

# The Quarterly Journal



THE NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION OF PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

VOL. 24, NO. 2

APRIL-JUNE 2004

EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

## The Christianizing of Human Potential Philosophies Is Bruce Wilkinson's Dream Giver a Borrowed Daydream?

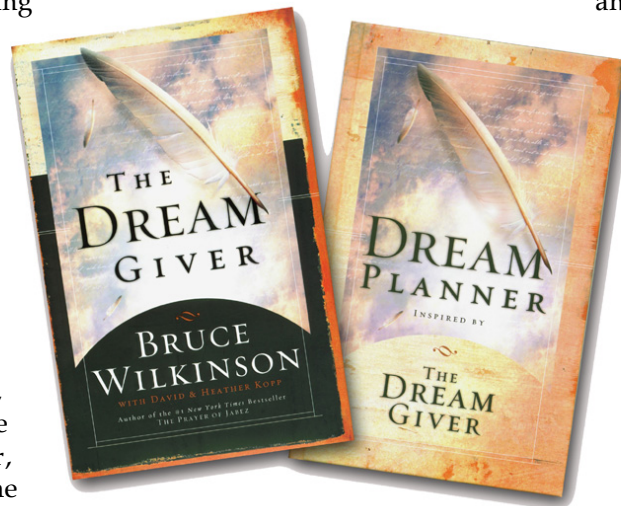
by G. Richard Fisher

John MacArthur once said, "The first role of successful merchandising is to give consumers what they want."<sup>1</sup>

### FOLLOW THE GOLD BRICK ROAD

Once upon a time, and not very long ago, Marketer contacted Ghostwriter. "We must go on a journey," Marketer declared. "I have a Dream, a Big Dream," he gushed, "a really BIG Dream!" Marketer then shared a Brain Child, the Big Dream that would take them through Marketing Fair, through Self-Help Valley, over the high hills of Human Potential to the End of the Rainbow and the Pot of Gold. It was a compelling goal and everyone's Dream. "I have the grist for your mill," Marketer informed Ghostwriter. And it was so.

The pair of travelers walked through the Bible Garden and left Jabez Mansion into the land of Generic Self-Fulfillment, as Undiscerning Consumer cheered them on. They broke through the land of Secret Vines and Rewards as the Prophet



Multnomah — who had slain the giant No-money — cheered the loudest. Lo, a great cloud of witnesses were all they needed. And lo, that host appeared. Another Prophet, one

named Robbins, huffed and puffed and became the wind beneath their wings. Behold, they could see in the distance the Rainbow, and as they struggled over Napoleon's Hill, Positive Thinker, Human Potential, and Self-Help came on the scene as in a Dream and prodded them on.

"You can, you can, I know you can, make your Big Dream a reality," they all affirmed. They could hear like a whisper in the wind the faint voice of the one called the Little Engine That Could. Two compatriots, Schuller the Nourisher and Robertson the Fosterer, gave them sustenance with their cheese and grapes.

Book Review, Critique, Hermeneutics, and Bible Expositor all tried to  
(continues on page 15)

### Inside this Issue:

ENOUGH IS NEVER ENOUGH .....	PAGE 2
CAN HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR BE DEFENDED BIBLICALLY? .....	PAGE 4
JOHN EDWARD: TRACER OF DEAD PERSONS? .....	PAGE 5

---

---

# Editorials

---

---

## ENOUGH IS NEVER ENOUGH

In the last issue of *The Quarterly Journal* we briefly reviewed the "opulent kingdoms" being built by televangelists Joyce Meyer and John Hagee. The details of Meyer's financial stockpile were based on an article that appeared last summer in the *St. Louis Business Journal*. At the time the winter issue of the *Journal* was rolling off the presses, an explosive four-part series on Meyer appeared in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Reporters Bill Smith and Carolyn Tuft invested months of painstaking and compelling investigative work exploring their hometown televangelist Joyce Meyer. Their thorough analysis should be a wake-up call, not only to credulous followers of Meyer, but also to Meyer herself. The *Post* estimated the 2003 income of Meyer's ministry, "Life in the Word," would be \$95 million. What was disturbing was not so much the high level of revenue, but how it (and past income) was being spent. Smith and Tuft noted that Meyer has a "penchant for nice things." Consider just a few of the wasteful and/or excessive avenues ministry funds have been personally used for and by Meyer:

- The ministry purchased and improved five homes, one each for Meyer and husband, Dave; and her two sons and two daughters and their spouses. According to

St. Louis County records, at least \$4 million was spent on these residences. Additionally, the "ministry pays for utilities, maintenance and landscaping costs at all five homes."

- A ministry-owned Canadair CL-600 Challenger jet worth \$10 million. The ministry also employs two full-time pilots to fly Meyer and her entourage to conferences.

- The Meyers own a \$500,000 vacation home in a private section of the Lake of the Ozarks (about three hours from St. Louis). At the lake home, the Meyers dock their Crownline boat valued at more than \$100,000.

- Personal and ministry automobiles, including a \$107,000 Mercedes-Benz S55 AMG sedan driven by husband Dave, a Lexus SC sports car, valued at \$53,000, driven by Meyer, and a \$46,000 Lexus sedan driven by her son Dan. In addition, the ministry owns a "fleet of vehicles with an estimated value of \$440,000."

- Ministry personal property, including equipment, furniture, artwork, and glassware, valued at over \$5.5 million. A few of the more extravagant items revealed in the *Post's* report were: a \$49,000 conference table and chairs; \$44,000 worth of woodwork in the offices of Meyer and her husband; a \$30,000 malachite round table; a \$23,000 marble-top antique commode; a \$19,000 pair of Dresden vases; and an \$11,000 French clock.

(continues on page 24)

### PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

P.O. Box 26062 • Saint Louis, Missouri 63136-0062 • (314) 921-9800

Visit PFO's Web Site at: <http://www.pfo.org>

#### BOARD of DIRECTORS:

James Bjornstad .....	Cedarville, OH	Joan C. Cetnar .....	Kunkletown, PA
G. Richard Fisher .....	Bricktown, NJ	M. Kurt Goedelman .....	Saint Louis, MO
Robert L. Griffin .....	Florissant, MO	Keith A. Morse .....	Denver, CO
David M. Tyler .....	Granite City, IL		

#### BOARD of REFERENCE:

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

©2004-PFO. All rights reserved. These articles may not be stored on BBS or Internet sites without permission. ISSN: 1083-6853. *The Quarterly Journal* is the newsletter publication of PFO. Published by Personal Freedom Outreach, P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, MO 63136. PFO's *Journal* files may also be obtained on floppy diskette for IBM-compatible computers from PFO.

## **MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR RECEIVES TOP HONORS**

The National Association of Broadcasters announced last November that "Music and the Spoken Word," the radio program of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, would be inducted into its broadcasting Hall of Fame. The induction took place in April at the NAB's annual meeting in Las Vegas. With the honor, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir finds itself among entertainment and broadcasting greats such as Bob Hope, Jack Benny, George Burns, and Paul Harvey, all who have been previously inducted in NAB's Hall of Fame.

The distinction comes as the choir's weekly program celebrates its 75th anniversary. The radio broadcast, which features music performed by the internationally recognized choir and inspirational messages, began airing in July 1929 on KSL, the Latter-day Saint church operated radio station. The Sunday morning program is now broadcast on more than 2,000 outlets, including radio, television, and cable TV stations. It originates from the church's Tabernacle located on Temple Square in Salt Lake City.

Just a few days before the NAB's announcement, the choir was given the national Medal of the Arts, an honor said to be "the nation's highest award for artistic excellence." The medal was presented by President George W. Bush to Choir President Mac Christensen, who accepted the award on behalf of the choir. The ceremony was held at the White House and recognized other individuals and organizations of distinction, including classical music conductor Leonard Slatkin and former child TV star-turned-director Ron Howard.

—MKG

## **MICHAEL X?**

Popular recording artist Michael Jackson has reportedly become a member of the Nation of Islam. Jackson's conversion came amid his arrest and subsequent charges of child molestation against him. Jackson's older brother Jermaine hired members of the sect to work in Michael's inner circle in various jobs, including bodyguard. Jermaine joined the group in 1989.

Jackson's spiritual resume includes being a baptized member of Jehovah's Witnesses along with engaging in the Watchtower's door-to-door campaigns. While he was a member in good standing, Jackson's ventures into music video, most specifically his occultic mega-hit *Thriller*, caused unwanted embarrassment for the Watchtower Society. Jackson disavowed the popular video in the May 22, 1984, issue of the organization's *Awake!* magazine, but he and the Jehovah's Witnesses eventually parted company.

Ironically, Jehovah's Witnesses have demonstrated a tolerance for pedophiles within their ranks. In recent years, the Watchtower has tried to keep a tight lid on revelations of widespread child sex abuse by its leaders. The organization repeatedly buries the allegations and castigates the victims and those who make known the offenses.

Charges of sexual assault are not new to Jackson. A decade ago, he derailed a similar allegation by settling out of court. According to some reports, Jackson paid as much as \$20 million to avoid trial. Prosecutors were unable to proceed with a criminal case against him as the would-be complainant stopped cooperating with the police as a result of the settlement.

The Nation of Islam was founded by Wallace D. Fard in the early 1930s. Amid other religious influences, Fard employed Watchtower doctrine in shaping his theology. He mysteriously disappeared in 1934. Some think he was murdered. The black nationalist group grew rapidly in the 1950s and is seen as a cult of Islam. Some Black Muslim members, such as Malcolm Little and Louis Walcott (Louis Farrakhan), exchanged their last names for an "X," saying their surnames were imposed by slavery and white society.

—MKG

## **SCAMMING THE SCAMMERS**

The wallets of Benny Hinn, Reinhard Bonnke, Marilyn Hickey, and members of their respective ministries, along with hundreds of other victims, just got a little thinner. A *ponzi* scheme has reportedly fleeced more than \$160 million from ministries and individuals across the country.

(continues on page 25)



# The Sons and Daughters of Hophni and Phinehas

## Can Homosexual Behavior Be Defended Biblically?

by Robert L. Griffin

In 1 Samuel we are told that the sons of Eli — Hophni and Phinehas, “the priests of the LORD”<sup>1</sup> — came under the judgment of God for the wicked influence that they had upon the people of Israel. These men had a family heritage of righteousness and service to Yahweh. They had risen to a place of high visibility in the religious life of Israel. They had opportunities and responsibilities to lead the people in godliness. However, rather than leading the people to know and follow the Lord, by their example and teaching they led them into gross sin. They disgraced their priestly office by greed, irreverence, and immorality.

It is recorded in Scripture, “Now the sons of Eli *were* corrupt; they did not know the LORD.”<sup>2</sup> Further, concerning their greed and abuse of the offerings of God’s people, it is said, “Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.”<sup>3</sup>

Were that not extreme enough, their greed joined hands with sexual immorality, as is often the case, and “they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.”<sup>4</sup> One can almost feel the pathos in the voice of Eli as he finally confronted them. In what may well be described as a classic example of much “too little, too late,” he said,

“No, my sons! For *it is* not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD’s people transgress.”<sup>5</sup>

How tragic! Those who were called to be the spiritual leaders of the people became the chief enablers for open rebellion, even at the very threshold of the tabernacle. No one should be shocked to learn that God’s judgment came at the hands of the Philistines. Hophni and Phinehas died in the attack, 30,000 “foot soldiers” of Israel were slaughtered, and the Ark of the Covenant was seized by their pagan enemies.<sup>6</sup>

Alas, the descendants of Hophni and Phinehas are still with us. Far too often we hear of those who are in places of religious influence and authority, who claim to be spiritual leaders, but who deny the Word of God and its clear teachings, who defend aberrant lifestyles, and who, by precept and practice, pave a pathway for people to live in ways that are unholy, ungodly, and self-destructive.

In the aftermath of the recent decision of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in America to elevate an avowed, practicing homosexual to the office of Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire, there were outcries of all sorts, ranging from wails of despair to shouts of glee. The 56-year-old bishop

in question, Gene Robinson, said:

“Yes, I think it’s one of the Church’s finest moments. I think it’s something that God is doing in, and through, the Church. The Episcopal Church today has said that there is no one beyond God’s love. We welcome our brothers and sisters *who happen to be gay and lesbian.*”<sup>7</sup>

With one of his two daughters and his male “partner” of 13 years watching nearby, he added, with a curious blend of melodrama and blasphemy, “God has once again brought an Easter out of Good Friday.”<sup>8</sup>

In contrast, Pittsburgh Episcopal Bishop Robert Duncan was described as having “grief too deep for words.” Representing a group of “conservative Bishops,” and reflecting the sentiments of many other Anglicans worldwide, he said, “This body will fully confirming the election of a person sexually active outside of holy matrimony has departed from the historic faith and order of the Church of Jesus Christ. This body has divided itself from millions of Anglican Christians around the world.” He added, “May God have mercy on his church.”<sup>9</sup>

The final vote, taken on August 5, 2003, in Minneapolis, with 106 Bishops present and one voting by absent

(continues on page 11)

# John Edward: Tracer of Dead Persons or Tactician of Deceitful Practices?

by G. Richard Fisher



“So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance” (1 Chronicles 10:13).

“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).

Years ago, the dark practice of communicating with the dead — or at least attempts at it — seemed to go on in darkened seance rooms and out-of-the-way places. A younger America always knew —because of its Christian heritage — that necromancy was evil, demonic, and forbidden by the Scriptures.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

The Salem witch trials in 1692 were isolated, regional, and short-lived, and may have been caused more by human hysteria than demonic spirits. H.S. Stout wrote, “To their credit, most of the Puritan clergy recognized that the real evil was in the accusers, not the accused.”<sup>1</sup>

Certainly pre-Civil War America had its superstitions, folklore, and folk medicine. However, cult and mystical meanderings never matched the numbers or strength of mainstream Christianity, and the Bible was still revered by most.

Modern spiritism can be traced to the Fox sisters in Hydesville, N.Y., in 1848.<sup>2</sup> Strange rappings could be heard in the sisters’ home and were attributed to spirits. While many prominent men, including Arthur Conan Doyle (author of the Sherlock Holmes stories), promoted it, the vast majority saw it as evil.

The Fox sisters had a four-decade run before being exposed. Psychic debunker M. Lamar Keene wrote:

“Then in 1888 both sisters confessed that the raps were a hoax produced by cracking their toe-joints. This explanation already had occurred to some skeptics, but nobody had been able to produce raps as convincing as those of the Fox sisters. After her confession, Margaret, in a demonstration at New York’s Academy of Music, showed exactly how she had bamboozled scientists. Standing on a little pine table on the stage, wearing nothing on her feet but stockings, the co-mother of modern spiritualism caused raps to be heard throughout the auditorium.”<sup>3</sup>

This negative exposure caused spiritualism to wane, but it came back worse than ever in post-World War I America with an array of new characters. The swept house filled back up with demons far worse than the first.

Most in America still really understood that the practice of necromancy — attempts to communicate with de-

parted loved ones — put one in the realm of the demonic and perhaps opened a door to “familiar spirits,” that is, demonic counterfeits acting as former family or friends. Scripture warns against impersonating spirits and condemns mediums.

After World War II, interest grew once again because of the loss and grief of so many worldwide. The Ouija Board experienced a period of brisk sales, with one Baltimore bookstore alone selling more than 800 a week.<sup>4</sup> Spiritism remained a subculture, at least through the 1960s until the 1970s when William Peter Blatty’s novel-turned-motion picture *The Exorcist* unleashed a flood of other movies about demons and exorcisms. This made the demon preoccupation big business with demon conversations and exorcisms becoming part of main-line religion.<sup>5</sup> People, such as radio talk show host-turned-exorcist Bob Larson, now make a living from contrived demon encounters.<sup>6</sup>

In 2001, the film *The Gift* presented the lead character and heroine Annie Wilson (a small-town, young, gentle, church-going widow) using her psychic insights, along with card laying, to help others. Self-sacrificing Annie is presented as one of the few sensible and sane people in a trouble-ridden southern hamlet. Hollywood has, for a long time, helped to condition our culture to psychic practitioners and

soften us up to various forms of spiritualism with a number of other blockbuster movies such as *Ghost*,<sup>7</sup> *The Sixth Sense*, and *The Others*. Talk show hosts, such as Regis Philbin, Maury Povich, and Larry King have invited the current wave of mediums and spiritualists on their shows and given them nationwide exposure.

The relentless daily exposure is definitely turning the minds of Americans to view spiritualism favorably. The results of a recent Barna survey bear this out:

“Although a comparison of current beliefs to those held over the past two decades shows that Americans’ views about life after death have been relatively stable over time, new perceptions about the hereafter are being grafted into the traditional perspectives. For instance, nearly 1 in 5 adults (18%) now contends that people are reincarnated after death. And one-third of Americans (34%) believe that it is possible to communicate with others after their death. As evidence that this belief is gaining traction, consider that nearly half of all Busters (48%) embrace the concept of communication with the dead, while just 35% of Boomers (39-57) and 15% of Elders (ages 58+) do so.”<sup>8</sup>

Spirit contacts are becoming a way to promote business:

“Spooky sounds and sights at Mikhail Baryshnikov’s Russian Samovar have some people convinced that the midtown restaurant is haunted. Russian Samovar manager Vlada Von Shats says she’s long heard reports that the four-story building on 256 W. 52nd St., which once housed the Frank Sinatra hangout Jilly’s, is inhabited by the ghosts of Ol’ Blue Eyes and his Rat Pack cronies.”<sup>9</sup>

Richard Kennedy defines spiritualism (sometimes called spiritism) as:

“Any form of religious practice

that attempts to communicate with the spirits of those who have died, usually by employing intermediaries known as *mediums*, to contact and speak with the dead.”<sup>10</sup>

Severe words of judgment were pronounced on King Manasseh because “he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger” (2 Chronicles 33:6).

Necromancy is an abomination to God. Linguist W.E. Vine spells it out:

“God forbade Israel to seek information by this means, which was so common among the pagans (Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:11). ... Necromancy was so contrary to God’s commands that its practitioners were under the death penalty (Deut. 13).”<sup>11</sup>

There is and ought to be a major concern by parents with the explosion of occult programs on television: *Charmed*, *Witchblade*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The X-Files*, *PSI Factor* and *Sabrina The Teenage Witch*. The practitioners are always young and attractive. These shows make the dark realm seem normal and attractive.

### THE MEDIUMS’ EVIL COUSIN

Before this current deluge of televised occultism, many knew that there was another related craft that was evil, but clearly in the realm of deceit. This con game, practiced in circuses, state fairs, magic shows, private parties, and gypsy tea rooms, is known as cold reading. Cold readings purport to be contact with those who have passed and manipulate the emotions and weaknesses of grieving people. Some have even stooped lower with the pet psychic phenomenon and shameless practitioners that swear they can bring us messages from our dead pets!

There are cold readers and warm readers. Warm readers acquire advance information through various

means and come equipped with information. Their prescience seems stunning, but it is all from “cheat sheets.” Cold readers know nothing ahead of time, but employ time-tested techniques. Either way it is a rigged game.

But what was once a con game in out-of-the-way places is now a television staple. Since Satan is the “father of lies,” he is the driving force in all of this and while people think there is something spiritual and otherworldly going on, it is simply an old craft that anyone can learn and anyone without a conscience can employ.

### HIGH PRIEST — ALMOST

A key player in the current world of cold readings is John Edward, who has a syndicated TV program, *Crossing Over With John Edward*. In the show, Edward the pop psychic seems to be connecting with departed loved ones as enraptured fans sit in awe and tears.

Edward is a former ballroom dance instructor and began his cold reading business on the Sci-Fi Channel. He is still advertised on the Sci-Fi Channel web site.<sup>12</sup> Others, including Sylvia Browne and James Van Praagh, use the same techniques.

### OUT OF THE ORDINARY

According to Edward’s own web site, he is:

“...an internationally acclaimed psychic medium who can communicate with the world beyond. Deeply compelling, often startling and even humorous, his honest and almost skeptical attitude regarding psychic phenomena has made the staunchest of skeptics take notice and listen. It has also earned him an enormous following from all walks of life and ages ... John was an ordinary kid growing up on Long Island.”<sup>13</sup>

It is almost laughable as they go on talking about this “ordinary kid” who “played ball with his friends, ate pizza on Friday nights, had out-of-body experiences, visions of dead

relatives he had never known, and predicted phone calls and surprise visits."<sup>14</sup>

There is no offer of verification or documentation for these claims, but if they are true even to a degree, Edward was, even as a youngster, deep into spiritism, occultism, mediumship, necromancy, and the demonic.

His call or impetus for becoming a psychic purportedly occurred when he was 15 years old:

"He did not understand how unusual this was until he was fifteen years old and was read by a psychic himself. She let him know that he was special and that his life's work would be about bringing comfort and hope to people here in the physical world by reuniting them with those they had loved and lost."<sup>15</sup>

It is claimed that Edward has not only these incredible powers, but a prophetic gift as well:

"John Edward has brought a fresh, honest and thought provoking attitude to the world of psychic phenomena. As a psychic medium, author and lecturer, he has, over the last fifteen years, helped thousands with his uncanny ability to predict future events and communicate with those who have crossed over to the Other Side."<sup>16</sup>

Edward's final launch came from another occult practitioner. Their encounter sounds almost like a "commissioning" service:

"John embarked on developing his own abilities after an encounter with famed psychic **Lydia Clar**. Lydia made him aware of his abilities and directed him to use them to assist others. Since then, his clientele has ranged from young to old, student to professor, people of the clergy, law enforcement agencies and people from everyday life. . . His clients wait over a year to sit with him for private sessions,

and although John is anxious to share his ability with those that need him, he is unwilling to compromise the quality of his work for the quantity that seek him out."<sup>17</sup>

Edward uses the same old sell that most of the cold readers use, claiming to have a spiritual gift that he wants to use to help his subjects. He sweetens the hustle by claiming to care about his subjects and those who have passed.

Edward's champion Clar is a lesser-known psychic who currently practices out of Melbourne, Fla. She does telephone readings and a limited number of radio and television interviews. It is interesting to note the coincidences that parallel with Edward. She also claims to have sur-

does not know much about the Other Side. He says one must review one's life after death to prepare for the next incarnation."<sup>19</sup>

Though we believe in familiar spirits, demonic powers (Ephesians 6), and denounce mediums and seances, Edward is not a conduit for these familiar spirits. Satan may be using him to prevaricate, mislead, and manipulate people, but it is doubtful that Edward is tapping into the paranormal at all when he claims to make contact. His evil is of another sort. It is a calculated and learned mendacity.

### THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF COLD READINGS

It is common to watch a magician and be baffled because we don't

---

---

*A definition of cold reading would be that it is a learned art of manipulation.*

---

---

faced her "gift" at age 15 and then a few years later got jump started by psychic Ena Twigg.<sup>18</sup> What Twigg did for Clar, it seems that Clar did for Edward.

Another part of Edward's convoluted background is filled in by former astrologer and psychic practitioner-turned-Christian, Marcia Montenegro:

"Edward claims to be a Catholic, although he realizes that the Catholic Church opposes what he does. He maintains that his relationship with God is important and that his 'connection to God has never wavered.' Edward has priests and nuns as clients, and he prays the rosary and meditates before doing spirit contact. Edward believes in reincarnation, while asserting that he

know the magician's technique. One psychic broke a glass in a handkerchief, placed the handkerchief on the pulpit, and began chewing the glass. As he crunched away into the microphone his admirers were shocked, amazed, and pleased at his abilities. Surely the spirits had kept him from harm. In fact, he had laid the handkerchief and broken glass on the pulpit and deftly scooped up ice chips from a bowl under the pulpit. The harmless ice being masticated sounded just like the glass fragments would have sounded. He delivered yet another perfect performance.

A definition of cold reading would be that it is a learned art of manipulation. It leaves observers believing that the cold reader has insights, powers, or mysterious paranormal qualities that give him a doorway into and

information from the unseen world. It is parlor magic without props. Salesmen, televangelists, psychics, self-help gurus, and con men use the same techniques whether they know it or not. Some cold readers do it for the income, others for the status and power over others, and still others for the combination of both.

On October 31, 2002, ABC News reported an experiment with cold reading on a *Primetime* audience with the help of debunker Ian Rowland. Rowland, who had no contact with the audience before, was to do cold readings and convince the 20 participants that he was contacting the dead. Rowland convinced every one of them. After telling them what he had done and how he had done it, most

shows. He says that one key, “just some well-chosen questions and a sensitivity to the audience’s reaction,”<sup>22</sup> is a great way to convince.

Cold readers memorize some basic statistics, surveys, and averages. It is easy to find out what the average person worries about. Some basic information about certain cultures and subcultures gives one a handle on where people are at, or might be at psychologically. Just knowing that the people there want information about Mom or Dad leaves them impressionable. Rowland says, “I know the kind of medical symptoms that are most likely to get people to agree. ... I have lists in my head of the 18 commonest male names, 18 commonest female names that have been registered in

work with, a friend, used to know, someone you’re going to know.”<sup>24</sup>

### THEY WILL DO ALL THE WORK FOR YOU

Cold readers can usually count on the subject to fill in all the blanks. All the cold reader would have to do is say “cancer” to a group. Someone in that group knows someone fighting the disease or a friend or relative that may have died from the disease. The listener will search his mind for the historical record.

Rowland got an instant “hit” with his group by throwing out the claim that he “saw” a chest condition and an older man and the letter “M.” There was an audience member whose aging father, Michael, had a heart condition. (This, by the way, is the key to so-called “words of knowledge” used by TV evangelists such as Benny Hinn, Pat Robertson, and Richard Roberts.)

Cold reading studies sometimes cite the Forer effect, named after skeptic Bertram Forer. This is the observation that people will accept general and specific information quite readily, if it seems to apply in any way, and ignore inaccuracies. A study of one psychic showed that only 1 in 14 suggestions was a correct hit. Some do better.

### FLEXIBILITY, FLEXIBILITY

The cold reader always has an alternative and is flexible. The cold reader capitalizes on his hits, but just moves on quickly if he misses. Rowland also uses direct questions. If he gets no answers or even a wrong one, then he will throw out another question. This fishing tactic drives the show. The ringmaster capitalizes on the things that connect and ignores or gently brushes aside the things that don’t.

“Seeing” someone in the process of moving usually works. Changing homes, careers, locations, relationships, chairs, churches, or even bedrooms can qualify. The deck is

---

---

*Just knowing that the people there want information about Mom or Dad leaves them impressionable.*

---

---

said it felt “real for them” and that was all that mattered.<sup>20</sup>

As we look at John Edward’s technique, we will parallel a bit of what Rowland revealed. Cold readers are good at reading body language and extracting information that can be fed back later. ABC News was not alone in its exposing cold reading. Numerous works have been published throughout the years.<sup>21</sup>

First, one must exude confidence. The practitioner must act as if he really believes what he is doing. Whether he does or does not is beside the point. There is an innate tendency to think that no one would lie to us about such deeply personal matters as those we loved and that no one would toy with our grief, but unfortunately that is not true as Rowland

the United States for the last 45 years.”<sup>23</sup> We can easily see why we would throw out the phrase “palms by water” to a group from Florida, but not to a group from Minnesota.

The cold reader acts as if he is struggling. Yes, he wants to do this, but the name is vague and the message is weak — after all this is the “Other Side.” The cold reader must seem humble and modest, which disarms and enlists the listener. It all works so subtly, having set the trap and developing the “Russian doll statement,” as Rowland explains:

“I start with something as vague as possible, and I’m looking for who will bite. It’s a lot like fishing ... If it’s not you, your immediate family, your extended family, then it’s someone you

stacked and the cold reader really has an easy time winning the game. Miscues, mistakes, gaffes, and blunders cannot derail him because that is the nature of the other realm and he just has to try harder.

If the reader has a total miss he can just say that there are other, more dominant spirits blocking messages or another relative of another person sending in contrary, but stronger information not needed right now. There is always an answer and always a way out.

Some ex-psychics who have come clean say that occasionally they got what they describe as "lucky" by throwing out guesses that turned out to be correct. Apologists and cult watchers suggest the "father of lies" may have assisted them in their "luck." A good fisherman knows the fish and his bait. Romans 1:29 warns us about the corrupt culture that practices deceit, for which the Greek word *dolos* is primarily a bait or snare.<sup>25</sup>

### LEAVE OUT THE MISTAKES

Television editing can enhance the appearance of success in a cold reader's performance. Only parts that flatter and enhance remain. Many misses and wild guesses land on the cutting-room floor. Brian Carnell reproduces the testimony of marketing manager Michael O'Neill regarding O'Neill's appearance on Edward's show:

"I was on the John Edward show. He even had a multiple guess 'hit' on me that was featured on the show. However, it was edited so that my answer to another question was edited in after one of his questions. In other words, his question and my answer were deliberately mismatched. Only a fraction of what went on in the studio was actually seen in the final 30 minute show."<sup>26</sup>

Rowland, the psychic debunker, told his group of 20 that he "saw" a calender or wall chart "at home that was out of date."<sup>27</sup> Rowland says it is

very common for people to have out-of-date calenders in their homes. Rowland got an instant hit when one lady volunteered she had an out-of-date fabric calender. Old cross-stitch calenders can be favored keepsakes.

Rowland also says there are certain things that come up in most families, and he has a list of 18 of these memorized, "such as a box of old photos or a broken appliance that has still not been thrown out."<sup>28</sup>

Most people who go to cold readers are looking for affirmation, support, and hope. The reader is all too ready to give them false hope. Many of the gullible and undiscerning seek affirmation of what they would like to think and believe. Cold readers *never* tell anyone anything negative or disheartening. That alone tells us that they have to be lying, because not everything can always be good, or nice, or have a happy ending. Jesus talked about both the good and the bad, and in speaking of heaven and hell affirmed that not every outcome is happy. Jesus spoke realistically of a broad and narrow way and of the separation of sheep and goats.

In Edward's scenario, the dead all appear to be in a wonderful place. Psychics would not be in business long if they hinted at anything negative.

To the contrary, Jesus indicated in Luke 16:19-31 not only the fixed estate of the dead, but the reality that the dead are not permitted contact with the living. Jesus did not always make people feel good. What Edward is claiming to do is clearly forbidden in Leviticus 19:31, 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 18:10-11; and Isaiah 8:19-20. God has not changed His mind.

The psychic knows his income depends on keeping clients. This can only be done by having happy customers. Self-confessed bogus psychic Lamar Keene explains:

"My master stroke was a plan to exploit to the fullest the desire — the *need* — most people have to

be somebody; to rise above the drabness of their day-to-day existence; to experience a touch of glamour, excitement, drama, and high and unique honor."<sup>29</sup>

The psychic has a vested interest in keeping the show going by not offending or disappointing. John MacArthur agrees:

"The first role of successful merchandising is to give consumers what they want. If they want bigger burgers, make their burgers bigger. ... Mankind wants glory. We want health. We want wealth. We want happiness. We want all our felt needs met, all our little human itches scratched. We want a painless life. We want the crown without the cross. We want the gain without the pain. We want the words of Christian salvation to be easy."<sup>30</sup>

Consider Dr. Richard Gardner's insightful observations:

"...we ourselves are powerful self-deceivers in accordance with our own wishes and aspirations. ... Our judgments and interpretations of external events are far less related to actual reality than they are to our desires to see things in our own way."<sup>31</sup>

The psychics exploit these weaknesses in all of us.

### THE TRUE-BELIEVER SYNDROME

It baffles the average person that someone, even after being shown that something is unreal and a fraud, will still believe the unbelievable. Some of it may be attributable to a mental state called the True-Believer Syndrome. Robert Todd Carroll helps us understand how True-Believer Syndrome, fueled by wishful thinking, the will to believe, emotional needs, and even desperation, works in the true believer:


"I may have overwhelming evidence that a 'psychic' is a phony, yet still believe that paranormal events occur. I may be *deceiving*

myself in such a case, but I don't think it is correct to say I am *lying* to myself. It is possible that those suffering from true-believer syndrome simply do not believe that the weight of the evidence before them revealing fraud is sufficient to overpower the weight of all those many cases of supportive evidence from the past. The fact that the supportive evidence was largely supplied by the same person exposed as a fraud is suppressed. There is always the hope that no matter how many frauds are exposed, at least one of the experiences might have been genuine. No one can prove that all psychic 'miracles' have been frauds;

His charade needs to be exposed for what it is. There is One who has come back from the dead (in resurrection) with a message of forgiveness and eternal salvation and it is Jesus Christ. He is and has all the comfort, peace, and assurance that we will ever need.

#### Endnotes:

1. H.S. Stout, *Dictionary of Christianity in America*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990, pg. 1041.
2. J.D. Douglas, General Editor, *New 20th-Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1991, pp. 782-783.
3. M. Lamar Keene, *The Psychic Mafia*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1997, pg. 116.
4. See Edmond C. Gruss, *The Ouija Board*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1994, pg. 24.

- ([www.scifi.com/johnedward/aboutjohn/](http://www.scifi.com/johnedward/aboutjohn/)).
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. "About John Edward," from the official John Edward web site ([www.johnedward.net/about\\_John\\_Edward.htm](http://www.johnedward.net/about_John_Edward.htm)).
17. Ibid., boldface and ellipsis in original.
18. "Lydia's Biography," from Lydia Clar's web site ([www.lydiaclear.com/bio.html](http://www.lydiaclear.com/bio.html)).
19. Marcia Montenegro, "I See Dead People — A Look at After-Death Communication," *Christian Research Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 01, pg. 14.
20. "Talking with the Dead, The Secrets of 'Cold Reading,'" abcNEWS.com Original Report, *Primetime Thursday*, Oct. 31, 2002, document available at: [http://abcnews.go.com/sections/primetime/DailyNews/coldreading\\_021031.html](http://abcnews.go.com/sections/primetime/DailyNews/coldreading_021031.html).
21. See, for example, Ray Hyman, "Guide to 'Cold Reading,'" *The Skeptic Journal*, document available at: [www.skeptics.com.au/journal/coldread.htm](http://www.skeptics.com.au/journal/coldread.htm); Roger Novella, "Cold Reading: The Psychic's True Power," *The Connecticut Skeptic*, Spring 1997, document available at: [www.theness.com/coldread.html](http://www.theness.com/coldread.html); James Randi, "The Art of 'Cold Reading,'" James Randi Educational Foundation, document available at: [www.randi.org/library/coldreading/index.html](http://www.randi.org/library/coldreading/index.html); and Brian Carnell, "John Edward's Cold Reading Gig," *Skepticism.Net*, document available at: [www.skepticism.net/articles/2001/000012.html](http://www.skepticism.net/articles/2001/000012.html).
22. "Talking with the Dead," op. cit.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., ellipsis in original.
25. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, op. cit., New Testament section, pg. 151.
26. "John Edward's Cold Reading Gig," op. cit.
27. "Talking with the Dead," op. cit.
28. Ibid.
29. *The Psychic Mafia*, op. cit., pg. 76, italic in original.
30. John MacArthur, *Hard to Believe*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2003, pp. 1, 12.
31. Richard A. Gardner, M.D., *Sex Abuse Hysteria: Salem Witch Trials Revisited*. Cresthill, N.J.: Creative Therapeutics, 1991, pp. 38, 115.
32. Robert Todd Carroll, "The 'True-Believer' Syndrome," italics in original. Document available at: [http://home.hetnet.nl/~ex\\_baba/engels/articles/p\\_holbach/eng/trueb\\_e.htm](http://home.hetnet.nl/~ex_baba/engels/articles/p_holbach/eng/trueb_e.htm).
33. "I See Dead People — A Look at After-Death Communication," op. cit., pg. 18. 

---

*In Edward's scam, there is no Bible, no Gospel, no repentance, no forgiveness, no saving grace, and no Savior.*

---

therefore, the true believer may well reason that he or she is justified in keeping hope alive. Such thinking is not completely illogical, though it may seem pathological to the one admitting the fraud."<sup>32</sup>

Marcia Montenegro's point about what is really going on with people like Edward is well-put:

"...why not consider that what is happening results from a combination of factors: coincidence, good guessing, the mediums' imaginations, generalities, demonic sources, and the client's belief and interpretations to fit the situation?"<sup>33</sup>

In Edward's scam, there is no Bible, no Gospel, no repentance, no forgiveness, no saving grace, and no Savior.

5. See further, Michael Cuneo, *American Exorcism*. New York: Doubleday, 2001.
6. See further, *Origins of the Devil*, MSNBC Special, Oct. 26, 2002.
7. Whoopi Goldberg received the 1991 Oscar® for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for her portrayal of medium Oda Mae Brown in *Ghost*.
8. "Americans Describe Their Views About Life After Death," Barna Research Online, Oct. 21, 2003, ([www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=150&Reference=G](http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=150&Reference=G)).
9. "Sinatra Haunts Ruskie Spot," *New York Post*, Oct. 30, 2003.
10. Richard Kennedy, *The International Dictionary of Religion*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1984, pg. 178, italic in original.
11. W.E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1985, Old Testament section, pg. 242.
12. See "Crossing Over with John Edward" on SciFi.com web site

tee ballot, was 62 in favor and 45 opposed. These represented the 2.3 million Episcopalians in the U.S., out of a worldwide Anglican Communion of 77 million.

It is not the purpose of this article to deal with the question of Bishop Robinson's qualifications. If there were no other considerations, the fact that as a pastor he abandoned his wife and two young daughters to enter a "committed relationship" (as if that made a difference) with one Mark Andrew, should settle that issue. Nor is it the writer's intention to discuss the entire issue of homosexuality or the dilemma in which some members of the Episcopal Church find themselves.

Rather, our purpose is to consider some of the misrepresentations of Scripture that are used by modern-day incarnations of Hophni and Phinehas, the influencers and defenders of those who choose the sin of homosexuality and its attendant lifestyle. Such apologists need to be challenged and reminded that they have neither a scriptural nor moral "leg to stand on." In this instance, we agree with the Rev. Kendall Harmon of the American Anglican Council when he said concerning Robinson's election: "There are no scriptural arguments to support this. The whole of Scripture as it coheres as a unit, as well as its individual teaching, is against this."<sup>10</sup>

For the serious biblicist, it is mind-boggling to note the tactics of those who want to maintain the appearance of caring what the Bible says while blatantly disobeying its clear teachings. They promulgate all manner of rationalizations, fearing not to twist the Word<sup>11</sup> to achieve their objectives. Certainly this is seen in the arguments of those who buy into and promote the homosexual agenda. Many typical misuses of Scripture could be noted, such as the ludicrous contention that God's judgment came upon Sodom

not because of sexual perversion, but because of the sin of inhospitality. But in this instance we will consider just two of the major claims, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New, used by the pro-homosexual religious lobby, as follows:

- The Old Testament prohibitions against homosexuality, they say, are neutralized by the fact that they are combined with other prohibitions of various types, some of which may seem to be minor and peripheral. Further, they claim, since the same word, "abomination," is used concerning many prohibitions — what one may eat, what one may wear, how one is to farm and tend his cattle, as well as issues of worship, idolatry, and sexuality — this must mean that we have wide latitude in how to interpret what is truly "abominable," and how those prohibitions apply to 21st century society.

- The New Testament also, they maintain, is less than conclusive as to a condemnation of all homosexual activity (a contention we will not grant them). For instance, some assert that in the account of the centurion who came to Jesus pleading for the healing of his servant (Matthew 8:5-13), the word translated "servant" may also be translated "boy," and refers to a "man-boy love" relationship (i.e., "pederasty"). In their argument, since Jesus healed the "boy" without any condemnation of the relationship, He must have approved it!

In the first instance, one might well ask, "Why do they even bother?" The extremes to which some go to appeal to the Scripture while flaunting their disregard of it hardly seem worth the effort. Why not just "fess up" to the fact that they have staked out an extrabiblical position and go on their way? This, sadly, for whatever reason, they choose not to do.

For instance, in the August 10, 2003, edition of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, a letter to the editor published over the name and title "Gloria Weber, Retired

Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," contained the following with reference to prohibitions against homosexuality in the Pentateuch:

"That law [i.e., "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination." (Leviticus 18:22)] is just one of more than 600 laws given to Israel more than 2,500 years ago. If we are to use Leviticus as a guide for our lives today, it would follow that obedience to all the laws of ancient Israel is also demanded. Must we not heed the others as well? There are, in the Old Testament, condemnations of adultery, of working on the Sabbath, and of stubborn and rebellious children. The punishment for all those misdeeds is death. Further, we are ordered not to wear clothes made of more than one fabric. No mixing polyester and cotton. We are to eat only animals that have divided hoofs and chew the cud. Pigs, rabbit and ostrich should not be in our stores. Seafood without scales and fins is forbidden. So there will be no shrimp, crab, or lobster for sale, either."

One of the problems of such a diatribe is that it offers legitimacy to those who are looking for an excuse to continue in their perversion. "If a retired pastor in a mainstream religious body can come to that view and attribute it to the Scripture," one might say, "Why should I be concerned about the uneasiness and guilt I feel because of my 'sexual orientation'?"

However, the matter of giving people a rationale for continuing in their sin is not the only problem with the position espoused by Weber and others. Of equal or greater significance is the violence such a contention does to principles of sound hermeneutics; that is, the proper way to handle, interpret, and explain the Scripture. Simply stated, no one has a right to make such a mish-mash of the Word of God.

What Weber and others present as an unanswerable dilemma isn't that difficult. The requirements and prohibitions that God gave to His people Israel in the Pentateuch pertained to every aspect of their lives, including:

- Their diets.
- Their clothing, personal appearance, and hygiene.
- How they sowed their fields, harvested their crops, and raised their cattle.
- How they were to behave sexually.
- How they were to raise their children.
- How they were to maintain distinctiveness from the pagan cultures that surrounded them.
- How they were to worship and serve God, and Him alone.

The scope of the rules was broad, but obviously there were clear differences as to: 1) the reasons for these various regulations; 2) those for whom they were intended; 3) how they were to be enforced; and, 4) for how long they were to be in effect. While it is true that not all biblically oriented Christians agree on the specifics of these issues, most *would* agree that there are distinct differences in how we understand the regulations that God gave to Israel pertaining to what to eat, how to dress, and how to be a farmer or a herdsman, as contrasted with those that taught them how to be sexually pure before and faithful within marriage, how to nurture children in the Lord, how to worship Him exclusively, and how to maintain their separateness from ungodly influences and practices around them.

For this writer, it has been helpful to consider the requirements and prohibitions of the Mosaic Covenant under three different headings: 1) The Moral Law, such as in the Ten Commandments, and other moral teachings drawn directly from those succinct statements; 2) The Judicial Law,

by which the Moral Law was enforced; and, 3) The Religious (or Ceremonial) Law, which regulated Israel's worship. The Moral Law revealed the holy character of the Law-Giver and what He required in order to be rightly related to Him; The Judicial Law gave instructions as to how infractions of those moral requirements were to be punished; and, The Religious (or Ceremonial) Law, dealt with the worship of Yahweh in the tabernacle, and later in the temple, through the God-ordained priesthood and sacrificial system.

Authors James R. White and Jeffrey D. Niell, take a similar, but slightly different approach to this issue:

"God's moral law refers to those precepts that are perpetually binding upon all peoples in all time (murder, adultery, the sole worship of the One true God). God's ceremonial law refers to those precepts (ordinances, regulations) that were temporarily in effect and were specifically designed for the worship of God by His covenant people. These temporary statutes, in part, pointed forward to (prefigured) the person and work of the Messiah, Jesus Christ (the priesthood, the tabernacle, temple, sacrifices, Passover, and the feasts) as well as referred to those aspects of divine requirement that pertained only to those persons who were 'in covenant' with the Lord. These ceremonial laws *were* temporary in practice and in design ... These practices, distinctive to Israel, would also include the regulations regarding the blending of fabrics, seed, and cattle as well as those that pertained to trimming of the hair and beards — Israel was a distinct nation."<sup>12</sup>

In noting the distinction between various types of regulations, White and Niell point out, with reference to the nations that surrounded Israel, "that no Egyptian, Assyrian, Moabite, or Edomite was ever condemned for missing Passover or for not following

the dietary laws or ignoring beard-trimming regulations."<sup>13</sup> They were judged because they were in *violation of His moral laws*.

The point is, notwithstanding the contention of Weber, for the serious Bible student it isn't a difficult task to discern the differences between moral principles that are binding on all people at all times, and health and hygiene issues that related only to Israel as the distinct people of God in The Land.

Several years ago, a movement was begun in a local Baptist association to expel the Broadway Baptist Church of Kansas City, Mo. The move was initiated because of ordained women on the pastoral staff of the church, the senior pastor's aberrant views on hell, and charges that the church had become involved in charismatic extremism. To the chagrin of conservative churches in the area, the initial vote on the expulsion proposal fell short of the two-thirds majority required. Within weeks, however, Broadway Church chose to separate itself from the body, and, shortly thereafter, the church took a public stance supporting homosexual behavior. Subsequently, the impetus for Broadway's pro-homosexual agenda became obvious when co-pastor Paul R. Smith "came out" as a homosexual.<sup>14</sup>

In an effort to promote its stance to the church congregation and the community-at-large, the Kansas City church invited Dr. Paul Duke, then pastor of the Kirkwood Baptist Church<sup>15</sup> in the St. Louis area, to present his views on the subject. He had already done so in his own church in a series of messages. After leaving Kirkwood, Duke was professor of New Testament, preaching and worship at McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University in Atlanta from 1996 to 2000. He has written several books and papers, including articles in such publications as *The Christian Century* and *Review and Expositor*. He and his second wife currently are co-pastors of the First Baptist Church in Ann Arbor, Mich.<sup>16</sup>

In one of his messages at Broadway Baptist Church, with reference to the Leviticus passages addressing homosexual acts as an abomination, Duke observed that in addition to the prohibitions against homosexuality [i.e., lying “with mankind as with woman-kind’], incest, adultery, sex with animals, sex during a woman’s menstrual period, there are also prohibitions against:

“...the cross-breeding of cattle, the mixing of fabrics in one garment, the planting of more than one kind of seed in the same field. They also prohibit barbecued ribs — which is a problem in this town — and of which the same word in Hebrew is used: *toebah* — abomination. The problem is that Christians are very selective in their obedience to Old Testament law.”<sup>17</sup>

As in the case of Weber, we see in Duke’s claim a flagrant disregard of the hermeneutical principle of “rightly dividing the Word of Truth,” such as by recognizing the distinction between moral laws and dietary laws. Beyond that, however, it must be noted that “the problem is” that Duke was incorrect in his statement about the use of *toebah* (also transliterated as *to’ebhah* and *toevah*). Actually, three different Hebrew words are translated “abomination” or “abominable” in the Book of Leviticus. One, *piggul*, used only twice (Leviticus 7:18 and 19:7), means “a foul thing,” and refers specifically to the fact that all sacrificial flesh had to be eaten by the third day, or destroyed.

According to Professor Mark Rooker:

“If any portion of this offering remained until the third day, it had to be burned. If a person were to eat of this offering (that had remained uneaten for three days), he would bear its iniquity (‘be held responsible’). In other words, God would see to it that the offender was punished.”<sup>18</sup>

No punishment by human authorities was stipulated. *Piggul* could not

possibly have personal application for believers today since we do not practice animal sacrifice.

In all general references to *dietary restrictions* in Leviticus (7:21; 11:10-13, 20, 23, 41-43; 20:25), some form of the word *sheqets*, not *toebah*, is used for “abomination.” It refers to that which is detestable, or to look upon something with contempt. According to the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*:

“All eleven attestations of the nom. *šeqes* connote detestable animals and other creatures that Yahweh designated as unclean,

Leviticus, all of the uses of *toebah* (18:22, 26-30; 20:13) refer to adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, and other sexual sins, and child sacrifice (i.e., as in giving “his seed to Molech” in Leviticus 20:1-5).

In Deuteronomy, *toebah* is used several times in prohibiting idolatrous practices, especially intermarriage with idolaters, which many times included sexual immorality.<sup>20</sup> The only time that *toebah* is used in relation to dietary restrictions is in Deuteronomy 14:3-21, but this passage is in the broader context of warnings against idolatry.

---

---

*Such New Testament texts as the words of Jesus in Mark 7:18-23, and the voice from Heaven to Peter in Acts 10:13-15, properly applied, enable us to understand that the dietary restrictions of Leviticus do not apply to us in this age of grace.*

---

---

prohibiting Israelites from eating them. The four instances of the vb. *šqs* ... denote loathing or being loathed because of unclean food.”<sup>19</sup>

Such New Testament texts as the words of Jesus in Mark 7:18-23, and the voice from Heaven to Peter in Acts 10:13-15, properly applied, enable us to understand that the dietary restrictions of Leviticus do not apply to us in this age of grace. Duke’s levity about the prohibition of barbecued ribs being a problem in Kansas City notwithstanding, proper handling of the Scripture enables us to see that eating spareribs is not the moral equivalent of sodomy.

In contrast to the use of *sheqets* with reference to all dietary restrictions in

In explaining *toebah*, it is further declared in the *New International Dictionary*:

“Yahweh also loathed homosexuality (Lev 18:22; 20:13) and transvestism (Deut 22:5). Since the other five occurrences of *tō’ēbā* in Lev refer either to Canaanite practices in general (Lev 18:26, 27, 29, 30) or homosexuality in particular (Lev 20:13), it is apparent that homosexuality was a prominent part of Canaanite practice, most likely an element of their worship (cult prostitution). This practice of a man lying with another man ‘after the manner of lying with a woman’ (Levine, 123) was abhorrent to Yahweh because it perverted the

heterosexual relationship ordained by him (Gen 2:24; 4:1). Anyone who committed this abomination must be executed (Lev 20:13)."<sup>21</sup>

This statement is absolutely correct with regard to Yahweh's loathing of perverted sex, which, of course, is light years removed from Duke's and Weber's references to barbecued ribs, shrimp, and lobster. While both *shegets* and *toebah* are translated "abomination," they are distinct words and are not used interchangeably in the Scripture. Such linguistic sleight-of-hand as that practiced by Paul Duke, Gloria Weber, and others, cannot justify countenancing that which is in clear disobedience to the Word of God.

Moving to typical misrepresentations of the New Testament position on homosexual activities, in the same address at Broadway Baptist Church in Kansas City, Duke said, with reference to the Centurion and his servant in Matthew 8:5ff:

"Jesus may have healed one man who was in a pederastic relationship. When the Roman centurion came and asked Jesus to heal a servant, the one Jesus healed from far away, the word he used was 'my boy ... my boy' — the exact word in the Greek used throughout that culture for the pederastic beloved. Did Jesus heal someone in that relationship? I don't know. But I'm willing to believe that He did."<sup>22</sup>

Apparently, Duke "is willing to believe that He did" because he is predisposed to so believe. There is absolutely no contextual or linguistic reason to do so. The Greek word *pais* and its diminutive, which Duke takes as implying a homosexual relationship, is used to refer to the apostles in John 21:5; to a little girl in Mark 5:39, 40, 41; to an infant just born in John 16:21; to the youngest believers in 1 John 2:13, 18; and even to Jesus in Luke 2:43 and Acts 4:27, 30! We are neither compelled to press the sins of the culture on the Gospel accounts, nor justified in doing so.

Of course, this leads us to consider the ultimate goal to which the offspring of Hophni and Phinehas will attempt to lead us — so-called "man-boy love" and other such perversions. If the scriptural prohibitions against homosexual acts can be so easily discounted by those who "are willing" to do so, can similar acceptance and promotion of pederasty, incest, and bestiality be far behind?

In a *Baptist Press* news release, Kelly Boggs is quoted as asking, "How long will it take before public schools in America will be instructing children — perhaps even preteens — that having sex with an adult is normal, natural, and healthy?" He continues:

"The only argument that is currently being utilized to challenge pedophilia's aberrant status is *consent*. In order for 'adult-child sex' to be accepted, a physician or researcher must seriously suggest (no proof will be needed, just the possibility will need to exist) that those who experience sexual attraction to children possess a genetic predisposition toward such behavior. When this happens, and it will, the guilt that weighs heavy upon those with an amorous attraction to children will be alleviated. Then, once a significant number of individuals are willing to publicly acknowledge their 'predisposition,' [Thomas Plante, a California psychologist at Santa Clara University cites research that suggests that up to 8 percent of the general population feel sexually attracted to children] there will be little resistance to pedophilia as a *normal* part of life."<sup>23</sup>

One can imagine the letters to editors and "sermons" preached by Hophni Broadmind, Phinehas Free-thinker, and their ilk, explaining how the Church needs to come into the 21st century, leave behind our unenlightened mindset, and free ourselves from biblical presuppositions. As absurd as it seems, someone will, no doubt, actually say, "Yes, I think it's one of the Church's finest moments.

I think it's something that God is doing in, and through, the Church. The Church today has said that there is no one beyond God's love. We welcome our brothers and sisters *who happen to be pedophiles*."

Even though he sometimes seems to work at not being taken seriously, satirist Joe Bob Briggs was serious when he wrote recently about the Church's historical view of the homosexual question:

"But here's what's always missed in the debate. The church is not a progressive organization that transforms itself for each new generation of social progress. On the contrary, it insists that its most sacred tenets are defined by one transforming supernatural event 2000 years ago, and that everything since then must conform to that event. Even the Protestant denominations, in breaking away from the Catholics, did so in order to return to the principles of the first century. Certainly they were disgusted with the 16th."<sup>24</sup>

To the descendants of Hophni and Phinehas, the Lord might well give warning, as with the words given to Jeremiah to those who "'cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all,' says the LORD."<sup>25</sup>

May the Lord continue to raise up spiritual Sons of Samuel, who will have ears to hear and determination to proclaim faithfully that which is in His heart and His mind!<sup>26</sup>

#### Endnotes:

1. 1 Samuel 1:3 (NKJV).
2. 1 Samuel 2:12.
3. 1 Samuel 2:17.
4. 1 Samuel 2:22.
5. 1 Samuel 2:24.
6. 1 Samuel 4:10-11.
7. "Robinson 'joy' at Church vote," *BBC News UK Edition*, Aug. 5, 2003, emphasis added. Document available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3122297.stm>.
8. AP report, "Episcopal conservatives

walk out of Minneapolis conference over gay bishop's election," *Minnesota Public Radio News*, Aug. 6, 2003. Document available at: [http://news.mpr.org/features/2003/08/05\\_ap\\_morebishop/](http://news.mpr.org/features/2003/08/05_ap_morebishop/).

9. Ibid.

10. "Episcopalians delay vote on gay bishop candidate," *CNN.com*, Aug. 5, 2003. Document available at: [www.cnn.com/2003/US/08/04/gay.bishop/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/08/04/gay.bishop/index.html).

11. See 2 Peter 3:16. The word "wrest" or "twist" refers to an action similar to twisting a human limb until it is out of joint, totally contorted from its normal condition.

12. James R. White and Jeffrey D. Niell, *The Same Sex Controversy*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002, pp. 80-81, italic in original.

13. Ibid., pg. 81.

14. Paul R. Smith, still a pastor at Broadway Church, recently published a sermon entitled "How to connect with your friends on the other side," in which he promoted reliance on "spirit guides" as a way "that God uses to communicate to us." In that sermon he presented his "journal entry" for Dec. 10, 2002: "Tommy Tyson died last week. (Dec. 5, 2002) I have been meaning to connect with him. Woke up at 2 AM. Aware of angels in my room. John [he had earlier identified John the

Apostle as one of his spirit guides] on my right side pouring healing energy into me. I was drawn to speak to Tommy. Paul: 'Tommy, do you understand now?' I was speaking of me being gay since he lovingly did not agree with my position about homosexuality. I was hoping he had changed his mind now that he was on the other side. Tommy: 'No, not yet. But I've just arrived here and I have much to learn. And I'm very busy now. I'm still around my loved ones and probably will be for the next few weeks, as I understand it.' Paul: 'Tommy, would you be willing to continue to be my mentor?' Tommy: 'Of course.' Paul: 'I understand. I'll contact you later.' Tommy: 'That will be good.'" Document posted on the web site of Broadway Baptist Church, <http://www.broadwaychurch-kc.org/paulteach/ConnectFriends.pdf>, as of Dec. 6, 2003, printout on file.

15. Kirkwood Baptist Church identifies itself as "affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship."

16. Information available on Paul Duke's web site, <http://home.earthlink.net/~staceyduke/index.html>. First Baptist Church in Ann Arbor, Mich., is affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA.

17. From tape of Dr. Paul Duke at Broadway Baptist Church, Kansas City, Mo., transcript on file.

18. Mark F. Rooker, *The New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000, Vol. 3A, Leviticus, pp. 134-135.

19. Willem A. VanGemeren, General Editor, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997, Vol. 4, pg. 243.

20. Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001, pg. 1072.

21. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, op. cit., Vol. 4, pg. 316.

22. From tape of Dr. Paul Duke at Broadway Baptist Church, Kansas City, Mo., transcript on file.

23. Kelly Boggs, "FIRST-PERSON: Homosexuality morally equivalent to heterosexuality, public schools say," *BP news*, April 5, 2002, italics added, parenthetical and bracketed statements in original. Document available at: [www.sbc Baptist press.org/bpnews.asp?ID=13081](http://www.sbc Baptist press.org/bpnews.asp?ID=13081).

24. Joe Bob Briggs, "Are There Homosexual Saints?," *The Door Magazine*, November/December 2003, pg. 39.

25. Jeremiah 23:32.

26. 1 Samuel 2:35.



---

## DREAM GIVER

(continued from page 1)

throw roadblocks called Warnings in their way, but Marketer and Ghost-writer stayed on the Hype and Spin-Offs pathway, even slaying the Giant Naysayer at his own border. Exegesis was trampled in the process. The Dynamic Duo at last found their Dream and the Pot of Gold at the End of the Rainbow. And it was all they dreamed of. But it was not over yet.<sup>2</sup>

Some who have read Bruce Wilkinson's *The Dream Giver* say things like, "There is nothing really bad in it, nothing really good in it. It's kind of nothing." Or, "It is written so vaguely you can add any meaning you want." And, "It could apply to anyone, including non-Christians. It's all about human empowerment, just another self-help fad."

Likewise, "Wilkinson's experiences

are the template for interpreting the parable."

Then, "The book reminds me of the existentialism I left behind in the 1960s after I got saved. The Church, unfortunately, is behind the times by 20 to 50 years."

Finally, "When I saw it I thought, 'Whatever happened to Jabez (referring to his best-seller *The Prayer of Jabez*)? You mean, that's over already?'"

Then there was the advertisement in *Charisma* magazine:

"You know it in your heart and feel it in your soul. ... Unlock the power of a life dream that is divinely inspired and uniquely yours. Follow your dream and find your destiny with THE DREAM GIVER. ... Open a new chapter in your life with THE DREAM GIVER."<sup>3</sup>

*The Dream Giver*, written by Wilkinson and David and Heather Kopp, begins with an allegory of "Ordinary." It is a mini-*Reader's Digest* version of *Pilgrim's Progress* set to Norman Vincent Peale and Robert Schuller. The "Big Dream" is what is known within the Human Potential Movement as a Life Metaphor. Self-help high priests teach that metaphors have power and efficacy bordering on the magical and are a tool for creation of a better future.<sup>4</sup>

Wilkinson and the Koppes explain the metaphor this way:

"But the truth Ordinary discovered from the Dream Giver is that every Nobody was made to be a Somebody. And the key to discovering all you are meant to do and be is to wake up to the Big Dream God has given you and set out on a journey to achieve it."<sup>5</sup>

What the average reader does not realize is that he is playing a game in which the odds are stacked against him. Wilkinson, also known for his work in the Walk Through the Bible seminars, and the Koppes have hemmed in the reader with a few unproven assumptions. The citation in the previous paragraph contains statements that are never documented or supported by Scripture.

A book description says *The Dream Giver* is a compelling modern parable of "Ordinary, who dares to leave the Land of Familiar to pursue his Big Dream. With the help of the Dream Giver, Ordinary begins the hardest and most rewarding journey of his life. Wilkinson gives readers practical, biblical keys to fulfilling their own dream, revealing that there's no limit to what God can accomplish when we choose to pursue the dreams He gives us for His honor."<sup>6</sup>

David Kopp was the ghostwriter for Wilkinson's best-seller, *The Prayer of Jabez*. Kopp is the editorial executive for Multnomah Press. However, *World* magazine reported 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."<sup>7</sup>

The Wilkinson/Kopp "parable" that makes up more than a third of the book sounds more like a "Veggie Tales" plot than that of C.S. Lewis or John Bunyan or from the parables of the New Testament. Their suggestion that they were following in that lofty genre seems silly.<sup>8</sup>

## DREAMS AND POSSIBILITIES

One Amazon.com customer posted his review of *The Dream Giver* and wrote:

"In Chapter Nine, 'Living Past the Edge', Mr. Wilkinson describes his fear of public speaking, and the steps he took to overcome it. I recently had the good fortune to be at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, where Mr. Wilkinson spoke not only to the vast crowd

in attendance, but to millions on television, and he is a truly gifted speaker; it is hard to envision that at one time he had felt inadequate in front of an audience. With this book he will help you conquer your own fears, and get past the feeling of being Unworthy and Unable."<sup>9</sup>

Almost everyone is anxious when first trying public speaking. However, given time, good preparation and practice, the anxiety subsides. To make a big deal out of such a common thing is overdramatic.

Wilkinson filled the pulpit of hyper-language expert and heretical teacher Robert Schuller at Schuller's Crystal Cathedral. Both say some of the same things. Schuller is the potentate of possibility thinking, which is a self-help metaphor he devised some years ago. A video presentation hosted by John MacArthur features an audio clip of one of Schuller's verbal riffs:

"Yes, tens of thousands of people that I know have overcome every imaginable human hardship. ... I have seen them become dreamers of a new dream. I have seen them step into the fantastic world I call possibility thinking. I have walked them through cancer, bankruptcy, depression, and failures. I watch as they go on to dream a new dream. And I watch them make it happen. Trust me, trust me. ... Yes, I have a new dream. The dream is you — if your dream will come true — it's up to you."<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, all Schuller has dreamed up is false doctrine and a false gospel. Schuller's humanism is disguised by a Christian label that has been slapped on it. His 1982 humanistic manifesto, *Self Esteem: The New Reformation*, met with devastating critiques.<sup>11</sup> Sadly, today Schuller is considered mainstream.

Wilkinson's October 26, 2003, appearance on Schuller's *Hour of Power* had him praising Schuller and his son and lauding how much he has learned over the years from them. The

end of the brief message had Wilkinson giving an "invitation" to "surrender to your dream" in what looked like a New Age version of an evangelistic meeting.

## IT MUST BE CATCHING

Five days following the *Hour of Power* appearance, Wilkinson showed up on *The 700 Club* and was interviewed by Gordon Robertson. Wilkinson said 80% of people do not follow their dream. He had earlier said during the *Hour of Power* broadcast that the figure was 90% or higher. He offered no documentation for either figure.

An invitation from Robert Schuller's Institute for Successful Church Leadership for the January 26-29, 2004, leadership conference said, "You're Invited to Discover a Fantastic New Dream for Your Church!" It went on to say, "If you can dream it, you can do it!" and "What Dreams Do You Have for Your Ministry?" Along with Schuller and his son, one of the featured speakers was Bill Hybels (along with another of the Willow Creek staff). Trinity Broadcasting Network founder and president Paul Crouch rounded off the list of notables.

## COME ONE, COME ALL

*The Dream Giver* says on the back dust jacket — in fine print — that it is a book in the category of "Personal Growth." So, from that perspective, Multnomah is somewhat up front. Yet, the basic thrust of the book is confined to that fine print. The book, no doubt, will be accepted as a "Christian book" on "Christian living," yet it contains not a single mention of the name *Jesus*.

The book is designed to be generic and uses only references to "God." It follows that there is no mention of the saving message of the Gospel or the essentials of Christianity. The book does not state that they presume those reading are believers, so it is obviously designed for the masses to help them find "personal growth."

PFO spoke to co-author David Kopp by phone and asked why the

name of Jesus was not used in the book. He responded that “there was heated debate over this, but Bruce preferred it this way so that the book could be used for pre-evangelism for Muslims, Hindus, and Jews. The decision was made for strategic reasons.”<sup>12</sup>

The word *dream* is mentioned in *The Dream Giver* hundreds of times (100 times in the first 36 pages alone). Muslims, Unitarians, Buddhists, New Agers, Liberals, and Monastics can all embrace this book without compromise. Most religions would not find it offensive. It may well be a retailer’s dream, but it is an apologist’s nightmare. What is left out may be as telling as what’s included.

### IT SHOULD NOT BE THIS HARD

Wilkinson and the Kopps write, “your Big Dream has been woven into your being from birth”<sup>13</sup> and “[God] will move your life in a direction where you can thrive ... I call this direction His Dream for you.”<sup>14</sup> Later, they write, “Your dream is beating in your chest. Do you feel it?”<sup>15</sup> He also refers to it as a “calling” and a reaching of one’s “full potential.”<sup>16</sup>

There is no official definition of “the dream,” so it seems to be something in all of us, but at the same time a direction toward a place where we can thrive. As well, it is a feeling in one’s chest. Later it seems to be a goal, or profession we work at,<sup>17</sup> and at the same time a call and arriving at potential. At some point we have to give it away.<sup>18</sup> However, the giving it away seems a bit vague and subjective: “That could be selling or giving something away, signing a contract, moving, or even resigning.”<sup>19</sup>

The authors tell us what “the dream” is supposed to do:

“A God-given Dream brings you together with what God wants to do in His world *through you*.”<sup>20</sup>

Through all this subjective fog, all we can be certain of is that we are not certain. Even more disheartening is

Wilkinson’s assertion that sometimes God will ask for a person’s dream back. “He lets you get closer and closer to the dream; and then when you’re just about ready to go for it big time, you hear Him whispering, ‘Give me your dream,’” he told Robertson and *The 700 Club* viewers.

It is all just a metaphor for all the above and illustrated by Wilkinson’s conversations with God and his various life experiences. The way it is expressed in the book, the exchanges with God sound like verbal exchanges, though Wilkinson, if pressed, would probably say they were impressions in his mind. Yet, he says that when God made a “seemingly impossible request” and Wilkinson prayed, God answered him directly and specifically.<sup>21</sup> It would have been more biblical and objective for him to have stated that he heard God “speak” to him through the Word. But that, perhaps, loses the flare for the dramatic.

As one struggles to pin down what “the Dream” is, one can’t help but wonder if the authors have been purposely ambiguous. A read of just 13 pages<sup>22</sup> has “the dream” for one lady to become a nurse, for one man to run a business, and for Mother Teresa, a life of sacrifice and philanthropy. It appears that “the Dream” is a generic term for “doing what she loves most.”<sup>23</sup> Wilkinson and the Kopps call this the “sweet spot.”<sup>24</sup>

The problem with that is that there are millions doing what they love who have no relationship to Jesus Christ. Richard Howe reminds us:

“...we have no right to encourage anyone to be optimistic unless and until that person has believed on Christ for eternal life. If we help the lost person to gain an optimistic attitude, we may be keeping him from ever seeing his need for a Savior. The lost person should not be optimistic because he is doomed without Christ.”<sup>25</sup>

Another problem is the fact that we can obey God against feeling and not love what we are doing. We obey

because we love Him, not because we necessarily love what we are doing. That is the scriptural precedence.

One could also wonder if any “dream” is off-limits or undesirable. Would dreaming of being a celibate priest be acceptable or should we discourage it based on 1 Timothy 4:1-4? This kind of reality is never confronted in *The Dream Giver*.

Strategy has limits. Reality can thwart dreams. A 70-year-old woman who wanted to be a cheerleader in high school, but never was good enough, is not going to realize that dream.

As noted, *The Dream Giver* obviously is written ambiguously, which allows the reader to connect the dots, fill in the blanks, read the images in the clouds, and impose his background and meanings on nebulous terms. Like astrological charts or ink blots, we can read whatever we wish into *The Dream Giver* language. After all, it is “your Dream.”<sup>26</sup> This is self-actualization with a deity thrown in.

### BUT WAIT, THERE’S MORE!

The book opens with great promises: “Welcome to my new book, *The Dream Giver*, a practical and innovative guide to achieving your Big Dream.”<sup>27</sup> However, after being told that the book would allow the reader to achieve his dream, he is told he cannot get there without buying other “Dream Giver” merchandise.

The book promises the path to the Big Dream, but closes with this disappointment:

“Of course, living your Big Dream is much more complex and challenging than can be described in a 160-page book. Visit us at [www.TheDreamGiver.com](http://www.TheDreamGiver.com) to find additional coaching tools and resources, including a daily e-mail from me about pursuing and living your Dream.”<sup>28</sup>

So early on, the reader is told he can achieve the “Big Dream” only to have the promise nullified at the end of the book. The dream cannot be fully

realized until if one purchases the CDs, the DVDs, the Study Series, The Dream Journal, The Dream Motivator, The Dream Assessment, and the eight-part study series. This looks like a long and expensive haul to achieve one's dream. No wonder the authors warned, "The way of the Dreamer is difficult."<sup>29</sup>

### SIMPLY TRUSTING

In *The Dream Giver*, Wilkinson asks us to let him be our "Dream coach." He writes:

"Think of me as your travel guide, or Dream Coach. My advice comes from years of experience as a Dreamer."<sup>30</sup>

Later, he writes:

"I wish I could visit with you personally, but this book is our only connection right now. So I invite you to allow me, in print, to be your Dream Coach."<sup>31</sup>

Implicit in his appeal is, "Trust me. I only have your good in mind." It's a real stretch to call one section, "Conversations with the Dream Coach,"<sup>32</sup> when a "conversation" requires a verbal exchange between two people.

The Bible nowhere lists "Dream Coach" as one of the spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12, 14 or Romans 12). Likewise, there is no office of "Dream Coach" discussed or mentioned in the New Testament Church offices cataloged in either Ephesians or the other pastoral Epistles. Wilkinson and the Kopps ask us to surrender to a conceptual framework that is not biblical.

Christians should be wary of putting themselves under the direction of anyone who appropriates a cute, unbiblical job description for themselves and claims the ability to enhance or affect their destiny. A believer's destiny cannot be secured for the price of a book or a few CDs. Christians are more safe and secure in the hands of their local church fellowship, enjoying their support and prayers, and under the guidance of a godly pastor. Like-

wise, they can rejoice being in the hands of Jesus (John 10).

### I THINK I GOT IT!

The writers tell us to go about finding that Big Dream in the following ways:

- "We start with an inkling, a cluster of interests, a longing that won't go away."<sup>33</sup>
- "It's already in you. It's already *who you are*."<sup>34</sup>
- "Think back to what you wanted to do while you were growing up."<sup>35</sup>
- "Interview three people you respect, who you think are living their Dream."<sup>36</sup>
- "If someone came along and gave you all the money you ever wanted, what would you do with it?"<sup>37</sup>
- "Observe your life and write down your conclusions."<sup>38</sup>
- "Who do I admire most?"<sup>39</sup>
- "What makes me feel most fulfilled?"<sup>40</sup>
- "What do I love to do most?"<sup>41</sup>
- "What have I felt called to do?"<sup>42</sup>
- "Ask yourself what legacy you would like to leave for your children and grandchildren."<sup>43</sup>
- "What am I willing to sacrifice for my Dream?"<sup>44</sup>

Questions like this may or may not help us. If our answers are not biblical, they could be hurtful. Our time would be better spent searching the Scriptures for the mind and will of God.

For the most part, there are no right or wrong answers to *The Dream Giver* questions. These questions are so general that a person of any religious persuasion could ask them and answer them.

In applying these questions to everyone, they apply specifically to no one. They are akin to the Kuder Preference Test in Psychology 101 and may help one think about where he

might fit in the work field. It is a bit overstated that one's destiny may hang on this book. Our eternal destinies hinge on Christ alone.

### WHY ALL THE FUSS?

The ambiguous "your dream" terminology and the "dream" metaphor serves a vague identity point in all of us. Our identifying with a vague association or concept is a discovery lifted from old psychoanalytic tests and smuggled into *The Dream Giver* beneath a veneer of a few Bible proof texts. A number of tests were developed in the early days of psychoanalysis. More than half a century ago, *The Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia* said, "Psychoanalysis gave rise to 'projective' tests based on individual's tendency to project unconscious attitudes into ambiguous situations."<sup>45</sup>

Wilkinson and the Kopps knowingly or unknowingly parallel Henry Murray's Thematic Apperception Test in which people tell their own story while they look at a number of pictures.<sup>46</sup> The word picture "dream" is general enough for us to fill it with our own history and longings. Psychoanalysis also did this with free word association. There is nothing new or revelatory in all of this. We must remember that just recently Wilkinson and Kopp used the metaphors "territory" and "enlarge my borders." Remember, *The Prayer of Jabez* promised "break through to the life you were meant to live."<sup>47</sup>

There were heated discussions in pastor's groups about what "territory" really meant: spiritual, material, ministerial, devotional, monetary, and so forth. It was a rigged game in which everyone could win — or more realistically, no one could win. Now, in just three years, we have moved on to a more global metaphor, which is "your Big Dream." Unfortunately, people will argue all day over the value of *The Dream Giver* simply because they connected with it, not because of its biblical worth. We do treasure our own feelings and experiences above all else.

This book is definitely in the genre of self-help and self-fulfillment books. Its stated design of "Personal Growth" attests to that. It is slightly baptized with the inclusion of some scattered out-of-context Scripture references. What is fascinating and contradictory is that Wilkinson endorses Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, by saying it is "Destined to be a classic on the Christian life ... Timeless, profound, compelling, and transforming ... This is the book we've all been waiting for!"<sup>48</sup>

Wilkinson's patronage is understandable since the two have done joint projects in South Africa. The problem lies in what Warren writes about books like Wilkinson's:

"The search for the purpose of life has puzzled people for thousands of years. That's because we typically begin at the wrong starting point — ourselves. We ask self-centered questions like What do *I* want to be? What should *I* do with *my* life? What are *my* goals, *my* ambitions, *my* dreams for *my* future? But focusing on ourselves will never reveal our life's purpose. ... Many people try to use God for their own self-actualization, but that is a reversal of nature and is doomed to failure. ... I have read many books that suggest ways to discover the purpose of my life. All of them could be classified as 'self-help' books because they approach the subject from a self-centered viewpoint. Self-help books, even Christian ones, usually offer the same predictable steps to finding your life's purpose: Consider your dreams. Clarify your values. Set some goals. Figure out what you are good at. Aim high. Go for it!"<sup>49</sup>

So here we are, *Purpose Driven* versus *Dream Giver* — what a dilemma. Wilkinson and the Kopps may waffle and say, "Well, we really mean it is *God's* dream for you." However, they repeatedly call it "your Big Dream." The best that could be said is that God may have used dreams as a

means for divine direct revelation (Hebrews 1:1) in the past, but Wilkinson does not say that is what *The Dream Giver* is all about.

Marcia Montenegro has a helpful overview of the human potential movement in her article, "The Sky's The Limit." She begins:

"'You have unlimited potential.' 'Success comes from within.' 'Empower yourself.' These and other similar phrases are used to publicize and market seminars originating from what is best known as the Human Potential Movement. This movement arose in the 1970's and 1980's finding fertile soil in the ambitious and success-oriented '80's. The seminars promote personal power, improved self-worth, and team cooperation through books, lectures, and workshops produced by each of the particular groups."<sup>50</sup>

Montenegro goes on to list some of the traits of these programs, two of which are telling: "The organization/seminar has hyper language offering self-transformation. ... Promises are made to redesign your view of your 'self' and reality."<sup>51</sup>

### WALKING THROUGH THE BIBLE FOR REAL

The word *dream* is used in the Bible about 125 times and almost all the verses have to do with literal dreams and mental images that come in sleep. Wilkinson is not using the word in this way. He is using it in the sense of something imagined or desired. Saying that the aspiration is God-given does not cover the problems and the difficulties that arise from so much of the self-help philosophies. God's will in Scripture may be contrary to our desires and dreams and we must always say, "Thy will be done."

The way that Wilkinson uses the word *dream* is a two-edged sword that is fraught with potential difficulties. The Prophet Jeremiah warned about "prophets" who told dreams contrary to God's Word and ways. They were

to be put to death (Jeremiah 13). In the New Testament, Jude uses the word *dream* metaphorically (v. 8) and negatively, and says false teachers are "dreamers." Unfortunately, metaphorical "dreams" can be filled with self, self-advancement, wishful thinking, and the flesh. We are not saying that *The Dream Giver* fits precisely into Jeremiah 13 or Jude, but we must be aware of these things.

Three things must be said about *The Dream Giver*: It is unhelpful as to what it identifies with; it is unhealthy in what it promotes; and it is unprofitable and undesirable because of what it replaces.

### UNHELPFUL IDENTIFICATION

*The Dream Giver* sounds like a scaled-down rewrite of Tony Robbins' 1991 book, *Awaken The Giant Within*. The first chapter in Robbins' book is "Dreams of Destiny."<sup>52</sup> Robbins has sewn together a crazy quilt of positive-thinking techniques. He, too, majors in "dream" terminology.

Consider Robbins' recurring theme:

"We all have dreams ... those dreams have become so shrouded in the frustrations and routines of daily life that we no longer even make an effort to accomplish them. ... I did have dreams back then ... *I am living my dream!* ... we all have a sleeping giant within us. ... the resources we need to turn our dreams into reality are within us ... tap their God-given power. ... I've learned about how to turn dreams into reality."<sup>53</sup>

Robbins also has a section on "Live The Dream."<sup>54</sup>

Robbins makes extensive use of what he calls "metaphors." A metaphor is a non-literal way of describing something. The word used is a descriptive comparison word as in calling Jesus "a Lion" (Revelation 5:5) or Satan "a serpent" (Revelation 12:9). Robbins believes that as we create new metaphors for living and speak

them, they empower us.<sup>55</sup> Calling life's aspirations a "dream" is a metaphor used by Robbins as he urges followers to live their dream.<sup>56</sup> He tells his readers to: "Take control of your metaphors now and create a new world for yourself: a world of possibility, of richness, of wonder, and of joy."<sup>57</sup>

Ron Rhodes says "Robbins views himself as a 'coach for success.'"<sup>58</sup> Robbins asks us to put ourselves in his hands — the hands of a coach — when he writes, "Do whatever it takes to read this book in its entirety. ... I'll be your personal coach. ... your coach shares with you ... This is the role,

who really cares about you. A coach is committed to helping you be the best that you can be. A coach will challenge you, not let you off the hook. Coaches have knowledge and experience."<sup>62</sup>

It all sounds so familiar: *A coach for my dreams. I am experienced to do this.* The parallels are obvious. We criticize cults when they "borrow," but utter nary a peep regarding the so-called mainstream guys.

No Bible expositor would want to be identified with Tony Robbins. In 1995, Robbins was forced by the

human potential theories."<sup>67</sup>

*The Dream Giver* advises readers to think about who they admire and to interview three people who are following their dream.<sup>68</sup> This could be dangerous depending on who the people are and what their dream is. Psalm 1 warns us about whom we seek for counsel.

Robbins also suggested this idea of interviewing others. He devotes Chapter 8 of *Awaken the Giant Within* to "Questions are the Answer."<sup>69</sup> His principles include asking questions of others and modeling. Rhodes says, "Robbins assures us that such modeling can be a huge time-saver for us on the road to success. ... By modeling successful people, 'you can feel like them in the flesh and even behave as they did.'"<sup>70</sup> Robbins' idea could be more accurately called copy-cutting. The Christian's model can only be Jesus Christ. Anything less than that falls short of what the Bible teaches. Human models may be helpful in discipleship, but only as they follow Christ.

Another technique perhaps borrowed from Robbins is the idea of "The Vocabulary of Ultimate Success."<sup>71</sup> Robbins says, "Words can not only create emotions, they create actions."<sup>72</sup> Robbins' point is that we speak our way to success. He says, "Using emotionally charged words can magically transform your own state or someone else's."<sup>73</sup> This is not far from the Word-Faith ideas of words being a creative force. It also ties in with his ideas about the creative power of metaphors.

In *The Dream Giver*, we read:

"Don't wait another day. Tell someone you trust today, 'I have a Big Dream.' Then, as best you can, tell them what it is. The first time you say your Dream aloud, you will hear your heart say, *You were born for this!*"<sup>74</sup>

Wilkinson and the Kopps tell us that speaking the dream is important and that it transforms us internally and actualizes our dream. We speak

---

---

*We criticize cults when they "borrow," but utter nary a peep regarding the so-called mainstream guys.*

---

---

with your permission, that I'll be playing for you."<sup>59</sup> Perhaps this may be coincidence, but remember that Wilkinson has asked us to let him be our coach. Robbins requests "your permission." Wilkinson rephrased it:

"I invite you to allow me, in print, to be your Dream Coach. One of my favorite things to do — yes, it's part of my Dream — is to help other Dreamers like you move forward on their journey."<sup>60</sup>

Wilkinson also says why we should accept him as a Dream Coach: "My advice comes from years of experience as a Dreamer and incorporates the lessons others have taught me along the way."<sup>61</sup>

Now compare that with Robbins:

"One day, though, I finally got it. 'I'm a coach,' I thought. What is a coach? To me, a coach is a person who is your friend, someone

Federal Trade Commission to repay fees for exaggerated profit potentials, as well as to buy back franchisees' kits for more than \$200,000.<sup>63</sup>

Robbins not only is a dream coach, but has launched a major foray into bogus health care. William T. Jarvis says, "Robbins combines misconception, misinformation, and misguided advice based upon the crackpot theories of Herbert Shelton, a self-styled 'nature doctor' who operated a 'health school' in Texas."<sup>64</sup> Shelton settled a lawsuit for more than \$800,000 when a man died after 30 days of a distilled-water diet.<sup>65</sup>

Robbins also blends spirituality into his human-potential mix. Rhodes notes that Robbins has an "openness to Eastern and New Age religious ideas. He does quote on occasion from the Christian Bible."<sup>66</sup> Rhodes adds that "he completely takes Bible verses out of context to support his

our way to our dream. This is not too much different than Robbins' methodology.

What Wilkinson and the Kopps suggest dovetails with Robbins' commitment to Neuro-Linguistic Programming<sup>75</sup> and the idea that we can verbally speak change to ourselves. Robbins calls this "conditioning."<sup>76</sup> Jesus often had to speak negative things because of real negative situations. The Bible does not tell us that we must always be optimistic, but rather *realistic* (Philippians 4). We need to speak truth to ourselves. One writer affirms:

"The Bible does not teach positive thinking or negative thinking. What the Bible does teach, first and foremost, is *truthful thinking*."<sup>77</sup>

Jesus did not teach us to speak about or think about dreams, but rather to think and speak in terms of the Father's will.

Robbins emphasizes writing down "everything that you'd like to improve in your life that relates to your own personal growth"<sup>78</sup> and coaches us to "write a paragraph about why you are absolutely committed to achieving this goal within the year."<sup>79</sup> In *The Dream Giver* we read:

"I encourage you to spend some time writing out a family Dreams profile of your family. What, in two or three sentences, was the big message about Big Dreams you received as you were growing up? ... I have filled many Dream Journals during the WasteLand seasons of my life. Like many others, I find that I do best when I can work through my questions, emotions, and insights on paper with my Dream Giver."<sup>80</sup>

Robbins also speaks of "breaking through the fear."<sup>81</sup> *The Dream Giver* has a section called "Breaking Through the Wall of Fear."<sup>82</sup>

In an interview with Craig Hamilton, Robbins confesses:

"I'm just telling you what I

believe. I'm not saying I'm right, by any stretch. Five years from now, ten years from now, you might ask me and I'll say, 'Boy, was I full of crap back then!' My own point of view about that is that I think most honest people will tell you that sometime in their lives they believed something with their heart and soul and ten years later, they look back on it and say, 'What a joke! What an idiot I was! Back then, I'd have died for that belief. Now I'm sane.'"<sup>83</sup>

The philosophies Robbins expounds may be "crap" or a "joke" in five or ten years. Robbins may become "sane" and even disavow being a coach with a dream or not care about his fears. By then, there might be a *The Dream Giver II* or a completely different metaphor to focus on. *The Dream Giver* is unhelpful as to whom it copies and identifies with. Thank God He is unchanging (Malachi 3:6), as is our Savior, the Lord Jesus (Hebrews 13:8).

During an interview,<sup>84</sup> Kopp was presented with the dream metaphor and other things in his book that sounded much like Robbins. Kopp, who was gracious and forthcoming during the interview, categorically denied that he himself had used any of Robbins' material. He stated he did not know much about Robbins and had never read his materials, but then added, "I used no other material in writing the book than Bruce's materials." When asked if Wilkinson had read and employed Robbins' material, he said that he did not know. In our litigious society — where even the most frivolous cases find their way into court — Robbins' attorneys could well have a field day.

### UNHEALTHY PROMOTION

In making the dream paradigm, Wilkinson and the Kopps ignore basic rules of hermeneutics and, in forcing their theme on Scripture, distort the message of the Gospel. One instance is their citation of 1 Corinthians 1:27. The authors tell us this verse assures us we can realize our "Big Dream":

"We all feel Unworthy and Unable to do a Big Dream. But the Bible says, 'God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.' God purposely picks Unworthy and Unable Dreamers like you and me!"<sup>85</sup>

Earlier, Wilkinson wrote, "I knew I wanted to become a creative Bible teacher who could help a lot of people."<sup>86</sup> It is not helpful to distort Scriptures and it is a violation of Scripture itself (2 Timothy 2:15). 1 Corinthians 1:27 is *not* about our "Big Dream." The context is the preaching of the Gospel (v. 17), preaching Christ crucified (v. 23), and God's call to salvation (vv. 26-27). Then those weak vessels can spread the powerful message to other weak ones in need of a Savior. This is not really hard to miss.

Adam Clarke confirms that God has chosen "by means of men *weak*, without secular *power* or *authority*, to confound the *scribes* and *Pharisees*, and in spite of the exertions of the Jewish *sanhedrin*, to spread the doctrine of Christ crucified all over the land of Judea."<sup>87</sup>

Albert Hughes wrote:

"*The Wise Do Not Make Up the Church*. Vs. 26-31. That calling out which God does is not to the wise or mighty or noble. That is not the basis of belief. Thank God some wise and some mighty and some noble have become part of the Church of Jesus Christ but not because they were wise or mighty or noble. ... they cannot be saved that way. ... Belief is the basis of God's choice so that no flesh can glory."<sup>88</sup>

What Rhodes says of Robbins can easily be applied to Wilkinson:

"If Robbins is so untrustworthy in dealing with the Christian Scriptures, one wonders how trustworthy he is in dealing with any other body of literature."<sup>89</sup>

Wilkinson as a Bible teacher will help no one in this way. He is no longer walking through the Bible, but all over the Bible.

It is disconcerting that Wilkinson and the Kopps automatically equate their own "Dream" metaphor concepts as "pursuing our God-given Dream."<sup>90</sup> To squeeze Moses and the Exodus into this mold as they do, does violence to the text. Of all of the references to Moses and the Exodus throughout Scripture, we find none that supports this premise. The overriding themes of Exodus are God's special call to Moses, God's grace and power to the nation of Israel and redemption, which Wilkinson very well knows. The Passover does not memorialize a "Dream." Exodus may tell us of the longings of the Israelites in captivity, but the focus is on God Himself and His power.

Wilkinson and the Kopps also come up short in their view of the purpose of the "WasteLand." That, of course, is their metaphor for trials or delays. They write, "Will you give God permission to do His work — for as long as He wants, in the ways He wants, to change you as deeply as He wants — to prepare you for your Big Dream?"<sup>91</sup> Even if we exult, "My Big Dream is the Dream God put in me," we still miss what Scripture says. God changes us through many means for one purpose: conformity to the image of Christ and His glory. And God does this by changing both dreams and dreamers. Paul says his God-given goal was "that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28). God's ultimate goal for all believers is to be the image of Christ (Romans 8:28-29). Paul labored for Christ "to be formed" in the Galatians (Galatians 4:19). Our accomplishments are peripheral to God's primary plan for us.

God neither disclosed Himself as "The Dream Giver" to Moses, nor did He tell Moses to tell them, "The Dream Giver has sent you." God revealed Himself as "I Am" and told Moses to tell the people "I Am" had sent him (Exodus 3:14). Consider this

exercise: Everywhere in Exodus that God is called, "I Am" or "Yahweh" or "God," insert in its stead "Dream Giver." Yet we are to believe that is what the Moses story is about.

As Wilkinson discusses metaphorical giants, he admits to reality, but only briefly. He speaks of the "Dream" as facing "the Giants" of "A lack of resources ... An immovable system ... An opposing group or individual ... An intimidating circumstance ... [and] A crushing physical or spiritual burden."<sup>92</sup>

In all difficulties, prayer and a supporting fellowship are imperative. However, problems can be unique and complex. A paraplegic, or someone caring for another who is chronically ill, or one who is too ill to work may have to live in Romans 8 and glorify God in spite of the circumstances. A woman who has an unsympathetic, unsaved husband may have to live in the book of 1 Peter and suffer for righteousness sake while still doing good — dream or no dream.

Simplistic metaphors are terribly cruel. Dream terminology might send some susceptible people out into unreality or even "over the edge." In some situations, the only real "dream" is heaven and a new body.

To just give an offhanded answer about "giants" with the suggestion of "Unbelief" on our part — then appeal to the walls of Jericho,<sup>93</sup> which is a unique, onetime account — is at best uncompassionate and at worst uncaring. It also confuses history with mandates. It is not universally true that "Giants are the primary opportunity to make His power and goodness known to a doubting world."<sup>94</sup>

Giants — or problems — are the ways we learn grace, trust, and dependence. God's power will be made known to a doubting world only through the cross of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 1). Remember that Jesus' miracles convinced very few and when the bread ran out, so did the crowds (John 12:37-40). God may choose to work through our weakness as well.

Wilkinson's South Africa ministry is a dose of reality and is an example of how simplistic the Dream metaphor is. It is not a universal life metaphor, as *The Dream Giver* book would suggest. If Wilkinson taught the people he is raising money to feed — to be Dreamers — they could overcome poverty by throwing off unbelief, march around their Jericho, all be Jabez, and believe for miracles. This would not work. Yet, the claim of his book is that it is a "practical and innovative guide to *achieving your Big Dream*."<sup>95</sup>

## UNPROFITABLE REPLACEMENT

Dreaming is not the governing metaphor of the Christian life and in fact, of all the rich metaphors (sheep, a body, a building, a priesthood, a temple, a bride, a pilgrim), dreamer is not among them. God left it out because we did not need it. The Christian life is too vast and varied to confine it to one metaphor. One of the primary metaphors of the New Testament is taking up one's cross.

Consider these words:

"...the single greatest potential God desires us to maximize to its fullest is *serving Him, glorifying Him, and humbly walking in obedience to Him*. ... We are called to shift the center of gravity in our lives from a concern for self (the human potential view) to an unbending concern for the will of God. The process of saying 'yes' to God necessarily involves saying 'no' to self. Taking up our cross and following Jesus necessarily involves denouncing *all* forms of self-idolatry. And make no mistake about it — human potential gurus may sugarcoat self-idolatry and whitewash its prideful tomb, but it nevertheless *remains* self-idolatry. ... But success from a *biblical* perspective involves living in such a way that you are using what God has given you — your intellect, abilities, and energy — to reach the purpose that *He* intends for you

life. Biblical success is not *self-centered*, focusing on the attainment of personal wealth, status, and power, but *God-centered*, focusing on becoming *exactly who God wants you to be* (see Psalm 1:1-3).<sup>96</sup>

If one got fixated on *The Dream Giver* ideas, it very well could create not only a spirit of elitism and Gnosticism, but be a distraction to the pursuits that are laid out so clearly in the Bible. At the very least it is a time-consuming and costly detour and may draw one away from daily devotions and seeking God's will. The Great Commission tells us not to teach "the Big Dream," but all that Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28).

Here is one final exercise. Read the following quote and try to determine who said it: Wilkinson or Robbins:

"...the resources we need to turn our dreams into reality are within us, merely waiting for the day when we decide to wake up and claim our birthright. I wrote this book for one reason: to be a wake-up call that will challenge those who are committed to living and being more to tap their God-given power."<sup>97</sup>

After making your selection, check the cited footnote to see who wrote it.

## THE FIELD IS OVERCROWDED

Wilkinson at least is acquainted with self-help/self-fulfillment/personal growth literature. Dream interpreter Leon Nacson refers to himself as "a dream coach."<sup>98</sup> Marcia Wieder not only calls herself "America's Dream Coach," but has a trademark on the phrase. Wieder offers courses from Dream Coach University to help people build a "successful coaching business."<sup>99</sup> Scott and Shannon Peck, personal growth columnists, will help you "act out your true identity with boldness"<sup>100</sup> and introduce you to "Your Personal Dream Coach" by way of an Internet magazine called *Commitment*. The field is littered with New Age mystics, self-help gurus, and human achievement schemes. It is a

long detour that takes one away from biblical anthropology and the Gospel.

Even Robbins warns about the limitation of working from one metaphor when he says, "having only one metaphor is a great way to limit your life."<sup>101</sup>

The rich array of metaphors in the Bible provides a balanced and rounded program of discipleship for every believer. They are all we need for life and godliness (2 Timothy 3:14-17). One all-consuming metaphor based on Neuro Linguistic Programming is simplistic, limiting, short-sighted, and unscriptural. It could even become deadening or be a substitute for seeking salvation in Christ.


PFO is not against going higher and accomplishing more for Christ, but our path must always be circumscribed by what Scripture dictates and human realities and limitations, lest we go off on a pipe dream. It is hard for us to determine if books such as *The Dream Giver* are a judgment on the Church, or an indictment, or both.

## Endnotes:

1. John MacArthur, *Hard to Believe*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2003, pg. 1.
2. This allegorical parable is pure fiction from this writer's imagination.
3. Advertisement in *Charisma*, October 2003, pg. 4, italics and upper case in original.
4. See, for example, Chapter 10 of *Awaken the Giant Within* by Anthony Robbins (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991).
5. Bruce Wilkinson and David and Heather Kopp, *The Dream Giver*. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah Press, 2003, pg. 69.
6. Amazon.com sales page, "Dream Giver: Following Your God-Given Destiny." Available at: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).
7. Edward E. Plowman, "Ghostwriters in the Machine," *World*, July 5, 2003. Available at: *World on the Web*, [www.worldmag.com/world/issue/07-05-03/cultural\\_6.asp](http://www.worldmag.com/world/issue/07-05-03/cultural_6.asp).
8. *The Dream Giver*, op. cit., pg. 7.
9. Amazon.com sales page, op. cit.
10. John MacArthur, *Does the Truth Matter Anymore?* Boca Raton, Fla.: Cross TV and Word Pictures Video, 2003.
11. See, for example, John MacArthur, Jr., "Questions for Robert Schuller," *Moody*, May 1983, pp. 6-10; Anthony A. Hoekema, "Schuller on Self-Esteem," *The Banner*, Nov. 15, 1982, pp. 8-9; and Joseph P.

Gudel, "A New Reformation? The Faulty Gospel of Robert Schuller," *Forward* (Christian Research Institute), Spring 1985, pp. 16-25.

12. Phone interview with David Kopp by author, Oct. 28, 2003.
13. *The Dream Giver*, op. cit., pg. 6.
14. *Ibid.*, pg. 8.
15. *Ibid.*, pg. 71.
16. *Ibid.*, pg. 70.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 132-136.
19. *Ibid.*, pg. 133.
20. *Ibid.*, italics in original.
21. *Ibid.*, pg. 131.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-85.
23. *Ibid.*, pg. 85.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Richard G. Howe, "Some Concerns About John C. Maxwell," *Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. Journal*, Fall 2003, pg. 12.
26. *The Dream Giver*, op. cit., pg. 71.
27. *Ibid.*, pg. 6.
28. *Ibid.*, pg. 157.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.
30. *Ibid.*, pg. 69.
31. *Ibid.*, pg. 80.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.
34. *Ibid.*, pg. 81, italics in original.
35. *Ibid.*, italics in original. Author's note: I did not relate at all to this one since I wanted desperately (my "Big Dream") as a child to be a fireman or a professional wrestler (among other things). Thank God I did neither. I wonder though, and hope it is not irreverent, if there is a connection between grappling with Satan and putting out church fires? Maybe I have realized my dream after all. This may be easier than I thought.
36. *Ibid.*, italics in original.
37. *Ibid.*, italics in original.
38. *Ibid.*, italics in original.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, pg. 82.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*, italics in original.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83, italics in original.
45. William Bridgwater, editor, *The Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia*. New York: Viking Press, 1953, Vol. 2, pg. 801.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Bruce Wilkinson with David Kopp, *The Prayer of Jabez*. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah Press, 2000, back cover.
48. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 2002, back cover. For a critique of Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life*, see Pastor Gary Gilley's two-part report, "The Purpose-Driven Life: An Evaluation," *Think on These Things*, October 2003 (Vol. 9, No. 10) and November/December 2003

- (Vol. 9, No. 11). Available at: [www.svchapel.org](http://www.svchapel.org). Also see, Albert James Dager, "The Purpose-Driven Program — A Growing Phenomenon in the Churches," *Media Spotlight*, Vol. 26, No. 4.
49. *The Purpose Driven Life*, op. cit., pp. 17-19, italics in original.
50. Marcia Montenegro, "The Sky's The Limit! An Overview of the Human Potential Movement and Motivational Seminars," *Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. Journal*, Fall 2003, pg. 16.
51. *Ibid.*, pg. 19.
52. *Awaken the Giant Within*, op. cit., pg. 19.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20, 22, 28, italics in original.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 283-285.
55. *Ibid.*, pg. 245.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21, 283-299.
57. *Ibid.*, pg. 245, bold type in original.
58. Ron Rhodes, "Anthony Robbins and the Quest for Unlimited Power," *SCP Journal* (Spiritual Counterfeits Project), Vol. 22:2-22:3, pg. 50.
59. *Awaken the Giant Within*, op. cit., pp. 23, 25.
60. *The Dream Giver*, op. cit., pg. 80.
61. *Ibid.*, pg. 69.
62. *Awaken the Giant Within*, op. cit., pg. 237, italics in original.
63. William T. Jarvis, Ph.D., "Anthony Robbins," The National Council Against Health Fraud web site. Article available at: [www.ncahf.org/articles/o-r/robbins.html](http://www.ncahf.org/articles/o-r/robbins.html).
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*
66. "Anthony Robbins and the Quest for Unlimited Power," op. cit., pg. 55.
67. *Ibid.*, pg. 56.
68. *The Dream Giver*, op. cit., pg. 81.
69. *Awaken the Giant Within*, op. cit., pg. 177.
70. "Anthony Robbins and the Quest for Unlimited Power," op. cit., pg. 52.
71. *Awaken the Giant Within*, op. cit., pg. 200.
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Ibid.*, pg. 202.
74. *The Dream Giver*, op. cit., pg. 85, italics in original.
75. *Awaken the Giant Within*, op. cit., pp. 108-111.
76. *Ibid.*, pg. 112.
77. Chris Thurman, *Self Help or Self Destruction*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996, pp. 85-86, italics in original.
78. *Awaken the Giant Within*, op. cit., pg. 290.
79. *Ibid.*, pg. 292.
80. *The Dream Giver*, op. cit., pp. 83, 122.
81. Craig Hamilton, "Excellence Is Not Enough, An interview with Anthony Robbins," *What is Enlightenment?* magazine, Issue 15. Article available at: [www.wie.org/j15/robbins.asp](http://www.wie.org/j15/robbins.asp).
82. *The Dream Giver*, op. cit., pg. 91.
83. "Excellence Is Not Enough," op. cit.
84. Phone interview with David Kopp by author, op. cit.
85. *The Dream Giver*, op. cit., pg. 91.
86. *Ibid.*, pg. 86.
87. Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*. New York: Abingdon Press, nd, Vol. 2, pg. 196, italics in original.
88. Albert Hughes, *Studies in First Corinthians*. Toronto, Canada: The Crusader Press, nd, pp. 38-39.
89. "Anthony Robbins and the Quest for Unlimited Power," op. cit., pg. 58.
90. *The Dream Giver*, op. cit., pg. 106.
91. *Ibid.*, pg. 121.
92. *Ibid.*, pp. 139-140, italics in original.
93. *Ibid.*, pp. 140-142.
94. *Ibid.*, pg. 143.
95. *Ibid.*, pg. 6, emphasis added.
96. "Anthony Robbins and the Quest for Unlimited Power," op. cit., pp. 58-59, italics in original.
97. *Awaken the Giant Within*, op. cit., pg. 22.
98. See web site home page for "Dream Coach." Available at: [www.dreamcoach.com.au/home/home.htm](http://www.dreamcoach.com.au/home/home.htm).
99. See web site home page for "Dream Coach University." Available at: [www.dreamcoachu.com](http://www.dreamcoachu.com).
100. See "Your Personal Dream Coach" on *Commitment* magazine's web site. Available at: [www.commitment.com/dream.html](http://www.commitment.com/dream.html).
101. *Awaken the Giant Within*, op. cit., pg. 233, italics in original. 

## EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

Meyer told the *Post*, "There's no need for us to apologize for being blessed."

A spokeswoman for Meyer told the reporters that the ministry donates about \$8 million annually to other charities and ministries. The newspaper listed James Kennedy's Coral Ridge Ministries, James Dobson's Focus on the Family, and the ministry of Oral Roberts as each having received a \$10,000 gift from Meyer's organization. (Meyer received an honorary doctorate in theology from Oral Roberts University.)

Meyer also contributes \$2.8 million for the operation of the Dream Center, a "faith-based social service" program in St. Louis' inner city. Yet, while citing financial support and charitable funding of \$10.8 million may sound impressive, when viewed in the dimension of the ministry's total income and just how much is spent on Meyer and her family, it yields a very disparate perspective.

Smith and Tuft uncovered another grave issue concerning Meyer and her ministry-founded and supported Dream Center. The pair reported in a subsequent article a few weeks after their initial articles that Richard L. Jones, one of the center's several pastors, is a registered sex offender — a fact known by Meyer's ministry. Jones had pleaded guilty to and served time for two counts of sexual assault of two teenage boys. According to the report, "The ministry hired Jones when he got out of prison five years ago." As the investigative story was set to publish, Jones resigned and Meyer's ministry told the newspaper that he left the Dream Center to "pursue other ministry opportunities."

Meyer is unashamed about her successes or her appeals for funds. At her conferences, she jests with her followers during the offering: "Make your checks payable to Joyce Meyer Ministries/Life in the Word. And million is spelled M-I-L-L-I-O-N." This ploy apparently finally worked as a woman from the East Coast gave Meyer stock worth that amount. Meyer has upped her goal to a \$5 million offering, and at a St. Louis conference last October she asked for a \$7 million check. "That would really bless me," the *Post* quoted Meyer as saying.

However, the bulk of the revenue comes from those at the opposite end of the financial spectrum. Trinity Foundation president Ole Anthony properly observed that Meyer “is in the typical genre of the TV evangelists who have become wealthy on the backs of the poorest people they are supposedly ministering to.”

One photograph appearing with the articles was taken inside the television production facility at Meyer’s headquarters in Fenton, Mo. The newspaper photo shows enormous images (from ceiling to floor) of Meyer which overpower the hallways. To say that these murals — which depict Meyer in slightly more than head and shoulder poses — are larger than life would be a gross understatement. How any Christian could biblically justify such a self-absorbing, self-aggrandizing display is beyond all reason.

If one will even consider just a fraction of the documentation found in the reports by Smith and Tuft, they will be unable to deny that Meyer has again been exposed as a conceited woman motivated chiefly by sensuality who pursues material pleasure and shameless indulgences. For Meyer, *enough is never enough*. Students of the Scriptures know such is the marking of false teachers who, with their insatiable desires, bring reproach and scorn onto the Gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 2:10-22, 2 Timothy 3:1-5). As we noted in our news item last issue, Meyer lacks the Bible’s call for virtue, reputation, moderation, and balance. The *Post’s* articles greatly reinforce that charge.

Some might dismiss the *Post-Dispatch’s* articles as an attack of the enemy. (Meyer herself claimed during a January conference that it was a “Satanic plot.”) But others apparently have heeded the reports. The Rev. Larry Rice, a St. Louis area pastor-evangelist known for his ministry to needy people, has withdrawn his support for Meyer. And attendance at a recent Meyer rally in the St. Louis area was down noticeably from her previous appearances.

For many years, ministries such as PFO have sounded the alarm about the aberrational and heretical teachings and shameless lifestyles of Meyer and others like her. When the Church fails in her mission to discern and expose false teachers (Romans 16:17-18; 2 Timothy 4:1-4), like Israel of old, God will allow that judgment to come from those outside the Church.

—MKG

---

## NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

Gregory Setser, a former minister who founded and headed up International Product Investment Corporation (IPIC), has been arrested and charged with fraud. In addition to Setser, five others, including his wife, sister,

and daughter-in-law, also were arrested. One of the defendants, Torsten Thomas Henschke, who was identified as the “executive international director” of IPIC, is the former executive director for Bonnke’s Christ for All Nations ministry, and a CAN board member at the time of his arrest.

According to the United States Securities and Exchange Commission, “the defendants have fraudulently raised at least \$160 million from investors associated with evangelical Christian congregations.” In its complaint, filed last fall, the SEC “alleged that the defendants deceived investors, promising to generate investment returns that would benefit Christian ministries through merchandising and manufacturing businesses; but in fact, according to the Commission, the defendants invested little, if any, of the investors’ money in that way, and instead used it to make *ponzi* payments to other investors and support their own extravagant lifestyles by purchasing items such as homes, a yacht, and a helicopter.”

The SEC’s complaint also indicated that IPIC told investors that “their principal was not at risk” and that “they would receive a 25% return on their investment within three to six months.” Setser further lured investors with tales of selling billions of dollars worth of merchandise to retailers including J.C. Penney, Costco, and Pier 1 Imports. His wife, Cynthia, was purported to be a partner in a Congo diamond mine along with the family of President Bush. All of these claims turned out to be false.

Televangelists such as Hinn, Bonnke, and Hickey often claim to operate under the influence of “words of knowledge.” However, they all somehow missed divine revelation when it came to investing with IPIC. Missed also was the history of Setser’s other financial misadventures. According to the *Denver Post*, “[I]n 1993 Setser received probation after pleading no contest to charges of theft by check in Texas” and “that he filed for bankruptcy that year after the feds put a tax lien on him.” The *Post* also reported “that in 1997, his bankruptcy petition was dismissed for failure to make payments” and in March 2002, IPIC “forfeited its status as a Texas domestic corporation for not paying taxes.”

—MKG

## A FICUS, A FRACAS

The Trinity Broadcasting Network has filed a \$300,000 lawsuit against three homeowners who live next to its international headquarters and television studios in Costa Mesa, Calif. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, TBN claims that the neighbors “illegally pruned and damaged a row of ficus trees just inside the church compound.” The suit was filed last Oct. 23 in Orange County Superior Court.

Those named in the suit claim that they only trimmed branches which extended into their backyards and that their actions caused no permanent harm to the trees. The residents had earlier sued TBN alleging their properties were plagued with branches and roots of the ficus trees and which were said to be damaging a wall separating their land from the TBN facility.

The *Times* reported that the “residents said the roots had caused a 6-foot wall dividing their homes from the church to lean perilously toward the ministry’s property.” The residents argue that when the trench was dug to plant the trees, “their wall was no longer supported.” However, according to a city planner, “the wall would be leaning to their side, not Trinity’s side” if the theory proposed by the residents were correct.

TBN’s attorney John Casoria told the *Times*, “We have bent over backward to these people in an effort to be good neighbors and all they have been is obstructive, uncooperative, and, we believe, committing illegal acts.” The residents dispute Casoria’s claim.

The litigation marks the latest in a progression of quarrels between TBN and neighbors. In the past, clashes have been fueled by the ministry headquarter’s bright lights and the chronic flow of traffic, including buses, which brings visitors to TBN’s offices, studios, and bookstore for tours and television broadcasts.

—MKG

---

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

(continued from page 28)

responsibility for suffering, but affirms His care for us. Ware then challenges the reader to think through all the implications of this approach. The result is a God in whom the Christian cannot place his trust. Ware’s approach encourages the reader not accustomed to reading theology to continue reading. The reader is thus not intimidated by technical language or theological terms before he or she is finished with the first chapter.

Ware also issues grave warnings to this generation, given its attraction to themes that try to present the Gospel as primarily therapeutic and designed to meet man’s needs, rather than display the glory of God’s grace. A generation of Christians that largely eschews theology regarding the attributes of God may find the god of open theism attractive.

But is it a viable option for the Christian? Ware skillfully reminds us that Yahweh makes His claim to be the only true God contingent on His perfect knowledge of the future (Isaiah, chapters 40-48).

Ware lays bare the claim of the god of open theism as one who fails this test. The god of open theism cannot command the believer’s confidence in His control of the future, His wisdom in guiding his life, and ultimately is not worthy of worship.

*Their God is Too Small* will equip the believer to critically evaluate not only the challenge of the destructive heresy of open theism, but other ideas which may assault God’s character in the future. All Christians will be greatly strengthened by taking the time to read it.

—DKS

## THEOPHISTIC COUNSELING: DIVINE REVELATION OR PSYCHOHERESY?

by Martin and Deidre Bobgan

EastGate Publishers, 143 pages, \$9.99

*Theophostic* counseling is the brainchild of Dr. Ed M. Smith. The word *Theophostic* is used to describe, according to Smith, a process God uses to bring illumination to darkened areas of a person’s mind (*Theos* = God, *phos* = light). Smith claims his approach sets people free from all kinds of debilitating fears, anxiety, guilt, shame, and depression, and that everyone needs it. In the Bobgans’ heavily documented critique, they rightly insist, like astronomer Alan Hale, that “extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof” and that the burden of proof is on the one making the claims.

The Bobgans cite Smith’s claims that the *Theophostic* message was given directly by God and flowed into his mind over a matter of weeks. It is eerie to read Smith recounting his taking stream-of-consciousness dictation in what can only be classified as automatic writing. The Bobgans are meticulous in quoting Smith’s claims. His own words are his worst enemy.

What adds even more weight to the Bobgans’ book is that Smith has made no significant attempts to respond to the Bobgans’ fusillade. On his web site, he simply refers to Martin Bobgan as “a fellow out in California” who “apparently feels called to discredit this ministry as well as several other noted ministries.” Smith puts his work on par with “other noted ministries.”

Smith, in the same short reply on his web site, states: “For the record, I do not believe that I have received any revelatory information from God nor have I ever made such a claim.” True or false? Smith is being disingenuous because the Bobgans only quote Smith’s words.

Consider: “As I drove home that night I asked God to show me a way to quicken this process of shifting from

embracing the lie to knowing the truth. I did not receive an answer that evening in the car but over the course of the next few weeks a simple yet profound principle began to emerge. It was as though a spigot had been turned on and the insight of this process began to flow through my mind ... He [God] gave me *TheoPhostics* so I would have no room to boast ... God was revealing this method to me ... God's gift of *TheoPhostic* therapy .. As God was revealing this method to me" (pp. 6-7, 113).

It is difficult not to think that Smith considers this latter-day revelation. His words also are empty when he says of revelatory information: "Nor have I ever made such a claim." Perhaps he does not consider what he says "a claim." Maybe what he writes is only a statement or a report. The readers can decide if they think Smith is being honest or telling a big fib. But then again, it may hinge on what "a claim" is.

Though Smith says his ideas are God-given, he only received them about eight years ago. Therefore, we must assume that God's best means of sanctification was withheld from the Church until He told Smith.

In fact, *Theophostics* seems to be a patchwork of secular cognitive-therapy theories. The Bobgans show from primary resources that it most parallels what is called Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. EMDR was developed by Dr. Francine Shapiro. They also show that *Theophostics* borrows heavily from Sigmund Freud.

The so-called "recovered memory" phenomenon promoted by Smith has been abandoned by even secular

practitioners. The AMA has warned against its validity, and even churches prone to welcome the latest "cure" have waved goodbye.

The Bobgans ask important questions: "Is TheoPhostic a divine latter-day revelation from God as Smith claims, or is it a Smith-devised variation of one or more of the many psychotherapies he learned and used, to which he added inner healing concepts and techniques?" Is *Theophostics* a God-given deliverance system or a smorgasbord of tired and worn out dead ends?

The table of contents shows a vast and varied dissecting of *Theophostics* as the Bobgans deal thoroughly with: "TheoPhostic Counseling: Latter-Day Revelation from God?," "TheoPhostic Claims, Cures, and Cases," "Misuse of Scripture in TheoPhostics," "Guided Imagery, Visualization, and Hypnosis," "Freud's Psychoanalysis and TheoPhostics," "God's Sufficient Provision," and much, much more.

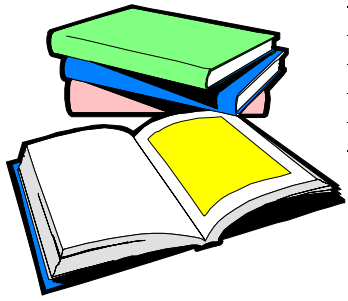
The Bobgans will prove beyond doubt their major premise: "TheoPhostic's major elements originated from known psychotherapies and inner healing practices and these sources can easily be identified."

The dogmatic claims of Smith as to the power and potency of his approach, along with the claim of divine origin, and coupled with his misuse of the Bible, make this book an absolute "must read" for all apologists and cult watchers.

—GRF

## PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH — STATEMENT OF BELIEF

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



# Books in Review

## EVIDENCE FOR JESUS

by Ralph O. Muncaster

Harvest House Publishers, 219 pages, \$10.99

Author and lecturer Ralph Muncaster integrates history, biography, archaeology, geography, and more into a terrific apologetic for the person and claims of Jesus Christ. His latest volume draws from a wide spectrum of “evidences” to establish the integrity of the Christian faith. Muncaster covers a lot of ground in reaching his objective. His chapters are concise, yet compelling.

Readers are first introduced to the crucial issue of “the empty tomb,” that is, the affirmation of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Subsequent chapters nearly all amplify this central theme. Along the way, Muncaster surveys the overwhelming evidence from internal sources (Bible testimony, prophecy, etc.), external sources (archaeology, non-Christian testimony, etc.), and sources that fall somewhere in between (Church fathers, creeds, etc.). His review of the martyrdom of the apostles and other early believers is yet another piece of powerful evidence which he presents.

Nearly every chapter is introduced with a brief fictional, but based on fact, narrative to target the evidences examined in it. Each ends with a “Conclusion” — a brief summary of the chapter’s contents.

The thrust of the book is the progression of the evidence for the claims of Jesus Christ. While one may be able to easily dismiss any single argument, the preponderance of evidence Muncaster presents becomes overwhelming. Any honest truth-seeker will be challenged with the weight of the established testimony.

While the book’s initial printing has a few inaccuracies (which Muncaster and his publisher are correcting), it is a good volume, not only for a mature Christian to read and hone apologetic skills, but for a new believer, or to give to someone considering or questioning the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ.

— MKG

## THEIR GOD IS TOO SMALL

by Bruce A. Ware

Crossway Books, 142 pages, \$9.99

Orthodox Christians, while differing in their views concerning predestination and their understanding of the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, nonetheless have historically affirmed together that God has exhaustive foreknowledge. That is, God knows perfectly and with certainty, all future events. In recent years, a new paradigm, called open theism, which is proposed by such men as Greg Boyd, Clark Pinnock, and John Sanders, argues that meaningful interaction between God and free human beings occurs only when the future is “open” and therefore unknown to God.

Bruce Ware, Professor of Christian Theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has rendered a great service to the body of Christ by forcefully answering this challenge with his earlier work, *God’s Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism*, and his latest book, *Their God is Too Small*. In the first book, Ware does an excellent job of exploring the apparent benefits offered by the openness perspective and the practical outworking of this view of God, and then refutes it with scriptural evidence. In his new book, Ware provides an excellent treatment of the same issues, both theological and practical, but at a somewhat less technical level and in a very readable format.

The result of Ware’s second effort is a great introduction to the crucial nature of this debate, particularly for Christians who are unacquainted with the topic. The believer who cannot fathom how anyone could entertain such a perspective or perceives no immediate threat from this heresy will find this book invaluable. The first chapter introduces the reader to the practical questions all Christians confront, such as God’s role in tragic events, how He interacts with the believer in prayer, and God’s wisdom in directing our lives.

Openness proponents are convinced that their view of God provides more satisfactory answers to these questions. For example, they say God cannot foresee tragic events, but is there to comfort us when they occur. This, on the surface, appears to absolve God of any

(continues on page 26)

**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.