



**REACHOUT
TRUST**
BUILDING A BRIDGE OF REASON

CELEBRATING 29 YEARS OF MINISTRY

Maybe Next Year

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**Issue 103
Spring 2011**

Once again we had a great weekend together at the beginning of February. God is so good to us in the way He meets us over these days. The administration was smooth and many felt they heard from God, for which we give Him the glory.

The seminars we recorded are:

Ministry on 'Be not weary in well-doing' Friday Evening and Sunday Morning.

Growing and Living as a Jehovah's

shared some Scriptures that showed how we can be sustained.

Gordon Cook's seminar on Jehovah's Witnesses took us through the life of a Witness that would be in their 60s today - all they had been through and what they had been told. It really helped folks understand the mindset of the person we will talk to.

It was great to have Mikle Thomas back with us and again his seminar helped people understand the thinking of a Mormon.



Michael Cummins was back with us and he shared Scripture on dealing with the past which many found helpful and requested prayer about.

Roger Monk in his own special style mapped the way the Emergent Church was developing and took every opportunity to remind us to read the notes! See some of the very helpful defini-

Witness.

Beyond Mormonism's Zion Curtain

Dealing with the Past

Mapping the Emergent Church

Discernment and Deception

Saturday Evening - Testimony and Encouragement

These are available on CDs for the special price of £15 including VAT and postage. Please order by ringing the office with your Debit/Credit card details or send a cheque made payable to Reachout Trust.

I really felt it on my heart to encourage folks from Galatians 6 that we should not be weary in well doing and

tions on pp.14/15.

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Reachout Trust is an international Christian ministry that equips the church, upholds evangelical biblical truth and builds bridges to people in the cults, occult and new age.

We aim to:

Examine in the light of the evangelical Christian gospel the beliefs and spirituality of people within the cults, occult, new age and all not upholding evangelical biblical truth.

Train and equip Christians to explain the evangelical Christian gospel in a relevant way.

Provide a complete service of advice and help to all enquirers.

Present the evangelical Christian gospel.

Work with organisations who will help achieve these aims.

A detailed information pack that shows how you can be involved in this ministry is available from head office.

All unassigned articles are the responsibility of Doug Harris, Director of Reachout Trust.

Other articles may not necessarily represent the Trustees' belief in every small detail.

Requests to reprint articles, in any form, must be made in writing to the Richmond Office.

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Saturday evening was testimony time with a former Jehovah's Witness and formere member of Armstrongism. Also Helen Shapiro and Chrissy sang to us and chatted about their work.

The final seminar before our worship on the Sunday morning was again something I feel very passionate about - Discernment and Deception. You will find the overview notes on p.8 of this Quarterly.

KINGS PARK

We have decided to go back to King's Park next year for the weekend of 24th-26th February 2012.

We are not sure of the exact prices - likely to be about 5% up on this year - but as soon as we have

them you will find full details of the booking procedures and the ability to book on line can be found at:

<http://www.reachouttrust.org/convention.php>

If you prefer you can ring the office on 0845 241 2158.

Full details of the Centre can be found at:

<http://www.actioncentres.co.uk/kings-park/>

The full teaching programme will be made available during the autumn of this year. However, as normal, we can say that it will include:

1) Teaching on some of the major groups we deal

with.

2) The latest movements such as the Emerging Church, that are prevalent at the time.

3) Reaching out to those who have been affected by the occult.

All this plus:

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Previously on *Simply the Truth*:

<http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=reachout&view=playlists>

Resource Catalogue:

<http://www.reachouttrust.org/pdf/Resource.pdf>

Latest News:

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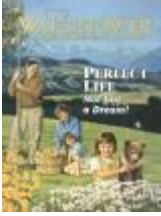
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WATCH THE OWER



2011/1

A New Year a new Start?

Happy New Year to all reading this article. A New Year can be a time to commit to getting fit, eating more healthily, reading your Bible more, praying more, maybe focusing on that ministry you have felt a desire to see moving.

As I was thinking about this I thought: What is going to be different for an active Jehovah's Witness member this year? Will they go to church more? Probably not. They are there many nights of the week anyway. Will they read their Bible more? Again probably not, because they have so many Watchtower documents to read they won't have the time. Well OK, will they commit to their ministry God has called them to more? Well, on this one maybe. However, there can only be one calling and that is the ministry of going door to door warning people of hard times to come. For them there is no individuality, there is no sense of what direction is God going to take me in this year, like there is for many of us. It is just the same direction of all the rest of the Watchtower membership, the 'one size fits all' ministry pattern.

In the Watchtower 1983 January 15 p.27 in the article *Armed for the Fight Against Wicked Spirits* we read:

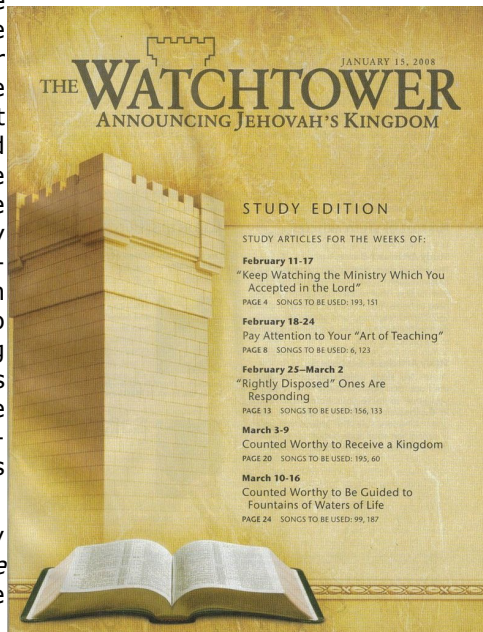
Fight Against Independent Thinking

19 As we study the Bible we learn that Jehovah has always guided his servants in an organized way. And just as in the first century there was only one true Christian organization, so today Jehovah is using only one organization. (Ephesians 4:4, 5; Matthew 24:45-47) Yet there are some who point out that the organization has had to make adjustments before, and so they argue: "This shows that we have to make up our own mind on what to believe." **This is independent thinking. Why is it so dangerous?**

20 **Such thinking is an evidence of pride.** And the Bible says: "Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling." (Proverbs 16:18) If we get to thinking that we know better than the organization, we should ask

ourselves: "Where did we learn Bible truth in the first place? **Would we know the way of the truth if it had not been for guidance from the organization? Really, can we get along without the direction of God's organization?" No, we cannot!**-Compare Acts 15:2, 28, 29; 16:4, 5.

21 When we consider the mighty spirit forces who are fighting against us, **we must acknowledge that on our own we could not possibly win. Yet with God's backing, and with the help and support of his organization-our worldwide asso-**



ciation of brothers - we cannot lose. (Psalm 118:6-12; 1 Peter 5:9) However, we must never forget that we are in a spiritual war, and that wartime is no time to be relaxing, enjoying only leisure and the pleasures of life. Rather, it is the time for vigorous training, alertness and self-sacrifice. The enemy has been able to get some from among us to relax their guard, and these have become battle casualties. May this never happen to us! It will not if we keep on "the complete suit of armor from God" and "stand firm against the [crafty acts] of the Devil."-Ephesians 6:11, 12.

In a recent meeting I had with some Jehovah's Witnesses I asked them what happens if they disagree with something the Watchtower taught?

The lady said that they would go to the Bible until they agree with what's been said. There was no sense of them really being able to disagree with anything coming from the mouth of the Organisation, literally Gods mouthpiece to them.

The point of this article is to look at the conditions which we see Jehovah's Witness members in. Like many people reading here, when I first came to Christ I felt a sense of freedom like never before. It was like my eyes had been literally opened to God's love for me and everyone else. Rather than feeling I had to serve God and go to church and read my Bible, it was more like I had gained the freedom to do it.

In the world many millions of Jehovah's Witnesses faithfully knocking on doors worldwide are in a system of bondage; they desperately need freedom from it. It can be 'impolitically correct' these days to speak against any system of belief. However, we as the Christian church need to lovingly respond whenever we get opportunity, as these faithful members out knocking on doors are simply lost people. They have a bit of Christ in front of them when He is referenced in their magazines but they do not know Him and are not saved by Him.

This hold the organisation has over its members is further demonstrated through various other parts of their publications. For instance, it has been said in the Watchtower magazines that its members do well to think of the organization as their parent and they the children.

Those expressions which made the Witness an individual before his recruitment into the Watchtower are gone and replaced with child-like dependency:

a little child who will be dependent on the Watchtower organization as his parent. Through the process of time, his life will be re-defined. - The Watchtower - February 1, 1961 pp. 80-81

How serious is this taken by Jehovah's Witnesses? One of these Witnesses said,

"I have learned to view Jehovah as my father and his organization as my mother." - The Watchtower - November 1, 1995 p. 25

And obedience is also seen as a top priority.

Obedience is the basic formula from which the Watchtower organization operates! The Watchtower June 1, 1967 p. 337

Obedience alone counts! - See The Watchtower - April 15, 1956 p. 243

At first, conformity seems unnatural, but it must be done. There is no other way! - The Watchtower - May 1, 1988 p. 11

Interestingly this process of teaching you to think this way starts from the very first Bible study someone goes through with a witness who knocks on their door. Anyone who has studied with the Witnesses, looking at books such as "What does the Bible really teach?" or "Knowledge that leads to Everlasting Life" among others, will know that here you are taught to get your answers from the Watchtower. Every question asked at the bottom of each page is answered for you in the text so this saves someone who does not know the answers to biblical questions the embarrassment of not knowing the answer. However, this also teaches them important principles that will take them right through life as a Witness member, that the *Organisation has the answers*.

The last time I met up with some Jehovah's Witnesses, for months I went through one of these study books with them, giving my answers from the Bible as apposed to their provided ones. I did this in the hope that I could build relationship with them, so that when I did start to challenge them I would have gained

their trust enough for them to listen. However, one week when I said, "Let's not do the Bible study", and I asked them some simple questions about the authority of the organisation, they stopped seeing me.

However much Jehovah's Witnesses might say their authority is the Bible in reality there is a higher authority that is the Watchtower. Many criticise the Mormons for having three extra books of scripture. However, this organisation has multiple volumes of material comparable with scripture every month subtly helping them to look at Christ, but not too closely, and look at the Watchtower, very closely!

This has helped me understand the answer to a question I have often wondered: Should we as Christians, when attempting to communicate gospel truth to Jehovah's Witnesses that come to our house, go through their publications with them in the way I did? Though I respect there are many approaches I would say no, as all you are doing is keeping them in their comfort zone and allowing them to do, what they do with everyone else happily sidestepping any issues you have. I would say when these opportunities come just speak to them about Christ. Say, "You claim to be Christian, I am a Christian. Let's talk to each other about the Chief Cornerstone of Christianity that is Jesus."

When we look at the Jesus of the Bible, and what we can have in Him, what do we see?

Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 Therefore, if

anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Matthew 11:28 Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

All the Watchtower is doing is trying to replace this freedom and grace in Christ with yet more bondage in religion.

Stay close to the Watchtower organization, Armageddon is near! - The Watchtower - January 1, 1955 p. 24

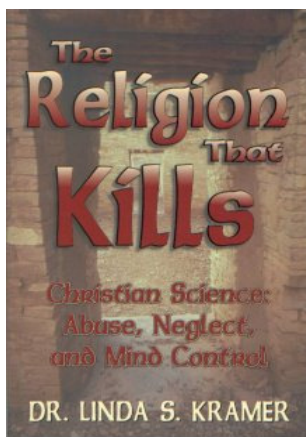
Come to the side of Jehovah's organization, if you want to live in God's new world! - The Watchtower - Nov 15, 1953 p. 702

Come to Jehovah's organization for salvation! - The Watchtower - November 15, 1981 p. 21

This year let's lovingly stand against the bondage this organisation puts on people by taking every opportunity we get to share this amazing grace in Christ when we get a knock on the door.

As well as this, please prayerfully consider opportunities to seek these people out and reach them. This could include helping with our Jehovah's Witness blog, or it could mean coming along when some of us go to them. This year I would like to have some of us at one of the Jehovah's Witness conventions, to take opportunities to speak to some of them there. If you have interest in either of these please email me on:

bobbygilpin@googlemail.com ☒

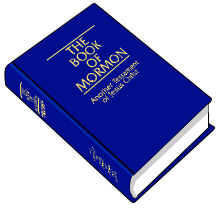


The Religion that Kills by Dr Linda S. Kramer is a 265-page book explaining how Christian Scientists are trapped by a way of thinking which twists their perception of reality, teaches them to mistrust their senses, and short-circuits their ability to make informed, reasoned decisions regarding health care.

Linda was raised as a Christian Scientist for 30 years before she left for doctrinal reasons. She then spent many years seeking to break its emotional hold. This is her story and the revelation of the things she discovered.

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TRUTH RESTORED - 66



BY MIKE & ANN THOMAS

THE BIBLE'S 'MISSING BOOKS'

The Mormon Church claims to have identified at least twenty books they think are missing from the Bible. These are considered serious omissions and, listing these missing books in his seminal work *The Articles of Faith*, Mormon apostle James Talmage wrote:

"Those who oppose the doctrine of continual revelation between God and His Church, on the ground that the Bible is complete as a collection of sacred scriptures, and that alleged revelation not found therein must therefore be spurious, may profitably take note of the many books not included in the Bible, yet mentioned therein, generally in such a way as to leave no doubt that they were once regarded as authentic." (Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 1960 ed.p.501)

Here is the list from Talmage's book:

The Book of the Covenant cited in Exodus 24:4-7

The Book of the Wars of the LORD cited in Numbers 21:14

The Book of Jasher cited in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18

The Book of Statutes cited in 1 Samuel 10:25

The Book of the Acts of Solomon cited in 1 Kings 11:41

The Books of Nathan and Gad cited in 1 Chronicles 29:29 and 2 Chronicles 9:29

The prophecy of Ahijah and the visions of Iddo cited in 2 Chronicles 9:29

The Book of Shemaiah cited in 2 Chronicles 12:15

The Book of Jehu cited in 2 Chronicles 20:34

The Acts of Uzziah written by

Isaiah cited in 2 Chronicles 26:22

The Saying of the Seers cited in 2 Chronicles 33:19

The missing letters of Paul cited in 1 Cor.5:9; Eph.3:3-4; Col.4:16

The missing letter of Jude cited Jude 3

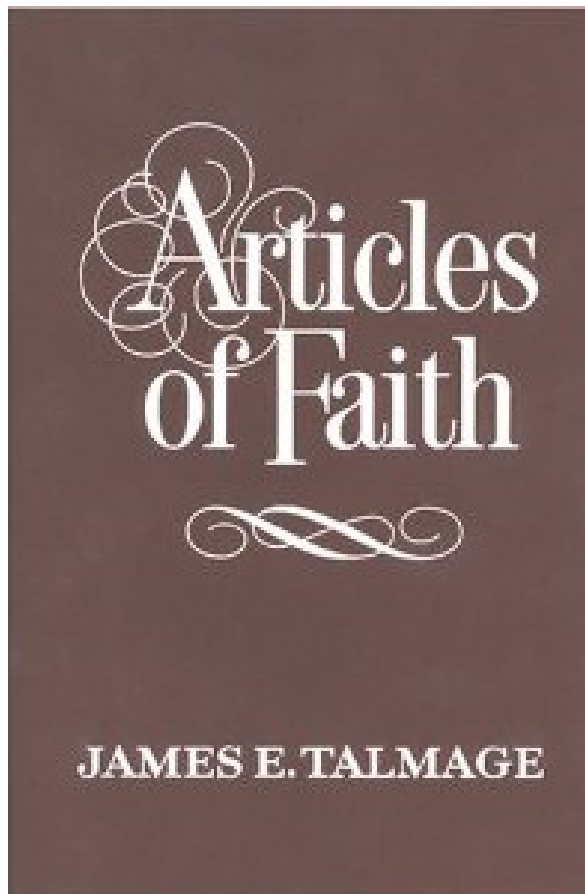
The Prophecies of Enoch cited in Jude 14

The missing text quoted in

the Scriptures "even as they are in mine [God's] own bosom, to the salvation of mine elect" (Doctrine and Covenants 35:20 [34:5 in RLDS version], December 1830). There is a distinct contrast between the incomplete, "as far as it is translated correctly" Bible and Mormon Scripture. The marks of this new dispensation are to be comprehensiveness and trustworthiness; fully the word of God as it is in the bosom of God.

The early Mormons were preoccupied with record keeping, from the 26 volume Journal of Discourses recording the sermons of Brigham Young and others to the personal journals diligently kept and still kept by Mormons today. The aim is a comprehensive and authoritative account of God's dealings with Mormons. If the absence of these books is serious enough, then, to cause Mormons to doubt the reliability of the Bible, their absence is serious indeed. This makes their absence from the so-called Inspired Translation all the more puzzling.

How went the Wars of the Lord? What were the Acts of Solomon, or Uzziah? What did the Seers say and Ahijah prophesy? What did Iddo see in vision? What were the statutes that ruled the conduct of kings? We are not to know since the books whose absence Mormons insist fatally compromises our Bible are absent from Mormon Scripture. Indeed, Joseph Smith, far from expanding the Biblical record by restoring lost books, is one book short because he deleted the Song of Solomon, reducing our 66 books to 65 where he might have had 86! "Missing" books serve to discredit our Bible while failure to restore them conveniently removes any responsibility to account for them.



Mt.2:23

A declaration of belief cited in Luke 1:1

Joseph Smith published his own Bible, "an inspired revision of the Authorized Version." (Title page, *The Holy Scriptures, Inspired Version*, Pub. Herald House) He was "commanded" in 1830 to produce a new version of

DEFINE "MISSING"

We were having a dinner party, my wife and I. Six guests were invited. Perhaps you know them: Bob and Carol, Ted and Alice and Dick and Dora. A splendid time was had by all, spoiled only by the absence of Bob, who had man flu and so couldn't make it. During the evening someone asked where Janet and John were and I explained that they hadn't been invited because our table seats only eight. But I would be sure to include them on another occasion. You see, Bob was missing in the sense that he was meant to be there but was absent, while Janet and John were missing in the sense that they were absent because they were not meant to be there.

Something is only missing in the way Mormons mean it if it is meant to be there in the first place. Just because something is mentioned in the Bible doesn't mean it is intended that it should be included in the Bible. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were included according to certain sound criteria while, based on those same criteria, other gospels were not. What Mormons are doing is complaining that certain books didn't get invited to the party. But then neither have they been invited to the Mormon party!

DEFINE SCRIPTURE

This idea of ongoing revelation and an exhaustive and comprehensive record raises a very important question; what exactly is Scripture?

Is the Bible intended to be an *exhaustive open record* to which further revelation is added? Or is it a discrete collection of messages, a closed canon that is nevertheless sufficient for life and godliness? Are we spiritually impoverished because we have no record of Jesus' childhood, or His life from the age of twelve until He was 30 years old? Or does the Bible give us only those things relevant to our salvation and our saved lives? The Bible favours the latter:

"Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." (Jn.21:25 ESV)

The notion of an exhaustive account of God's dealings with man is problematic, since the world would not be able to contain, nor humanity be able to make use of, such a record.

"As for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you have learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good



work." 2 Tim.3:14-16 ESV)

Paul makes clear in his letter to Timothy that Scripture has the purpose of making people "*wise for salvation through faith in Christ...competent, equipped for every good work.*" The question is not whether we have an open canon but of whether we are wise for salvation and competent, equipped for every good work. It doesn't take an encyclopaedic knowledge, just knowledge of Christ to be saved and an understanding of what we are to be in Christ to be equipped for every good work.

Timothy was wise for salvation because he knew from childhood

the sacred writings (Old Testament) that pointed to Christ and knew the Christ to whom those Scriptures pointed. He was equipped for every good work because he had the example of Paul to follow (2 Tim.3:10). We, too, have that example in the Bible that has been wonderfully preserved for us.

"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book." (Rev.22:18-19 ESV)

Mormons are always quick to point out that this dread warning applies only to the Book of Revelation and not the whole Bible; they miss the point. Whether we consider this or similar warnings in Deut.4:2 and Deut.12:32 the offence is not in multiplying books but in adding to the established, sufficient word. We are not limiting God in having a closed canon but obeying God in recognising His purpose in having a sufficient message.

Does God speak today? Of course He does! We follow prophets who lead us, as they led Timothy, to being wise for salvation and we follow, as did Timothy, the examples of New Testament leaders like Paul, growing in competence, increasingly "equipped for every good work." The Bible does speak today (Heb.4:12), the Spirit opens our understanding (Jn.16:13) and we, devoting ourselves to the apostle's teaching (Acts 2:42-44), walk in His grace, living our faith before a watching world and looking forward to that day when He will come for His own (Rev.22:20; 1 Cor.16:22)

BOOKS

The picture conjured in people's minds by "books" is of sizeable volumes, something the size of one of the Major Prophets or a gospel. When Mormonism produces additional and sizeable "books of scripture" such as the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants the inference that "books" means substantial volumes containing many

key lost doctrines is reinforced. When twenty such missing "books" are identified it is an alarming revelation and feeds the popular conception that the Bible is unreliable and incomplete.

But when the Bible talks about "books" it is usually translating a word such as the Hebrew *sepher* or the Greek *biblia* which translate "writings" and can mean anything from a letter (Jude is just 1 chapter containing 25 verses), to a legal document (the "book" in 1 Samuel 10:25 is an example), to a lengthy chronicle (Chronicles and Kings). It is important then to not take too literally in the modern sense the word "books."

We have already said that just because a book is mentioned in the Bible doesn't mean it was intended that it should be in the Bible. Of the twenty books listed by Mormons some certainly are mentioned but not included in Scripture while others are, curiously, included in the "missing" list - even though they are found in the Bible, or even don't exist at all.

REPORTING, RECORDING AND REDACTING – SIX SOURCE BOOKS

The popular Mormon picture of prophets and of Scripture is Joseph Smith bent over his gold plates dictating to a scribe an "inspired" translation of the Book of Mormon. Of Smith getting messages directly from God, such as are found in the Doctrine and Covenants. Messages

meant to read like the "Thus saith the LORD" sections of Isaiah, Jeremiah and others. When Mormons talk about the "fullness of the gospel" they have in mind not just a 'sufficient for salvation' message, but an exhaustive record of revelation issued straight from the throne room of the Almighty untouched by profane hands.

God does indeed speak through prophets in the Bible but much of the Bible is historical narrative, wisdom literature, songs and poetry, proverbs, laws and statutes, etc. the stuff of humanity. Scripture is not simply dictated by God, who works through men in the familiar process of transmitting oral tradition, making written chronicles - and redaction, or editing. This makes it no less the Word of God but it helps explain that many "books" are not so much lost as used as sources in the editing and transmission of works that *are* in the Bible.

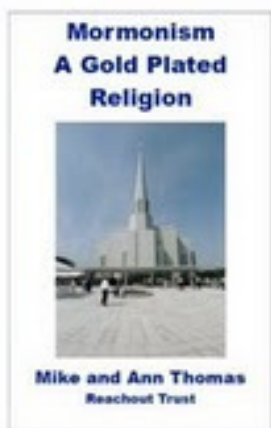
Six so-called "missing books" fall into this category of sources for the records we do have in the Bible. These six so-called "missing books", Nathan and Gad, Shemaiah, Jehu, Uzziah, and the Seers all relate to the monarchic period in Israel. *"The authors of Kings specifically claim to have access to written sources of information about the monarchic period, both for Israel and for Judah."* (Study Note to 1 Kings 14:19, ESV Study Bible, 2008)

This was a period when literacy was widespread in and around Pal-

estine and writing was employed in legal, business, literary and religious texts. In the period from 1200 BC to the fall of Judah in 587-586 writing has been described as pervasive. The picture we have is of writers and Chroniclers drawing on a vast store of royal archives, temple libraries and archives, as well as foreign annals and inscriptions to produce what has been carefully passed down to us. The writings of Nathan and Gad, of Shemaiah and Jehu, Isaiah's record of Uzziah and the Chronicles of the Seers were all used to supplement existing material in telling the story of Israel and Judah.

The period covered by Nathan and Gad is covered in Samuel. Chronicles covers the same period as Kings and the Chroniclers' use of Shemaiah and Iddo, cited in 2 Chronicles 12:15, explains how they were able to supplement the material in Kings. The same might be said of Jehu, a source cited in 2 Chronicles 20:34, Uzziah cited in 2 Chronicles 26:22 and the Chronicles of the Seers cited in 2 Chronicles 33:19. This last expands on 2 Kings 21:17-18 in emphasising Manasseh's prayer and humble repentance as key to his reign.

The "missing books" were available to, and drawn on by, the Chroniclers whom God led to write as they did, and whose writings cover the same periods and events as contained in those "missing" documents. Therefore we can be confident that nothing is missing in the sense that it should have been there in the first place. Next time we will look at the list book-by-book. ☐



Mormonism Explained

- This book is: A 'how-to manual' for understanding Mormonism.
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- Learn the best way for sharing the true person of Jesus Christ with them..

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Deception and Discernment

The Dictionary definition of discernment is, "Recognise, perceive distinctly" – no haziness or doubt; no room for question. Discernment is necessary when dealing with the subject of deception.

Why should we bother? Surely, if we just leave everything alone, God will sort it out? This appears at odds with the New Testament. Heresy and wrong doctrine are not new, they lived with it in the Early Church and, as such, it is not surprising that we find ways to deal with it in the Scriptures.

Introduction - Jude 3, 4

The reason given, for this need to contend, is basically deception – hence they go together. Some who were against the truth and the faith that had been delivered had "crept in without being noticed". This is the translation of just one Greek word - the only time it is used in New Testament - *pareisduno*, which literally means to 'enter secretly' or 'slip in stealthily'.

To do this they must have blended in by pretending to be 'Christian teachers', but their doctrines and actions denied the very grace of the God they said they served.

Deception in the Church – Acts 20:17ff

Paul warns of the responsibility of the shepherds, to protect themselves and 'all the flock' from the danger of false teachers. The Holy Spirit has commissioned them with the responsibility to oversee of the church.

Some 'savage wolves' (v.29) would enter into the church from the outside and plunder the members but others would arise from the *inside*, distorting (twisting) the truth for the purpose of building up their own following (v.30). They would twist the truth and preach lies to suit what the people want to hear.

Here we find these hypocrites and perverters of the Gospel who will entice undiscerning people away from the God. Please note that this is linked clearly (vv.33-

34) with issues of money, possessions and position.

We are to 'be on guard' (v.28) and to 'be on the alert' (v.31). People are often blasé about these warnings and think, "It could never happen here!" But the seriousness is shown in that Paul shed many tears (v.31) over the issue!

Deception in the Word and Action – 2 Peter 1:12-2:3

Peter is preparing the disciples for his departure just like Paul. Concerned that the next generation continue with the same diligence.

Even though the disciples already knew about the things, Peter intended to remind them once again. These issues were vitally important for spiritual safety. He does not apologise for repetition.

Prophecy of Scripture does not have its origin in the will of man, but from God to man through the Holy Spirit. Holy men of God 'spoke' as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Just as there had been false prophets in the past so also in the future. It is our responsibility as Christians to test all things. We are to judge what is spoken by people who claim to be speaking on behalf of God. We cannot just blame the speaker (God will bring judgment) we must be concerned for the hearer.

False prophets are within the congregations among God's people. They introduce their heresies secretly - by stealth. Such teaching is destructive - not only to the hearer but to the teacher. God will bring judgment upon the promoter of false doctrine.

Unfortunately many will follow the cancerous doctrines of the false teachers. The Holy Spirit is warning that many professing Christians will follow after these teachers and be corrupted by their teachings. Many of the false teachers and false prophets are motivated by greed and they will financially and physically exploit shallow and gullible Christians with fanciful stories that have been designed specifically to appeal to their 'itching ears.'

Deception in the Second Coming – Matthew 24:4-5

Two days prior to the Passover and His Crucifixion, Jesus was instructing His disciples on the Mount of Olives. He was not going to waste words; please note carefully, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."

There will be, has already started, a great deception associated with His coming and the end of the age. These were the first words uttered by the Lord in His reply to His disciple's query. The Lord also pointed out that many will come in His name, that is, in the name of Jesus, and deceive many. Please note Jesus said many! He goes on to say, "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."

The word translated 'offended' comes from the Greek *skandalizo*, which means 'to entrap', i.e. 'to trip up' or 'to entice to sin, or apostasy'.

There are a number of interpretations as to the meaning of Jesus' words that many will come saying "I am Christ." First, it could mean that many will come in Jesus' name claiming of themselves that they are Christ. Somehow, these false teachers will convince themselves and a great number of their followers to believe that they are actually Jesus Christ. Although you might think this not possible there are many that are teaching that we are almost on a par with Christ.

"Man... was created on terms of equality with God, and he could stand in God's presence without any consciousness of inferiority... God has made us as much like Himself as possible... He made us the same class of being that He is Himself... The believer is called Christ... that's who we are; we're Christ!" (Kenneth Hagin. *Zoe: The God-Kind of Life*, p35-36, 41.)

"When you say, I am a Christian, you are saying, 'I am mashi-

ach' in the Hebrew. I am a little messiah walking on earth, in other words. That is a shocking revelation... May I say it like this? You are a little god on earth running around." (Benny Hinn, Praise-a-Thon program on T.B.N.)

Second, the verse could be read to mean that many will come in the name of Jesus claiming that they are the 'anointed' ones. The Jehovah's Witness Governing Body does. The leader of the Roman Catholic church, the Pope, would also fall into this category.

Indeed anyone claiming an anointing from the Lord which gives them authority over the 'laity'. See - Revelation 2:6 and 15.

Third, the verse could be read to mean that many will come in the name of Jesus claiming that He really is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed. We are being warned that even though a person can declare or confess agreement that Jesus is the Christ, it also means that same person can deceive us. Acts 16:16

Reasons and Answers

Scriptural Ignorance

Unfortunately, many Christians are ignorant of the Scriptures because of a lack of regular Bible read-

ing. Reading is not a popular pastime in our culture today. People prefer to have someone read to them, usually from the television set. The Bible is a prophetic message to God's people - but we must carefully read the Bible if we are to be aware of its warnings. We are to study it, according to 2 Timothy 2:15, if we wish to rightly divide the Word of Truth. It is absolutely vital that we also consult our Bibles when sitting under the ministry of our pastors and teachers to see that what is presented to us is so. If we profess to be Christians, that is, followers of the teachings of Christ, then we should not simply take for granted that what is presented to us by our teachers is in absolute accordance with the Scriptures. Jesus has clearly warned us of deception and false teaching in these final days of the age.

Be diligent because the object of ministry is not to please men but to know and be approved of God. As such I will not be ashamed (the only time the word is used in new Testament) because whatever I say or do will come from the Lord; it may not always be easy or received fully but I will have no cause to be sorry or hide what I have done. The Lord goes on to promise help to those who are diligent - if we do not both-

er or care we are unlikely to have a clear understanding.

Because of my diligence I will not be slipshod or not know how to do things, but will be able to 'handle accurately', or 'rightly divide' God's Word. The Greek word for 'handling accurately' *orthotomeo*, is only found here in the New Testament. It means, "to cut straight, to divide right"; some feel it refers to a steward distributing to each one under his care what they need; others think it refers to the Jewish priest, cutting or dividing the sacrifice into proper parts; and still others, to a carver distributing food to the guests at a feast. However, whatever the thinking, it clearly means that:

1. First, the one handling the Word knows what it means - this is the first place we should come to and obviously affects the one studying in a very practical way. However, in this context it also moves on so that the diligent studier knows:

2. Who also needs this clear understanding, and...

3. Gives it out in a way that his hearers will understand.

4. Finally, he will ensure that each one gets what they need. ☐

Joel Osteen by John Taylor

How to become a better you and live your best life now

1. Introduction

Before pastoring Lakewood Church, Joel Osteen had a lifelong interest in television production. So, for seventeen years, whilst his father was in the pulpit, Joel was responsible for producing the Church's television programme. Joel did not have a desire to preach, though his father encouraged him to do so, on numerous occasions. Despite the fact that he had neither preached nor attended Bible College, almost immediately prior to his father's death in 1999, Joel preached his first sermon and became Pastor of Lakewood Church shortly thereafter.

'On July 16, 2005 after completing \$95 million dollars in renovations, Joel moved Lakewood Church into its new 16,000-seat home - the former Compaq Center. It is the largest regularly-used worship center in the United States. Each week Joel delivers God's message of hope and encouragement to more than 38,000 attendees. According to Nielsen Media Research, Joel is the most watched inspirational figure in America. His weekly sermon is broadcast into every U.S. television market, where it is viewed by seven million Americans each week and more than 20 million each month. His weekly broadcast is also seen in almost 100 nations around the world.' (www.joelosteen.com)

Joel Osteen's ministry style is typically upbeat, practical and positive. Interestingly, he perceives himself as performing the role of a life

coach. The content of his books '*Your Best Life Now*' and '*Become a Better You*' reflect that and are similar in format to self help books. There is a greater focus on the reader improving their own life through the application of the steps provided to fulfil personal potential, rather than living a sanctified life of obedience that would both please and glorify God.

Joel Osteen has been interviewed by Larry King and appeared surprisingly unclear when questioned concerning the gospel and the salvation of those who refused to believe that Jesus is the only way to the Father. Needless to say, he has received considerable criticism from conservative Evangelical leaders as he is reluctant to mention sin, which is virtually ignored, almost as

an afterthought.

In addition he proclaims the prosperity gospel, greatly endorses positive confession and visualisation techniques to manipulate the creative power of words and the imagination and offers advice on how to be healthy, wealthy and materially successful, as well as how to tap into God's power and live the victorious life of a champion.

2. Your Best Life Now

Joel Osteen provides instruction on how to be happy and fulfilled in his book *'Your Best Life Now'* by implementing these seven steps.

'Enlarge your vision;

Develop a healthy self-image;

Discover the power of your thoughts and words;

Let go of the past;

Find strength through adversity;

Live to give; and

Choose to be happy.' (p.x YBLN)

If the above was recommended in a secular book in a secular bookstore, no doubt those principles could be expounded on successfully to nurture and develop an individual's human potential. Surely, for the believer in Christ, there must of necessity be an entirely different set of priorities. A healthy view of the holiness of God is of far greater value than a healthy self-image. Finding strength in God by trusting Him and living a life of faith through obedience to God is more important than finding strength through adversity. What about praying earnestly, reading the Scriptures, fellowshiping with the saints and preaching the gospel? Does the Bible encourage us to choose to be happy or choose this day who we will serve, irrespective of the cost involved in this life?

Enlarging Your Vision

Joel Osteen then explains how to

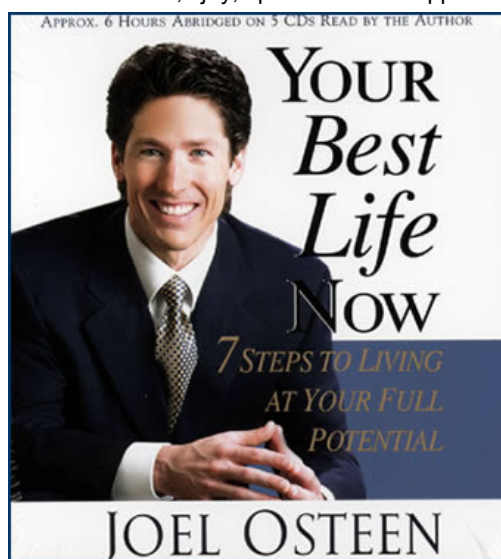
enlarge your vision.

'To live your best life now, you must start looking at your life, through eyes of faith, seeing yourself rising to new levels. See your business taking off. See your marriage restored. See your family prospering. See your dreams coming to pass. You must conceive it and believe it and believe it is possible, if you ever hope to experience it.

To conceive it, you must have an image on the inside of the life you want to live on the outside. This image has to become part of you, in your thoughts, your conversation, deep down in your subconscious mind, in your actions, in every part of your thinking.' (p4 YBLN)

What is being presented here is mind over matter, instead of praying to God in all circumstances. For someone to obtain what they desire, the creative power of an individual's imagination to visualise an outcome replaces faith that is reliant on God's power to intervene. Joel Osteen seems to suggest that if you think the right thoughts you can get what you want.

'What you keep before your eyes will affect you. You will produce what you're continually seeing in your mind. If you foster an image of defeat and failure, then you're going to live that kind of life. But if you develop an image of victory, success, health and abundance, joy, peace and happi-



ness, nothing on earth will be able to hold those things from you...We don't

really stretch our faith; we don't believe for anything bigger. But God wants us to be constantly increasing, to be rising to new heights. He wants to increase you in His wisdom and help you to make better decisions. God wants to increase you financially, by giving you promotions, fresh ideas and creativity.' (p5 YBLN)

Whilst pessimists or fatalists may well hinder their own success or happiness, it is a stretch of the imagination, not faith, to be certain that God wants to increase you financially. Agur desired neither riches nor poverty lest he be tempted to consider himself full and deny God or be poor and steal and profane His name. (Prov 30:7-9)

Some Biblical characters that were faithful to God were wealthy, others were poor. The same is true today. Affluence is not indicative of an individual's faith. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus commanded not to lay up treasures on earth but in heaven. (Matt 6:19-20) Thus the reader is offered the vain hope that if they stretch their faith by continually visualising a financial blessing then they will have what they hope for.

Living Favour Minded

Osteen is adamant that God wants to bless people in all areas of life, so that they will experience preferential treatment when they have learnt to live what he refers to as '*favour-minded*'.

'If you work in sales, you ought to declare that you have favour with your clients. Every day you should say, "Father I thank You that my clients are loyal to me and want to do business with me." If you work in real estate, you ought to speak God's favour over your property...Learn to speak God's favour over every area of your life. If you are not experiencing God's favour in your life, start declaring it more often...Remember the more favour minded you are, the more of God's favour you're going to experience.' (p46 YBLN)

In essence Osteen is teaching that God's favour in basically any life situation can be activated by

speaking a positive formula to achieve a desired outcome. If it is not successful initially then keep repeating the formula on a more frequent basis until you get what you want. According to Osteen living favour-minded results in preferential treatment from others also.

'But when you are living favour-minded, the Bible says, "God's blessings are going to chase you down and overtake you." In other words, you won't be able to outrun the good things of God. Everywhere you go, things are going to change in your favour. Every time your turn around, somebody's going to want to do something good for you, to assist you in some manner. They may not even know why. But it's the favour of God that causes you to stand out in the crowd.' (p45 YBLN)

When the Lord spoke to Ananias about the ministry He wished for Saul to accomplish, He explained, "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." (Acts 9:16) Paul did not testify of preferential treatment by living favour minded but testified, 'We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed - always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.' (2 Cor 4:8-10)

Become What You Believe

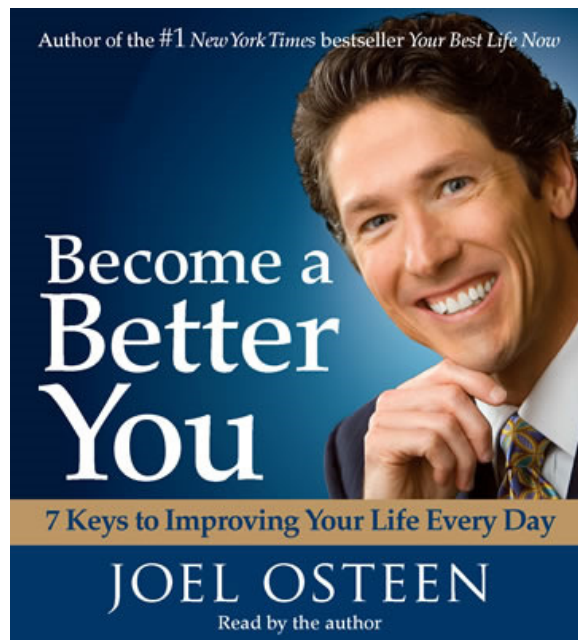
Osteen explains how he thinks the above principle arises.

'Our thoughts and expectations wield tremendous power and influence in our lives. We don't always get what we deserve in life, but we usually get no more than we expect; we receive what we believe. Unfortunately this principle works as strongly in the negative as it does in the positive.' (p72 YBLN)

Undoubtedly our thoughts and expectations to a certain degree have an influence on the outcomes of events in our lives. However, the next statement is represented in a way that is contrary to Biblical teaching. Although it is presented as a Biblical concept, it is extracted from a poor and inaccurate dynamical equivalent paraphrase.

'The modern-day Biblical paraphrase *The Message* relates the story about the blind men with an interesting twist: "Jesus touched their eyes and said, 'Become what you believe.'"

What a powerful statement! *Become what you believe!* What are you believing? Are you going to go higher in life, to rise above obstacles, to live in



health, abundance, healing and victory? You will become what you believe. The truth is, I am what I am today because of what I believed about myself yesterday. And I will be tomorrow what I believe about myself right now.' (p76 YBLN)

In James 4:13-15, in direct contrast to the idea of becoming what you believe, he wrote, 'Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."

The Power In Your Words

There is a difference between thinking optimistically and positive confession. In the former an individual chooses to reflect on the positive side of a given situation. Concerning the latter a person declares what they hope to be or have, irrespective of whether what

they are saying is accurate in their present circumstances. That is neither truthful nor realistic, let alone Biblical. Nonetheless, Osteen recommends the following.

'Start calling yourself healed, happy, whole, blessed, and prosperous. Stop talking to God about how big your mountains are, and start talking to your mountains about how big God is!' (p124 YBLN)

'Quit complaining that nothing good ever happens to you and start declaring, "Everything I touch prospers and succeeds." We must stop cursing the darkness. Let's start commanding the light to come.' (p125 YBLN)

That is the prosperity gospel. The philosophy is that the atonement of Christ guarantees the believer health and wealth. Nevertheless Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus and Trophimus all suffered from ill health on occasions. (Gal 4:13, 1 Tim 5:23, Phil 2:25-26, 2 Tim 4:20) Wealth and financial success should not be perceived as a spiritual barometer indicating an individual's level of faith! Osteen is certain though, that the

creative power of words need to be combined with seeing an outcome by faith to create your own reality.

'It's not enough to simply see it by faith or in your imagination. You have to begin by speaking words of faith over your life. Your words have enormous creative power. The moment you speak something out, you give birth to it. This is a spiritual principle, and it works whether what you are saying is good or bad, positive or negative.' (p129 YBLN)

The Seed Must Lead

'The Scripture says, "Whatsoever a man sows, that he will also reap." All through the Bible, we find the principle of sowing and reaping. Just as a farmer must plant some seed if he hopes to reap the harvest, we, too, must plant some good seed in the fields of our families, careers, businesses, and personal relationships.' (p250 YBLN)

Osteen takes the principle to the extreme of sowing and reaping to the extent that God is almost obligated to bring prosperity in response to one's giving. Giving fi-

nancially is motivated by the hope that God will bring someone greater riches. In other words sowing seed is carried out with the selfish motive of expecting a higher return. If this principle was actually foolproof then those who gave away all of their possessions, and had mastered the ability to see what they desired to obtain by faith and speak those things into existence, would amass and enjoy exponential rates of return, riches and prosperity!

'Scripture says that there are two things we must do in times of trouble. First, we must trust in the Lord; and second, we must go out and do something good, Go out and sow some seeds. If you need a financial miracle, go buy somebody a cup of coffee tomorrow morning, or give a little extra in the offering at church. If you don't have money, do some physical work for somebody; mow somebody's lawn, pull some weeds, wash their windows. Make someone a pie. Do something to get some seed in the ground.' (p252 YBLN)

Become A Better You

'Become a Better You' is the sequel to Osteen's other book, 'Your Best Life Now'. Again the subject matter starts where the other finished and the pattern is similar in that Osteen presents seven imperatives to become a better you.

1. Keep pressing forward.
2. Be positive toward yourself.
3. Develop better relationships.
4. Form better habits.
5. Embrace the place where you are.
6. Develop your inner life.
7. Stay passionate about life.' (pxiv BABY)

Generally speaking, the above makes sense in endeavouring to live a successful life, especially in a non-religious context. If those principles were implemented then the reader may well become more prosperous, but the lack of Biblical foundational instruction for living is staggering! The issue is not so much what is included rather than what is omitted! It is apparent that whilst the principles are sensible and to some degree wise, the above is self focussed and lack's spiritual depth.

Every day with Joel Osteen

Joel Osteen advocates self-proclaiming words of affirmation for his readers which can be carried out on a daily basis.

'At the start of each new day, remind yourself: "I am talented. I am creative. I am greatly favoured by God. I am equipped. I am well able. I will see my dreams come to pass." Declare those statements by faith and before long, you will begin to see them in reality.' (p21-22 BABY)

The Bible doesn't advocate a personal pep talk to remind ourselves how great we think we might be! Our focus should be on God and we should pray for His will to be done



in our lives (Matt 6:10). Osteen thinks this mental programming is necessary to enable us to see ourselves in a more positive light.

'Every day, we should make positive declarations over our lives. We should say things such as, "I am blessed. I am prosperous. I am healthy. I am talented. I am creative. I am wise." When we do that, we are building up our self-image. As those words permeate your heart and mind, especially your subconscious mind, eventually they will begin to change the way you see yourself.' (p109-110 BABY)

He then explains how he is disciplined in carrying out those procedures in his own life.

'Every day, whether I feel like it or not, I declare, "I am anointed. My gifts and

talents are coming to the full. Every message gets better and better. People are drawn to me. People want to listen to me.' (p117 BABY)

It is interesting that prayer increases our reliance upon God so that our desires become more in line with what He desires. Our confidence should be in Him rather than tapping into God's power to continually reaffirm our sense of worth valued in our own estimations.

Tapping into God's Power

Joel Osteen explains how to really enjoy this life.

'You can be happy and free in this life, not simply in heaven one of these days; you can accomplish your dreams before you go to heaven!

How can you do that? By tapping into God's power inside of you.' (p41 BABY)

'Tap into God's power within you and stop saying, "I can't break that habit." Instead, start declaring every day: "I am free. I can do all things through Christ. No weapon formed against me is ever going to prosper." Remember what Jesus said: "Whom the Son sets free is free indeed." Start declaring that over your own life.' (p210 BABY)

God knows what is best for His children. The emphasis presented here is focussed more on the gift rather than the giver. Whilst God is all powerful, and infinitely wise, He doesn't dispense His power arbitrarily at the beck and call of those who attempt to channel His power for their own endeavours. Sadly, this is again taken to the extreme, since the idea of prophesying over yourself is encouraged.

'With our words, we can prophesy our own future. Unfortunately, many people predict defeat, failure, lack and mediocrity. Avoid those kinds of comments and use your words to declare good things. Declare health, joy, financial blessing, happy and whole relationships. All through the day, you can declare, "I have the favour of God. I can do what I need to do." As you do so, you will be blessing your own life and strengthening your self-image.' (p115 BABY)

Please understand that those who fear the worst all the time are not lending themselves any favours and a positive outlook on life is healthy. But the idea that you can prophesy your own future contradicts what

the word of God says. Prophecy is for the edification of the church (1 Cor 14:4). In Isaiah 44:6b-7 God proclaims, 'I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, since I appointed the ancient people, and the things that are coming and shall come,' and in Isaiah 46:9b-10 'I am God and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.'

Learning to love yourself

The concept of learning to love yourself and in particular, learning to love yourself before you can love others, has been a popular concept in psychology which has crept into the church on an unprecedented scale in recent years. Often, and as in this case, the second greatest commandment is taken out of context to give support to the notion that generous self love is a must for the Christian.

'Jesus said, "Love your neighbour as yourself." Notice, the prerequisite to loving others is to love yourself. If you don't have a healthy respect for who you are, and if you don't learn to accept yourself, faults and all, you will never be able to properly love other people. Unfortunately, self loathing destroys many relationships nowadays.' (p100 BABY)

In contrast though, Scripture reminds us that if anyone desires to follow Jesus they must deny themselves. (Matt 16:24) Paul commended the church in Philippi to esteem others more highly than themselves. (Phil 2:3) Incidentally, selfishness destroys more relationships than self loathing. After all, Paul wrote to the Ephesians stating, 'For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.' (Eph 5:29) Also John wrote, 'We love Him because He first loved us.' (1 John 4:19) When we truly understand and have the assurance of our how God loves us, our view of ourselves will not be dependent purely on our subjective assessment of our self worth, since there is no greater love than God's love, whose Son loved us and gave Himself for us (Gal 2:20).

Have Confidence in Yourself

'The Scripture says, "Our faith is made effectual when we acknowledge everything good in us." Think about this: Our faith is not effective when we acknowledge all our hurts and pains. It's not effective when we stay focussed on our shortcomings or our weaknesses. Our faith is most effective when we acknowledge the good things that are in us. Declare affirmations such as "I have a bright future. I am gifted. I am talented. People like me. I have the favour of God.'" (p129 BABY)

This quote unfortunately omits the Author and Perfecter of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ. Without Him there would be no good in us. Our faith is made effectual 'by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in **Christ Jesus**. (See Philemon 1:6)

'When we believe in God's Son, Jesus Christ, and believe in ourselves, that's when our faith comes alive. When we believe we have what it takes, we focus on our possibilities.' (p129-130 BABY)

Our confidence should be entirely founded in God. The concept that is affirmed here is that God has deposited power into believers to enable them to believe in themselves. Proverbs 3:5-6 states 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.'

And Finally - Every Day in Every Way I am Getting Better and Better...

Osteen advises taking certain actions to accompany faith, including faith declarations, and recommends the following when you face sickness.

'No, that's not your high blood pressure; that's not your sickness. Quit taking ownership of it and start making plans to get well. Our attitude should be, this sickness didn't come to stay, it came to pass. Say things such as, "I know with long life, God is going to satisfy me. So I declare it by faith, I'm getting better and better every day in every way.'" (p330 BABY)

Is longevity guaranteed for all believers if they pray the right prayer formulae and declare their state of wellness through faith? Is it realistic to declare by faith that every day in every way you are getting better and better? Did Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus and Trophimus forget to

make those bold declarations when they were not well and missed out on God's favour?

Conclusion

To his credit, Joel Osteen attempts to bring messages of encouragement that provide hope. Undoubtedly he is sincere. He is quick to challenge negative thought patterns of behaviour that are not helpful and counter-productive to having joy in the Lord.

In all fairness, though, his messages are typically self-focussed and draw the emphasis away from denying oneself and taking up the cross to being happy, successful, achieving your own ambitions and dreams and having everything that you want now. As heaven is the final destination for believers, surely the best is yet to come! There is also a lack of Scriptural content and where the Bible is referred to, it is frequently used in support of the prosperity gospel and at times taken out of context.

A great deal of attention is given to making declarations of faith, positive confession and conceiving an event or outcome in the imagination before it can become a reality, and that simply isn't Biblical. Faith and confidence in God is largely substituted with asserting individual expectations and aspirations on the basis of the power of God invested inside a person to achieve their own ends. Similarly, it is assumed that the believer should expect to live constantly in good health, abundance, success, happiness and victory, which ignores other Biblical themes, such as endurance, perseverance and the Lord's chastening that will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness in the life of the believer.

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www.joelosteen.com

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Mapping the Emergent Church

As with any subject it's necessary to try to define some terms and describe concepts to aid getting an understanding of the Emergent scene. The BIG problem in any attempt to grasp what the Emerging Church/Post-Modern movement is about is the fact that a lot of the phraseology employed is used by the people involved in a way that appears deliberately designed to be obscure. Emergent leaders loathe definitions. They use esoteric jargon (understood only by the "in-crowd"); also beware of subtle changes of meaning of words away from their commonly understood meanings [the semantic shift]. So, it's very difficult to nail down a set of neat definitions of the emerging movement and its beliefs. It means different things to different people – even the proponents of Emerging actively resist being categorised; they would go so far as to describe their movement as being a fluid "conversation".

Beware 'THE BIG CLICHÉ' trotted out by Emergents and their apologists – it involves a nail, jelly and a wall. My version of this is: "Defining the emerging church is like trying to make maps of sand dunes....." (hence the title of my presentation)

Post-Modern (general use); According to academic and social observers there was a big change around the 1960s; mankind entered a "new age" (not to be confused with the spiritual concept of "New Age"), identified by philosophers, social scientists and historians as 'Post-Modern'. This era succeeds the 'Modern' age. In general terms Post-modernism is a worldview. Post-modern man, in theory, questions all the accepted norms in every field. In the post-modern era it became acceptable to believe that scientific measurement might no longer be the only way of measuring reality. Measures of reality that lead to the claim "we have got all the answers" lost their credibility and are now distrusted by people with the post-modern mind set. For example, evangelical Christian claims that the Bible is God's definitive word and that Jesus is the only way to salvation are not generally

acceptable in post-modern circles. The origins of post-modern thought go back earlier than the 1960s & 70s but that's probably when the concept left the worlds of academia, the arts, etc. and came into more general circulation. There is already, in some academic circles, a view that the Post-Modern era is already passing and something called Pseudo-modernism is the new paradigm. It's important to bear in mind that post-modernism is 'only' a philosophical concept; it could even be a mirage. Moreover, it's a philosophy of history as seen through a particular lens.

Post-Modern (theological use); A theological 'framework' designed to be acceptable in a post-Modern environment. In simple terms, it is a theology stripped of truth claims and rejecting many of the established Biblical doctrines regarding Creation, sin, salvation, and even the very nature of God.

Modern (as used by academics and Emergents): The historical timeline after the Middle Ages. So, for a period of up to 500 years, man (in the western world at least) has lived in the so-called 'Modern' era. This concept is widely accepted by secular philosophers and historians. The 'modern' era is defined as one in which most people accepted that were certain sets of absolutes or norms that underlay society, scientific study, morality, religion, etc. The cultural era of Modernism is generally associated with the European Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution and with Scientific Rationalism. The thought concept that characterised the Modern era was - what is 'really real' is whatever is open to precise measurement with our senses. Taking a lead from some in the academic realm many of the Emergent Church leaders maintain that a word like "truth" (that is supposed to apply in all times and circumstances) is a way of thinking that is just a product of the Enlightenment. Emergents further maintain that 20th century churches (especially the Protestant ones) adopted the Enlightenment emphasis on technical and linear thinking. The Emergent's big Modern

'bogeymen' are: (a) systematic theology and (b) the concept of the inerrancy of Scripture (they conveniently ignore the fact that this concept goes all the way back to Jesus and before).

The Age of Enlightenment (or simply the Enlightenment) is the era in Western philosophy and intellectual, scientific and cultural life, centred upon the eighteenth century, in which reason was advocated as the primary source for legitimacy and authority.... The 'Enlightenment' was not a single movement or school of thought, for these philosophies were often mutually contradictory or divergent. The Enlightenment was less a set of ideas than it was a set of values. At its core was a critical questioning of traditional institutions, customs, and morals, and a strong belief in rationality and science. Significantly it was also a period during which there was some hostility to Christianity and there was the start of a strong rejection of the historicity and authority of the Bible.

Emerging/Emergent/Emergence; These terms are often used interchangeably. Observers have identified three related movements in what could be labelled the "post-modern church". They could be viewed as steps along a progression with (1) & (2) morphing into (3):

1) The Emerging Church (evangelicals who still hold to at least a few Biblical doctrines)

2) The Emergent Church (mainline/liberals who have basically abandoned all Biblical doctrines)

3) Emergence Christianity – started around 2005; includes speakers and writers who are basically New Agers, Universalists, and admirers of the Interfaith Movement.

Many Christians have not even heard of these three movements; if they have they are not always able to define them or differentiate between the three. They are influencing evangelical thought in churches, colleges and seminaries in almost every denomination, primarily in the USA, but now spreading across the "western" world. It is fair to say that, in some cases, Emerging Church leaders are separating themselves from the inherently New Age-

ish Emergence leaders but this is the exception rather than the rule.

In the pro-Emergent book "Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Communities in Postmodern Cultures" Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger said:

"Emerging churches are not young adult services, Gen-X churches, churches-within-a-church, seeker churches, purpose-driven or new paradigm churches, fundamentalist churches, or even evangelical churches. They are a new expression of church. The three core practices are identifying with the life of Jesus, transforming secular space, and commitment to community as a way of life. These practices are expressed in or lead to the other six: welcoming the stranger, serving with generosity, participating as producers, creating as created beings, leading as a body, and taking part in spiritual activities."

Story; A way of conveying meaning; the instinctive means by which humans experience and make sense of the world; a story describes a sequence of events.

Metanarrative; a metanarrative is a story about a story, encompassing and explaining other "little stories" within an overarching scheme. It is an abstract concept.

Journey; for Emergents the journey is more important than the destination

Conversation; Means by which Emergents explore ideas and arrive at a consensus view (for now)

Epistemology; the theory of knowledge. The branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge. It addresses the questions:

- What is knowledge?
- How is knowledge acquired?
- How do we know what we know?

Paradigm shift; a change in a fundamental model of events; a change of world-view

De-construction; In art and literature, it's a tendency to subvert, pull apart and examine existing conventions having to do with meaning and individualism. Whether using language, images, or building elements, deconstructionists raise questions about meaning, materials, forms

and other aspects of artistic expression. As applied to a literary work, the process is fiercely critical, seemingly intent upon destroying the author's meaning and replacing it with something entirely different. In academia it can mean to take apart a work of literature or a history or some kind of academic work to find out what it's supposedly "really" saying.

Re-painting/imagining/thinking/framing/traditioning; The process of challenging and then replacing a well established concept with a different version that fits the post-Modern paradigm.

Transitioning; the process of changing something "modern" into the post-Modern paradigm

Transformation(al): The process of changing from traditional/established structures of church to a new model, fit for the perceived post-modern world (a concept adapted from the management/business world)

(new) Reformation; Emergents see themselves as in the vanguard of a much needed new reformation in the Church; Emergents tend to dismiss the importance of the Reformation c500 years ago

Missional; Any activity that makes the world a better place and advances a better future; finding 'Christ' in all cultures; a mission to help God's dreams become true

Pan(en)theism; Pantheism (literally "All is God") is the belief that the universe is in some sense divine and should be revered. It identifies the universe with God but denies any personality or transcendence of such a God. Panentheism (from Greek πᾶν (pân) "all"; ἐν (en) "in"; and θεός (theós) "God"; "all-in-God") is a belief system which says that God exists and interpenetrates every part of nature.

Propositional [knowledge]; Knowledge that is, by its very nature, expressed in declarative statements. A concept despised by post-Modern thinkers

Foundationalism; A system of recognised self-evident truths. A concept despised by post-Modern thinkers.

Spiritual evolution: a parallel to so-called biological evolution - i.e. man is evolving spiritually over time; also - a view that 'God' got 'unfolded' into the universe at cre-

ation so He now needs to be 'unfolded' from the substance of creation (=panentheism).

Quantum spirituality; "bonds us to all creation as well as to other members of the human family" [Leonard Sweet in Quantum Spirituality] QS is a New Age inspired transformation of biblical Christianity into the New Spirituality; this entails embracing a radical doctrine - the embodiment of God in the very substance of creation (=panentheism).

Integral theory; A concept of the Buddhist philosopher Ken Wilber. It has influenced and is popular with some Emergent thinkers and leaders.

Theological liberalism; During the latter part of the 19th century virtually all the cardinal doctrines of the faith were challenged or denied by the growing movement towards theological liberalism (derived mostly from German Rationalism and Higher Criticism). From the Godhead to the necessity for salvation to the existence of hell to the atonement to the inspiration of Scripture to the meaning of the gospel, almost every doctrine was gutted of biblical meaning and then infused with ideas fitting the times. The new liberalism found in the Emergent movement is similar to the old one but upgraded to run in a post-Modern environment.

Fundamentalism; (the 'bogeyman' of the Emergents) - five basic biblical truths that defined the fundamentalist stand in the early 20th century are:

- the inerrancy of Scripture,
- Christ's virgin birth,
- the Substitutionary Atonement of Christ,
- Christ's bodily Resurrection, and
- the historicity of Christ's miracles.

Fundamentalism (n.b. NOT fanaticism) was the evangelical response to the late 19th/early 20th Century Liberal Theology movement. Fundamentalism, to the Emergents, equates to the views of somebody who is very narrow-minded (and not very intelligent) who sees the Emergents as threats to their world-view. This is why Emergents see those who attempt to question their views as supposedly filled with fear and hate. ☐

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