Him.”²⁴

More correctly we could say that Christ showed up as expected because this is what the Word of God predicted and prophesied. Palm Sunday should have been expected since the time that Zechariah gave his prophecy (9:9). It was an event completely within the boundaries of Scripture. Some of the people in some fashion recognized the uniqueness of Jesus, or they would not have shouted, “Hosanna” — save now.

When we declare that God operates on the basis of His Word, we are only declaring what the Bible teaches. God fulfills prophecy as He says and as is expected. God works in accordance with His Word, and Psalm 119:65 assures us of that fact: “You have dealt well with your servant, O LORD, according to your Word.” Carnal experiences and carnal explanations of experiences do not qualify. How the Palm Sunday event can be a basis of what Kendall is proposing is ludicrous eisegesis.

DOCTRINE 101

Kendall, for all of the prestige and status of Westminster, apparently does not understand the distinctions between the concepts of revelation, inspiration, and illumination. Consider the following definitions:

Revelation: “The term revelation means intrinsically the disclosure of what was previously unknown. In Judeo-Christian theology, the term is

used primarily of God’s communication to man of divine truth, that is, his manifestation of himself or of his will.”²⁵ There is natural or general revelation in which God reveals Himself through nature (Romans 1:20), as an artist through his painting. There is also special revelation where God at special times in history communicated with prophets and apostles for the purpose of having these inspired men convey God’s message through preaching and in Scripture.

Inspiration: “Inspiration, then, as defined by Paul in this passage [2 Timothy 3:16], is the *strong, conscious in-breathing of God into men, qualifying them to give utterance to truth. It is God speaking through men, and the Old Testament is therefore just as much the Word of God as though God spake every single word of it with His own lips.*”²⁶ By extension, the same thing can be said of the New Testament. Because the Bible is complete, there is no continued inspiration (or penning of sacred Scripture), nor does there need to be. Cults thrive on claims of ongoing revelation and additional scriptures.

Illumination: “Spiritual Illumination refers to the influence of the Holy Ghost, common to all Christians.”²⁷ Henry Thiessen says, “illumination does not deal with the transmission of the truth, but with the understanding of the truth already revealed.”²⁸ Illumination, then, is the Holy Spirit quickening our minds to understand sacred Scripture.

In writing about his experiences, it is obvious that Kendall is seeking revelation and inspiration when he ought to be seeking illumination. We are promised illumination by God’s Spirit as we seek to understand and follow God’s Word (John 14-16). Wanting God to “show up” is a clear case of coveting the experiences of direct revelation and divine inspiration when it is not promised by Scripture.

There is no way we can repeat the Palm Sunday event, nor must we. The record of Christ’s deeds and the fulfillment of prophecies are there for our edification. We do not have to repeat the experiences of Abraham,

Joseph, or the apostles. Through their inspired stories we are reminded that God will be with us in our afflictions. Scripture does not require us to walk on water or multiply food. The worn out canard that the Bible does not state that these things will cease must be turned around and we must insist that it does not state they will continue, otherwise we would not expect clothes to wear out in the wilderness or no longer have to shop for food or take boats over water.

Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He will not change in His nature, character, essence, and promises to be with us (Hebrews 13:5-8), but as Albert Gibbs reminds us:

“A great deal of the confusion of Christendom is the result of failure to appreciate what is called ‘dispensational truth.’ By ‘dispensation’ is meant the basis of God’s dealing with mankind, or a portion of mankind, through various periods of history. Andrew Jukes has defined it as follows: ‘God had dealt with mankind at various periods since the fall of man, in different degrees of intimacy and, in a certain sense, also on different principles. Through it all, He has had one purpose in view: to reveal what He is, and to show what man is; but this one end has been brought out in different ways, and under varied and repeated trials.’”²⁹

DEPRESSING ADVICE

Some of Kendall’s advice is off the mark and may even be dangerous. His advice on depression is shallow, simplistic, and sad:

“Angels Comfort Us When We Are in Extreme Depression ... When we suffer from depression, we ought to know that God knows we are suffering. He understands. If a man of God like Elijah could know depression, then why should we feel guilty because we do, too?”³⁰

Angelic presence and comfort in depression are at best speculations on

Kendall's part. God knowing and understanding is a given. The problem is that the depression might be caused by a real physical ailment that could go undiagnosed and untreated. Anemia can cause depression. Sleep deprivation can factor in as well. Depression can be caused by a number of medications. We must be a bit more compassionate and thorough and ask the person to check on any medications they are taking. If there is a possibility of depression as a side effect, we should recommend that they contact their doctor for a change or reduction in amount. Jesus said the sick have need of a physician and the most godly and humane course of action would be to refer a depressed person to a competent doctor for a physical checkup. It is not compassionate to glibly mouth angel talk.

Depression also can be triggered by guilt. There is no use telling a person to not feel guilty when he should. In the event that the depression is guilt-induced, we can point the person to the One who can forgive, cleanse, remove guilt, and set their minds free. A guilt-ridden adulterer, for instance, should not be pointed to angels, but rather to repentance, God's mercy, and grace. Forgiveness is a great guilt reliever.

Depression can be triggered by self-pity and brooding, in which case the person has to be helped in breaking that habit and developing a Philippians 4 mind set. Depression is complex, and pawning the person off to angels is cruel and dangerous.

The way in which God treated Elijah was specific to Elijah. Elijah's depression appears to have stemmed from a combination of fear, running from God's will, sleep loss, and lack of nourishment (1 Kings 19). God treated each of those problems specifically and in order. Elijah's case should be referred to only in general terms. His depression had physical, practical, spiritual, and peripheral components. God dealt with every one of them.

Os Guinness writes that we usually end up "being either practical at the expense of being spiritual or spiritual

at the expense of being practical."³¹

Joanie E. Yoder also gives the practical advice that, "If you are discouraged because you are tired or overworked, God's initial remedy for you is probably extra sleep or a day off. The most practical remedy, if it's the right one, is usually the most spiritual one."³²

Jay Adams informs us on the complexities of depression:

"Almost anything can be at the root of the counselee's depression: a recent illness in which he gets behind in his work, hormonal changes, a reversal of his fortunes, the consequences of simple negligence, guilt over a particular sin, self-pity arising from jealousy or a disadvantageous turn of events, bad feeling resulting from resentment, worry, etc. The important fact to remember is that a depression does not result *directly* from any one of these factors, but rather comes from a cyclical process in which the initial problem is mishandled in such a way that it is enlarged in downward helical spirals that eventually plunge one into despair."³³

The pastor/counselor needs to be an alert, aggressive, and knowledgeable helper, and his counselee well-informed. It may well be harmful to be under the pastoral care of Kendall, as his grasp of personal problems appears limited.

CANDY FROM STRANGERS?

Kendall's advice on guidance sounds like a recipe for disaster: "*Be open to anybody at any time. You never know if God will send someone who will give you a word that is life changing. I have had it happen to me more than once — by being open to just anybody. God spoke, and the person through whom He spoke may, for all I know, have been an angel.*"³⁴

We are to "test all things" (1 Thessalonians 5:21) and "beware of false prophets" (Matthew 7:15). Just "anybody" could be David Koresh, Jim Jones, or Marshall Applewhite. De-

ceivers come in the guise of "angels of light" (2 Corinthians 11:13-14). Psalm 1 advises that we not be open to just anyone for advice or influence.

SUBJECTIVISM OR TRUE SPIRITUALITY?

A subjective orientation shows up in Kendall's definition of spirituality. He teaches that "we can define spirituality as the ability to close the time gap between the moment the Lord appears and our awareness that it is the Lord."³⁵ This is really just subjective mumbo-jumbo.

Spirituality by any biblical definition or explanation must be related to God's Holy Spirit and the Scriptures. Paul shows that our spirituality is progressive and tied to walking in obedience to the Holy Spirit and the Word as we develop the fruit of the Spirit. The Apostle Paul instructs, "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8-10). Theologians in the past often have referred to *praxis*: living out in the everyday the dictates of the Word. The Puritans saw it as all-around godliness.

In Galatians, Paul urges: "For if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:18, 22-23). With God's strength, we can be joyful, peaceful, patient, more gentle, more kind, good, faithful, and self-controlled.

True spirituality — called godliness — consists of the development of godly character qualities (2 Peter 1:1-12) and knowing and following the will of God. John Walvoord points up the varied parts of Christian spirituality:

"Service and our progressive sanctification, our knowledge of the Word of God, our guidance, assurance, worship, and prayer life are not elements which fall

into separate categories, but rather are the varied lights of all the colors of the spiritual life, which combined form a holy life in the will of God."³⁶

Paul shows that the spiritual man will be a thinker and will view things in terms of biblical categories: "But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:15-16).

Adam Clarke expounds the Pauline concept of the spiritual man:

"He who has the mind of Christ discerns and judges of all things spiritual ... *He examines, scrutinizes, convinces, reproveth* ... *The spiritual man* — the well-taught Christian, convinces, i.e. can easily convict, all men, ... his mind is enlightened, and his life is holy."³⁷

Kendall's view of spirituality as awareness seems so shallow when compared with Francis Schaeffer's robust, biblical one. Schaeffer argues that there cannot be a true spirituality apart from a growing, healthy relationship in a local church setting. He calls for substantial healing in personal relationships and substantial healing in the interpersonal relationships in the church.³⁸ True spirituality is connected to character, behavior, and relationships. It is not a subjective inner awareness, but a heartfelt commitment to obedience and the outworking of that obedience in practical biblical terms.

Kendall is confusing at points when he merges God's actions with His presence.³⁹ Kendall tries to use the story in Acts 12, where Peter is released from jail, as an illustration of God "showing up."

In Kendall's view, God "showing up" can be answered prayer, direct revelations, bodily manifestations, and many other things. When something is everything, it is really nothing. Kendall quotes Mother Teresa in her asking, "Did you see Jesus today?"⁴⁰ and strongly implies that

seeing Jesus in others is a way that God "shows up." God blesses works of mercy and sharing our faith, but He does not have to "show up" — He is already there.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Kendall's advice on spiritual warfare is fine as far as it goes, but leaves out the believer's *major* defense against the enemy. He writes: "*Remember* that the devil is round about us. ... *Be ready.* ... *Recognize* him for who he is. ... *Refuse* him. ... *Resist.*"⁴¹ Kendall says nothing about quoting the Word of God. Jesus quoted the Word, which resulted in Satan leaving Him (Matthew 4:1-11). The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit in our armor (Ephesians 6:17).

It is hard to understand how Kendall can put a so-called "prophetic word," a so-called "word of knowledge," and even a "suggestion" on exactly the same level as Scripture. However, he does that very thing as he teaches:

"If God speaks to you through a word that's preached or a prophetic word or a word of knowledge, or through a friend gently trying to make a suggestion, and you reject that message, then you leave Him no choice but to do what He has to do to get your attention."⁴²

This comment by Kendall is naive and less than protective of his flock (Acts 20:28-31). Modern "words of knowledge" have been shown to be statistical guesswork and in some cases outright deception and fraud from a crib sheet or ear receiver. It is shameless exploitation that gives false hope.⁴³ Because the word-of-knowledge scam has been run so often, we ought to have nothing to do with it.

LITTLE GODS?

Kendall's statements about Christ, the believer, and the Godhead are troubling. Kendall seems to be saying that Christ has been displaced in the Godhead and has to move over and share His exclusive place in the Trinity with us. It almost sounds like the

old Herbert W. Armstrong heresy of a God-family.

Armstrong taught that the Godhead could not be limited to the Father and Christ, but that the Church would become part of the God family and that, "The GOD FAMILY will then RULE ALL NATIONS with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD RESTORED!"⁴⁴ He taught that the Trinity doctrine destroyed the Gospel.

Kendall puts it this way: "What possibility could there be that Jesus could lose His place in the Trinity, that Jesus could be dislodged from the Godhead? Yet, Romans 8:17 says, 'We are ... co-heirs with Christ.' This means God loves us as much as He loves Jesus."⁴⁵ If Kendall is saying what it sounds like he is saying, then God does not remain God, and the Trinity becomes an extended family.

Being a joint heir with Jesus certainly means that we will share His eternal riches in a resurrected body, but it cannot be taken to the lengths Kendall pushes it. Roman law, according to biblical scholars, considered joint heirs to be "equal inheritors."⁴⁶

We will share Christ's glory in some fashion in the hereafter, but we will not dislodge Him. *The Geneva Study Bible* says, "As all the children in a human family are heirs of the father along with the oldest brother, so believers are God's heirs in and with Christ."⁴⁷ This involves a change of status for the believer, not a change of nature. Jesus shares his future riches in heaven, not His deity or place in the Trinity. Any truth pushed to extremes becomes heresy.

An inheritance is riches promised for the future. Anders Nygren illuminates Romans 8:17 with its emphasis on joint inheritance:

"In these Paul's emphasis on both present and future in relation to Christ comes to expression. In this life it is of primary importance that we are participants with Him in His suffering. But in the life that is to come we are made participants in His

glory; only then shall we enter into the inheritance which has already been assured for us."⁴⁸

An expanding or growing Trinity is nowhere taught in the Bible. The idea of Christ sharing His place in the Godhead with mere creatures is a sibling to Armstrongism and cousin to Mormonism.

THE RETURN OF FREUD

Kendall also seems to buy into questionable modern psychological theory, which suggests a link between a person's inability to believe God loves him and that person's relationship with his or her father. He seems to be about 30 years behind the times as he hitches his wagon to psychological theory. Kendall writes:

"There could be a psychological problem. I know people who can't call God 'Father' because of the relationship they had with their own fathers. It may surprise you to know, I sympathize here. I never quite came up to my own father's expectations."⁴⁹

Kendall, at best, is imposing a debatable psychological interpretation on an event. The person could be using the parent as an excuse for rejecting God's love.

This writer had an abusive, alcoholic, unloving father who abandoned his family following divorce. This writer discovered in the Scriptures the truth of the Fatherhood of God and rejoiced in the new relationship with a perfect, loving Heavenly Father who would never abuse and never forsake. The concept of God as Father was nourishing, comforting, and healing. The Holy Spirit illuminated and applied that truth in wonderful ways. I was not bound to be an abusive father in need of some kind of psychological healing.

Christ would not have told us to pray, "Our *Father* which art in heaven" if it were impossible to do so. Peter assured believers that they have been released and redeemed from the aimless conduct (or vain habit patterns) of their fathers (1 Peter 1:18). If one is unable to accept,

process, and enjoy God's love and Fatherhood, there may be many potential causes, including lack of conversion or inattention to the Word, which must be determined.

Paul Vitz reminds us:

"In the case of both parents, it is high time that these 'explanations' be called by their real name — a new variety of the old prejudice known as 'scapegoating.' When will psychological theory be honest and large enough to allow us the dignity of accepting that the fault is not in our parents — anymore than it is in our stars—but in ourselves."⁵⁰

Jay Adams shows the tie-in to secular self-love and self-image teaching and describes what the New Testament presents:

"What do the writers of the New Testament epistles actually require of their readers? Quite the opposite of self-image practices. They constantly insist that their readers love God and one another in spite of any deprivation they may have experienced in their backgrounds. Indeed the issue of deprivation is never raised as an extenuating circumstance to explain away sinful living. Are we to infer that the recipients of the epistles had none of the deprivations ... wouldn't you expect to see stroke after stroke given to converts in the epistles rather than commands and exhortations to love God and love one another? Commands to love, regardless of background and even in the midst of existing problems of every kind, appear in 1 Corinthians 13 and innumerable other passages. Indeed, Jesus Himself told us that Scripture can be summed up as a group of books that teach us how to love God and one another. If that is so, how is it that the all-important self-worth truth (that love for others rests on love for self, and this in turn on the love of others for one's self) is not spelled out in Scripture?"⁵¹

LAUGHING AT ONESELF

In making light of a "special call," Kendall shows the subjective nature of self-authenticating experiences. The humor he employs inadvertently shows how mystical and silly these claims are:

"A friend I grew up with heard an audible voice saying, 'Dale, preach!' Someone else was plowing corn in the fields when he saw the clouds were formed in a PC. He said, 'God is saying to me 'Preach Christ,' and he quit plowing corn and he started preaching Christ. (Those who heard him very often said the PC really meant 'Plow Corn!')"⁵²

In the end, the lesson is lost on Kendall and his followers.

Kendall is also into personal prophetic words and gives high marks to Paul Cain,⁵³ who teaches that the prophets and apostles of today are greater than Elijah, Peter, or Paul.⁵⁴ Benny Hinn has dubbed Cain "the most accurate prophet on the earth today,"⁵⁵ an inadvertent condemnation if there ever was one. Fallible prophets is a made-up concept fabricated in recent years because of the constant misses and failures of the false prophets dotting our land.

Kendall believes that prophetic words will "*unveil God's secret will*."⁵⁶ Here again, Kendall is dead wrong. There are two kinds of knowledge with God: the things He wants us to know and has revealed in His Word, and the secret things which belong to Him alone. Deuteronomy 29:29 is emphatic: "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and our children forever, that we may do all the words of the law." Note that the acquiring of biblical knowledge is for obedience, not just to boast in discovery. Jesus spoke openly and said, "In secret have I said nothing" (John 18:20).

Kendall burdens his followers with a yoke that makes things more difficult than they need to be. Supposedly these prophetic words come to en-

courage us, warn us, or give us specific instructions.⁵⁷ At the same time, he makes scant mention of the Bible, which is given to fulfill all these functions (Romans 15:4, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:1-4). Kendall devotes four lines⁵⁸ to Bible reading, but many pages to tell us the other ways that God gives prophetic words. That, in itself, speaks volumes.

HEALTHY AND WEALTHY, BUT WISE?

Kendall hedges when it comes to the “health and wealth” gospel. He presents verses that seem to support the prosperity message and suggests a “balanced view of prosperity teaching.”⁵⁹ Some who endorse Kendall’s book are committed prosperity teachers, or at least would not criticize those who are. In the final analysis, it is hard to have a “balanced view” of error.

Kendall does say that God is sovereign, that He could make one prosperous if He wished, but at times opts not to do that.⁶⁰ But even when Kendall appears to be headed in the right direction, we discover he’s moving under the power of unbiblical reasoning. He writes, “I often talk at Westminster Chapel about The Peter Principle.”⁶¹ Kendall’s point is that we may rise to a level of incompetence and hate our success.

Again, Kendall is far out of even current thinking. *The Peter Principle* is an outdated secular invention. In fact, we may rise to a level of success and love it and be drawn away from God.

The Peter Principle was the work of Laurence J. Peter and was the big rage at the beginning of the seventies. What Kendall failed to note was that Peter claimed to correct, at least in part, the inevitability of *The Peter Principle* in his subsequent book, *The Peter Prescription*, released in 1972, two years after *The Peter Principle*. Peter subtitled the sequel, “How To Be Creative, Confident and Competent.” The trouble with following secular management theories is that they change or are outdated very quickly. The Church is not to be

governed by old management theory, but by the clear structure of the pastoral epistles. The Word of God is adequate for all of Church life.

UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS

As a boy of about seven years of age, this writer had a young friend with a wagon with removable wooden sides. We were employed by the neighborhood grocer, old Mr. Gibbs, to go and gather coal from a coal-littered field where full open coal trains rumbled through daily and pieces of the black cargo bounced out. Mr. Gibbs heated with coal and promised us 25 cents for each full wagon load. If we worked all afternoon we might bring in five wagon loads. Exhausted from the summer heat and waiting for our \$1.25 (a huge amount back then), Mr. Gibbs proceeded to throw a quarter at us and tell us to get lost. The disappointment and frustration stayed with us for a long time.

One can feel much the same way with Kendall’s books. While the reader might expect the same caliber of delivery from the long history of solid exposition at Westminster Chapel, Kendall delivers anemic theology and shallow advice. History, doctrine, psychology, management theory, emotions (via Toronto), and various Bible portions are all thrown into a theological blender. The work of God, the ways of God, and the person of God are mixed and matched in a strange fashion. Kendall’s exposition is eccentric, subjective, and confusing. What really shows up is how far the Westminster pulpit has moved from its roots.

Charisma magazine gave Kendall a renewed boost in the summer of 2002. In an article titled, “Don’t Get Trapped in Pigeon Religion,” Kendall confesses that he has had a counterfeit spirit many times:

“It seems to me that many of the claims to the presence of the Dove among us are nothing but pigeon religion — a counterfeit for the Holy Spirit. In my own haste I have presumed the presence of God in my life many times — when it was not the

Dove after all. Often it has been a pigeon — not the heavenly Dove — that gave me a ‘religious’ feeling. ... someone could easily fall to the floor after being prayed for and that there could be an entirely natural explanation for it.”⁶²

In his article, Kendall, in essence, debunks God “showing up” experiences as he describes an experience he had at a church where falling down and laughing had become a norm for worshipers. Kendall says that, “I believe that their expectancy was so high and the preconditioning so powerful that a pigeon could have done the same thing.”⁶³

Just about anything will get people charged up, according to Kendall:

“There is nothing like a large crowd to counterfeit the presence of the Dove. A big group can create an expectant atmosphere. Nothing preconditions a leader or a congregation like a church that’s filled with people. ... But eventually one wakes up and comes to terms with the sobering possibility that it was all hype. ... A powerful leader (even a worship leader or preacher) can sometimes control a crowd with his or her gift and personality. The people out there may not have a clue they are being manipulated.”⁶⁴

So much for God “showing up.” Kendall’s admissions ought to be reviewed before one reads his books.

It is not even correct to speak of ecstatic experiences as God “showing up.” Ecstasy can come out of the human psyche or from the evil spirit world. The way in which God works with us is much different than the way Kendall suggests. Scripture indicates in various places that God works with us through what has been called dynamic understanding. As God addresses us in Scripture, the Holy Spirit gives understanding, conviction, and decision making power, which brings forth transformation. These are cognitive events, as Gerhard Maier explains when he writes:

“...dynamic understanding takes place where revelation meets the person directly, transforming and profoundly altering him. Through contact with the Word the person is not who he was before. A dynamic transformation has taken place. The Word ‘cut[s] to the heart’ (Ac 2:37 KJV).”⁶⁵

Maier further explains that this new dynamic understanding is not thrills, chills, and goose bumps:

“It must be graphically underscored that this has nothing to do with emotionalism or ecstatic excess. Revelation meets a person in the heart, and thus also in the intellect. It does not meet him somewhere beyond the person as a central whole. Nor does the dynamic transformation mentioned above remove the responsibility of response, of decision. Dynamic understanding takes place just as well in a situation where the person is compliant and where the person drags his heels. In any case the coordinating center of his life has been profoundly touched.”⁶⁶

One should feel compassion for people in Kendall’s confusing environment, and for people who get their buttons pushed to create a God “showing up” experience. God is not showing up in many of the ways Kendall suggests. Kendall is only imagining it.

God is not the author of confusion. Kendall himself confesses it may be all man-made, after all, in his “pigeon religion” analogy. The deep exposition of G. Campbell Morgan and the rich exegesis of Martyn Lloyd-Jones — still available in their writings — are a far better choice. Safe and proper encounters with God can be found in His dynamic and transforming Word.

Endnotes:

1. See further, R.T. Kendall’s book catalog listed on his web site, www.rtkendallministries.com/books.htm. Dobson’s endorsement is found in the listings for Kendall’s *Understanding Theology Volume II* and *Volume III*.

2. Jack W. Hayford in R.T. Kendall, *When God Shows Up*. Ventura, Calif.: Gospel Light, 1998, pg. 7, italic in original.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.
4. R.T. Kendall, *In Pursuit of His Glory*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2002, pg. xvii.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-113.
6. “Blessitt Announces Divorce,” *Charisma & Christian Life*, August 1990, pg. 16.
7. *In Pursuit of His Glory*, op. cit., pg. xi.
8. *Ibid.*, pg. 104.
9. *Ibid.*, pg. xii.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.
11. *Ibid.*, pg. 81.
12. *Ibid.*, pg. 26, footnote 1.
13. *Ibid.*, pg. 33.
14. *Ibid.*, pg. 132.
15. *When God Shows Up*, op. cit., pg. 14.
16. Charles R. Erdman, *The Gospel of Matthew*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1948, pg. 26.
17. *When God Shows Up*, op. cit., pg. 14.
18. *Ibid.*, pg. 15.
19. *Ibid.*, italic in original.
20. *In Pursuit of His Glory*, op. cit., pg. xvii.
21. See further, G. Richard Fisher, “The Animalization of Christianity — Chaos in the Vineyard,” *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 2, and “All That Glitters... Gold Fillings and Truth Decay in Toronto,” *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 3.
22. *When God Shows Up*, op. cit., pg. 16.
23. *Ibid.*, pg. 8.
24. *Ibid.*, pg. 26.
25. Everett F. Harrison, editor, *Baker’s Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1973, pg. 457.
26. William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1974, pg. 194, italics in original.
27. *Ibid.*, pg. 197.
28. Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1952, pg. 106.
29. Albert Gibbs, *Christian Baptism*. Kansas City, Ks.: Walterick Publishers, 1966, pg. 16.
30. *When God Shows Up*, op. cit., pg. 38.
31. *Our Daily Bread*, devotional entry for Saturday, Feb. 17, 2001.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, 1973, pg. 375, italic in original.
34. *When God Shows Up*, op. cit., pg. 40, italics in original.
35. *Ibid.*, pg. 44.
36. John Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*. Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishers, 1958, pg. 224.
37. Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*. New

- York: Abingdon Press, nd, New Testament Vol. 2, pg. 201, italics in original.
38. See further, Francis Schaeffer, *True Spirituality*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1971, pp. 148-180.
39. *When God Shows Up*, op. cit., pp. 47-48.
40. *Ibid.*, pg. 55.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87, italics in original.
42. *Ibid.*, pg. 77.
43. See further, G. Richard Fisher, “Words of Knowledge: Mystical or Statistical? The Truth Behind the Sham,” *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1.
44. Herbert W. Armstrong, *Mystery of the Ages*. Pasadena, Calif.: Worldwide Church of God, 1985, pg. 42, upper case in original.
45. *When God Shows Up*, op. cit., pg. 104, ellipsis in original.
46. Kenneth Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1973, Vol. 1, Romans, pg. 136.
47. *The New Geneva Study Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1995, pg. 1780.
48. Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans*. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949, pg. 329.
49. *When God Shows Up*, op. cit., pg. 107.
50. Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology As Religion*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1979, pg. 85.
51. Jay E. Adams, *The Biblical View of Self-Esteem, Self-Love, Self-Image*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1986, pg. 54.
52. *When God Shows Up*, op. cit., pg. 115, italics in original.
53. *Ibid.*, pg. 122.
54. See further, Hank Hanegraaff, *Counterfeit Revival*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1997, pg. 160.
55. Benny Hinn, *Praise the Lord* show, Trinity Broadcasting Network, Nov. 20, 1996, tape on file.
56. *When God Shows Up*, op. cit., pg. 124, bold italics in original.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 124-126.
58. *Ibid.*, pg. 123.
59. *Ibid.*, pg. 136.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137.
61. *Ibid.*, pg. 138.
62. R.T. Kendall, “Don’t Get Trapped in Pigeon Religion,” *Charisma*, August 2002, pg. 81. This article is adapted from Kendall’s book *The Sensitivity of the Holy Spirit*, published by Charisma House.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.
64. *Ibid.*, pg. 82, 84.
65. Gerhard Maier, *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1993, pg. 74. Note that Maier uses “revelation” in a very loose sense, meaning our personal encounter with God’s revelation in Scripture.
66. *Ibid.*



the great doctrines of the Christian faith that Archie knows so well are not relevant and practical to him when it comes to solving the problems of everyday living. Archie's theology tells him that Jesus died and rose, that faith without works is dead, and that God answers prayer, but it doesn't tell him how to counsel people who are depressed or fearful. Like many Christians today, Archie looks for answers outside of the Scripture. He looks to psychology for instruction and help. Psychology tells Archie he needs to love himself.

Psychology has exerted a powerful influence on Archie's thinking about the Bible and the work of Jesus Christ. Archie believes the Scriptures are inadequate and not sufficient to help him meet his deepest problems or "emotional needs." Like so many in the Church today, he believes the lie that there exists outside of Scripture, wisdom about man's nature. Archie believes that the Wonderful Counselor didn't tell him everything he needs to know and, therefore, God worked through unbelievers such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Rogers to fill in the blanks.

While many Christians view psychology with respect and admiration, more secular psychologists and psychiatrists are voicing their lack of confidence in psychology's claims, therapies, and scientific status. The titles of their books are revealing. For example, *Manufacturing Victims: What the Psychology Industry is Doing To People* by Tana Dineen; *Freudian Fraud: The Malignant Effect of Freud's Theory on American Thought and Culture* and *The Death of Psychiatry* by E. Fuller Torry; *The Myth of Mental Illness* and *The Myth of Psychotherapy* by Thomas Szasz; and *Toxic Psychiatry* by Peter Breggin. The list goes on.

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul tells his student to confront certain men within the Church who are teaching "strange doctrines" (1:3). What Paul had anticipated in Acts 20 when he wrote, "I know after my

departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock," had happened. Paul describes their teachings as "strange doctrines ... myths ... speculations" (1:3-4) that do not further the Gospel and help people. Paul warns Timothy that these people want to be teachers, but "do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertion" (1:7). While these people confidently assert themselves as teachers and experts on matters pertaining to God's Word, Paul says they do not know what they are talking about.

There are all kinds of strange doctrines, myths, and speculations in counseling. Sigmund Freud's doctrines of the Id, Ego, and Super-ego are very strange. Alfred Adler's speculative theory of "striving for superiority," Carl Rogers' "ideal self," and Christian psychologist Larry Crabb's theory of the "hollow core" are unusual to say the least.

Many people who proclaim they are experts and qualified to teach on matters pertaining to behavior, do not know what they are talking about. Paul said these people were not using the Scriptures correctly or "lawfully" (1:8). They were not accurately handling God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15). Christians — ministers and laymen — need to be careful that their ministry is characterized by an accurate use of the Scriptures. An accurate use of the Scriptures means one not only "preaches the Word," but one also "counsels the Word" of God.

The Bible warns believers that the Church will be inundated with doctrines of demons, myths, perverse teachings, human traditions, worldly fables, philosophies, speculations, and deceiving spirits. This is certainly true of the Church in our day. Many in the Church have become so gullible it seems they no longer have the ability to discern truth from error. It seems that many believers do not have the ability to sort things out, to distinguish between God's thoughts and ways and man's thoughts and ways. There is nothing that demonstrates this more than the gospel of selfism.

Help for Archie began with giving him biblical hope. Losing hope is a serious concern. When a person loses hope, there is a danger of falling into despair and concluding there is no solution to their problem. They are the ones who shoot themselves, divorce their spouse, or choose to live with their chronic depression.

The prophet Ezekiel wrote, "You will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done" (20:43, NAS). People do not hate themselves. People hate their circumstances and their behaviors that led to those circumstances. Self-love is universal. Paul wrote, "No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it." If Archie truly hated himself, he would not want things to be better for himself, but worse. Archie nourishes and cherishes himself, and that is why he came for counseling.

Archie's troubles were not the result of self-hatred and low self-esteem, but his sinful behavior and/or attitudes. Sinners prefer themselves over others and God (universal self-love). A study of Archie's life revealed sinful patterns and habits. He had been fired twice for quarreling with his superior, and quit three other jobs because he believed he was not being treated fairly. When we started counseling, Archie had not worked for over a year. He admitted to anger, bitterness, envy, marital discord, and money problems.

Sin, not low self-esteem, was Archie's problem. Archie lacked self-control. He was filled with self-pity. Envy usually accompanies self-pity. Archie was envious of Edith, who had both a good job and work record. Archie was envious of his brother who could afford things that he could not. Archie was idle. Archie failed to pay his bills and was dodging creditors. Archie was unrepentant of his anger and bitterness.

Dr. Karl Menninger, in his book, *Whatever Became of Sin?*, speaking about modern prophets, secular and religious, wrote:

"In all of the laments and reproaches made by our seers and prophets, one misses any mention of 'sin,' a word which used to be a veritable watchword of prophets. It was a word once in everyone's mind, but now rarely if ever heard. Does that mean that no sin is involved in all our troubles — sin with an 'I' in the middle? Is no one any longer guilty of anything? Guilty perhaps of a sin that could be repented and repaired or atoned for? Is it only that someone may be stupid or sick or criminal — or asleep? Wrong things are being done ... But is no one responsible, no one answerable for these acts? Anxiety and depression we all acknowledge, and even vague guilt feelings; but has no one committed any sin?"¹

Archie portrayed himself as a victim. He complained that he was always being misunderstood and mistreated. He was bitter and angry with his parents, his wife, his employers, his brother, and his sister-in-law. Archie was bitter and angry toward God, too.

Archie's sinful behavior and attitude resulted in feelings of guilt. Archie felt bad. Archie should feel bad. People, like Archie, whose lives have been disrupted by feelings of guilt are referred to counselors who help them build their self-esteem. Low self-esteem is a euphemism for guilt. James Dobson says that low self-esteem leads to all kinds of sinful behavior such as "neuroticism, hatred, alcoholism, drug abuse, violence, and social disorder."² In other words, low self-esteem leads to sin, and therefore, nurturing self-esteem leads to righteousness. Unlike Scripture (Jeremiah 17:9), nowhere in psychology is the wicked heart mentioned. Nowhere is sin, the cross, the Holy Spirit, and progressive sanctification mentioned. Sin produces guilt, which is reinterpreted or redefined as low self-esteem. John MacArthur wrote:

"Our culture has declared war on guilt. ... No one, after all, is supposed to feel guilty. Guilt is

not conducive to dignity and self-esteem. Society encourages sin, but it will not tolerate the guilt sin produces."³

We have lost sight of the fact that sin, not low self-esteem, is the root cause of our problems and the source of many troubles. Today we are explaining these problems in unbiblical terms.

In Genesis 3:1-5 we have the first theological conversation ever recorded. The Serpent promised Eve "her eyes would be opened" if she would partake from the forbidden tree. Nothing would be hidden from her. Eve would understand the deep things of God. She would be like God.

The natural tendency of all men is to throw off the restraints of humanity and attempt to become God. What has grieved godly men and women over the years was their struggle with self. For example, in 1898, Andrew Murray wrote that "the one real hindrance to this life of the Spirit is the power of our evil self."⁴ In 1945, L.E. Maxwell wrote, "Self has usurped the throne ... Self is the new and false center upon which man has fixed."⁵ Thomas Watson wrote, "The more one values himself, the less God and angels value him. ... Self is an idol, and it is hard to sacrifice this idol."⁶ Thomas Brooks wrote, "Self-seeking blinds the soul ... There is not a greater hindrance to all the duties of piety than self-seeking."⁷ John Calvin wrote:

"... wherever denial of ourselves does not reign, there either the foulest vices rage without shame or if there is any semblance of virtue, it is vitiated by depraved lusting after glory. ... For, such is the blindness with which we all rush into self-love that each one of us seems to himself to have just cause to be proud of himself and to despise all others in comparison. ... There is no other remedy than to tear out from our inward parts this most deadly pestilence of love of strife and love of self."⁸

Nouthetic counselor and author Martha Peace writes:

"'Self' is at the center of our lusts — our supposed needs for significance, worth, security, identity, or esteem. A psychologized, man-centered view of God and of man appeals to our natural sense of loving ourselves and thus deceives us."⁹

And most importantly, the Apostle Paul, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote: "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another" (Galatians 5:17, NAS). They all wrote about the same thing. The struggle in their life is between God and self.

There is a struggle in the life of every believer to keep God on the throne of his heart. It is difficult because man's heart is constantly and relentlessly trying to dethrone God and enthrone self. Trying to keep God on the throne of one's heart is like a tug-of-war. It is the flesh warring against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. "I want God on the throne. I want self on the throne. God. Self. God. Self."

The allure to be God is present in every man's heart. Isaiah said it when he wrote, "All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way" (53:6). Man suppresses the truth of God and uplifts self (Romans 1:18). Although man knows there is a God, he does not honor God, but honors self (Romans 1:21). Man worships and serves the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25). Paul's words are true of all men. All men have a worship-orientation. No man is neutral. All men are worshippers. All men are self-worshippers.

Eve's desire to worship God changed to a lust to be God and worship self. Eve wanted to climb to heaven, as it were, and throw God out. Isaiah wrote about Lucifer's desire to be God: "But you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount, I will ascend above the heights of the

clouds; I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13-14).

The Serpent knew Eve could not resist self-exaltation. We, the offspring of Adam and Eve, cannot resist it either. We are idolaters. We are self-worshippers. John Calvin wrote that "we may gather that man's nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols."¹⁰

Over the past several decades, the concept of self-esteem has had a powerful influence on the Church. Christians, who have generally thought of self-esteem as sinful, continue to be prompted by Christian authors in their books to develop a "healthy" self-esteem. These authors have warned that a negative self-esteem is the basis of most psychological problems and that it even leads to sinful behavior.

If the advocates of self-esteem are right, we must change our emphasis from man's unworthiness and focus on man's worthiness and his right to esteem himself. The Church will need to recognize the tremendous signifi-

cance that this teaching will have in the lives of its members.

But if the advocates of self-esteem are wrong, then clearly the Church's fascination with self-esteem is heretical. Jesus called His followers to imitate Him in denying themselves (Matthew 16:24). While not endorsing all of his positions, we agree with T.B. Maston when he stated:

"The cross, with all that it symbolizes, permeates and gives meaning and unity to all the ethical teachings of Jesus."¹¹

Jesus consistently tied together self-denial and the cross. The call of God into the Christian life is a call to self-denial. The cross — self-denial — is the path of every Christian. The antithesis of the cross is self-love. Therefore, self-love is classified as a "different gospel" (Galatians 1:6), opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Endnotes:

1. Karl Menninger, *Whatever Became of Sin?* New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1973, pg. 13.
2. James Dobson, *Hide and Seek*. Grand

Rapids, Mich.: Flemming H. Revell, 1979, pg. 21.

3. John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Vanishing Conscience*. Dallas: Word Publishing Company, 1994, pg. 19.

4. Andrew Murray in William Law, *Freedom From a Self-Centered Life / Dying to Self*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1977, pg. 6.

5. L.E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1973, pg. 56.

6. Thomas Watson, *The Duty of Self-Denial (and Ten Other Sermons)*. Morgan, Penna.: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1998, pp. 14, 29.


7. Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*. Carlisle, Penna.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1968, pg. 189.

8. John T. McNeill, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960, Vol. 1, pp. 691-694, (Institutes 3.7.2,4).

9. Martha Peace, *Attitudes of a Transformed Heart*. Bemidji, Minn.: Focus Publishing, 2002, pg. 41.

10. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, op. cit., Vol. 1, pg. 108, (Institutes 1.11.8).

11. T.B. Maston, *Biblical Ethics*. Waco, Texas: Word Books Publishers, 1967, pg. 162.

Editor's Note: A fuller treatment by Dr. Tyler of the self-esteem gospel is available in his work, *Jesus Christ: Self-Denial or Self-Esteem?* (Timeless Texts, 2002). 

EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

facts do not matter. False prophecies are proclaimed and the false prophets are revered all the more. The lying prophets go on record and their record shows them to be fabricators and dissemblers. Claims are made with no documentation. Outright lies are constructed. When the lies are confronted, the response is, "touch not the Lord's anointed," yet it is obvious they are not the Lord's anointed. They live in obscene luxury, but are given a pass because money is equated with the blessing of God. There is no financial accountability.

3. *The local church*. The epistles bear out the importance of the local church in God's program. However, that is not the emphasis of the wandering apostles and prophets. Anointing centers, mass meetings, healing encounters, following the next "revival" or "breakthrough" are more important. Find a "blessing" center (code for adrenalin out of control) or a place where God may be doing divine dentistry, dispensing gold dust, or leaving angel feathers. One can always be "slain in the Spirit," which makes local church meetings seem downright dull.

Scream, shout, let it all hang out, shelve your mind, go into altered states, but don't dare talk about the local church.

4. *Sound doctrine*. There is a frightening cross-breeding of heresies today that will produce more mutant doctrines warned about in Scripture. Oneness Pentecostals pollinate across Assembly of God lines. Deniers of the Trinity such as T.D. Jakes and Tommy Tenney mingle with orthodoxy as though they were straight on the doctrine of God. Arch-heretic Finis Dake is promoted via his study Bible.

Benny Hinn promises he will break financial bondage if one will send the prophesied amount of \$77. His God resembles a slot machine in Las Vegas or Atlantic City more than a Heavenly Father. Then there's the outrage of Jerry Falwell endorsing "Brother Benny."

Jesse Duplantis claims to have a car that raptured him in a cloud from place to place and people believe it. Duplantis revels in referring to himself as the "Ragin Cajun" and has more the demeanor of a hokey professional wrestler than a man of God. Oh yes, Duplantis talks routinely about meeting Paul and Jesus in heaven and it never dawns on listeners that he is suggesting a

form of communication with the dead that is forbidden by Scripture.

A new Jesus who had to suffer in hell and be born again is welcomed. Utopia is promised and redemption of the body offered *now*, though it is never delivered. Salvation, sanctification, and glorification are mixed, matched, and mingled in incredible confusion. Doctrine is shockingly referred to as “doo doo” and there is no outrage! People are so far in the gutter that the sewer cannot be far away.

These shameless charlatans are the devil’s instrument to weaken the Church, even though Paul says it is the pillar and ground of truth. Their television broadcasts, along with their book deals, allow them maximum exposure to perpetuate massive heresies as they cavalierly undermine Scripture, raze honesty in ministry, belittle the local church, and disregard sound doctrine. “If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?”

For over three decades, Christians have been encouraged to write the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in protest of a fictitious petition. The petition (known as “Petition #2493”) is purported to be an effort by infamous atheist Madalyn Murray O’Hair to remove all religious programming from the television airwaves. The petition is pure fiction, but attempts to stifle it continue to circulate within Christian circles. As a result, letters of protest from Christians steadily pour into the FCC’s office. (The fact that O’Hair was murdered in September 1995 has done little to deter the crusade against the spurious campaign attributed to her.)

In one very real sense, we could say, “Oh, that the O’Hair petition were true.” The Church would be better served if Christians signed their name, not on letters of protest, but on just such a petition to remove religious broadcasting. Pulling the plug on “Christian television” with its destruction of the four pillars noted above, would be a tremendous advantage for the local church. The local church is God’s arrangement for worship, teaching, fellowship, encouragement, ministry, evangelism, and so forth. It is not, and never will be, “Christian television,” despite Paul Crouch’s repeated exclamation, “We’re gonna have church tonight!”

It is safe to say that the outlawing of religious broadcasting by the FCC will never take place. So what should Christians do? We can start by turning off religious television and reading our Bibles, becoming active in a local church (investing time, talents, and finances), supporting good apologetics ministries, and writing letters of protest to the false prophets, calling them on their lies and lunacy. There needs to be an outcry, and it needs to start now. We need to speak out to the managers of so-called Christian bookstores that are promoting poison by the boatload. That is what the righteous can do. *Act now while there is still time.*

—GRF

NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

York City, pointing out what appears to be a face in the ascending smoke. The apparitions are more readily visible in a still photograph and probably would not have been recognized at the scene by an unaided eye. Newspapers that publish these photos usually define the apparition but leave any further interpretation to readers.

Not so for Arnold Murray, televangelist and pastor of the Shepherd’s Chapel in Gravett, Ark. Recently, Murray called attention to a facial image found in the gigantic clouds of ash rising at the eruption of Mount St. Helens, adding to it his commentary that works the United States’ most famous and greatest natural disaster into end times prophecy.

On Sunday, May 18, 1980, Mount St. Helens, a volcano in southern Washington state, erupted with the energy of 27,000 atomic bombs. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* ran a dramatic aerial photograph of the volcano’s primary eruption which spewed rock and ash 16 miles above the mountain. On the left side of the rising cloud is said to be the “face” in Mount St. Helens. As with a stone that Murray says contains the 10-million-year-old footprint of an angel, the Mount St. Helens photograph is a favorite “show and tell” resource for Murray.

Murray fuses this twentieth-century cataclysmic event with biblical prophecy through the unorthodox use of the phrase “vapor of smoke” found in Joel 2:30. He connects the dots of Joel 2 (eighth century B.C.) with Acts 2 (first century A.D.) and then leaps right off the biblical pages to the contemporary Pacific Northwest. “What smoke and vapor came up from the earth on Pentecost day to show maybe that we could be in the latter days?” he asked his viewers during his broadcast on July 10, 2003. Murray outlines, in great detail, the facial features he says appear in the cloud rising from Mount St. Helens.

“God allowed the picture ... fire, smoke, and brimstone to lock in a benchmark of time in the final generation ... He gives enough signs that you cannot help but believe His Word,” he told his audience. The point not to be missed for Murray’s followers is that on Pentecost Sunday 1980, God bolstered His Word with the effects of a volcanic eruption. Other than claiming it to be a “sign” of the “final generation,” Murray did not say why it was a “face” — and not some other object — that appeared in the smoke.

Murray’s prophetic observation is flawed on key issues. First, seeing images and patterns in clouds of smoke are the products of one’s imagination. When Jesus told His followers to understand the times, He did not instruct them to employ pareidolia — that is, the art of seeing His face in a rusty road sign or the Virgin Mary on the side of a weather-worn barn. Christians are never to engage in such a frivolous, abstract, and subjective practice as cloud watching. The signs which Christ said

would be on the horizon would be real, concrete, and objective events (Matthew 24).

Murray demonstrates a disregard for truth and accuracy and takes advantage of the ignorance and gullibility of his television flock. He has based his interpretation of Bible prophecy on an erroneous date. Murray says the Mount St. Helens' eruption occurred on Pentecost Sunday in 1980. It did not. The volcano's primary eruptions began May 18, a week before Pentecost, which was celebrated on May 25, 1980. But Murray doesn't let historical fact stand in the way of his interpretation. This sort of implausible hermeneutic may titillate an audience, but does nothing to honor God by rightly dividing the word of truth.

Murray repeatedly calls those who challenge his Bible interpretations "Bible-thumpers," "numbskulls," and "yo-yos." However, it is Murray who would be more rightly regarded with such scorn. Despite his efforts to establish himself as an extraordinary Bible teacher, careful examination of his ideas shows him a confused teacher to be avoided.

—MKG

JESUS SAVES, YES JESUS SAVES

Christians have long sung of the saving power of Jesus. As they sing, they express the power of Christ to save one from spiritual death. Recently, however, Dallas Cowboy's cornerback turned CBS sports analyst Deion Sanders gave new meaning to the popular hymn. Apparently Jesus is now saving from more than just the consequences of sin. He saved Sanders \$2,765 off a \$4,265 auto repair bill.

In 2001, Sanders had work done on his 1961 Lincoln Continental convertible. Since that time, auto repair shop owner Phil Compton, along with his attorney, Ed Edson, have been trying to collect on the bill for the repair work. According to an *Associated Press* report, "The owner of the repair shop said Sanders wanted to pay only \$1,500 of the \$4,265.57 bill, saying that Jesus had informed him that was all he needed to pay."

Compton serviced the vintage automobile and returned it to Sanders' home in Plano, Texas, in November 2001. Pilar Sanders, former wife of the sportscaster, took the keys and repair bill from Compton and retreated into the locked house while bodyguards and housekeepers moved other vehicles around the automobile to prevent it from being returned to the repair shop. "When Sanders drove up, he refused to pay the invoice amount, handing Compton a \$1,500 check and saying, 'Praise Jesus ... I follow what in my heart I'm told to pay,'" the *AP* reported.

Compton filed suit in March 2002 in an attempt to collect the outstanding balance. During the July 14, 2003, trial, held in Texas State District court, Judge Joe Cox ruled in favor of Sanders. Testimony was given during the trial which stated that Compton had been told that there was a \$1,500 ceiling on the cost of repairs.

Sanders told the *AP* that "I'm not hurting for money. And let's be honest. A \$4,000 bill, I could have written a check a long time ago. But it's the principle. I'm tired of getting ripped off."

—MKG

LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND SHAMELESS

Two local business-related publications last summer disclosed the successes of their respective hometown televangelists. The *St. Louis Business Journal* examined the "evangelism empire" of Joyce Meyer, while the *San Antonio Express-News* revealed the spectacular income of John Hagee. Each report revealed an opulent kingdom that is amassing millions of dollars through donations and the sale of books, tapes, and other materials.

The St. Louis publication sought, but was refused, an interview with either Meyer or her husband, Dave. The newspaper also noted that an "exact revenue figure for the ministry wasn't available." Joyce Meyer Ministries is not a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, an organization that oversees and sanctions the financial activities of evangelical ministries. The ECFA regularly receives inquiries concerning Meyer and her ministry.

Despite these obstacles, the June 20-26, 2003, issue of the *St. Louis Business Journal* divulged prominent items in the inventory of Joyce Meyer Ministries, including an annual income estimated at \$57 million, a \$19-million headquarters, Meyer's personal silver Lexus SC 430 sports car, and an eight-bedroom, seven-bath, 7,000-square-foot home valued at more than \$500,000.

The *Business Journal* also said that within her office complex, the "hallway leading to the television studio features larger-than-life murals of Meyer in various speaking poses." Critics of Meyer long have noted her unabashed vanity. The *Orlando Sentinel* has stated that Meyer has had "plastic surgery," which the newspaper reported "Meyer readily admits." She wears tailored suits and lavish jewelry. Likewise, photographs of Meyer fill her Web site and magazine publications. As one approaches the guardhouse at the front entrance to her ministry's headquarters, a large portrait of the Meyers looms behind the guard.

While the *St. Louis Business Journal* reported on Meyer, the June 20 edition of the *San Antonio Express-News* revealed John Hagee's exorbitant income. The newspaper revealed that for the year 2001, "Hagee's total compensa-

tion package amounted to more than \$1.25 million." This amount, critics charge, is "too high" and made him one of the highest, if not the highest, paid non-profit director for the San Antonio area. Also, "Hagee's compensation was among the highest packages for television evangelists in 2001, according to IRS 990 filings," the *Express-News* further stated. The \$1.25-million figure reflected \$540,000 in compensation from Global Evangelism Television (the television unit of Hagee's ministry), \$300,000 for serving as president of Cornerstone Church, and \$410,000 in benefits from GETV, including contributions to his retirement package.

Hagee's retirement package, known as "The John Hagee Rabbi Trust," includes "a \$2.1 million 7,696-acre ranch outside Bracketville, with five lodges, including a 'main lodge' and a gun locker. It also includes a manager's house, a smokehouse, a skeet range and three barns," the newspaper disclosed.

Hagee and his wife, Diana, own a six-bedroom, 5,275-square-foot home. The house, said to be "in one of San Antonio's most exclusive gated communities," is valued at nearly \$700,000.

Televangelists like Hagee and Meyer have long tried to justify their lavish and unrestrained lifestyles by claiming those in the secular business sector easily demand such financial compensation. They also tend to excuse their living in extreme wealth by wrongly claiming that critics say Christians should live in extreme poverty. There is, however, middle ground and Scripture clearly establishes the character for those devoting their lives to ministry. It is one of virtue, reputation, moderation, and balance (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1).

Those who hunger for earthly palatial mansions, private jets, and costly sports cars, would do well to attempt to satisfy their insatiable desires in the secular world rather than bring scorn onto the Gospel. The Gospel of Christ is one of self-denial and self-sacrifice, not an abundance of possessions (Luke 12:13-21).

—MKG

GARNER TED ARMSTRONG DIES

Garner Ted Armstrong, disgraced televangelist and son of the late Herbert W. Armstrong, died Sept. 15, 2003. Armstrong died from complications of pneumonia and had been hospitalized for several weeks. He was 73.

In 1978, Armstrong was excommunicated from the Worldwide Church of God, the sect founded by his father. He earned all his degrees — a bachelor's, master's, and doctorate — from the Worldwide Church of God's Ambassador College in Pasadena, Calif. Until his ouster, Armstrong was vice president of both the church and its college, and was the movement's primary spokesman.

Following excommunication from his father's church, Armstrong established his own ministry, the Church of God International, based in Tyler, Texas. In 1995, Armstrong resigned as church president and board chairman amid charges of sexual assault. He continued with the church's television broadcasts until removed by church leaders in 1997.

Armstrong continued his media presence through the Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelical Association and, in 1998, established the Intercontinental Church of God.

Despite his expulsion from the Worldwide Church of God, the younger Armstrong remained true to the many unbiblical and heretical teachings taught by his father. These included a defective view of the nature of God, conditionalism, Sabbath worship, festival keeping, and British Israelism.

Claims of Armstrong's viewing audience for his broadcasts varied from 5 million to 20 million. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "his splinter churches amassed only about 5,000 members, compared with an estimated 80,000 for his father's Worldwide Church of God."

—MKG

CODE TWO FOR DROSNIN

Perhaps former *Wall Street Journal* reporter Michael Drosnin thinks the old saying, "One good turn deserves another" should be revised to say, "One bad book deserves another." At least that's how Drosnin's *Bible Code II* is being received. The book, released in December 2002, is the sequel to his 1997 best-seller, *The Bible Code*.

Drosnin claims "a Bible beneath the Bible," and that by skipping across an equal number of characters or spaces, one can form new words revealing the hidden messages or codes of the Bible. Drosnin's technique of equidistant letter sequencing (ELS) has been debunked by most countercult groups and secular investigators (see further, *The Quarterly Journal*, January-March 1998, pp. 4, 9-13). This kind of "letter play" can be done with any secular book. How exact could all of this be anyway, because Drosnin uses a particular Hebrew Bible that is not the same as other Hebrew Bibles? It is much like our choice of modern translations, which may be the same in substance, but not necessarily in style or word order.

Because of the popularity of Drosnin's contrived methods and ominous predictions, the practice of finding coded messages within Scripture has been successful grist for other dabblers in biblical prophecy, including Paul Crouch, Grant Jeffrey, and Hal Lindsey.

In *Bible Code II*, Drosnin says he has uncovered a prophecy that speaks of an atomic holocaust in 2006. His earlier volume designated 1996 (the Hebrew year 5756) as being "encoded" for an "atomic holocaust."

Drosnin, a reporter by trade, is neither a scientist nor an archaeologist and does not speak Hebrew. Therefore his books are rejected by many as baseless fantasy no matter how creative.

His latest book posits that space aliens made a trip to our planet in the distant past and left behind obelisks near the Dead Sea. These obelisks bear secret messages written on them, says Drosnin. He does not say what the messages are about. He offers no archaeological evidence for these claims.

One code word that Drosnin produced was the Hebrew *lashon*. He says the word should be interpreted *Lisan*. The *Lisan* is the prominent projection of moon-scape-like marl that juts into the Dead Sea from east to west and is easily visible on a map of Israel. It is chalky, inhospitable, and riddled with deep valleys and high projections. It is a crumbly mix of gypsum, limestone, clay, sand, and shell. It has worn down considerably over thousands of years and any buried "treasure" would have been exposed long ago. Geologists in Israel for years have known its makeup. All the aliens would have accomplished by putting the obelisks there is a guarantee that no one would ever find the buried treasure. The location is too remote.

Drosnin says — and wouldn't you know it — that the Jordanian Government, at the last minute, without explanation, withdrew permission for him to do the archaeological research on the *Lisan* (pg. 94) in Jordanian territory where it rests. So, in the end he admits he has not been there.

Drosnin then creates other mean-nothing phrases (by letter skipping) and somehow comes up with the idea of aliens seeding our planet, which is his answer to where life on earth began. Though he claims to be working in the Hebrew Bible, any thought of a Creator in Genesis 1 is out the window. Drosnin also says that some words have double and triple meanings. The words mean what Drosnin wants them to mean.

Because Drosnin wrote the book in 2001 (with a copyright of 2002), he "found" nothing about weapons inspectors, the Iraq war, and other current events, such as United Nations Embassy bombings. Perhaps he will find them in *Bible Code III*.

Drosnin sees himself as someone who has been chosen to be the decoder and may be able to delay the world's end in 2006. Drosnin also claims to have an "in" with the Mossad, Israel's secret service. He says he has met with the advisors to Yitzhak Rabin, Yasser Arafat, Bill Clinton, and with Ariel Sharon, but he offers no documentation.

Drosnin (like the Raelians) also lays out a scenario of aliens bringing their DNA to earth via a spaceship (see pp. 143-145). He does admit that these wild ideas were brought forth by Francis Crick as far back as 1973. Crick put himself out on the lunatic fringes of science with his ideas.

The evil genius of Drosnin's book is that there is absolutely no documentation for his claims, nor is there any objective way to check his claims. Jesus talked about truth being established by two or three witness. Apologetics groups, like PFO, could never get away with undocumented assertions.

Drosnin's work is clearly sci-fi futurism sprinkled with archaeological mystery, spaceships, and obelisks no one has ever seen that have the key to the end of days. He clearly knows what drives the American mind and that people are looking and longing for myths. That Drosnin talks about terrorists is no surprise. Suitcase bombs were being talked about in the 1980s in the novel *The Fourth Protocol*.

Reviewer Randall Ingermanson concludes: "His 'codes' are not science. They are not codes. They are so bogus it hurts." Other critics say Drosnin's original book "was based on a fundamental misunderstanding and misuse of science." His sequel hasn't fared much better. One reviewer wrote, "If, like me, you found his first book to be entertainingly silly, this one will be a real treat."

—GRF

WILL THE REAL AUTHOR PLEASE STAND UP?

In *The Prayer of Jabez*, Bruce Wilkinson explains "how the remarkable prayer of a little-known Bible hero can release God's favor, power, and protection." But now, the first-person, autobiographical framework of the phenomenal best-seller of recent years is being disputed.

For more than a decade, Edward Plowman has kept his eye on what he labels "an exercise in deception" in the arena of Christian writing. What is this exercise? It is "ministry celebrities who cede most or all of their prose to [ghostwriters] who receive little or no acknowledgment."

In "Ghostwriters in the Machine," his recent article for *World* magazine, Plowman discloses that it was "Multnomah Publishers editorial executive David Kopp, 53, who wrote Bruce Wilkinson's blockbuster, *The Prayer of Jabez*." Plowman further notes that "Missing from the cover of the first 8 or 9 million copies of *Jabez* is Mr. Kopp's name; it now appears as a 'with' byline in small print." In later editions, Kopp's name appears on the inside title page, and Wilkinson acknowledges Kopp as "his writing partner" on the acknowledgement page.

The Evangelical Christian Publishers Association adopted a set of standards for members which includes, "co-writers or collaboration should be clearly identified as such." Kopp told *World* that he "wishes the ECPA had used the word 'accurately' rather than 'clearly.'"

—MKG



Books in Review

A CHRISTIAN WOMAN'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING MORMONISM

by Donna Morley

Harvest House Publishers, 240 pages, \$11.95

Mormon missionaries call upon millions of homes annually. And there's a good chance that they've come to your door during the past 12 months. Have you ever faced the Mormon at your door (or perhaps a Mormon neighbor) and been uncertain about what to say to these sincere, but misguided people? For most Christians it can be seen as a frightening encounter.

In *A Christian Woman's Guide to Understanding Mormonism*, author Donna Morley allays those fears as she leads her readers through the first half of the book on a journey into the history, doctrines, and practice of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Morley examines the character of Joseph Smith Jr., with well-documented information from reliable sources. She surveys the various versions of Smith's first-vision account, the purported origins of *The Book of Mormon*, and reviews the teachings of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. The final chapter of the first section examines the third LDS scripture, the *Pearl of Great Price*, and current revelations from the church's leadership.

The second half of her work is titled "Questions to Ask Our Mormon Friends." Questions encompass the sufficiency of Scripture, salvation, God's grace, baptism for the dead, who Jesus is, becoming a god, the Trinity, and heaven. Sections in each chapter in this half include "Looking to the Word" to comprehend what God's Word says. At the end of every chapter is a section called "Thinking It Over," which aids readers to recap the presented information.

Two appendices accent the volume. They are "Helping Our Children Who Have Mormon Friends" and "A Comparison Between Mormonism and the Bible." The latter is a very practical understanding of the different biblical terms as compared to what Mormonism teaches. The last page of the book is a "Mormonism Fact Sheet" with systematic questions to ask Mormons (along with

Scripture responses). Morley suggests laminating the page and keeping it inside your Bible.

Don't be fooled by the title. Morley's is an excellent study on Mormonism, and not just for women — men will benefit equally from this important publication.

—AMG

A TIME OF DEPARTING

by Ray Yungen

Lighthouse Trails Publishing, 175 pages, \$12.95

The New Age is alive and well and may be living at your local church. Ray Yungen issues what he calls "an alert to the church of how and through whom New Age thinking is currently creeping into our pulpits, Sunday school classrooms, prayer groups and Bible studies."

Yungen's volume is a slow but worthwhile read: slow because of the huge amount of documentation and firsthand quotes; worthwhile because it gets right to the information regarding how Eastern mysticism and spirituality is invading the Evangelical Church.

Yungen takes several pages to explain the huge difference between spiritual encounters described in the Bible and in modern pantheism. The latter is creeping into the Church via Roman Catholic contemplative prayer and the writings of M. Scott Peck, Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, Thomas Keating, Basil Pennington, Gerald May, Morton Kelsey, John Main, Matthew Fox, Brennan Manning, Richard Foster, Mike Yaconelli, and others. It is a frightening exposé of the lack of discernment in the churches.

Yungen offers some fresh insights into prophetic passages, and shows how the new contemplative movement and the centering prayer movement are dressed-up Eastern mysticism and are something the Bible warns against.

The book has a handy glossary and index, the latter which makes retrieval of information easy.

Those who think they have read all the latest in regard to the New Age and disguised Buddhism will find *A Time of Departing* a real eye opener that reveals how much has been flying under the radar in Christian bookstores. By all means, get this book.

—GRF

Editor's Note: The publications featured in PFO's *Books in Review* section are available from **Personal Freedom Outreach** (P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, Missouri 63136). Please add \$2.00 to the price listed for shipping and handling. Due to occasional price changes by the publishers, the retail amounts listed are subject to change without notice. These publications are also available to those who help to financially support the work of PFO. Please see our funds appeal flyer for details.