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Missionaries to America - Deux

By L.L. (Don) Veinot

This is a paper that tries to identify the unity between the Old Testament and the New Testament regarding God's desire to reveal Himself to ALL people, i.e. evangelism. We recognize the Great Commission in the New Testament to reveal God to all people. Often, however, we think that this call was not part of Israel's purpose in the Old Testament. This is not true. Israel was specifically used by God to reveal His presence, power and salvation to the people of the ancient world. Many times Israel did not recognize that this was God's goal.¹

This opening portion of the online article “Evangelism in the Old Testament” (EOT) by Chris Sarris caught my attention as I was considering revisiting the topic of being missionaries to America. We first wrote on this in the winter 1999 issue of the *MCOI Journal* (vol. 5, no.1).² **“The more things change, the more they remain the same”** (Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr) seems to echo in my mind as I consider our mission: Exposing the growth of cults, false religions outside the church, and false teachers/teaching within the church. As we pointed out in that article more than 12 years ago: When we think of missions, we often think in terms of place—sometimes exotic and almost always across a large body of salt water. The inside joke among home missionaries is that in order to qualify as a missionary, we have to cross a large body of salt water; so we fly over Salt Lake City, UT once a year. ☺

Sarris is correct in his article (EOT) that Israel was **“to reveal His presence, power and salvation to the people of the ancient world.”**³ In other words, they were to be *missionaries*. Being missionaries (or in today’s descriptors, being *missional*)

always has been part and parcel of God's expectation for His people. It seems they often fall short as they become more self-focused and ingrown as a community. The result tends to be less-than-glorifying to God and tends to focus on evangelizing amongst the various groups within the people of God to their

particular *denominational distinctives* rather than to the *doctrinal essentials* of the faith. That is not to say the denominational distinctives are not important, they are; but they are of secondary importance in comparison with the essentials of the faith. In Christian orthopraxy (the *way we practice* the faith) for example, the time and mode of baptism is less important than Christian orthodoxy (*what we believe* about the essentials of the faith) such as whether Jesus was physically raised from the dead. Jesus spoke to this dilemma in Matthew 23:15:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

The context of that statement demonstrates my point. They were focusing on the things of secondary importance and virtually ignoring or even altogether abandoning the things of primary or essential importance.

Woe to you, blind guides, who say, "Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated."

You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? And, "Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but who-

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MIDWEST CHRISTIAN OUTREACH JOURNAL

is a publication of:

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Financial donations are welcomed
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ever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated." You blind men, which is more important, the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering? Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by Him who dwells within it. And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. (Matthew 23:16-23)

He continues publically exposing them and calling those religious leaders *"hypocrites," "serpents,"* and *"a brood of vipers."* (v.29, 33) Jesus was not politically correct, certainly; but instead, He was direct and to the point with those who should have known better. The Pharisees were missionaries, but they had in mind to build up an anthropocentric (man-centered) kingdom rather than a theocentric (God-centered) Kingdom. All the while, claiming and, perhaps, even believing their efforts were for God. However, the sad result was a proliferation of false teaching and false teachers outside and inside the community of faith.

Book Ends In Time

The Church began during the first-century Roman Empire. The Empire was largely pagan and relativistic. Truth seemed foggy and elusive which explains Pilate's response when he asked, *"What is truth?"* (John 18:38). He almost comes across as tired of hearing the competing claims that this or that is true. This is very understandable, because the common folk regarded all truth claims as equally true, while philosophers viewed all truth claims as equally false, and politicians thought all truth claims were equally useful.

Injected into this mix of competing truth claims, the first-century disciples were sent as missionaries to their locales. We see this in a few places in Scripture, but of particular note are Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8. I will handle His last instructions to the disciples as one thought:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)

... but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

They were sent as missionaries first to their homeland people and then out from there. Reaching your homeland people has several advantages: You have a shared culture and language with which you are familiar as well as having a shared history, which is important. You use the same money and measures, shop at the same stores, frequent the same restaurants, work at the same jobs, and live in the same neighborhoods. Even though the Apostle Paul was sent to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13), his heart was still with his people—Israel (Romans 10:1).

The other noteworthy passage is 2 Corinthians 5:20:

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

An ambassador is one who is commissioned to represent his or her sovereign to a foreign nation. In this case, it is one representing Christ to unbelievers. The place it was to be done first was on home territory so to speak. Sending missionaries to other parts of the world is a fine thing; but if we do not build a solid base from which to work, the endeavor will ultimately fail.

A missionary's work was not only to evangelize, but also to teach essential sound doctrine and to raise up leaders who would do the same thing. The missionary—Paul—wrote in 2 Timothy 2:2 to the young man pastoring the church Paul had planted, saying:

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

As we look around, the world in which we live in is more like the first century than any other time in history. Alvin J. Schmidt, in his book *Under the Influence: How Chris-*

tianity Transformed Civilization, outlines the amazing transformation in the thinking and behavior of culture brought about by Christians in the first four centuries. Rampant homosexuality virtually ceased; male/ female monogamy became the order of the day. Abortion and infanticide—once regular practices—gave way to protecting children. There was truth that could be known, and it was found in Scripture. The predominant world view became Christ-centered. Even though many were not Christians, the Christian world view greatly influenced Western culture and thinking.

While it is true many wars and atrocities were done *in the name* of religion by power brokers who (mis-)used religion by wielding it as a club to build their empires, that is not the same thing as proving Christianity was responsible for these great evils. The sway the Christian world view had on culture for 1600 years began to lose its influence in the United States around the 1930s. We addressed some of this in our article, “Stranger Danger” in the Summer 2004 *MCOI Journal* (vol. 10, No. 3), ⁴ so I will only make a few brief comments here.

With “Progressives,” “Socialists,” and liberalism seemingly increasing on all sides, Christians—like the Nation of Israel—largely abandoned interacting and challenging culture, preferring to retreat to a safe place. The reason is understandable: They wanted to protect their children. However, the results of this would become manifest a generation later when the vestiges of the Christian world view were wearing off and disappearing from the American populace in the 1960s and 70s.

Another generation has passed since then, and we now find society has reverted back to embracing the practices of the first century culture. Abortion, infanticide, the glorification and acceptance of homosexuality, as well as the idea that personal pleasure is the primary determiner of truth have become the norm. The silence of the lamps (Matthew 5:14-16) has been devastating (I am aware I have used a mixed metaphor here, but I like it anyway). The attempt on the part of the Church Growth Movement to make the church appear more like culture in order to “attract” non-believers has mostly backfired, and the result has been Christians live more like culture. With each successive poll, we find the divorce rate higher in the “Born-again” and “Evangelical” churches than among Agnostics. There doesn’t seem to be a noticeable difference in the number of abortions or even very much concern over sexual immorality. Some Evangelicals have resorted to trying to bring the culture back to some semblance of Christian values through politics. There is nothing inherently wrong with trying to influence legislation to favor a Christian world view, but legislation alone is not able to influence the heart. It may force better behavior; but in the end, all we have is better-behaved, unredeemed sinners.

Gentleman, This Is A Football

The inimitable Vince Lombardi is credited with walking into the locker room of the Green Bay Packers to address the horrible way they were playing by saying: **“Gentleman, this is a football.”** Using only five words, Lombardi conveyed his point: We’ll start with the basics and make sure we execute the fundamentals. How much more basic could one get? In many ways, that is where the church is at today. With a one-word substitution I would like to say: *“Ladies and gentleman, this is a missionary.”*

A missionary works alongside the pastor and the local church. Their task is two-fold: It is outreach and, to some degree, border maintenance. By that, I mean they need to understand the world view, language, and culture of the unbelievers to whom they are called as missionaries, whether the location of those unbelievers is at home or in a distant land. It is just as important to understand the language and culture of an Agnostic, Jehovah’s Witness, or witch as it is to be trained to understand the language and culture of the people in Zimbabwe. The pastor’s task is to guard and guide the flock under his charge. The missionary’s task is primarily about outreach and then discipleship, which includes getting the new believers into local churches. This has become more difficult today as it is becoming more and more difficult to find good, doctrinally-sound local churches. It is also the case that very few churches support or understand the value in having missionaries to cults and culture. Add to that, many of us engaged in this particular mission field witness the invasion and proliferation of false teaching and false teachers in the church. By speaking up, we are rendered as anathema or divisive by many church leaders for whom the great theologian Rodney King’s credo—**“Can’t we all just get along”**—has become paramount at the expense of souls.

Like the first-century disciples, missionaries are not concerned with empire building

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**HAVE
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BUT RATHER
EXPOSE THEM.**

~EPHESIANS 5:11~

HAROLD CAMPING'S HERETICAL HERMENEUTIC

By Christian McShaffrey



Harold Camping has predicted the end of the world again. One might have thought that after his failed prediction in 1994, the famed *Family Radio* pontiff would have learned to restrain his prophetic license. Unfortunately, Camping has grown all the more emboldened in his apocalyptic authority and has kindly given us less than five months to prepare for the rapture.

Camping's latest prediction for the end of the world is May 21, 2011.

His means and methods for arriving at this date are so convoluted, that I suppose even the world itself could not contain the articles that could be written; but this one is written that you may know Harold Camping is a heretic and a false prophet.

Review And Critique

Camping was once an elder in the Christian Reformed Church and has held many of the basic tenets of the Calvinist tradition. In his teachings, the authority of the Bible, the depravity of man, and salvation by grace alone have been stressed. His ministry has been blessed by God and many—including myself—have been brought to faith through his teaching.

Nevertheless, Camping presently is leading as many away from the Church as he initially had led to Christ. His erroneous teachings are threatening the spiritual health and well-being of the blood-bought Bride of Christ.

Rather than refuting specific errors, this review is intended to expose the root problem: Camping's hermeneutic (i.e., method of biblical interpretation). His method of biblical interpretation is the poison presently threatening the Church, and unfortunately, this booklet has been sent to millions and will continue to be sent free of charge.

As we examine and critique the hermeneutical principles set forth in Camping's booklet, we shall find many of them are orthodox, while others reek of ancient Greek philosophy and vain speculation.

His book is divided into three sections:

1. **Biblical Interpretation**
2. **The Bible is its Own Interpreter**
3. **The Bible has More Than One Level of Meaning**

We shall maintain that format while giving special attention to his various theses.

Biblical Interpretation

We must remember that the Bible, in its entirety, is the Holy Word of God. Every word, every phrase, is God-breathed ... it is imperative that we remember that the Old Testament is just as holy and important and uniquely the Word of God as the New Testament. (p.1)

This statement is as crucial as it is correct. It is derived from 2 Timothy 3:16, and we agree that as long as the Bible student begins with the truth "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, ...*," he is headed in the right direction. Further, the equality of the two Testaments is also here asserted, and this is as crucial as his first statement. So, in these two premises, Camping is in total agreement with both the Bible and the historic Christian view of Scripture [*c.f.*, Belgic Confession 3 and Westminster Confession of Faith (WFC) 1].

The Bible alone and in its entirety is the Word of God. (p.10)

Again, nothing could be more accurate. By virtue of its being the very Word of God, the Holy Scriptures have absolute authority. Camping's interest here is to expose and reject all attempts either to broaden or narrow the ultimate authority of Scripture. Indeed, we agree with his premise:

There is no other source of divinely articulated or verbalized truth. (p.10)

Camping employs Revelation 22:18 to prove that further revelation from God is impossible and rightly identifies extra-Biblical revelatory thoughts, tongues, dreams, and visions as threats to the true Gospel which is circumscribed by Scripture alone.

The theological concept that the Bible “contains” the Word of God is also rightly denounced. He refutes this attempt to diminish the authority of Scripture on the basis of Revelation 22:19.

The New Testament interprets the Old Testament ... The later revelation sheds more light on the earlier one, and it is the final word. (p.13)

The necessary interrelation and interdependence of the two Testaments is here highlighted. Camping rightly asserts it is impossible to understand the OT unless we have carefully studied the NT. However, this principle could (and should) also be reversed.

The NT, although a later revelation, should not be regarded as superior revelation. The NT cannot be understood on its own anymore than can the OT, for **“in the Old Testament the New is concealed; and in the New, the Old is revealed”** (Augustine, *Quaestiones In Heptateuchum* 2.73).

A conclusion that allows us to set aside certain passages because they seem to be associated with a cultural problem of long ago and therefore said to have no application for our lives today, effectively, destroys the authority of the Bible. It is a direct violation of II Timothy 3:16. (p.16)

In his effort to establish the ultimate authority of Scripture, Camping addresses this popular-but-absurd notion and quickly gets to the heart of the issue: Are we ready to be obedient to what the Bible teaches? Those who are not ready conveniently will dismiss entire portions of Scripture as being so historically and culturally specific that there no longer remains any direct modern application.

While we must acknowledge the time-conditioned nature of Scripture, we must also be careful not to abuse this principle; lest we lose the whole Bible (for every book and letter was directed to a particular audience at a particular point in history).

We, therefore, must agree with Camping (and more importantly with the Apostle Paul) that all Scripture is not only given by inspiration by God, but also **“...is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that ” even the modern “man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”** (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Having rightly confirmed the Bible as the authoritative Word of God, Camping then turns to the next principle of Bible interpretation:

The Bible Is Its Own Interpreter

One of the most puzzling phenomena currently facing the church is that theologians of various denominations are so far apart in their understanding of doctrines supposedly related to or derived from the Bible. (p.19)

This is no *current* phenomena. Lack of agreement in under-

standing the Bible always has plagued the Church. One only needs to consult any Church history book in order to survey the various contentions and doctrinal disputes that have risen in past centuries.

In actuality, the Christian Church today enjoys far more doctrinal uniformity than any other time in history.

For instance, the debate concerning the doctrine of the Trinity was not “settled” until the fourth century. The Canon was not agreed upon until the same era. Likewise, the doctrine of justification by faith alone was not clearly articulated until the sixteenth century.

Granted, disputes still arise, but there are some basic Christian doctrines that are, for the most part, taken for granted (c.f., *The Ecumenical Creeds*).

Nevertheless, Camping obviously is less interested in essential doctrine than he is in eschatology;* for disagreement over End time issues is the prime example he cites to demonstrate this **“puzzling phenomena.”**

Let it be noted: No denomination in history ever has reached

full consensus on End-time doctrines. Even the meticulous precisionists of the *Westminster Assembly* refused to be overly specific on such matters in WCF 33.

The problem is that theologians and pastors are taught to come to the Bible from the perspective of the already established theological position of the church or denomination to which they belong. (p.20)

This may be the case, but Camping over-generalizes here. He faults Baptists for coming to the Bible with Baptist presuppositions, Lutherans with coming with Lutheran presuppositions, Reformed coming with Reformed presuppositions, etc. The necessary consequence of such a process, he claims, is that no one ever leaves his tradition. So, we must ask the obvious question: Did he not leave his?

Furthermore, if the **“perspective of the already established theological position”** is the root of all evil, could one expect the multitude of modern non-denominational churches to embody Christian orthodoxy? This, of course, is not the case, because independent teachers who are exempt from accountability are most often the *least orthodox* in their teaching.

Camping’s aversion to denominations is as immature as it is unrealistic. Like-minded Christians will find one another and unite. This is inevitable. This reality can even be observed among *Family Radio* listeners. “Camping-ites” have adopted the presuppositions of their teacher in the same way as Baptists or Lutherans. Camping’s over-generalizations on this matter are almost as absurd as his proposed solution:

The solution to this problem is: we must go to the Bible with no prejudices and no presuppositions whatsoever. (p.22)

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Camping cannot mean what he writes here; because he either contradicts it or corrects it on the very next page by saying we may hold presuppositions—so long as they are these: The Bible is true, it is the infallible Word of God, and it is the only rule for doctrine and practice.

Is Camping trying to recommend a revelational epistemology? He does not use these terms, but it seems this is what he is trying to say when he writes:

... we cannot trust our minds ... we must put every thought under the search light of the Word of God. (p.23)

His conclusion is:

If they [our presuppositions] cannot be shown to be derived from the Bible, they should be corrected. No presupposition should be retained if it is not in complete harmony with the Bible. (p.23)

With this premise, we agree. The inescapable question is this: Are Camping's presuppositions in complete harmony with the Bible?

When I was finally able to ferret out all the biblical teachings concerning the nature of salvation, to my utter delight I found that the five points of Calvinism were in agreement with everything that I had found in my independent studies of the Scriptures. The Reformers of old had done their work well and accurately. (p.24)

This certainly is a gracious statement! Camping, in his own personal study, has found that Christ, indeed, has been Lord over His Church and His Spirit, indeed, has been leading the Church into all truth as he promised.

Camping stops here to explain how he had been brought up in a Reformed Church, but he was not taught how to prove its doctrines from Scripture. This, without a doubt, is a lamentable fact, but it is not sufficient ground to dismiss or despise the Church's historically received doctrinal standards. If Camping wishes to start from scratch, he certainly may. However, he ought not to spread this mentality in the Church.

It needs to be acknowledged there are those who simply do not possess the necessary gifts and resources to search the Scriptures as intensely and accurately as the Reformers of old. That is precisely why Christ gave teachers to his church (Ephesians 4:11). May we not trust Christ in this regard, and did He not promise to send learned shepherds to look over our souls?

Whether intentionally or not, Camping has propped up the postmodern idols of individualism and egalitarianism. In doing so, he also has laid a burden upon the sheep they never were intended to bear.

The only curiosity is this: Why are his followers suspicious of all teachers but him? This notion of "implicit trust in a leader" is more indicative of a cult than a church.

... if all appears beautiful, complacent, and secure, then we can wonder, "Do we really have the truth?" Remember that Jesus said, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" (p.27/29)

This statement further illustrates the "suspicion mentality" that Camping's teaching breeds. It also represents his tendency to de-contextualize Bible passages in order to prove his point (i.e., Luke 6:26 quoted above).

Rather than seeing the present and relative peace of the Church as a blessing from God, he sees it as the proverbial calm-before-the-storm.

Such suspicion has devastating effects upon the believer. Persecution rather than peace is seen as the predominant benefit of salvation. This is strange; for is it not the wicked who find no peace: **"There is no peace," says the LORD, "for the wicked"** (Isaiah 48:22).

When bringing judgment, God first blinds theologians so that they begin to rewrite the rules of the Bible. As a final judgment on the church prior to Judgment Day, He will allow the churches to be overcome by false gospels – gospels in which it is taught that there is more to divine revelation than the Bible alone (p.28)

Camping admits, **"We have wandered beyond the scope of our study..." (p.28)**. Lest we do the same, suffice it to say Camping's heretical ecclesiology*** and eschatology are wreaking havoc in the community of faith.

One must wonder just how he comes to such erroneous conclusions when he can say such sensible things as:

Regardless of how clear a verse may appear to be, the doctrinal conclusion we derive from that verse should not be taught as Gospel truth unless it has been checked against any-

thing and everything else in the Bible that might relate to that conclusion. (p.31)

This statement seems legitimate in that it only requires our conclusions to be thoroughly biblical. With this premise we shall not contend. However, Camping has begun to introduce the notion that most of Scripture is not clear. This is contrary to both the internal testimony of Scripture and the historic Reformed doctrine of the perspicuity (i.e., clarity) of Scripture (c.f., WCF 1.7).

If we wish to know the meaning of word in the Bible, we do not go to a dictionary of Greek or Hebrew To do so would be useless. (p.33)

In this absurd statement, Camping asserts **"the Bible is its own dictionary" (p.33)**. Yet, this is ridiculous, because more than once in his book Camping recommends *Young's Analytical Concordance* and *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* as being able to **"help immeasurably"** in one's study of Scripture.

Young's Analytical Concordance and Strong's Exhaustive Concordance help immeasurably in this re-

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spect because they give every word used in the original languages and where the words are found in the English King James Bible. (p.2, cf. p.38)

Both of these volumes utilize a dictionary format and are, in fact, a step removed from the more foundational linguistic tools of the Hebrew and Greek Lexica.

Again, if Camping is trying to stress the authority of the Bible, that is admirable; but his argument is irrational.

In the case of *hapax legomenon* (i.e., single occurrence of a word), he recommends leaving the word un-translated, and one is to **“... trust that at a future date God will open the eyes of a Bible student to learn its meaning.” (p.34)**

Ideally, the rules of grammar and the meanings of words should be derived entirely from the Bible, because the Bible alone must stand as the final authority in all matters of which it speaks. (p.34)

Camping continues his line of fallacious argumentation by making the Bible its own grammar book as well as its own dictionary. In this, he fails to realize Hebrew and Greek were not mystical, Bible-only, heaven-languages, but rather, they were the common languages of ancient civilizations.

In that these languages existed before, during, and after the time of the Divine inspiration of Scripture, is it not conceivable they may have developed an accurate dictionary or grammar book?

Further, Camping’s assertion contradicts one of his own primary rules. *Nowhere in the Bible* does the Spirit speak concerning **“rules of grammar.”**

One need only consult the trusty *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* to find that grammatical terms such as *tense*, *mood*, *syntax*, etc. do not appear *anywhere* in the text of the Bible.

Surely, Camping’s motives seem good, but his continued absurd assertions only further discredit his argument.

Consensus is never a basis for truth. (p.34)

This presupposition is probably the most troubling in his whole book; because it lends credence to the separatist and individualistic tendencies of both Camping and his followers.

This premise also violates the second most important Bible verse related to the development of a biblical hermeneutic: 2 Peter 1:20, where Peter through the Spirit says, **“knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation”** with good reason. Granted, consensus is no guarantee, but it is a great help in determining whether one has reached a true interpretation. One must always be wary when departing from the traditional interpretation of any given passage, because the Bible was not given to individuals but to the **“... the pillar and ground of the truth.”** (1 Timothy 3:15).

What self-confidence and sinful audacity does that one manifest who accuses the entire historic Church of being mistaken!

One must understand that only the original autographs are to be considered infallible. (p.37)

This premise is another example of Camping’s lazy argumentation, as he fails to point out these **“original autographs”** no longer exist. Fortunately, he does maintain that the copies we have are **“virtually infallible” (p.38)**, but he gives no explanation of exactly what he means by this.

The biblical doctrine of the preservation of Scripture (c.f., WCF 1.8) could have strengthened his argument here, but instead, he falls back on the tired Wescott-Hort rule that **“... the earlier the original was copied, the more faithful the copy” (p.37)**. His inconsistency here is particularly astounding in that

Camping is a staunch Textus Receptus/King James Version (TR/KJV) advocate.

For all his desire to uphold the authority and perfection of Scripture, Camping fails to defend his position. The best he can say is that the Bibles we have today are:

... almost as infallible as the original texts. (p.38)

God is infinitely wise. He could have written the Bible simply, so that no one could misunderstand it. God did not intend to write the Bible to be always easily understood. (p.38)

Camping had previously hinted that the Bible is not entirely clear, and he now begins to develop that notion. It will soon become evident Camping, wittingly or not, has, adopted the ancient *Alexandrian Model* of allegorical interpretation. In order to establish his position that the Bible is not clear, he even employs the same proof texts as the ancient allegorical interpreters: Proverbs 25:2 and Proverbs 1:5-6.

We shall revisit and more fully demonstrate this connection in our consideration of the third section of his book.

One must realize that the Word of God is to be accepted first by faith and not because one understands it. (p.39)

This is an interesting but false dichotomy. Faith and reason *are not* natural enemies, and the rationalists who give priority to reason are no better than the mystics who give priority to faith. While faith may be *above* reason, it is not necessarily against it. Faith and reason must be responsibly reconciled lest all of life become unintelligible.

The Bible Has More Than One Level Of Meaning

According to Camping:

These levels are:

- a. The historical setting.**
- b. The moral or spiritual teaching.**
- c. The salvation account. (p.43)**

While Camping may not be aware of it, this threefold division of the meaning of Scripture comes from ancient Greek philosophy and not from the Holy Spirit.

It was Plato (428-347BC) who taught the human soul had three parts and illustrated their interrelation in *Phaedrus*.

In the second and third century, this idea was married to Christianity as interpreters like Clement of Alexandria (AD150-215) began subjecting Scripture to what had become known as the *Allegorical Model* of interpretation. This method of interpretation valued the “deeper sense” of Scripture as being more valuable than the plain or literal sense.

Then, having accepted Plato’s threefold division of the human soul and believing Scripture was given for the salvation of man’s soul, Clement’s disciple Origen (AD185-254) developed and articulated the “threefold sense” of Scripture in *De Principiis*. His division (almost identical to Camping’s) was this:

1. Literal
2. Moral
3. Allegorical

These early interpreters soon forgot God’s revelation was both clear and accessible; and it took over a millennium for this basic principle to be rediscovered by the Reformers.

WCF 1.9 explains Scripture interprets Scripture, difficult passages can be clarified by more simple passages, and the sense of the Scripture is one.

—Continued on page 8

“Camping” Continued from page 7

Let it be noted that to say that the sense of Scripture is one is not to deny the rich diversity of God’s revelation. The Lord, indeed, employed parables, allegory, historical narrative, etc. We are only asserting the Holy Spirit speaks with a singular and specific intention in any given text. Therefore, the plain meaning is the “deeper meaning”.

God’s purpose for writing the Bible was not to give us a book on history or science. It was to reveal His salvation plan, and God did this in an historical context. His plan comes to fruition in history. (p.45)

In a defense of his “**historical setting**” (first level of meaning), Camping briefly defends the historical accuracy of the Bible. He takes a few stabs at modern-day scientists, offers a few evidentialist arguments, and ultimately concludes that whatever the Bible speaks of is true.

He claims God recorded historical incidents and conversations so “**His salvation plan**” “**shines through**” them.

However, he then admits the Bible wasn’t intended to be history book. Certainly, it is odd he believes the Bible to be a sufficient dictionary and grammar book, but not a sufficient science or history book. This is another example of gross inconsistency in his argumentation.

At times he does acknowledge the historicity of the Bible, but he somewhat undermines it here by making that almost irrelevant. As a good allegorist, he affirms the usefulness of the literal; but he quickly turns to the more “important” aspects of the text.

The Bible is the standard God established for the well-being of mankind. The Bible records hundreds of historical situations which can be examined in light of these rules to discover the blessings that come with obedience and the curse that comes with disobedience. (p.47)

Camping now explains the second level of meaning: “**The moral or spiritual.**” This level highlights the many rules contained in Scripture.

Using 1 Corinthians 10:11, Camping sees the moral lessons of Scripture as being God’s means of showing the natural man his need while showing the regenerate the path of blessing.

We will not contend with his premise but will point out Camping has little or no concept of the rich history of redemption that can be seen when one properly looks at inscripturated history in terms of providential and linear progression.

This is no surprise, for the allegorist seeks a meaning that transcends actual events, and this perspective blinds him to anything but moralistic applications of any given text.

The third level of meaning persistently shines through the Scriptures: the Bible is the presentation of the Gospel of grace. Unquestionably, this is the most important purpose of the Bible. (p.48)

Priority here is given to the third level of meaning: “**The salvation account.**” All Christians agree the Bible is the presentation of God’s Salvation plan, but Camping is inferring something more here.

This author agrees the Bible’s *chief* purpose is to make known the Gospel of Grace. However, this revelation was developed and delivered through redemptive history, which Camping has essentially rendered irrelevant. Camping essentially has reduced Scripture to some redundant reiteration of one main idea.

When giving such heavy priority to the third level of mean-

ing, doesn’t Camping also diminish the value of the other two levels? For example: Are we to read Genesis 1 to find out how the world was made, or do we read it primarily to discover what it tells us about salvation? If the third level of meaning “**is the most important purpose,**” then, perhaps, we finally can embrace those liberal Bible interpreters who deny creation *ex nihilo*. “After all,” one might say, “It is the plan of salvation that matters most.”

The Bible makes many statements that bear directly on the message of salvation, but the message is not always immediately apparent - sometimes it is hidden within the biblical language. (p.50)

“**Hidden**” is classical allegorist terminology. It is very true that all passages in Scripture are not equally clear. For this reason, most interpreters follow the basic principle where we allow “simple” passages to assist in the interpretation of more “difficult” ones. However, this *is not* what Camping means.

The message of salvation, as he explains, is sometimes “**hidden**” behind a text that seems to be teaching a less than purely salvific message.

This word “**hidden**” is admittedly alluring in that it suggests understanding the Bible is some esoteric and mystical matter achieved only by the enlightened elect rather than a gift from God intended for all his children.

Additionally, if one believes that the “**hidden**” meaning is the most important, we have to wonder what other Gnostic† tendencies they will eventually adopt.

One major way in which God hid the salvation message is in the ceremonial laws. (p.51)

Was it that God *hid* the message, or did He *foreshadow* it? Camping may refuse such a distinction, but in this he departs from historic hermeneutical principles.

Types and shadows do play a significant role in Scripture—especially in the OT. They were intended to point toward the Christ (Messiah) and were made effectual by the Holy Spirit to build up believers in the faith.

The reason we recognize the ceremonial laws as being types is because the Spirit makes it clear in the New Testament which people, items, and events from the Old were intended as shadows. Nevertheless, imaginative people can always find more than the Spirit has specifically named. This is where one must be careful.

Can one improve upon God’s revelation? Should one attempt to draw conclusions where the Spirit has not?

It is not a matter of motive (for the ancient allegorists used their model of interpretation for the defense of the orthodox faith), but it is a matter of principle: Can one be wiser than God?

Since it is God who chose the types and shadows, we must allow Him to point them out as well. Camping does give lip service to this concept when he states:

When God indicates that He is speaking in parables ... then it is safe to develop spiritual truth from these Scriptural accounts.” (p.52)

Unfortunately, two pages later, he contradicts and invalidates that statement when he says:

Scripture says that Jesus always taught with parables ... (p.54)

The declaration of Mark 4:34, “without a parable spake he not unto them” applies to the whole Bible. (p.54)

Historical events are, in effect, historical parables. (p.54)

Through this line of reasoning, Camping would make the entire Bible a parable. It is a classic *non sequitur*. Perhaps, sensing the lack of logic here, Camping attempts to prove his conclusion on theological grounds.

His argument is this: Since Christ is *“the Word of God”* (Rev. 19:13) and spoke through the OT prophets (1 Peter 1:11), then His statement about speaking only in parables (Mark 4:34) applies to the OT as well as the NT. He alleges further “proof” of this is Psalm 78:1-3 and Proverbs 1:5-6.

Thus, having declared the entire Bible is one big parable, Camping now has freed his speculative mind to wander.

Parables classically are defined as *earthly stories with heavenly meanings*; and while this is not a bad definition, it does determine a certain approach to interpretation. It suggests parables have a lesson to communicate, and it also admits a certain distance between the event and the reality of that lesson.

One might then wonder: Of what value is history if it is recorded only to point us heavenward? Further, does the exaggeration often employed in parables compromise the accuracy of their supposed historical record?

For instance, Camping would never deny the historical accuracy of the Creation account in Genesis 1. On the radio, He indeed, has waxed eloquent upon the theme that *“Let there be light”* (Gen. 1:3) is really a promise that Jesus would be sent as *“... the light of the world ...”* (John 8:12) and be raised from the dead on the first day of the week. Is the key word *“light”* or *“first day”* or both? This is what Calvin called *“syllable-snatching”* (*Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion* 4.17.14-23). What warrant does he have to reason so?

Really, it does not matter. This arbitrary assignment of deeper meaning to various passages is at the heart of Camping’s hermeneutic. Let us examine another example.

If Boaz is a representation of Christ, it must be decided who Ruth and Naomi represent, and who or what is represented by the other kinsman, the cities, and the other historical elements in the written account. (p.55)

The connection between Boaz and Christ is universally accepted on the basis of both having applied to them the title *redeemer* (though Camping recognizes no such word clue).

On what basis, then, will these other allegedly “necessary” connections be made? Vain and fanciful speculation is the answer.

When a statement in the Bible appears to have no direct bearing on salvation, we must look for a deeper spiritual meaning of that statement that relates to salvation. (p.55)

This search for *“a deeper spiritual meaning”* is as unwarranted as it is inappropriate.

Camping admits a student may spend hours with one verse and never find this *“deeper spiritual meaning.”* He claims:

This is God’s way of keeping us humble. (p.55)

Could it be that such an enigmatic meaning simply is not there? Could the dreadful words of Jesus at Matthew 13:10-17 explain why some never come to understand his words?

In relation to the third level, [salvation account] any spiritual meaning found within a passage must be in agreement with these three principles:

1. The deeper, spiritual meaning must relate to the Gospel of salvation.

2. The spiritual identification of elements within the parable or historical account must have biblical validation.

3. The spiritual conclusion must be in total agreement with everything in the Bible that clearly relates to the nature of salvation. (p.73)

The arbitrariness and speculative assignment of hidden meaning to the different elements of a text is here somewhat bridled; and for this, we should be thankful. At least the fantastical insights of Camping will not intentionally contradict the main message of the Bible. Nevertheless, it is quite impossible to interpret every aspect of a text without violating one or more of his rules.

For instance, in his example of “Ruth as a parable,” (remember, according to Camping, *“the whole Bible”* is a parable) Camping rightly designates Boaz as a type of Christ. The text not only allows this, but even demands it.

However and as previously stated, if Camping is consistent, he would also have us assign *“a deeper spiritual meaning”* to *all* aspects of the Book of Ruth.¹ This simply cannot be done without violating one or more of his own rules. Allow us to demonstrate:

When we apply Camping’s thinking to Ruth as he does to other passages, if Boaz signifies Christ, then we must give *“a deeper spiritual meaning”* to Ruth as a picture of the redeemed. Now we have a problem, for was it not Ruth who came to Boaz? Would this not suggest in *“a deeper spiritual meaning”* that we initiate salvation by coming to Christ?

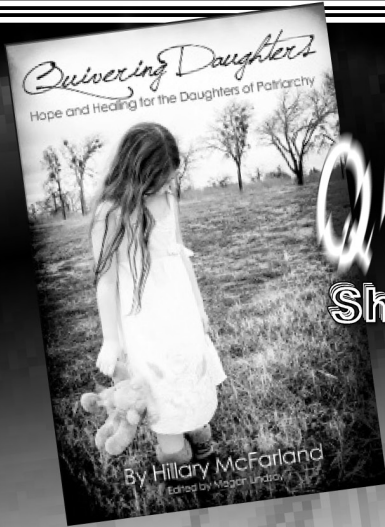
This conundrum might be solved if we say that Naomi, who sent Ruth, is a picture of the Holy Spirit. But if that’s the case, we then have another problem with the deeper meaning: Naomi essentially speaks against God for His harsh dealings with her in Chapter 1.

What implications might that have for our understanding of the perfect agreement and interrelation between the Three Persons of the Godhead?

It becomes clear that one runs into a multitude of problems when trying to unravel every supposed and specific parabolic mystery of the Bible.

—Continued on page 18

**CAN ONE IMPROVE UPON
GOD’S REVELATION?
SHOULD ONE ATTEMPT TO
DRAW CONCLUSIONS WHERE
THE SPIRIT HAS NOT?
IT IS NOT A MATTER OF
MOTIVE (FOR THE ANCIENT
ALLEGORISTS USED THEIR
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ORTHODOX FAITH), BUT
IT IS A MATTER OF
PRINCIPLE: CAN ONE BE
WISER THAN GOD?**



QUIVERING DAUGHTERS

Shakes Roots of Un-biblical Patriarchy

By E. Stephen Burnett

Sunday, July 4, 2010, with my wife at our spot near the community center, reading and waiting for the patriotic orchestra to start—and neither of us wanted to read further.

The book was *Quivering Daughters* by Hillary McFarland (Darklight Press: Dallas, Texas), which was released summer 2010. I was given a copy by Don Veinot, president of Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. He's written much on the topic of un-Biblical patriarchy—a Christian-esque belief system about sex and family relationships that overemphasizes a man's role as head of the household and the roles of his wife and children under his authority.¹ Since then, I've also written much about this on my own web site.²

However, McFarland's book brings the worst of patriarchy's roots and fruits to often-frightening life.

Quivering Daughters (QD) is based on the author's own experiences as a “quivering daughter” (pg.xxix) in a household that valued conformity, supposed “spiritual” poverty and ignorance of the actual source of sin at the expense of grace and the Gospel. Most of the book is specifically intended for women who've been brought up in this particular lifestyle. Thus, this particular reader had a few hurdles going in:

1. I'm not a daughter, and I'm not quivering (i.e. spiritually abused the way McFarland describes it though I have researched “patriarchy” beliefs);
2. McFarland's style is very “devotional,” and it is mostly about admitting the problems exist and finding healing with, perhaps, not as many beat-up-those-abusers-with-the-real-Bible parts as I'd favor!

The fact is, I would have preferred the book to have more direct targeting of *specific* notions of patriarchy. I don't mean in a graceless way, but rather debunking the ways they have used to justify these extra-Biblical lifestyles and even worse legalisms as the most Godly way to live. Their method is to ripped verses screaming from context.

Space doesn't permit more than the following summary of what patriarchalists believe. Many of them say they believe Biblical passages (such as Ephesians 5), which do lay out a “complementarian” vision of differing-yet-equal roles for men and women. But they go too far in seeking as their basis to avoid perceived feminism and supposed compromise—and thus, they lose sight of a Gospel center. Thus, they look to the Old Testament (or their favorite parts of it), for *implications* about how a *father* (not just parents) should uniquely manage his family. That can include keeping his daughters at home (with college and any jobs seen as the domain of feminism) and micro-managing their “Biblical” courtships. As for the “quivering” term, it refers to a belief system (inferred from Psalm 127:5) assuming that if children are the Lord's blessing, then logically the more children (and sooner!) the better.

Organizations such as Vision Forum and leaders such as Doug Phillips promote such teachings. They tend to ignore how God *does* work His will among Christian women who go to college or work outside the home either before they get married and become mothers, after, or if they stay single.

But McFarland doesn't name names or sling Scripture as much as she offers empathy for her audience. Many quotes from other “quivering daughters”—she also runs a blog about these issues³—provide backup for the kinds of sin-denial and un-Biblical actions that can occur in patriarchy-practicing families. And she tells her own painful story—thus, the difficult reading I mentioned at the beginning of this review.

Daughters Quivering Together

One of the less-intense examples of patriarchal parents is cited by a woman named Carolyn regarding her own parents:

They told me I was “deceived” because I am a woman. That God would only speak to me through Dad. At one point I cried out and said, “I just want you to acknowledge that I can legitimately be led by God

myself!" Dad answered me, "That is an oxymoron! You cannot be led by God yourself!" Dad even said I would never be his equal before God. When he said that, I tried to leave the room but Mom grabbed me and tried to physically force me to stay. Over the next four months, they tried many things. They withheld love. Refused to hug me. Told me I didn't love them. Had "discussions" that were 2 to 3 hours in length. Told me I was "making people in my family sick."

They blamed me for any problems, saying that since I'd never told them I had these thoughts, it was my fault. When I tried to explain that I was too afraid to share, they said they never did anything to make me afraid. Anything I told them about pain in my upbringing was called "family-bashing." (pg.58)

The book has dozens of similar accounts ranging from struggles such as this, to the account of the girl abused by a relative whose parents, afraid of being revealed as less-than-perfect, utterly ignored the ongoing abuse. (The disturbing description of another girl, her mother, and a dead dog made us need to stop reading for a while.)

Frequently, the testimonies in the book seem quite overwhelming. As a reader, I wanted truth to shine brighter than the darkness. Yet, I recognize that a quivering daughter, not son, might need more empathy first.

All throughout, McFarland stresses not developing resentful attitudes toward patriarchal parents and other spiritual (and even physical) abusers. Rather she advocates forgiveness and reliance on the true God. It takes a while, but perhaps, the book is at its best when she encourages quivering readers not to keep buying the lies that this is what God is like and what true Christianity really is.

I might not always agree with all her advice, however. Some, including myself, could disagree with her recommendation to quit reading the Bible for a while so one's stigma about its contents can eventually vanish, and one can read it again with joy. On the surface, that seems unnecessary and even disrespectful of God; however, since my original version of this review, I've heard from many women who say this is exactly how God has worked in their lives, indeed, to bring them back to Scripture with a renewed love for real truth. Yet, of the author's suggestion to find a Christian counselor to help: I'd suggest, instead, finding a Biblical local church with solid Christ-exalting leadership that teaches the Gospel and its results in life. Some of the self-talk, also, echoes a find-your-inner-child approach, and the author's lapses into fiction (and I'm a fiction writer!) seemed somewhat out-of-place to this reader.

But overall McFarland's emphasis is one of grace and looking to the true Jesus—the only true Mediator Who died to save His people. That means no one else—priest or human father—should be between God and us.

A Firmer Foundation

QD does get a little shaky at other times, and I don't mean just emotionally. Some of the book could use better organization and editing; it looks and feels self-published (and probably is, in this age of print-on-demand). The introductory essay/chapter presents a great overview of many patriarchalists' truth-minimizing search for a God-approved culture. Material such as this

could have been expanded into a longer section about how patriarchalists twist Scripture:

Jesus neither endorsed, nor participated in, a separatist lifestyle [...] rather, He took positive illustrations from, and participated in, His culture.


[... Gordon] Fee and [Douglas] Stuart argue that "there is no such thing as a divinely ordained culture; cultures are in fact different, not only from the first to the twentieth century, but in every conceivable way in the twentieth century itself." They caution against applying a biblical passage to a present-day situation when particulars in the passage are not comparable to the present-day situation. (pg.xi)

This is solid hermeneutics—something patriarchalists ignore in their fervor to avoid sinful corruption or to preserve the integrity of a belief system that may be consistent internally but is not consistent with all of Scripture. I would have suggested more material be written about this because, from what I've seen, many quivering daughters already have been conditioned to ignore shoulder-crying and empathy; and instead, they also resort to twisted proof-texting from Scripture. Thus, one could first expose the flawed foundation, gently, showing how it is not the right way to read the Word and discern God's will.

Summary

Christians intent on finding Biblical foundations for male/female and husband/wife roles and avoiding junk to either extreme of previous "church-ianity" strains—evangelical feminism *or* chauvinism—will find *QD* a solid place to start.

So far, while many popular and Gospel-centric Christian leaders speak out against feminism's wrongs, I have not yet seen much about lurking "Biblical" chauvinism that is just as prevalent in other circles.

But as the bad fruits from patriarchal, Gospel-neglecting leaders and families become more evident, I'm confident more Christian authors, bloggers, and teachers will add more books and research to the discussion. Perhaps, best of all, Christians, who want to follow Biblical roles for God's glory and teach their own children these truths, will become more aware of the wrong leaders and teachings that are still out there; and they will seek Biblical balance in their families. 



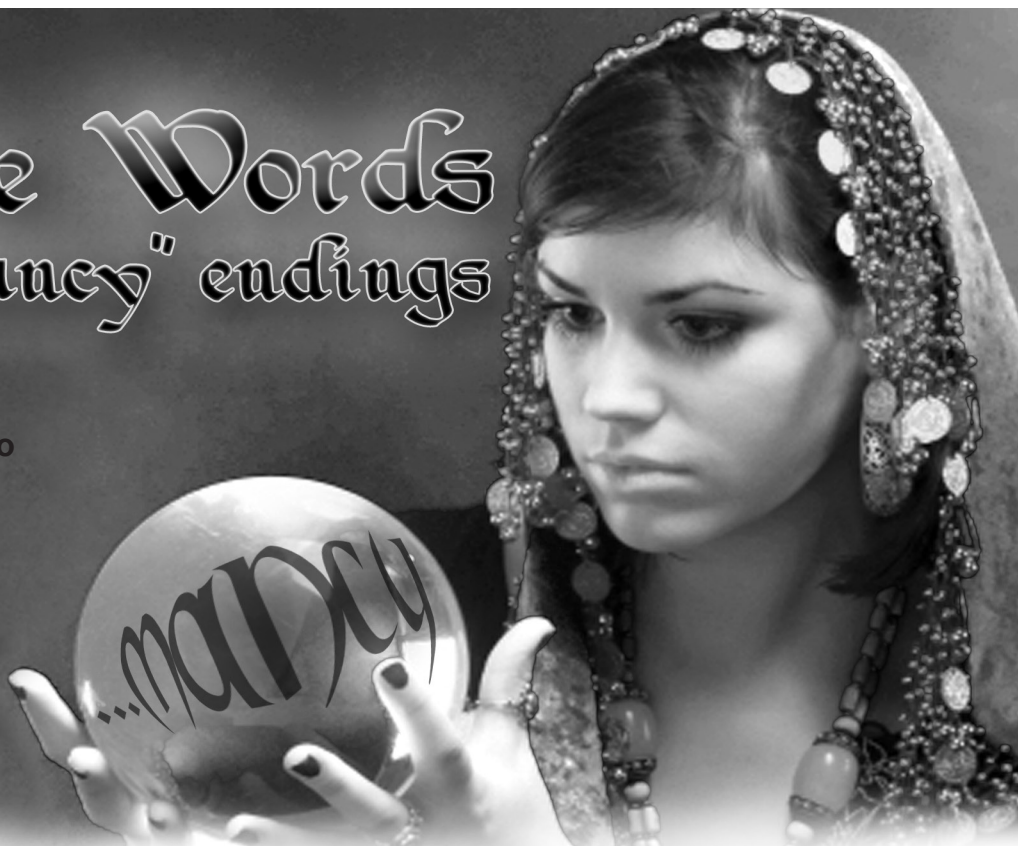
E. Stephen Burnett is an aspiring novelist, community journalist, and online columnist. His hope is God's grace and glory will help him honor Him in all things. That includes *SpeculativeFaith.com* (a team blog to explore Christian visionary fiction) and *YeHaveHeard.com* with its debunking of Christian myths. He also enjoys reading and spending time with his wife in their central Kentucky home.

ENDNOTES:

1. For example, see the Midwest Christian Outreach blog at <http://midwestoutreach.org/blogs/category/vision-forumpatriarchy>.
2. www.YeHaveHeard.com, which exists to bust small Christian myths, lovingly, logically and Biblically.
3. www.QuiveringDaughters.com

Divine Words fancy "mancy" endings

By Marcia Montenegro



The word *divine* is related to the word *divination*, which in a broad sense means getting information from a divine being. The divine being can be a god, goddess, angel, any kind of spirit, or some other alleged supernatural entity. However, *divination* today usually refers to attempts to get hidden information by interpreting esoteric meanings in images, patterns, or the natural world (such as finding meaning in cards or the position of planets in astrology) via attempted contact with supernatural beings (angels or other disembodied beings) or via supernatural means (such as the use of psychic abilities).

Words Ending In "Mancy"

Words ending in *mancy* almost always refer to a form of divination. *Mancy* comes from the Greek *manteia*, which means *divination*. Divination is central to occult practices and is forbidden and strongly denounced by God in His Word. Deuteronomy 18:10-12 lists all the practices of the occult, including divination (which may be translated as *fortunetelling* in some Bible versions).

Some forms of divination referred to in the Old Testament include scattering arrows on the ground (probably to read the patterns) and looking at the liver of dead animals. Ezekiel 21:21 refers to both:

For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination; he shakes the arrows, he consults the household idols, he looks at the liver.

Cartomancy is card reading as is done, for example, using Tarot* cards. This involves discerning a hidden meaning in the images on the cards. There are hundreds of types of Tarot cards, and they are sold by many large bookstore chains. Other cards, such as Angel Oracle cards, are also used for divination.

Chiromancy is divination by reading the palm and is also known as palmistry.

Geomancy is reading meaning in the features of landscapes or structures. Feng Shui is based on geomancy and uses other divinatory arts as well.

Necromancy is divination via contact with the dead. Merely contacting the dead is spiritism, such as is allegedly done on some television shows featuring "haunted" houses, "ghost hunters," etc. A medium is someone who claims to communicate with the dead. This may be done by the medium receiving messages from the supposed dead, by the medium inviting a disembodied "guide" to speak through him or her with messages from the dead (this guide is called a "control"), or by channeling the voice of the dead person.¹ If one is attempting to contact the dead to receive messages or advice about the future, it is necromancy. Therefore, mediumship or consulting a medium is engaging in divination as well as in spiritism.

Arithmancy is divination using numbers, especially when letters of the alphabet are converted into numbers as in numerology. Arithmancy is a course taken by Harry Potter and his classmates at their school, Hogwarts, in the Harry Potter series.

Bibliomancy is seeking to find a private message in a book, especially the Bible, by opening it at random. This does not mean one cannot open the Bible and find a meaningful passage; but rather, it is a belief there is a message or answer specifically for you (and no one else) found only by opening the book at random. Using the Bible this way treats it as though it is a magical book of sayings with private messages rather than a book whose passages should be read in context.

Non-Mancy Words for Divination

There are, of course, many words for divination methods that do not end in *mancy*. Some examples are:

Astrology: Reading meanings into the positions and patterns of the planets.

Scrying: Reading messages in opaque surfaces, such as a crystal (the opaque surface itself does not bring forth images, but it is actually used as a point of concentration for the diviner). However, this practice is also known as hydromancy.

Augury: Reading messages from the patterns or formations of birds in flight.

The augur was a priest and official in the classical world, especially ancient Rome and Etruria. His main role was to interpret the will of the gods by studying the flight of birds: whether they are flying in groups or alone, what noises they make as they fly, the direction of flight, and what kind of birds they are. This was known as “taking the auspices.”²

Belief in omens means certain events indicate a forthcoming happening—good or bad. Examples include: The appearance of a comet, indicating a major disaster is on the horizon; a spoon dropping foretells a visitor; or a black cat crossing your path forebodes bad luck. Many of these beliefs are a part of folk tales and garden-variety superstitions (such as seven years of bad luck for a broken mirror).

Divination – Almost Anything Goes

Almost anything can be used for divination: Using a pendulum to get advice, even for just a “yes” or “no” answer; dowsing, whether using branches, wire, or other object, to find water, buried treasure, oil, etc.; tying a pencil at the end of a string and holding it while asking a question to see which way it sways; and applied kinesiology (muscle testing) is a form of divination mixed in with New Age pseudo-science.

These techniques should be questioned. After all, who decides what it means for an object at the end of a string to swing back-and-forth or side-to-side? Why does one way mean “yes” and another “no?” Upon what authority do these methods lie? It certainly is not any scientific, medical, or biblical authority. Interpretation of patterns or other responses using divinatory tools has its origin in the occult and in pseudo-science—most of which is based on an occult world view.

Psychics and mediums, if not accessing information via guesses, imagination, or fraud, are receiving hidden information from spirit guides.³ Thus, since they are retrieving hidden information through paranormal means, they are not only practicing spiritism (contact with spirits), but also divination as well. Others in the occult, such as astrologers and card readers, also have guides and get information this way.⁴

After all, how can an object (such as a pencil or branch) or a non-thinking organism (such as a muscle) provide supernatural information or guidance? When one is going beyond the normal five senses for information, advice or answers, then it is very likely to be divination.

What About . . . ?

What about Joseph’s cup of divination referred to in Genesis? In testing his brothers, Joseph had his servant secretly pack his cup of divination in the youngest brother’s sack (Genesis 44:1-12). After the brothers left, the servant follows them and eventually opens the sacks, accusing Benjamin of taking the cup. Two verses refer to Joseph using this cup. In verse 5, Joseph directs

the servant to say his master uses the cup. In verse 15, Joseph himself states to his brothers:

Joseph said to them, “What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?” (NASB)

First of all, there is no clear indication Joseph ever actually used the cup; the servant only relayed what he was told. The brothers do not yet know this Egyptian official is Joseph, and Joseph is playing the role of an Egyptian in a high position in that kingdom, who certainly would have such a cup. Perhaps the cup was put in the sack because it was valuable in order to bring the brothers back for a valid reason. Secondly, even if Joseph did use the cup, which is doubtful in light of Joseph’s faithfulness to God throughout his life and lack of any biblical report of such usage, that does not put God’s seal of approval on divination since there are numerous passages condemning it. Furthermore, one should not derive theology from narrative unless other passages support it. In this case, other passages forbid divination; so no matter what Joseph may have done, there is no allowance for divination.

Some may wonder about the Urim and Thummim from the Old Testament.⁵ Apparently, these were objects the high priest kept in a bag in his breastplate and were used to determine God’s will. Some believe they were stones or lots. The reason the Urim and Thummim are not the same as pendulums, dowsing rods, or other objects used for divination, is because the Urim and Thummim originate with God and seem connected to God’s judgment.⁶

When Saul had disobeyed God and later was seeking God’s counsel, the Bible states:

When Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by prophets. (1 Samuel 28:6, NASB)

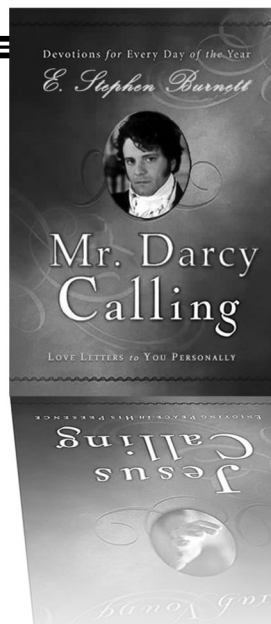
God withdrew from Saul as a judgment on Saul’s earlier disobedience. With no response from God and no prophet (Samuel had died), Saul’s desperation led to a defiance of God’s laws against consulting mediums; and he sought out the medium at Endor and asked her to contact Samuel.⁷

God does not tell us what the Urim and Thummim were, how they worked, or how the high priest initially got them; but since God is the one directing the high priest to use them, it is clearly a God-ordained way of non-occult divination.

There are many cases of God’s people casting lots. In some cases, God directs certain people to cast lots (Leviticus 16:8) or it seems to be done according to God’s will, because the lots are cast “before the Lord” (Joshua 18:6-10). In other cases, it is not clear, but casting lots also was done as a pagan practice (Obadiah 1:11; Jonah 1:7; Matthew 27:35). In many examples, it was done as a random decision-making process—similar to tossing a coin today—and was not divination (seeking a hidden message or meaning).

What is significant, however, is that casting lots is not done by Christians after Pentecost. Prior to Pentecost, casting lots is mentioned only one time as the way to determine who would replace Judas as an apostle (Acts 1:26). After that incident, there are no further references to casting lots. Christians clearly can conclude that casting lots to get messages certainly is not a Bible-based way of making decisions today, especially since the counsel of God is available in His Word.

—Continued on page 16



an open letter to the readers of Jesus Calling

Stephen, a book reviewer who hopes to unite Biblical truth with God-honoring imagination,

To all the readers of a little hardback that was the Christian bestseller of 2010,¹ and with hopes they will understand I seek to support a real and true relationship with Jesus Christ,

Grace and peace to you! Yet, might I honestly ask some questions about this book?

In her introduction to *Jesus Calling*, author Sarah Young writes that she knows these devotionals do not equal Scripture's importance. Nevertheless, she writes in the first person "as" Jesus, and doesn't attempt to find any precedent in the more-sure Word to seek God's words that way.

Instead, her main reason seemed to be that doing this is what she needed and what helped her. *It works for me; so, therefore, it's right and will also always work for all other Christians in the same way.*

While sharing her life story of learning, church-planting, and counseling, Young admits, **"I knew that God communicated with me through the Bible, but I yearned for more"** (p. XII). That statement implies she's already read the Bible—been there, done that—and knows everything in it; and therefore, she is ready to move on to something **"more."** For Young, that supposed superior method includes **"waiting quietly in God's Presence, pencils and paper in hand, recording the messages they received from Him;"** (p. XI), as once did two *anonymous* authors of another book titled: *God Calling*.

But does the actual Word of God recommend doing this? Why does Young seem to expect **"His Presence"** (p. XII) to speak *new* words? Scripture says the Holy Spirit's job is to show us Christ and His Word—which is thoroughly sufficient for our needs (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Why desire more?

In Ephesians 1, the Apostle Paul's loving letter to a new church, he prays not that they would find new wisdom, but rather, that they would have **"... the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints"** (v.18, ESV), through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Paul's prayer is in effect: *Jesus, open their eyes to the amazing salvation and spiritual riches You've already purchased for them!*

Young does credit the Bible as **"the only inerrant Word of God"** (p. XIII), but only after explaining how her wish for more led her to listen to **"receive personal messages from God"** (p. XII) and to sense special intimacy with Him. But why not focus on God's already-revealed Word? **"My writings must be consistent with that unchanging standard,"** (p. XIII) she says; and that reminder is welcome. But why write messages ostensibly from Jesus—either for ourselves or for others—at all? I know *I* haven't mastered the Bible in any "101 course" and now am ready for supposedly superior **"personal messages!"** But even if Young had mastered Scripture, why does she ignore the Bible's Gospel narrative: The one true, holy God sent His Son to save sinners? Ignoring that truth actually weakens how we comprehend His love and promises, which is contrary to Young's stated goal.

"My writings must be consistent with that unchanging standard." Are they? Might we test this book's teachings in love and with the already revealed Word, the same way we must do with the teachings of any preacher or writer who claims to speak for God?

An Allegory

Allegories are helpful, and here is mine. This purported letter from a certain famous literary character follows Young's suggestion that people should **"listen"** and **"record these words"** (p. XII). Of course, my example breaks down only because Jesus is an actual Person. But what if Mr. Darcy were real?

My Darling,

You may have heard such different accounts of me so as puzzle you exceedingly. But though I am absent from you today, my heart ever returns to think of you and anticipate greatly when we will reunite. **Permanent happiness shall be ours, with passions (that) were stronger than our virtue.** And now as I plan to return from London in a fortnight, know that my love remains with you. You may not know how this began; neither did I, for *I cannot fix on the hour, or the look, or the words, which laid the foundation. ... I was in the middle before I knew that I had begun.* Do contemplate my return and think of me in return, for it is our quiet times together I treasure the most.

Very truly yours,
Your Mr. Darcy

This could be the next great literary success: *Mr. Darcy Calling* with daily devotions “from” Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy himself—brooding and mysterious, owner of Pemberly, hero of Jane Austen’s classic book *Pride and Prejudice*! In fact, actual quotes from *Pride and Prejudice* itself—the parts where Mr. Darcy was talking—are in the above letter as I personally sought to “listen” to him, to relay his “personal messages” to you, gentle reader. My past experience with *Pride and Prejudice* allows me to know what Mr. Darcy wants and what he’s daily thinking about: You, and how much he desires your company.

Of course, yes, *Pride and Prejudice* is the *only* source for learning what Mr. Darcy did and said, what we know about him from his creator (the actual author), and also what is mysterious about him. But don’t you feel like you want to know *more* than that? Like you want his actual presence?

Now to explain a few issues that many Austen book purists will take with my approach:

1. *Pride and Prejudice* was not intended to be read this way. The only sure record we have of Mr. Darcy’s nature and what he does is the book itself!
2. The italicized quotes do not place what he said in the rightful contexts.
3. Mr. Darcy’s dialogue takes place in *completely different settings* than in a “personal message” to you, “My Darling.” Sometimes he was talking with Elizabeth Bennet—his actual love!
4. *Pride and Prejudice* is not meant to be read piecemeal. It has an overarching storyline.
5. Elizabeth Bennet is not found in the 365-devotional volume *Mr. Darcy Calling*. Her role and Mr. Darcy’s courtship of and eventual marriage to her are integral to the story. You can’t just hijack a real person (again, imagine he’s real) and “listen” for “personal messages” from him to another.
6. The alleged quotes in italics give lip-service to the original book, but they are useless and even contradictory additions. For example, Mr. Darcy does *not* endorse “passions ... stronger than ... virtue.”

And if I have let errors—such as minor plot disparities, or misspelling Elizabeth Bennet’s last name with two *T*s instead of one (which I haven’t)—slip into this “personal message,” I could say: “Oh, why should those trifling oversights get in the way of having a personal relationship with Mr. Darcy or my own qualification to speak on his behalf?”

Seriously, I hope no one who respects Jane Austen and *Pride and Prejudice* would decry these six critical points as ignoring a need to have a “personal relationship” with Mr. Darcy. Why? It is because this particular “Darcy” is *fabricated*—based on partially remembered quotes from the book. It gives lip-service to the book—such as the character’s name and origins and some traits—but the very existence of this product implicitly says: *Austen just didn’t say enough to help. Now it’s my turn.*

How might Jesus feel to hear His wonderful Word so dismissed? Moreover, can one say he or she wants a personal relationship with Christ, and then decide not to listen to what *we know* He said; or (even with good intentions) listen to someone else who wasn’t listening carefully enough to His Word?

Real Promises: Weakened, Ignored Or Omitted

“My writings must be consistent with that [the Bible’s] unchanging standard.” I’m not sure if Young understands what a vital goal that is. Back in Old Testament days, Israelites were commanded to put to death those who “prophesied” something God didn’t say (Deut. 18:20). Now some believe the gift of prophecy Paul discussed with the Corinthians is identical, and that is a related issue, but Young does not even try to prove her listening for “personal messages” from God is Biblical. She simply assumes it is, starts to listen, and doesn’t even explain how it is God’s alleged words to *her* also apply to readers ... I’m confused!

Of course, if God *had* promised He would communicate “more” with His people using impressions during quiet times, I wouldn’t be exposing and denouncing this. However, He *never* promised He would work through such a method.

Yes, of course, He *could* do this. But the fact God *could* do many things is not proof He has or will. Even a *VeggieTales*² episode portrayed this well: God *could* turn Larry the Cucumber into a chicken; but as Bob the Tomato once reminded Larry, God only does what He *wants* to do. Scripture tells us how God has revealed what He wants us to know about Him: Scripture alone.

Even if God had chosen to reveal “personal messages” to those who “listen” today, those messages *must* be consistent with His already-revealed Word. Otherwise He is a liar, and not the loving, truthful God He promised He is.

But despite claiming to give credit to Scripture alone as being inspired, *Jesus Calling*’s author frequently treats the precious, revealed Scripture in a very casual and cavalier fashion throughout these devotions. Her partial quoting of verses—often mixed with her own opinions of what Jesus was telling her that particular day—bypasses the context of each passage, and even the Bible as a whole.

The first woeful result: This weakens the power and implications of Scripture’s promises. For example, Jeremiah 29:11 is a wonderful prophecy from God about how He promised to remember the Israelites even during their exile (which He Himself had promised and carried out because of their disobedience). But Young quotes only that verse, apart from context, apart from the glorious encouragement that God not only made this promise *to Israel*, but He also *fulfilled it*. She portrays the “promise” as not only narrowly personal, but also pathetic. Instead, the only reason we know God will do the same for us—which is promised more directly in other Scriptures—is because *He has a track record, a history*.

It’s not unusual for evangelicals to repeat God’s promises without their contexts—contexts which are actually what render His promises even *more powerful* and encouraging. Why quote only partially? We treat no other book or writer like this. Is it more loving to Jesus only to listen to parts of His more-sure promises? How does He feel about any of us salvaging His words from the page, or our own memories—anyone steeped in evangelical culture for years could do this—for *our own goals* and not His?

Second, Young’s partial quotes of Scripture phrases frequently end up ignoring what God has already and explicitly said. At random (which is another wrong way of reading any book, including the Bible!), I flipped to Young’s personal-turned-meant-for-others entry for June 18:

—Continued on page 17

What God Says About Divination

Divination is forbidden throughout the Bible. Divination is listed in a passage in Deuteronomy, which lists all the practices of the occult.⁸ Divination practices, like other forms of the occult, arose out of the worship of false gods and are considered by God to be spiritual adultery.⁹ In fact, rebellion against God is compared to the "sin of divination" (1 Samuel 15:23).¹⁰

Divination replaces seeking the counsel of God¹¹ and puts one at risk for contact with fallen angels, who are only too happy to disguise themselves—as the dead, as good angels, guardian angels, aliens, ascended masters, or "higher beings" on another plane—in order to deceive.¹²

Aside from numerous passages in the Old Testament, there is a strong passage in the New Testament which not only condemns divination, but also reveals its demonic tie. In Acts 16:16, Paul casts a demon out of a slave girl who is practicing divination for her masters. This not only uncovers the evil supernatural source of divinatory arts, but also indicates divination can bring one into demonic bondage.

Conclusion

Thus, two very easy red flags to avoid are any activity described by a word that ends in mancy and any person who practices one of these forms of divination. However, if a Christian can understand the principles of divination as explained in this article, he or she will be better equipped to recognize and avoid any form of divination—no matter how the word may be expressed, or how the action itself may be disguised.

All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard version.

*Tarot=a system of fortune-telling using a special deck of 78 cards.



Before trusting Christ in late 1990, **Marcia Montenegro** was a professional astrologer and taught astrology for several years, as well as having been involved in Eastern and New Age practices. Through her ministry, Christian Answers for the New Age, Marcia speaks around the country and writes on New Age and occult topics.

Based in Arlington, VA, she is the author of ***Spell-Bound: The Paranormal Seduction of Today's Kids***. (Life Journey/Cook, 2006).

ENDNOTES:

1. The alleged dead people being contacted, if not imaginary or done via fraud, are in actuality fallen angels (demons.)
2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augury>
3. A spirit guide, sometimes merely called a guide, is a disembodied being believed by the psychic or medium to be a benevolent spirit, whether angel, dead person, or some advanced being in another sphere. However, such guides are always fallen angels, also called demons.
4. The writer of this article, before becoming a Christian, was a practicing professional licensed astrologer who had spirit guides.
5. Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Number 27:21; 1 Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65.
6. "You shall put in the breastpiece of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons

of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually." Exodus 28:30 (NASB); also Numbers 27:21 and Deuteronomy 33:8

7. 1 Samuel 28:7-19. This action was firmly condemned by God in 1 Chronicles 10:13-14: **"So Saul died for his trespass which he committed before the Lord, because of the word of the Lord which he did not keep; and also, because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it, and did not inquire of the Lord. Therefore, He killed him and turned the kingdom to the son of Jesse."**

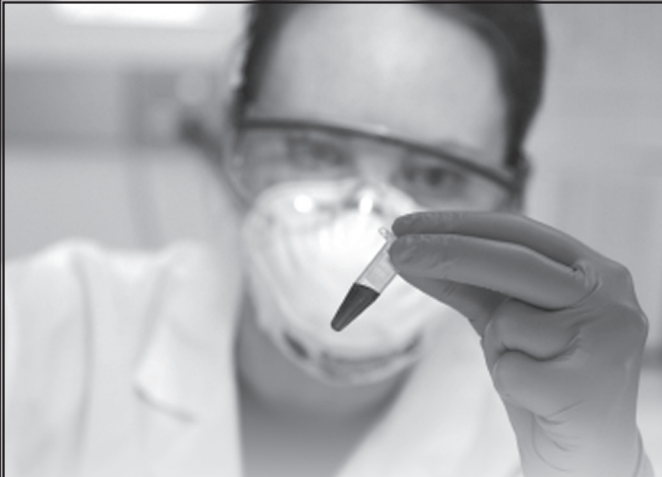
8. Deuteronomy 18:10-12

9. Leviticus 20:6; divination practices, including mediumship, spiritism, and consulting mediums or spiritists, are condemned in Leviticus 19:26, 31; Jeremiah 27:9; 1 Samuel 28:3; 2 Kings 17:17, 21:6; 2 Chronicles 33:6; and Isaiah 19:3.

10. Some translations say **witchcraft** rather than **divination**. This is because the Hebrew terms for these practices do not easily translate one-on-one into other languages and the Hebrew terms often overlap.

11. **"When they say to you, 'Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter' should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?"** Isaiah 8:19

12. **"No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."** 2 Corinthians 11:14



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“Calling” Continued from page 15

You are my beloved child. I chose you before the foundation of the world, to walk with Me along paths designed uniquely for you. Concentrate on keeping in step with Me, instead of trying to anticipate My plans for you. If you trust that My plans are to prosper you and not to harm you, you can relax and enjoy the present moment. (p. 177)

Is this all just a pack of lies? No. But has Jesus really said this in this order? The answer also is, “no.” Young italicizes the **“I chose you ...”** to indicate its Biblical origin and cites the reference (Ephesians 1:4) along with others. But she ignores the fact that in context, *Paul was writing (Ephesians 1:3-10) about a Christian’s salvation from spiritual death thanks to the fact that “...Christ died for our sins ... was buried ... was raised on the third day ...”*: *The Gospel* (1 Cor. 15:1-4)! Instead, she misappropriates this phrase as if it’s only about a Gospel result: following **“... paths designed uniquely for you.”** This both weakens the actual promise and ignores the core truth: Only through the Gospel of Christ’s grace and forgiveness of our sins do we have any hope of staying on His paths for us. Because Young ignores what God has truly said (whether intentional or simply carelessly), her pep talk is neither loving nor encouraging. Whatever her intentions, this becomes a lie-by-omission and a *unique path* that isn’t as unique as it is legalistic.

This leads to a third and last tragic result of Young’s attempts to speak on Jesus’ behalf: *Jesus Calling* omits the Gospel. This is perhaps the worst omission in the book: I could not find, in the 365 devotions, a discussion let alone an emphasis on how **“... everything written about me [Jesus] in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled”** (Luke 24:44) and **“...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ...”** (1 Tim. 1:15). Jesus did not come just to show a better way to live or give us His special **“peace”** and **“Presence”** to help in our troubles and then leave us completely on our own with no power to employ His advice (any self-help speaker could do that). Instead, Jesus fulfilled the more amazing promise: *He died for “... the sins of the whole world”* (1 John 2:2) *to reconcile them and His Creation* (Romans 8:21-23) *to God the Father and is alive to fulfill His promises and empower us to do His will found in His Word.*

Any book that bypasses that—as if expecting someone else to take care of that tangential, trivial part of the Bible—does not help point people to the only true-life Jesus (John 17:3). Any other “Jesus” ends up being *only* a solution for personal problems and a balm for one’s soul during quiet times. Any other Jesus is not the actual Savior Who saves us—not just from little failings and imperfections, but from our *hatred* of God, and does all things for God’s glory.

Any professing Christian book ignoring the Gospel is not offering **“more”** love or a bonus-feature love; rather, it is *no* true love at all.

Relationship Through Truth

My goal is not to be a mean “divider-of-the-brethren” type, or to act as though any imaginative portrayal of Jesus or creative work is an assault on the truth of Scripture’s sufficiency. As a fiction author myself, I’ve written “dialogue” for Jesus, and even imagined what He would say to a man who somehow visited the New Earth before he died! But all artistic endeavors, all imaginings of what Jesus would say or do in a particular situation, *must*

be grounded in God’s actual already-revealed Word. And is it really loving, both to the true Jesus and to our Christian brothers and sisters, to act as though we have managed to reach some spiritual plateau to search for **“more”** and listen for more **“personal messages”** from Him?

Let us say I come home today after work and reunite with my loving wife. Then she tells me about her day, what thoughts she had, what goals she accomplished, anything she has done or hopes to do. What if I nod politely, telling her (and others later) how much I appreciate what she says—but then go off by myself in a quiet room and write down in first person **“more”** of what I *thought* she would say to me, even while using half-remembered phrases she did say?


This approach is too close to some of the rhetoric I have heard from those who *say* they want “relationship” but don’t want to worry about all that truth-and-doctrine stuff. *I just want to know the real Jesus, they say, and all this learning theology and doctrinal facts gets in the way.*

Fortunately, Young does not say that. But she also never reminds us that true love for someone does not come apart from careful, grace-based, intentional listening to what that person *actually said about himself*. One can memorize facts about a person without loving or being in a close relationship with him; but one cannot *truly* love someone apart from caring and loving what that someone has revealed about who he really is.

A possible objection: *But I’ve been in so many churches where everyone is all about dry facts and figures about Jesus. What I really need is to rest in Him and have His peace, not just more things to do and truths to know about Him—“doctrine” without love. Why are you picking on this book?*

Yet, any *professed* “doctrines” about Jesus *also* become lies-by-omission if separated from the love for others in Christ—that same love the Father showed us by sending Him to redeem us.

Therefore, I would simply ask: How does correcting for lies-by-omission with more of the same help fix the problem? Absolutely, Jesus does promise rest (as in Matt. 11:28). But the best rest we can receive in Him is because He has forgiven us—not just for stressing out or failing to believe His promises to help guide us, but from our *rebellion against God Himself* (Colossians 1:21-22). That is a greater story, which brings a far greater love for the true Jesus Christ.

Christians shouldn’t oppose creative re-presenting of His *truth* either in fiction or nonfiction—including devotional books. But we must love the true Jesus. And He calls us to love truth and honor His precious Word—the same Word that Peter said is “more sure” (1 Peter 1: 16-20) even than Peter’s incredible experience on a mountaintop. 

All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version of the Bible.

Author’s bio and picture can be found on page 11.

ENDNOTES:

1.The Evangelical Christian Publisher’s Association ranks *Jesus Calling* as the number five bestselling Christian-published book for 2010: <http://christianbookexpo.com/bestseller/bestof2010/>
Another site, though, based on numbers obtained from publisher Thomas Nelson, ranks *Jesus Calling* at number one throughout 2010: <http://michaelhyatt.com/the-100-best-selling-christian-books-of-2010.html>

2.Veggie Tales is the title of the series of computer-animated children’s Bible stories with anthropomorphic vegetables as the characters.

"Camping" Continued from page 9

Camping has done a great disservice to the Church. He has essentially turned "The Revelation of God" into "The Secret of God" and will have to answer for this in the Judgment.

Camping should take his own advice to heart:

We who believe that we have been called to preach or teach have a grave responsibility to be as accurate as possible in the Word of God. God declares in James 3:1: "My brethren, be not many masters [teachers], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." (p.17)

May God have mercy on Harold Camping's soul. ☞

All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Bible.

*Eschatology=the study of end times

**Epistemology=the study of the nature of knowledge with reference to its limits and validity

***Ecclesiology=the study of the history and theology of the Christian Church.

†Gnostic=the belief that learning esoteric spiritual truths free humanity from the alleged evil material world.



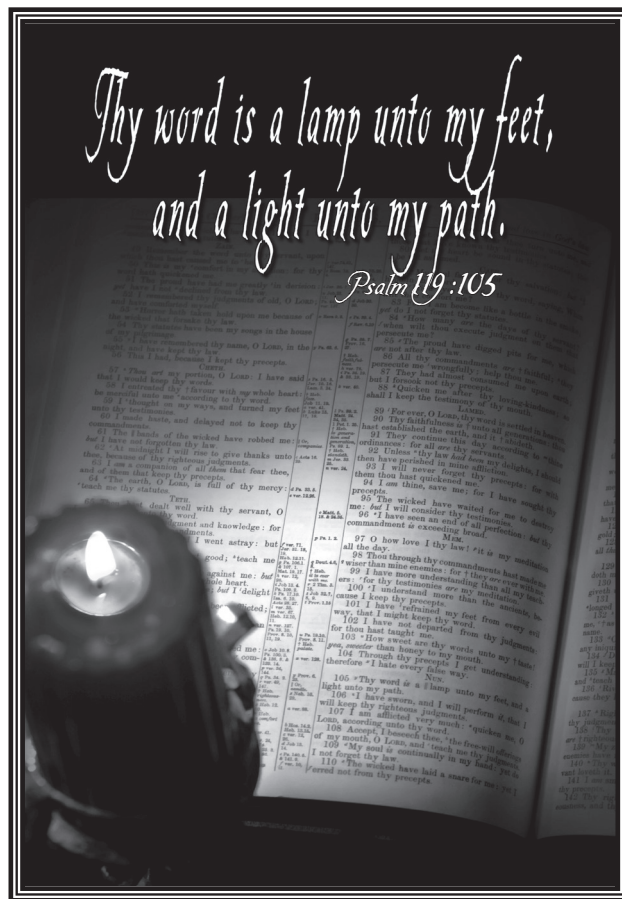
Christian McShaffrey was called to Reedsburg, WI after his graduation from Mid-America Reformed Seminary (Dyer, IN) in 2003 to serve as an evangelist of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In 2007, Grace Reformed Church was organized, and he continues to serve there as pastor. He and Kelly, his wife, have five children.

ENDNOTES:

1 Editor's brief summary of the Book of Ruth: Naomi was a widowed Jew; and her daughter-in-law (also widowed) Ruth was a Gentile who loved and was determined to follow Naomi and her God. Boaz was Naomi's Jewish Kinsman Redeemer within whose field Gentile Ruth finds food and protection. Through Naomi (Jew), Ruth (Gentile) learns more about Boaz (Jewish Kinsman Redeemer), and they eventually marry. Initially, Naomi grumbled against the God of Israel for His dealings with her; but God eventually renews and restores her through what happens with Ruth.

BUT IN YOUR HEARTS SET APART
CHRIST AS LORD. ALWAYS BE
PREPARED TO GIVE AN ANSWER
TO EVERYONE WHO ASKS YOU TO
GIVE THE REASON FOR THE HOPE
THAT YOU HAVE. BUT DO THIS
WITH GENTLENESS AND RESPECT.

1 PETER 3:15



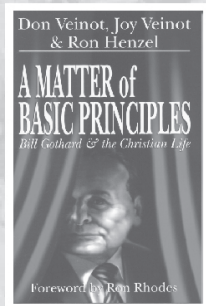
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"Missionaries" Continued from page 3

(nickels and noses) or even particularly about "getting along." We are not to be intentionally offensive for the sake of offending, but we are to communicate the truth in love (Eph. 4:14-15) for the preservation of souls regardless of how well or not it is received. We are to reach individuals with the Gospel who, in turn and in partnership with missionaries, reach other individuals and eventually the community. This should be done in conjunction with and support from local churches.

Support Your Local Missionary

By virtue of their work, missionaries are largely physically disconnected from the local church. Their task is primarily living among, mingling with and talking to unbelievers who hold to opposing beliefs, world views, and behaviors. This is particularly difficult in a nation where Christians, cultists, false religions, and false teachers speak essentially the same language (English) and use many of the same terms (i.e. *God*), but those terms can have *radically different meanings* from group to group.

For example: The term *resurrection* (Greek: *anastasis*) actually means *a standing up again*. Essentially, the physical body which was buried will be raised (*stand up again*) with additional properties and the spirit of the departed will be reunited with their body (cf. John 2:19-21, 1 Cor.15).

In contrast to that, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WTBTS) teaches Jehovah's Witnesses that "resurrection" essentially is a copy of the original. They teach there is no soul or spirit per se, and the body is forever lost to decomposition. So, God makes a new copy of the body and makes a new copy of the memories and experiences of the individual from His copy, and He allegedly puts those into the newly minted body.⁵ One can perceive that without an understanding of the language being used, no vital communication can occur.

Salvation is another term common to many religions, but having radically different meanings. Biblically, the words *salvation* and *eternal life* are synonyms. Conversely, these terms mean two entirely different things to Mormons: Salvation is the possibility of being resurrected, while eternal life is becoming a god or goddess of your own planet. As Lorenzo Snow, the fifth president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (a.k.a. Mormons) said: **"As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become."**⁶

Biblically, salvation is individual rather than national (an entire nation) or corporate (an entire group): **"... he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'"** (Acts 16:30-31), and we can individually have shalom or **"peace with God"** (Romans 5:1). For Black Liberation Theologians (i.e.: Pastor Jeremiah Wright, Barak Obama) and Progressives (Tony Campolo, Brian McLaren, et. al), salvation is corporate and primarily focuses on eliminating poverty, redistributing the wealth, and is man-centered; and talking with Wiccans requires a good understanding of relativism.

In the first century, most Christians came from pagan backgrounds. They already had an understanding of the culture around them. They were learning their new faith and sharing it with their non-believing friends, because they already had a grasp of the language, world view, and culture from which they had been delivered. This is less true

today. The American culture has shaken off the hangover of a Christian world view and ethos. Consequently, understanding their thinking and communicating with them has become more specialized. Missionaries to America are an asset to the Church ***"for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;"*** (Eph. 4:12). As with other mission agencies, Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. is in need of prayer, encouragement, and financial support in order to carry out the mission to which we have been called. ☐

All scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.



L.L. (Don) Veinot Jr. is co-founder and President of Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc., a national apologetics ministry and mission to new religious movements based in Wonder Lake, Illinois with offices in Florida, Iowa, Southern Illinois and Colorado. He, along with his wife of 40 years, Joy, have been involved in discernment ministry as missionaries to New Religious Movements since 1987. He is a frequent guest on various radio and television broadcasts as well as being a staff researcher and writer for

the Midwest Outreach, Inc. *Journal* and is co-author of, *A Matter of Basic Principles: Bill Gothard and the Christian Life*, contributing author of *Preserving Evangelical Unity: Welcoming Diversity in Non-Essentials*, as well as articles in the *CRI Journal*, *PFO Quarterly Journal*, *Campus Life Magazine* and other periodicals. He was ordained to the ministry by West Suburban Community Church of Lombard, IL, at the Garden of Gethsemane in Jerusalem, Israel in March of 1997. Don is a charter member of ISCA (International Society of Christian Apologetics) and is also the current President of Evangelical Ministries to New Religions (EMNR), a consortium of Counter cult/apologetic and discernment ministries from around the country.

ENDNOTES:

1 "Evangelism in the Old Testament" by Chris Sarris, *Online Thoughts*, http://www.onlinethoughts.com/onlinethoughts/evangelism_in_the_old_testament.htm

2 "Missionaries to America?," by L.L. (Don) & Joy A. Veinot, MCOI Journal, vol. 5, no. 1, 1999
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