

*Y*HUS SAITH THE *L*ORD,

STAND *ye in the ways, and SEE, and*

ASK *for the old paths, where is the good*

way, and WALK therein, and ye shall

FIND *rest for your souls.*

But they said, We will not walk therein.

— JEREMIAH 6:16

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“A WAY WHICH SEEMETH RIGHT...”

by T.A. McMAHON

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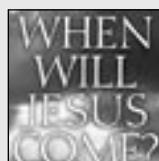


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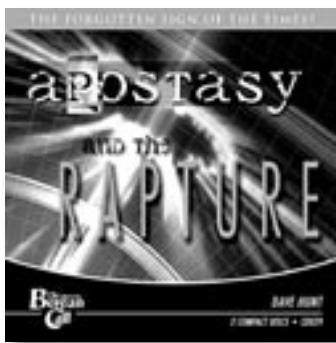
Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. —Matthew 24:44

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. —Matthew 25:13

Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. —Luke 12:40

I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? —Luke 18:8

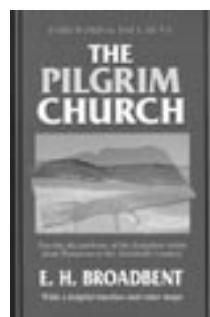
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About the cover: Scripture clearly communicates the Lord’s invitation and instruction: to stand, see, ask, walk, and find His way and His will. Man’s response is rebellion.

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October 2005

"A Way Which Seemeth Right..."

T. A. McMahon

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.
(Proverbs 14:12)

I recently attended the Celebrate Recovery Summit 2005 at Saddleback Church in Southern California. The primary purpose of the conference was to train new leaders who would return to their churches and inaugurate the Celebrate Recovery (CR) program. Saddleback's pastor, Rick Warren, describes CR as "a biblical and balanced program to help people overcome their hurts, habits, and hang-ups...[that is] based on the actual words of Jesus *rather than psychological theory* [emphasis added]."¹

As a long-time critic of psychological counseling and 12-Steps therapies in the church (see *The Seduction of Christianity* and archived TBC newsletter articles and Q&As), I was pleased to have the opportunity to learn firsthand from those who are leading and/or participating in the program, to better understand what was intended in CR, and to see how it is implemented. What I learned right away was that the 3,000 or so in attendance had a tremendous zeal for the Lord and an unquestionable sincerity in desiring to help those who were struggling with habitual sin. This was my impression in all of my interactions—with individuals, in small groups, in workshop sessions, and in the general worship sessions. The CR Summit lasted three (eight- to nine-hour) days and covered nearly every aspect of Celebrate Recovery.

Nevertheless, other thoughts ran through my mind as I reviewed whether or not I had missed something significant in my previous criticisms of 12-Steps recovery therapies. Is Celebrate Recovery's 12-Steps program truly different—that is, "biblical and balanced...rather than psychological"—as Rick Warren believes? Furthermore, is he simply naïve when he says in his "Road to Recovery" series of sermons, "In 1935 a couple of guys formulated, *based upon the Scriptures*, what are now known as the classic twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and used by hundreds of other recovery groups. Twenty million Americans are in a recovery group every week and there are 500,000 recovery groups. *The basis is God's Word* [emphasis added]." Or is Celebrate

Recovery another alarming example of *a way that seems right to a man* but one that is turning believers to ways and means other than the Bible to solve their sin-related problems? Let's consider these questions in light of some A.A. and 12 Steps background information.

To begin with, 12-Steps programs are not just a Saddleback Church issue. Increasing numbers of evangelical churches are sponsoring Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.) meetings and/or creating their own self-help groups based upon A.A.'s 12-Steps principles. Bill Wilson, one of the founders of A.A., created the 12 Steps. Wilson was a habitual drunk who had two life-changing events that he claims helped him achieve sobriety: 1) he was (mis)informed by a doctor that his drinking habit was a disease and was therefore not his fault, and 2) he had an experience (which he viewed as spiritual enlightenment) that convinced him that only

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein."

Jeremiah 6:16

"a Power greater than" himself could keep him sober. Attempting to understand his mystical experience, he was led into spiritism, a form of divination condemned in the Scriptures. His official biography indicates that the content of the 12-Steps principles came to him "rapidly" through spirit communication. Certainly *not* from God.

Celebrate Recovery began 14 years ago at Saddleback and is used in more than 3,500 churches today, making it evangelical Christianity's most prominent and widely exported 12-Steps church program. Warren considers CR to be "the center of living a purpose-driven life and building a purpose-driven church" and recently announced that Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship would begin implementing CR in every prison where the ministry is functioning.

Celebrate Recovery is a very complex methodology that attempts to bring biblical adjustments to the 12-Steps program originated by A.A. and utilized in numerous other "addiction" recovery programs. The complexity, however, applies to the setting up and implementation of the program as well

as to the strict rules that govern its execution. Although there are many problems related to "making it work," there is only space in this article to address some fundamental issues. Let's begin with the implications regarding the name of the program.

Reflecting A.A.'s influence upon CR, the term "Recovery" is significant. All those in A.A. are "recovering" alcoholics, who, according to A.A., never completely recover. Recovery is a term that primarily denotes a process of physical healing. A.A. teaches that alcoholism is a disease for which there is no ultimate cure. Although CR rejects A.A.'s view of alcoholism as a disease and calls it sin, the title nevertheless promotes the A.A. concept in contradiction to what the Bible teaches. Sin is not something from which a believer is "in recovery." Sin is confessed by the sinner and forgiven by God. The believer is cleansed of the sin right then. "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Ps 32:5).

At the 2005 Celebrate Recovery Summit, every speaker introduced himself or herself in the A.A. "recovery" mode, with this "Christianized" difference: "Hi, I'm so and so...and I'm a believer in Jesus Christ who struggles with issues of (alcohol, drug, codependency, sex, or whatever) addiction." The audience then applauded to affirm the individual for overcoming the "denial" of his or her habitual sin. Not to confess some "addiction" or specific sin struggle raises suspicions of "being in denial." Throughout the three-day conference, there was never a hint from any of the speakers that anything about A.A., 12 Steps, or CR might not be biblical. Moreover, where Celebrate Recovery programs were not available, those "in recovery" were encouraged to attend A.A. or N.A. meetings.

Rick Warren, on video, reassured the Summit attendees that CR was no man-made therapy. He insisted that CR was based upon the "actual words of Jesus Christ from the eight Beatitudes, which parallel the 12 Steps" and identified his own "Higher Power: His name is Jesus Christ." I don't find "Higher Power," which is a misrepresentation of God, in the Bible. Nor can I fathom why a Bible-believing Christian would want to promote Bill Wilson's concept and methodology. Why not simply rely on what the Bible teaches?

Is God's way completely sufficient to set one free from so-called addictions? Did

A.A.'s founders provide a more effective way? If so, what did the church do for the nearly 2,000 years prior to Bill Wilson's "spiritually enlightened" way to recovery? Moreover, if Wilson's method really works, why are some in the church trying to add Jesus as one's Higher Power and the Beatitudes to it? On the other hand, if the effectiveness of the 12-Steps program is questionable at best and detrimental to the gospel and to a believer's life and growth in Christ, why attempt to "Christianize" such a program? It is imperative that all believers ask themselves whether or not they truly believe that the Scriptures and the enablement of God's Holy Spirit are sufficient for "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pt 1:3). A rejection of this biblical teaching is the only possible justification for turning to ways the Bible condemns: "the counsel of the ungodly" (Ps 1:1) and "a way which seemeth right unto a man."

How dependent is Celebrate Recovery upon (with minor modifications) A.A.'s 12 Steps? Completely! Those going through CR's small group take from 12 to 16 months to complete the 12-Steps program. Many go through more than one small group and often become leaders in one while attending others. Without Bill Wilson's principles, the CR program would be reduced to a handful of misapplied Bible verses. Tragically, the most obvious biblical problem with such an approach to overcoming habitual sins seems to be dismissed by all 12-Steps advocates: the Bible never offers a by-the-numbers *self-help methodology* for deliverance from sin or for living a sanctified life. God's way involves obedience to His *full counsel* and maturity in Christ through the enablement of His Holy Spirit.

Warren's CR program views the 12 Steps as generally compatible with Scripture yet seeks out verses that appear to biblically reinforce each step. In doing so, however, scriptural interpretations are forced upon concepts that either have no direct relationship to the Bible or that pervert the true interpretation of the scripture intended to support the particular step. CR's attempt to use the Beatitudes as biblical principles for overcoming habitual sins, for example, is a serious distortion of the Word of God.

Search as you may, you'll find no commentaries that even hint at such a use of the Beatitudes. Why? Simply because the Beatitudes all have to do with seeking the Kingdom of God and nothing to do with solving an individual's so-called addictions. Again, why try to legitimize from Scripture Wilson's "ungodly counsel" from "seducing spirits [bringing] doctrines of devils" (1 Tm 4:1)?

Consider, for example, the "Beatitudes

justified" first three steps: (1) We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors. That our lives had become unmanageable. "Happy are those who are spiritually poor." (2) Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. "Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (3) Made a decision to turn our life and our will over to the care of God (modified from A.A.'s "God as we understood Him"). "Happy are the meek." This is more than a misdirected attempt to sanctify (in Rick Warren's words) Bill Wilson's "biblically vague" 12 Steps.² It both abuses the Scriptures and reinterprets Wilson.

In these *foundational* steps, Wilson is summarizing his beliefs based upon his experiences as a "recovering alcoholic." He felt "powerless" because he believed alcoholism was an incurable disease that consequently made his life "unmanageable." Since he couldn't "cure" himself (although millions do without 12-Step or other therapies!), he put his faith in "a power greater than ourselves," whom he called God, and "understood" Him by fabricating Him out of beliefs discovered in his study of different religions and religious experiences. That's more than "biblically vague." It's a false religion.

So why would Celebrate Recovery or the multitudes of other Christianized 12-Steps groups try to reconcile the Word of God with Wilson's definitely erroneous and demonically inspired methodology? The deluded response is: "Because it works!" But does it?

Pragmatism is the fuel that powers "the way that seems right" and governs much of what is being lauded in the church today. Not only is this unbiblical, but too often there is nothing beyond enthusiastic testimonials to support the claim that something actually works. The reality for the 12-Steps program of A.A. and N.A. is that there is no research evidence proving that they are more effective than other treatments. Furthermore, the most extensive studies related to "addictions" conclude that most drug and alcohol abusers recover without any psychotherapeutic treatment or self-help therapies.³

The many problems inherent within a Christianized 12-Steps program—and particularly Celebrate Recovery—are too numerous for this brief article. Yet, consider these observations: CR is highly promoted as completely biblical and not psychological, yet the key speakers for CR Summit 2005 were clinical psychologists Drs. John Townsend and Henry Cloud. Psychologist David Stoop, the editor of *Life Recovery Bible* (CR participants' mandatory paraphrase Bible, polluted with psychotherapy commentary), is a favorite speaker at Saddleback's CR Large Group

meetings. The CR leadership manual advises, "Have Christian psychotherapists volunteer their time to help instruct and support your leaders."⁴

CR's entire program content is marbled with psychobabble such as this "solution" from its Adult Children of the Chemically Addicted group's dogmas: "The solution is to become your own loving parent....You will recover the child within you, learning to accept and love yourself."⁵ This is biblical?! Honoring the psychologically contrived "disorder" of codependency, CR's Codependency and Christian Living group made this humanistic and biblically false statement: "Jesus taught....A love of self forms the basis for loving others."⁶

A.A.'s 12-Steps methodology, along with its antibiblical psychotherapeutic concepts and practices permeates Celebrate Recovery, yet no one at the Summit with whom I spoke seemed concerned. CR's small group meetings are the antithesis of the way the Bible instructs mature believers to help those young or struggling in the faith to grow. Pastors and elders can be small group leaders, but not for teaching purposes. No leader may biblically instruct or correct but may only affirm the "transparency" of the participant sharing his feelings. "Cross-talk," or comments by others, are prohibited to allow the freest expression possible. Much of this "expression" reinforces psychotherapeutic myths. The two-hour meetings usually open with the spiritually anemic Serenity Prayer and the recitation of the 12 Steps. Leaders are drawn from those who have completed one or more 12-Step groups. Some leaders work through one "addiction" in a small group while leading another group. It's not unusual for a leader to put in eight to ten hours in CR functions per week, every week. Serious Bible study and discipleship are not part of the Celebrate Recovery "biblical" emphasis.

Let no one think that presenting these critical concerns about Celebrate Recovery in any way lessens the biblical obligation (Gal 6) of the church to minister to those struggling with habitual sin. The issue is not whether we *should* minister, but *how* we should minister: man's way or God's way? Man's way, or a *mixture of biblical teaching and ungodly counsel*, is contrary to God's way. Man's way leads to death. Applying Scripture to man's way leads to a slower death, akin to what would result when pure water is added to a toxic drinking fountain. We desperately need to take heed to God's admonition through the Prophet Jeremiah: "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer 2:13). **TBC**

Quotable

The man who is intimate with God is never intimidated by man.

Leonard Ravenhill

Who would wish to dwell among the nations, and to be numbered with them? Why, even the professing church is such that to follow the Lord fully within its bounds is very difficult. There is such a mingling and mixing that one often sighs for "a lodge in some vast wilderness." Certain it is that the Lord would have his people to follow a separated path as to the world, and come out decidedly and distinctly different from it. We are set apart by divine decree, purchase, and calling, and our inward experience has made us greatly to differ from men of the world; and therefore our place is...in the narrow way where all true pilgrims must follow their Lord. This may not only reconcile us to the world's sneers, but even cause us to accept them with pleasure....Only let us be found in the number of the redeemed, and we are content to be odd and solitary to the end....

Charles H. Spurgeon

*Lamb of God! our souls adore Thee while upon Thy face we gaze;
There the Father's love and glory shine in all their brightest rays;
Thy almighty power and wisdom, all creation's works proclaim;
Heav'n and earth alike confess Thee as the ever great "I AM."*

*When we see Thee as the victim nailed to the accursed tree,
For our guilt and folly stricken, all our judgment borne by Thee,
Lord, we own, with hearts adoring, Thou hast loved us unto blood;
Glory, glory everlasting be to Thee,
Thou Lamb of God!*

*Lamb of God! Thou now art seated high upon Thy Father's throne;
All Thy gracious work completed, all Thy mighty vict'ry won.
Every knee in heav'n is bending to the Lamb for sinners slain;
Every voice and harp is swelling, "Worthy is the Lamb to reign!"*

James G. Deck (1807-1884), Hymns of Worship and Remembrance

Q&A

Question: In a recent book, a well-known prophecy teacher writes, "I have never been able to fully embrace the traditional viewpoint of conscious, eternal punishment. It seems to impugn

the character of God....He is a God of righteousness, holiness, and justice, but is eternal suffering justice...? The concept of eternal torment seems to run contrary to biblical examples. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah...suddenly and quickly...Noah's evil world...suddenly and quickly....[Thirdly] it seems to contradict a descriptive phrase...to describe Hell..."the second death...." How can Hell be a "second death" if it consists of eternal, conscious torment? [Fourthly] Hell is a place of destruction (Matthew 7:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:9, et al.). Fifth, there is a difference between eternal punishment and eternal punishing...a judgment that continues eternally, or...a judgment with eternal consequences....Revelation 14:9-11 [does not] speak of eternal torment [but] "the smoke of their torment" ascending forever. [But] Isaiah 34:10...says the smoke of Edom's destruction will "go up forever." I have been to Edom...seen its destruction. But there was no smoke ascending to heaven. The reference to eternal smoke is obviously symbolic...Edom's destruction will give eternal testimony to how God deals with a sinful society....I believe the Bible denies the immortality of the soul....In 1 Timothy 6:15,16 Paul says that God alone possesses immortality. First Corinthians 15:53 teaches that THE Redeemed will not become immortal until the time of their resurrection....There is no need to believe in an eternal Hell if the soul is not intrinsically immortal. And it isn't....Justin Martyr (A.D. 114-165) [says] the souls of the unrighteous will suffer only as long as God wills, and that finally their souls will pass out of existence. [I believe the damned] will be cast into the lake of fire (Hell) where they will suffer a time of torment in proportion to their sins. Then they will experience the "second death" (death of body, soul and spirit)." Please help me to discern.

Answer: The above arguments are seriously flawed. The fact that the sinners in Sodom and Gomorrah and in Noah's time suffered swift physical destruction does not prove that they have not been suffering spiritual torment ever since, in Hell! Of course, no man, but "God alone has immortality." But when was immortality ever required for suffering in the Lake of Fire? Without immortality, we have physical life; and even after physical death we continue to exist: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb 9:27). Judgment can't be pronounced on those who no longer exist

—and judgment pronounced must be meted out in punishment. The author of the book denies that it is eternal but gives no Scripture—only faulty reasoning.

If both spiritually dead people and physically dead people are still alive, what does it mean to be "dead"? Spiritual death separates from God; physical death separates from the body and from all those who are still physically alive. The physically dead who believed on Christ and thus were united to God before they died continue to exist in heaven in eternal bliss ("and so shall we ever be with the Lord"— 1 Thes 4:17).

Upon death, those who rejected Christ and the salvation He provided for them go to hell to await their judgment; but even while awaiting the final judgment, they experience horrible torment: "the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments" (Lk 16:22,23). Obviously, then, the fact that man doesn't have immortality is not a valid argument against eternal existence in the Lake of Fire. Sin brought death to Adam's spirit and eventually to his body, and so it has always been with his descendants. But the fact that man is doubly dead—first spiritually, then physically—does not mean that he ever ceases to exist.

Physical "death" no more means *cessation of being* than does spiritual "death"—nor is there ever any hint anywhere in the Bible of any end either to the bliss of the redeemed or to the torment of the damned. The writer suggests that because today there is no physical smoke ascending from Edom in spite of Isaiah 34:10 saying that "the smoke of Edom's destruction will 'go up forever,'" therefore, the statement in Revelation 14:9-11 concerning those who worshiped the beast—that "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever"—isn't to be taken literally. But Isaiah was no more speaking of physical smoke arising from ruins on earth than he was of physical torment lasting forever on earth. "Smoke" was symbolic of their spiritual torment in the Lake of Fire, and that "smoke" will indeed ascend for ever and ever.

We are clearly told that "the devil...the beast and the false prophet...shall be tormented...for ever and ever" (Rv 20:10). Where? In the lake of "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt 25:41; Rv 20:14,15). It would neither be biblical nor reasonable to believe that although the devil and his angels will be tormented therein "for ever and ever," their followers, having been placed in this everlasting fire, will be there only for a temporary time. The writer makes the Lake of Fire to be like purgatory for the Catholic: temporary punishment in proportion to one's sin. But never in the many times that Christ

refers to the punishment of the damned (“weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth” – Mt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Lk 13:28) does He ever offer the hope that it is only temporary.

That every man “is judged...[and by implication punished] according to their works” (Rv 20:13) refers to the severity of the punishment, not to its duration. That it must be eternal is because God himself is eternal, His righteousness infinite, and His judgments immutable. Death is the punishment for sin, not cessation of being. Eternal death is separation from God and all others to face alone the stark horror of one’s rebellion against one’s Creator and the fact that the forgiveness He offered was rejected.

While admitting that death doesn’t end anyone’s existence, he claims that the existence of the damned after death is only temporary—long enough to punish them “in proportion to their sins.” But this theory is never stated in the Bible. The “wages of sin is death,” which is separation from God just as physical death separates from the body. Those who are spiritually dead enjoy physical life for a time. But after physical death comes judgment—and their “everlasting punishment” (Mt 25:46), as he admits—a “second death” in the Lake of Fire. It could hardly be called “everlasting” if one day it will be as though it had never been, with all sinners having ceased to exist. Punishment for breaking the infinite law of the eternal God must be eternal.

Question (representative of several): In your May Q&A, you objected to the use of the terms “Messianic Jew” and “Messianic movement” as not biblical. The Jerusalem council settled the issue that there would be a distinction between Gentiles and Jews in observances and practice....Jesus Christ is the same for Jew and Gentile unto salvation, yet observances can be different....I would differ with your explanation of Jesus and His followers not being observant Jews after the cross. The apostles did continue to observe Sabbath after the cross (Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4, 11; two Sabbaths at Antioch, one Sabbath at Philippi, three Sabbaths at Thessalonica, seven to eight Sabbaths at Corinth). The feasts of Scripture were to be everlasting for the Israelites and could be partaken of by the strangers among them. Most were everlasting observances, and...will continue in the future....God does not change His mind (Leviticus 23:14, 21; Zechariah 14:16-19). As a Gentile in a “Messianic” congregation, I have the liberty to keep these Feasts.

I think the writer of the question you answered was expressing the frustration he or she has regarding churches [where]

a Jewish believer...is made to give up their identification as a Jew upon joining a predominantly Gentile congregation...told that they should not celebrate Hannukah or Passover [but] must defer to Christmas and Easter, which is not in Scripture at all. God wants Jew and Gentile to be together in harmony, not replacing anything Jewish with something non-Jewish. This has been done throughout history...pushing Jewish people far away from the gospel. Jesus was a Jew, lived a Jew, died a Jew and will return a Jew. The church in many cases portrays Him stripped of His identity as a Jew....There is no argument that the sacrifices were completed in Him, once and for all, and all has been accomplished for us to receive His free gift of eternal life.

Answer: I am sorry if there are any Christians who want Jews to deny their heritage as the chosen people of God descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were delivered from Egypt and brought into the Promised Land. That is wrong. Yes, the stranger who became a Jew through keeping the law, including being circumcised, was to keep the feasts of the Lord. But for a Gentile to keep those feasts today would be a fraud. His ancestors were not delivered from Egypt by miracles and brought into the Promised Land to inherit it, nor has he joined the nation of Israel.

None of the verses you list declares that the Apostles kept the Sabbath but only that they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Obviously, that was because the Jews gathered together there on that day, and this was the best way to reach them with the gospel. Now in the early days, the apostles did observe the law and keep the feasts in order not to offend the unsaved Jews. This was only, however, for the sake of winning them to Christ: “For though I be free from all...yet...unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law....I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor 9:19-23).

There are many warnings against becoming entangled in Jewish observances: “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike....He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it” (Rom 14:5,6). That passage certainly closes the door for Jew and Gentile upon obligatory observation of the Sabbath or any other Holy Day.

As for “Messianic Jew,” the very term makes a distinction between Jews and Gentiles that does not exist in Christ. Am I a “Messianic Gentile”? There is neither Jew nor Gentile; we are one in Christ.

News Alert

News.yahoo.com, 9/21/05: SPEEDY BUT SPIRITUAL: BRITISH CLERIC UNVEILS “100-MINUTE BIBLE”—Business folk are used to reading executive summaries of important documents, and now would-be Christians are to have the same privilege, in the form of a chopped-down Bible that can be read in under two hours.

A Church of England vicar was on Wednesday unveiling his self-styled “100-Minute Bible,” an ultra-condensed edition of the Christian holy book which claims to neatly summarize every teaching from the Creation to the Revelation.

The Reverend Michael Hinton was launching his work at Canterbury Cathedral in southern England, the headquarters of the Anglican Church.

Publishers of the 100-Minute Press say the book has been written for those who want to know more about Christianity but who do not have the time to read the original in full.

“This is a book for adults and has been written in a style to encourage readers to keep turning the pages, but without resorting to any literary gimmicks,” said Len Budd from the publishing firm. “As the bible itself, the 100-Minute Bible should be a bestseller.”

[TBC: If there is one trend in Christianity that could be singled out as probably the most destructive, it is a dumbing-down of the Word of God in the life of a believer. One form of this is the perpetuation of biblical illiteracy. It has been a growing problem even among evangelicals—not that they can't read, but because many just don't care to read the Bible, or certainly not the whole Bible. Therefore, in today's prevailing consumer-oriented way of doing church, no doubt this “Cliff Notes” version of the Bible will become quite popular. However, those who are producing the “100-Minute Bible” need to take “the time to read the original in full” for themselves—especially the verse that says what will happen to those who would “take away from the words” of His Book (Rv 22: 19).]

End Notes

1. *Celebrate Recovery Summit 2005 Handbook*, 61.
2. *Celebrate Recovery Senior Pastor Support Video*, 2003.
3. *The Harvard Mental Health Letter*, Vol. 16, No. 12, 1-4; See also: www.stats.org/issuer_ecord.jsp?issue=true&ID=8.
4. *Celebrate*, 31.
5. *Ibid*, 342.
6. *Ibid*, 350.

Dave & T.A.'s Itinerary

Oct 7-8 (Dave)	Prophecy: Peril & Promise San Marcos TX (512) 353-7759
Oct 9 (Dave)	Calvin Chapel South Austin South Austin TX (512) 576-5433
Oct 19-21 (Dave, T.A.)	Winnipeg Prophecy Conference Winnipeg Canada (204) 888-7270, www.wpgpc.org
Oct 24-27 (Dave)	Brazilian Prophecy Conference www.Chamada.com.br 0300-789-5152 (from Brazil) 55-51-3241-5050 (from U.S.)
Oct 28-30 (Dave)	Igreja Batista Esperança São Paulo Brazil 11-5571-9721
Nov 6 (Dave)	Candlelight Fellowship Hayden ID (208)772-7755
Nov 12-13 (Dave)	Keizer Community Church Keizer OR (503) 393-0222
Nov 16 (Dave)	Calvary Chapel Chino Valley Chino CA (909) 464-8255
Nov 20 (Dave)	Calvary Chapel Rialto Rialto CA (909) 820-7300

Letters

Thanks, Dave and T.A.,

The Holy Ghost is shedding so much junk out of my life through your [radio] program [*Search the Scriptures Daily*]. I hope and know that the Lord will finish the work He has started in me: that my eyes would be cleared of this forest so I can judge rightly. MH (CA)

Dear Berean Call,

What a revelation! Thank you, friends, for enrolling me in your Lending Library. Most everything you do has significance. PB (ND)

Dear Dave,

Congratulations are in order! Your recently published book *Judgment Day!* tells the true story of Islam and its agenda. I have many books that are factual, but you've managed to put everything into one revealing, well-documented book. RE (GA)

Dear Dave and Ruth,

Your fine book *Judgment Day!* arrived here a few days ago and I sat down immediately to read it. You depict Islam as it really is and not as it is painted by the media....You must have done considerable

research to glean all those statistics, but that is what makes the book so interesting. AS (France)

Dear Dave,

While attending a Bible study, I offered the story of a Canadian pastor who was prosecuted for "hate crimes" when he read a passage of Scripture that had unkind things to say about homosexuals....When I suggested the same thing could be happening here, pastors and assistant pastors around the room refused comment. I was later told by a well-educated "Christian counselor" that my approach to Christianity was old fashioned. She said we are not supposed to go around talking about sin and hell; she had seen many more good results by emphasizing love for all humanity. MV (ID)

Dear Berean Call family,

I would like to commend you on your unwavering stance in bringing the truth of God and His Word to light in an ever-darkening world....In the beginning I found that when I read your newsletter it was difficult to follow and understand. I have since learned that I was quite unaware (and naïve) of the real and present dangers of false doctrines that are out there. I have also realized the importance of knowing and growing in the Scriptures on a daily basis. I thank you and your staff for your tireless and persevering work in exposing these false doctrines in the light of His Word. KD (FL)

Dear Bereans,

I came out of the library and met a boy getting on his bike. He told me he came to the library to learn how to do real magic, like Harry Potter. He said if you put a dollar between two candles and light them at the same time, the dollar would turn into three dollars. I suggested we look in the Bible and see what happened to Simon the magician. Such is the effect of the books about Harry Potter on innocent children. A father should teach his children the Scriptures every day [not just] leaving it up to their wives or the Sunday school. I am now 81 years old and I used to attend services at a chapel 50 miles away. I thank you for giving edifying articles in *The Berean Call*. BB (NY)

Dear Dave Hunt and T.A. McMahon,

I am grateful that there are sound teachers left who have the guts to stand up for the truth (without timidity). I worry greatly about seeker-sensitive, deceptive teaching impacting the church. My boyfriend recently got saved...through

conviction and listening to the *Search the Scriptures Daily* radio segments. SW (Australia)

Dear Friends,

I have much appreciated your stand on biblical authority and have heard both Dave and Tom speak with resonance on issues about which we share a mutual passion. The comments from JS (NJ) that John MacArthur and R.C. Sproul led this women's Bible study leader's class to conclude, "we don't need to have the Old Testament to understand the New Testament...Israel is not really important" make no sense and cause your readers to scratch their heads in wonder. I...am a graduate of The Masters Seminary. I also attended Grace Community Church and was heavily involved in evangelism, teaching, and music ministries....I now pastor a church....I am troubled by...Sproul's...views....However, I know for certain that Pastor MacArthur does not condone any notion that..."Israel is not really important." The writer has wrongly connected MacArthur with *reformed eschatology* and should set her class straight....MC (CA)

TBC Notes

Update

We want to express our thanks to all of you who have so kindly written or otherwise sent words of encouragement during this time of intensive cancer treatment for our daughter Janna. We wish we could personally respond to each expression of concern and assurance of prayer, but that is not possible. Please know you are appreciated so very much. The doctors say that Janna is making progress. Please continue to pray. Our trust is in Him who does all things well.

Dave and Ruth Hunt

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Mysticism big business for mainstream evangelical authors, publishers, retailers



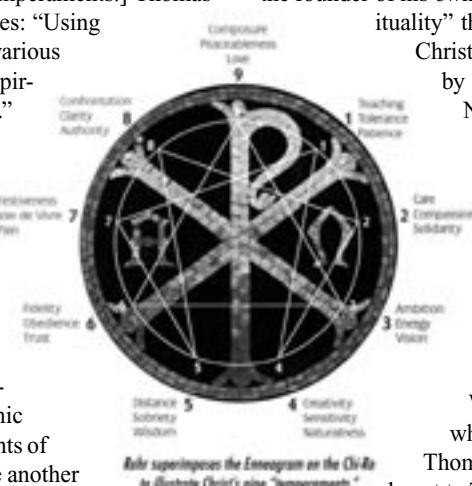
An inward spiral of self: nine "sacred paths" mirror the syncretistic Enneagram of mystical Sufi (Islamic) tradition.

The Pathway to Psycho-Spirituality

Sacred Pathways author Gary Thomas recounts how "Carl Jung developed four profiles to describe human nature..." (p. 21). "Knowing our personal temperaments, whether we are sanguine or melancholy, for instance, will tell us how we relate to others or how we can choose a suitable spouse or vocation. But it doesn't necessarily tell us how we relate to God" (p. 17). [Past issues of *TBC* have long established the occult connection in seeking to classify people by personality types and temperaments.] Thomas continues building a case for his nine worship styles: "Using biblical figures, historic church movements, and various personality temperaments, we can identify nine spiritual temperaments—what I call sacred pathways." Thomas is somewhat vague as to the exact origin of his ideas, but research reveals a close connection to the nine psycho-spiritual "types" of the mystical, esoteric Enneagram.

Enter the Enigmatic Enneagram

In the grossly unbiblical *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective* (Crossroad, 2004), Robert Rohr states, "The Enneagram[s]...roots go back at least as far as the early monasticism of the Desert Fathers...presumably passed on through the Islamic wisdom tradition of Sufism.... These mystical currents of the major religions come astonishingly close to one another in...the religious experiences they transmit.... Indeed, the Enneagram seems to be...a bridge that people can step onto from different sides and in the middle of which they can meet" (xii). "Indeed" is right—comparison of Thomas's ecumenical "sacred paths" to the characteristics of the syncretistic Enneagram reveals unmistakable parallels (see illustration). Rohr (a Franciscan "retreat master") relates, "The Sufis supposedly called the Enneagram 'the face of God' because they saw the nine energies manifested in the nine personality types as nine attributes of God..." (p. 232). Rohr writes "Self-knowledge is tied in with inner work, which is both demanding and painful.... The masters and soul guides of all spiritual traditions of the West and East have known that true self-knowledge is the presupposition of the 'inner journey'..." (xiii, emphasis added). "The transfer of wisdom between religions is...one of the most essential contributions to world peace.... The Enneagram can help us to find a deeper and more authentic relationship with God—even though it was not discovered by Christians." Christ, the *only* way, is denied.



IF THE WORD "Christian" was not part of their logo, readers could easily mistake Family Christian Stores' recent sales flyer as a New Age publication. Nine spiritualistic symbols "dance" around a central circle in a flowing sunburst pattern. Turning the cover, a lavish spread is devoted to explain "nine sacred paths" to worship God: 1) Naturalists; 2) Sensates; 3) Traditionalists; 4) Ascetics; 5) Activists; 6) Caregivers; 7) Enthusiasts; 8) Contemplatives; and 9) Intellectuals. Each of these "paths" is defined (since the terminology is foreign to most evangelicals except for those versed—or immersed—in Catholic mysticism or the New Age). The entire display is given credence by a large advertisement for Andy Stanley's new four-part, small group video series called *You've Got Style*, marketed under Stanley's "northpoint" church resource imprint—a product of Multnomah Publishers. Readers are invited to take an online "worship style" quiz, which connects the "familychristian" website to Stanley's own "sacredpaths" survey. The 45-question personality inventory is designed to reveal "how you draw near to God." Several questions make no distinction between Catholic and Christian—for example: "I enjoy attending a 'high church' service with incense and...[the] Eucharist." The promotional copy describes Stanley's teaching as "inspired by Gary Thomas's book, *Sacred Pathways*. Due to the massive marketing forces at work, and the widespread influence of Stanley (whose church near Atlanta, Georgia, hosts over 10,000 adults in three Sunday a.m. services), further inquiry into the origin of "nine sacred paths"—and how they oppose the *one* "narrow way" and "strait gate" is necessary.

The Zondervan Connection

The fact that *Sacred Pathways* (Zondervan, 2000) is an "evangelical" introduction to the practices of Catholic mystics and the Desert Fathers is no surprise. Thomas's prior book, *The Glorious Pursuit: Embracing the Virtues of Christ* (NavPress, 1998), was part of a "spiritual formation" series edited by Dallas Willard (a longtime advocate of mysticism and an editor of *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible*; see *TBC*, Aug. '05). Thomas is the founder of his own highly ecumenical "Center for Evangelical Spirituality" that "integrates Scripture, church history, and the Christian [mystic] classics." A back cover endorsement by *Publishers Weekly* exudes, "Thomas cites Henri

Nouwen as an example of the 'sensate,' which is a happy illustration since Thomas himself shows great potential for becoming the Henri Nouwen of evangelicalism." Emergent church pastor/leader Doug Pagitt (whose wife, Shelley, promotes yoga) is a Zondervan author of *Reimagining Spiritual Formation*. His website proudly proclaims he is an "Enneagram Type 8," and a convenient link connects viewers to the Enneagram Institute for a free "sampler" evaluation.

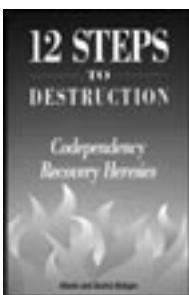
While Stanley is a prominent Multnomah author whose endorsement will further popularize Gary Thomas's "Christian" mysticism, perhaps the biggest boost to Thomas's work has come from Zondervan author

Rick Warren. On pages 102 and 103 of *The Purpose-Driven Life*, Warren shares, "My friend Gary Thomas...discovered that Christians [mystics, desert fathers] have used many different paths for 2,000 years to enjoy intimacy with God...In his book *Sacred Pathways*, Gary identifies nine of the ways people draw near to God." Warren proceeds to validate the nine "types" with a poor proof-text from Eugene Peterson's *The Message*. But Scripture only knows *one* path: "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17).

Looking Inward for Identity Instead of Upward for Understanding

The new "evangelical" market for mysticism is big business—but there are no "new" occult teachings: "*That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been...*" (Ecc. 3:15). Sadly, for a growing number of professing Christians, God's Word is not sufficient: "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables* (2 Tim. 4:3-4). The eager cross-pollination and promotion of blended beliefs is a sure sign: that time has come.

WHAT ABOUT SCIENCE, PSYCHOLOGY, AND THE BIBLE? READ THESE EYE-OPENING RESOURCES!



12 STEPS TO DESTRUCTION: Codependency Recovery Heresy

M&D Bobgan—Written for those who are suffering from the trials of life and for those who want to help, for those thinking about joining a “recovery” group or entering a treatment center for codependency or addiction, for those who have tried or are involved in a 12-Steps program or treatment center, and finally, for Christians who offer such programs to others, encouraging them to return to “the faith once delivered to the saints.” EastGate, 247 pp.

B00054

\$12.00

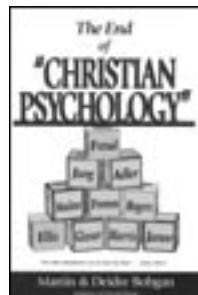


FOUR TEMPERAMENTS: Astrology & Personality Testing

M&D Bobgan—Are personality inventories and tests valid ways of finding out about people? Do personality typologies give true insight into behavior? Can knowing temperament and personality types foster Christian love and maturity? What is the biblical and scientific basis for popular tests? These answers and more with biblical, historical, and research data. EastGate, 213 pp.

B00070

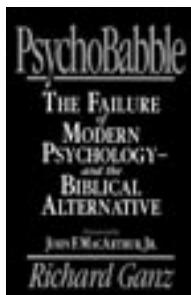
\$12.00



M&D Bobgan—What can be wrong with “Christian psychology”? The same confusion of contradictory theories and techniques as secular psychology comprise it. “Christian” psychologists have simply borrowed their theories and techniques from this world’s wisdom. Packed with biblical and scientific evidence, this book thoroughly demonstrates that professional psychotherapy, with its underlying psychologies, is a deceptive spiritual counterfeit. EastGate, 271 pp.

B00127

\$13.00



PSYCOBABBLE: The Failure of Modern Psychology

Ganz—Both church leaders and laypersons seem to believe that the psychological “experts” have the answers for the wounded hearts and souls of God’s people. *PsychoBabble* explains the dichotomy between secular and biblical counseling and shows the danger of incorporating secular techniques into a Christian approach. This book will arm believers looking for scriptural answers to the hurts of a broken world. Crossway, 173 pp.

B07340

\$14.00

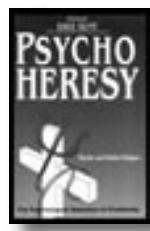


COMPETENT TO MINISTER: The Biblical Care of Souls

M&D Bobgan—The authors’ book, *Against Biblical Counseling*, drew some hostile responses from those who perceived it as critical of counseling from the Scriptures. This resource clarifies their position on that issue, calling Christians back to the Bible—and to the biblically ordained ministries and mutual care in the Body of Christ that have effectively ministered to souls for almost 2,000 years. EastGate, 251 pp.

B00119

\$13.00

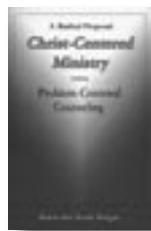


PSYCHO HERESY

M&D Bobgan—*Psychoheresy* exposes the fallacies and failure of psychological counseling theories and therapies; reveals the anti-Christian biases, internal contradictions, and documented failures of secular psychotherapy; examines various amalgamations of secular psychologies with Christianity, and explodes firmly entrenched myths that undergird these unholy unions. EastGate Publishers, 242 pp.

B00003

\$14.00



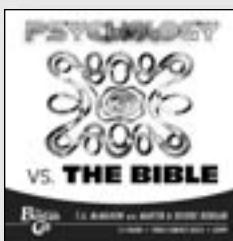
CHRIST-CENTERED MINISTRY vs. Problem-Centered Counseling

M&D Bobgan—This book reveals the origins and faults of problem-centered counseling, describes Christ-centered ministry and how it differs from problem-centered counseling, and encourages local congregations to minister as God has called them to without the influence of the psychological or biblical counseling movements. Eastgate, 134 pp.

B80500

\$9.00

POWERFUL EAR-OPENING AUDIO RESOURCES – TOOLS TO TEACH AND PASS ALONG!



Psychology vs the Bible (audio)

Bobgan/McMahon—All the schools of thought contributing to what we know as psychology were the creation of men who rejected Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. These include Freud, Jung, Skinner, Rogers, Adler, Maslow, et al., leaving a vast difference between biblical theology and psychology. T.A.

McMahon and Martin and Deidre Bobgan thoroughly demonstrate the absolute failure of psychology to fully meet the true need of man. TBC, 2.5 hrs. (CD cover shown; other formats may vary.)

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12 Steps to Destruction (audio)

Bobgan/McMahon—This special 2-part audio presentation discusses the growing trend in the evangelical church of turning to 12-Steps programs to remedy everything from alcohol abuse to sexual perversions. Is this trend compatible with what the Bible teaches? Or does it progressively draw believers away from God’s solution for sin? This series will shed much needed light on 12-Steps programs in Christendom today. (CD cover shown; other formats may vary.)

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Walton—The orphan Christie befriends an old, dying organ player and in the process encounters a series of challenging circumstances. He

comes to realize that the Lord has prepared a home for those who serve Him and that the words to the old song, "Home Sweet Home," have a special meaning for those who have yielded themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. The reader will be encouraged and edified as the story draws them in.

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Peep Behind the Scenes

Walton—Behind many smiling faces there are hurting hearts, and behind things that are attractive and alluring, there is usually a high price to pay. An excellent book to teach discernment and reinforce the biblical truth that there is no real, no true, no lasting joy in anything of this world. But to the believer, there is the certainty that in the Lord Jesus Christ there is safety and the only way to true happiness. You will understand why 2 1/2 million copies were printed in 1850!

B05954 (255 pp • \$5.95 retail) **\$5.00**

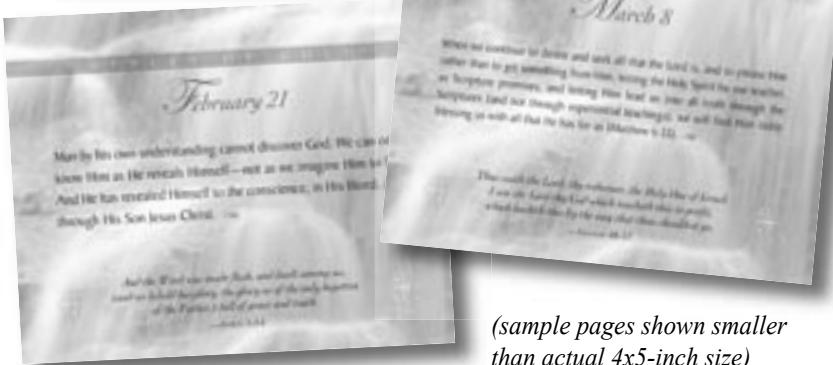
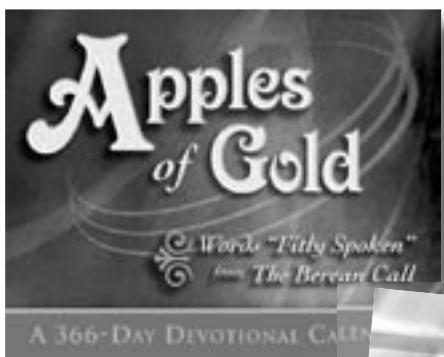
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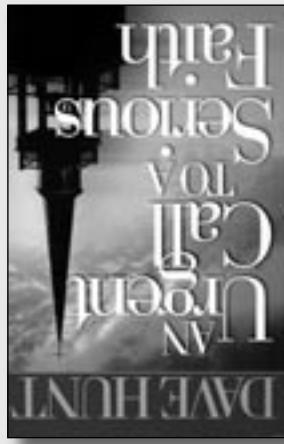
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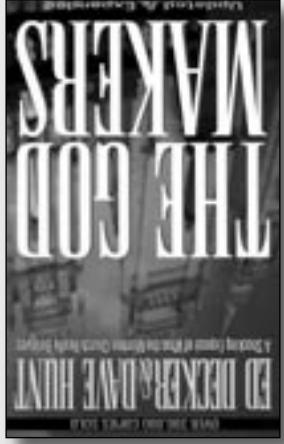
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