

# JOURNAL

MIDWEST CHRISTIAN OUTREACH

*"Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?"*  
Galatians 4:16

Volume 19 No. 2

Fall 2013 / Winter 2014

Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc.  
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# MORALOPHOBIC

By L.L. (Don) Veinot, Jr. & Dr. Jerry Buckner

In the 1930s, Roman Catholic priest and radio commentator Fr. Charles Coughlin discovered a very effective way of discrediting people he considered political threats. He would appeal to the anti-Semitism and isolationism shared by much of his audience by denouncing various individuals as "atheistic Jews" or "imported radicals." It mattered little to Coughlin that the sources of his "information" were often untrustworthy. He knew that once he used the power of the broadcast medium to slap labels on people, those people would find them very difficult to remove from their reputations.

In the 1950s, Wisconsin Senator Joseph P. McCarthy used the new medium of television to boost his political career by taking advantage of Americans' fear of Communism. No evidence was too slight, no testimony too tainted, no logic too specious for him to use it to label various individuals as "Communists" or "subversives." Reputations were destroyed. Careers were ruined. For decades after McCarthy himself was discredited and died, his victims struggled to rebuild their shattered lives. McCarthyism has come to be synonymous with intimidation through labeling and blacklisting and has often been mistakenly portrayed as a "right-wing" tactic. The fact is, however, that McCarthyism is equally useful to demagogues of all political persuasions. In fact, it has become a favorite tool of the Left for stifling opposition to their agenda today.

Conservatives are often labeled "Uncle Toms," if they are black, or "racists" if they are white, for daring to voice opposition to any aspect of the Left's "civil rights" agenda. People who oppose gay "marriage" are labeled "homophobic." Men and women who oppose abortion on moral grounds are dangerous "extremists," and so it goes. Thus, opposers are allegedly motivated by "hate" or "fear" rather than rational disagreement. Name-calling, then, becomes a very effective substitute for rationally defending one's case—legitimate viewpoints are summarily de-legitimized, and thinking is short-circuited by knee-jerk reaction to an emotional appeal. Whenever you hear someone slap a label on someone else without providing careful definitions and clear evidence, you are more than justified if you suspect you may be listening to a propagandist, rather than someone who truly desires to inform the public.<sup>1</sup>



These words penned in 2003 and published in our book *A Matter of Basic Principles: Bill Gothard and the Christian Life* are just as relevant today as they were then. The art of name-calling can often be a useful tool to marginalize or even silence those with opposing views. It masquerades as defending the rightness of a position without actually ever defending the position itself with clear, logical and actual precision. If done well, name-calling keeps those with another view so busy trying to demonstrate they have been maligned, that they rarely have the opportunity to address the actual original issue.

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is a publication of:  
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**“Moralophobic” Continued from page 1**

This is true in the area of religion, where groups like the Jehovah’s Witnesses (JWs, aka Watchtower Bible & Tract Society) write about **“The Whore of Babylon, World Empire of False Religions”** as a description of all groups which claim to be Christian, but who are not JWs. At times when confronting false teaching, I am accused of being mean, narrow-minded or even bigoted. But since I am aware of the gamesmanship here, I elect not to begin defending *myself* from the accusations, but instead, I respond with something like, “You might be right, I might be mean. I might even be short and perhaps even fat. All of those things can be true, and we certainly can discuss them; but the question we need to answer first is: Where am I wrong?” I am often met with a blank expression at that point.

**You Are Homophobic**

In the current cultural battle, name-calling really has replaced reasoned debate and discussion. If someone holds to historic Judeo/Christian moral values—the values which have been central in the founding and history of our nation—they often find themselves or their group the object of name-calling and character assassination. Anyone who is opposed to “same-gender marriage” is labeled “homophobic.” Those opposed to abortion are “misogynists.” Is it really true those who oppose abortion hate women? I clearly remember in the days leading up to the Gore vs. Bush election in 2000 watching a woman in tears at local Post Office begging the postal clerk to vote for Gore because, according to her, “Bush wants to kill women!!” I suppose I missed Bush’s plan for the mass extermination of women.

Is opposition to same-gender marriage actually “homophobic?” The definition of *phobia* is fairly straightforward and simple:

**...usually defined as a persistent fear of an object or situation in which the sufferer commits to great lengths in avoiding, typically disproportional to the actual danger posed, often being recognized as irrational.<sup>2</sup>**

Of all of the people I know and with whom I have spoken, including some homosexuals, “fear” of homosexuals—much less “irrational” “fear”—simply is not present. But many people are often cowed by the accusation; because like Br’er Rabbit fighting the Tar-Baby,<sup>3</sup> the more they fight to defend themselves against name-calling, the more stuck they become.

I have wondered: Are those who *support* abortion, same-gender marriage, and other “Progressive” social issues “moralophobic?” That is, do *they* have an “irrational” “fear” of morals, or would using that term just be name-calling instead of sound, reasoned debate as well? I have come to two conclusions on this question. **First**, it *would* be name-calling and, as tempting as it may be to me, it comes across as a playground squabble ending with “So is your mother!” The accusation that Progressives and Liberals are moralophobic lacks reasoned debate and comment on the issues at hand. **Second**, it is actually not true. They don’t have an “irrational” “fear” of the morals which have been the fabric of our nation since its inception—the ones contained in the Judeo/Christian Scriptures. Rather, they have a *rational fear and hatred* of those morals. They are not opposed to morality per se, but they are working to *change* morals to accommodate the way *they* desire to live rather than how *God* says we ought to live. Fear of condemnation can be assuaged—if not eliminated altogether—by making the change. It is being accomplished a little at a time.

The big push now is to normalize same-gender, sexual relationships. The line from *married to non-married* sexual relations had been shifted a few decades ago. Now that unmarried sex is more acceptable, there is just a small shift in cultural thinking to embrace same-gender, sexual relationships. “How can you deny someone sexual satisfaction solely because they are attracted to others of the same gender?” we are asked. The highest moral value in this area today: Personal Satisfaction. Legitimizing same-gender sex happens simply by moving the *marital requirements* one (albeit huge) step to include these homosexual relationships. But then, why not include polygamy or eliminate the age of consent and include children in the mix? Well, that would absolutely be met with near-complete cultural rejection ... right now. However, by moving the boundaries one-step-at-a-time, it is easier to change morals. The new morality becomes, “How could you deny the right of two people who love each other ‘the right’ to marry.” Once that is accepted, it then becomes immoral to oppose same-sex marriage. The next part of the process is to create *peer pressure* to conform to the new morality.

## Thought-Shapers and Peer Pressure

Changing morals across culture is perhaps an easier task than one might think. For many, the change appears to be sudden and drastic but that is really only because they have just noticed. This has been in the works for the last century as the battle between Progressives (in the early twentieth century Marxists/Socialists) and Conservatives has been waged. As we have pointed out in numerous articles in the past, those who believed in the fundamentals of the faith abandoned the colleges and universities in the 1920s and 30s while Marxists/Socialists used those institutions to spread their philosophy pretty much unchallenged. The college student rebellion of the late 1960s and 1970s were the fruition successfully reeducating the children of the **"Builder Generation."**<sup>4</sup> The abandoning of the faith and changing of national morals was already well underway, but we still had a Christian hangover. Many still lived by Judeo/Christian morality, but it was not attached to any foundation. It would give way to the morals of self. Self-centeredness would become the guide for determining the shape of national and individual morality. What we are now witnessing is the clearing away of that hangover of Judeo/Christian morality and the codifying of the new moral expectations.

Most of the population are followers. It is not that they are unintelligent or uncaring, but they are mostly focused on the day-to-day aspects of their lives. Their opinions on big issues in life are informed mostly by the media to which they are exposed, the organizations in which they participate, and friends with whom they interact regularly. It is falsely assumed that news organizations are philosophically neutral and simply reporting the facts. Church leaders, it is believed, are there to be caretakers of the soul and guide their followers with the wisdom God has imparted whether directly from the Scriptures or not. The combination of these influences set up guidelines as to what someone should believe; and the peer pressure flows from it and enforces how one ought to behave. As our culture has made what are now substantial shifts away from Judeo/Christian values, that shift has been guided by those thought-shapers who have the biggest public voice.

The news media and government officials have been near giddy with the elevation of acceptance of the homosexual practices, and they vilify anyone who publicly expresses a contrary view. In 2012, Dan Cathy, President of Chick-fil-A, was quoted as supporting the biblical definition of marriage: One man and one woman. When asked, he said he was **"guilty as charged."** It became a media circus as Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced that these are **"not Chicago's values."** When Emanuel made that assertion, I wondered how many Chicagoans in a one-man,-one-woman marriage realized their marriage did not fall within the bounds of **"Chicago values?"** It wasn't that Chick-fil-A, as a company, discriminated against homosexuals. They *did not* and *do not* ask about sexual orientation in hiring. In fact, how one is sexually satisfied is not a concern with the company as long as it isn't being pursued on the job. It doesn't impact promotions or in any way impact one's employment. Chick-fil-A also does not ask customers about their preferred sexual encounters before taking their order. How someone has sex has nothing to do with whether or not they can purchase a sandwich and fries. But here is where the media and government ban together to bring *peer pressure* to bear: Dan Cathy and others who looked on were bullied—in no uncertain terms—that *no one may have an opinion which is different than the news media and government, or they will be punished.*

The "new morality" was forced into the military. Sexual relations between *non-married* troops have always been discouraged. Males and females, even if they *want* to have relations, are segregated when it comes to sleeping and showering arrangements. The reason is fairly understandable. It is a practical way to diminish sexual tensions, as well as to protect those who would be the objects of sexual advances from potential predators. Now, it is politically correct *to force* the military not only *to allow* but *to endorse* those who prefer same-gender relations to publicly advertise their preferences. However, there is no segregation to allay sexual tensions from those with whom they may want to have relations. The result?

**More military men than women are sexually abused in the ranks each year, a Pentagon survey shows, highlighting the underreporting of male-on-male assaults.**<sup>5</sup>

In 2004, roughly 12% of sexual assaults were against males. In 2012, approximately 54% of sexual assault victims were male.<sup>6</sup> Now, it should be noted that there are far more males in the military than females, but that was also the case back in 2004. The basic change has the implementation of the new morality by Federal fiat. In reality, if the military were

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HAVE  
NOTHING TO  
DO WITH THE  
FRUITLESS  
DEEDS OF  
DARKNESS,  
BUT RATHER  
EXPOSE THEM.

~EPHESIANS 5:11~

### "Moralophobic" Continued from page 3

to be truly fair and liberated about this social experiment, they would eliminate *any* reference to gender or sexual orientation and make *all* facilities—barracks etc.—gender-neutral. Anything less is discrimination.

The legalization and recognition of same-gender marriage as no different than opposite-gender marriage will not be the end of the changing morals in the nation. As Denny Burke points out in "**The Case for Plural Marriage: The slippery slope gets slicker and steeper,**" polygamists and polyamorists are just waiting in the wings for the door to be open by same-gender marriage.

**The redefinition of legal marriage in our culture will not end with same sex "marriage." The polygamists are waiting in the wings for the opportunity to make their case—a case that will be all the more compelling as arguments for gay "marriage" take hold across the country. If marriage becomes defined as legal recognition of whoever it is that you love, on what basis will the polygamists be excluded?**

**But redefinition won't end with polygamous marriage either. The polyamorists are beginning to make their case as well. In an article for *Slate* magazine, Jillian Keenan argues that polyamorous unions should be on an equal footing with all other marriages. The polyamorous "family" featured in the article includes two men and two women, all of whom share one another sexually. Their relationship is defined as "consensual, ethical, and responsible non-monogamy."**<sup>7</sup>

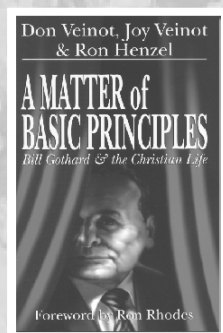
"A Matter of Basic Principles deserves a hearing . . . Those who have experienced abusive spiritual authority in any context will be more inclined to find this book refreshing for its thoroughness."

—Christianity Today

## A MATTER of BASIC PRINCIPLES

*Bill Gothard & the Christian Life*

Don Veinot, Joy Veinot and Ron Henzel



"A must read for all thinking believers who wish to protect their churches.."

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### Where Is The Church In All Of This?

Of course, there are many solid, biblically based churches which are horrified by what they are seeing. They receive the brunt of the name-calling and bullying by the high priests of the new morality. But there are segments of the church which are being unduly influenced and have become supporters of the new morality even though those who attend the churches—and, perhaps, even the leadership—do not agree with abortion, homosexuality or other elements of the new morality. They have become accessories to facilitating the change through their political allegiances.

Our friend, Advisory Board member, and co-author of this article, addresses the issue of how the Black church has been captured by what he calls, "**The Cult of Black Liberation Theology.**" Over 90% of the Black vote for President went to Barack Obama. Barack and Michelle Obama had been members of the Trinity United Church of Christ (TUCC) in Chicago, Illinois. Trinity United Church of Christ not only *embraced* Black Liberation Theology (BLT)<sup>8</sup> under the leadership of Pastor Jeremiah Wright, but it was a *flagship church* of Black Liberation Theology. BLT was *central* to the teaching of Pastor Jeremiah Wright, and it promotes Marxist ideas of class warfare between "**oppressed groups**" and "**established groups.**" The United Church of Christ is the first denomination in America to ordain gays/homosexuals as ministers. The influence of BLT on the Black church along with Obama's views on homosexuality have had a big impact upon the Black church and the Black community. Even though Black churches may lean toward being *theologically conservative*, they tend to be *socially liberal* through the influence of Black Liberation Theology. It is very difficult to be of African-American descent and go against the tide here. Those who do are called, "Uncle Tom" or are labeled as being not really Black. In this setting, one's race is no longer a matter of *ancestry*, but rather one of *political affiliation*. The recent stand for same-gender marriage by Black pastors in Chicago claiming it is "**about civil rights, not religion**"<sup>9</sup> is a demonstration of the effective power of *peer pressure* to achieve the implementation of the new morality.

There is a similar assault on the White church. It is coming from the Emerging Church movement. Brian McLaren made slow moves away from affirming biblical views on sex and marriage. In 2006, he called for a five-year moratorium on asserting firm views about homosexuality:

**Perhaps we need a five-year moratorium on making pronouncements. In the meantime, we'll practice prayerful Christian dialogue, listening respectfully, disagreeing agreeably. When decisions need to be made, they'll be admittedly provisional. We'll keep our ears attuned to scholars in biblical studies, theology, ethics, psychology, genetics, sociology, and related fields. Then in five years, if we have clarity, we'll speak; if not, we'll set another five years for ongoing reflection. After all, many important issues in church history took centuries to figure out. Maybe this moratorium would help us resist the "winds of doctrine" blowing furiously from the left and right, so we can patiently wait for the wind of the Spirit to set our course.**<sup>10</sup>

Six years later, McLaren affirmed the rightness of same-gender marriage by leading the "**Commitment Ceremony at Son's Same-Sex Wedding.**"<sup>11</sup> Rob Bell, another well-known and widely read luminary, also came out in favor of homosexual relationships and was fairly unhappy at the questions directed at his position:

**“Do you believe that this is an area where actually God is ahead of the church, that affirming same-sex partnerships is actually a God thing and that we will eventually all get to see that in the course of time?” Brierley asked Bell of comments he made in March.**

**The former Mars Hill Bible Church pastor revealed in March his acceptance of gay marriage, having said, “I believe God [is] pulling us ahead into greater and greater affirmation and acceptance of our gay brothers and sisters and pastors and friends and neighbors and coworkers.” Previously, Bell had also stated that he was “for marriage ... for fidelity ... for love” whether it was with homosexual or heterosexual relationships.<sup>12</sup>**

The young adults and teenagers within the Evangelical, Fundamental and Confessing church read and are greatly influenced by these and other well-known leaders who are going down this same path. They are—whether intentionally or unintentionally—thumbing their noses at God. The moral code God handed to Moses (the Ten Commandments) does condemn all of us. Paul calls it **“the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones.”** (2 Corinthians 3:7a) and writes that **“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** (Romans 3:23) The moral code reflects God’s holiness and is not able to make us live holy lives, but rather, it was given *to teach us how sinful all of us really are and to point us to the solution to our sin:*

***Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*** (Galatians 3:23-25)

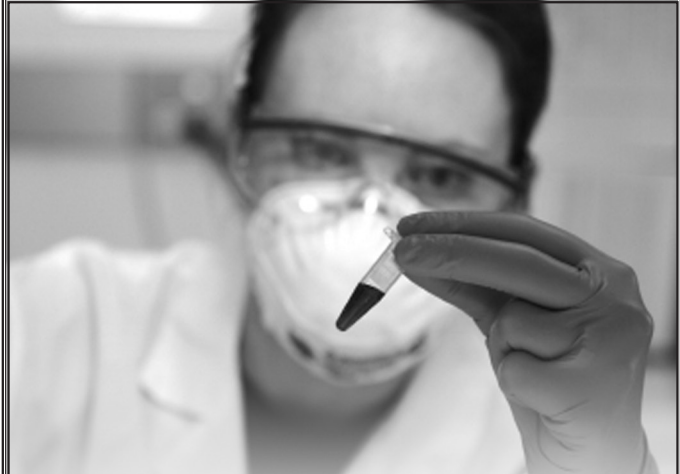
If we get to write our own moral standards, we can do it in such a way that we can come out looking righteous and those who disagree are regarded as immoral by the standards of the newly defined morality. This is not a new issue; it has been the pattern of humanity nearly since The Creation. Noah’s descendant, Nimrod, established a kingdom **“in the land of Shinar”** (Gen. 10) and his descendants *turned from God* to create their own religion (Gen. 11) The plan to build a tower to heaven and make a name for *themselves* (rather than hallow God’s name) would obviously include their new moral code. We see examples of this in the leaders of the Nation of Israel when Jesus walked among them. For example, sons created a way not to have to assist parent(s) in need by keeping the money that should go to assist them, and employing it for their own use, while maintaining the appearance of being righteous. How? They developed a doctrine called *Corban* which means *dedicated to God*. As long as it was “dedicated to God,” they couldn’t give it to someone else; but they, themselves, could use it as they wished. Jesus spoke to this issue as, **“Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.”**(Mark 7:8). He went on to say:

**...“You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, is to be put to death’; but you say, ‘If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),’ you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.”** (Mark 7:9-12)

Notice the common thread of self-centeredness as regarding the Tower of Babel. In Genesis 11:4 they say, **“...let us make**

**a name for ourselves.”** We find Lucifer weighing in similarly in Isaiah 4:14 as he asserts, **“I will make myself like the Most High.”** In Mark, the Hebrew concept of “Corban” was a demonstration of self-centeredness. Today’s equivalent of working to redefine morality is also based on self-centeredness. It comes from the now-pervasive idea that “God wants me to be happy.” Let me say for the record, God is more concerned about our *holiness* than He is about our *happiness*. For unbelievers, His focus is on their being clothed with His holiness by being redeemed by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. For believers, He is more concerned they practice the holiness to which they have been called rather than whether they are happy or not. That doesn’t mean He is unconcerned about our happiness, but He has other priorities. An example from the life of an earthly father may be helpful here. I love my son, daughter and grandchildren. There have been times when each of them have fixated on doing something which they convinced themselves would make them happy. For reasons they didn’t understand, but was in their best interests, I would prevent them from carrying out their intentions. Sometimes their response was, “I hate you,” or “You must hate me.” Neither was true. I just had something better for them.

—Continued on page 14



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# Defending the Faith: Apologetics in Women's Ministry



A Book Review by Sarah Flashing



**Author:** Mary Jo Sharp

**Published by** Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI 2012

**W**hat you believe affects how you live. This truth is at the heart of Mary Jo Sharp's *Defending the Faith: Apologetics in Women's Ministry (DFAWM)*. Her goal, as an academic and ministry leader, is to see lives changed via the integration of apologetics into the life of the Church, particularly in the area of women's ministry. Though this isn't the first tome to argue for the relevancy of apologetics ministry at the level of the local church, it is by my estimation the first with a specific focus on women's ministry.

In recent years, Sharp has risen to the level of popular and academic influence in the Evangelical, apologetics subculture, speaking around the nation at conferences and academic events including formal debates with Muslims. Sharp has a Master's Degree in Christian Apologetics from Biola University, is the first woman to become a Certified Apologetics Instructor through the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, and is an assistant professor at Houston Baptist University.

Like any book, DFAWM has both its strengths and weaknesses,<sup>1</sup> and it is this writer's desire to provide a gracious assessment of its content in a manner that honors the expertise and intent of the author.

## Strengths

At its foundation, DFAWM seeks to inspire women to become skilled apologists who are both honest and intelligent as

they engage unbelievers. Sharp understands how easy it is to get caught up in the nature of the argument such that winning the debate can become the primary goal. But with urgency, she offers the caution that it is important to admit when one might not have an answer to every question. It is of greater importance to have the grace and honesty to say, "I don't know," and then pursue those answers with more diligent study and research, eventually conducting a follow up with the individual who originally asked the question.

The method of engagement in DFAWM isn't ever labeled as evidentialist or classical, though it is this writer's view Sharp utilizes an approach that is more eclectic, certainly not textbook and more concerned with Kingdom goals than devotion to any particular method. In this, she hasn't forgotten her audience; at the most practical level, she has communicated a step-by-step approach that can be respected by any Christian apologist or theologian and put into action by any woman who desires to learn and grow.

Set forth in chapter 4, her approach involves four "Actions:" 1) *know what you believe*, 2) *listen* (be relational), 3) *ask questions* and 4) *respond*. As an individual becomes more equipped to share the truth of Christianity within their sphere of influence, this process is said to be the most natural method for influencing others. Rightly ordered, it begins with understanding what you believe and moves into the proactive, ministry-minded approach for defending the faith. True listening is an outward evidence of the apologist's sincerity to the unbeliever and reveals the character of the believer engaging in the conversation. Still required is a give-and-take of questions and answers on both sides in order

to unearth what might be some of the intellectual obstacles to embracing Christianity as the one true faith.

Sharp writes:

**Our responsibility is not to convince anyone that our reasons to believe in God are true. Rather our responsibility is to become the kind of people from whom reasons naturally and honestly flow. We share what Jesus did for humankind. We share the need for Jesus. We leave the choice to every individual and to the Lord.** (pp31-32)

As is the case with those of us who have been deeply involved in women's ministry at the local church level, Sharp declares a mission with which many church leaders resonate:

**My goal is to recapture the importance of the intellectual part of the Christian life that has diminished much over the years. I long for women's ministries to revere wisdom as a vital aspect of Christian living.** (p64)

Training women to understand what they believe and why will yield a legacy of spiritual benefit to the Church, a truth of which Sharp is entirely aware as she presses forward, encouraging women to **"revere wisdom."** A core strength of this book is Sharp's role as a thought-leader within evangelical Christianity and her belief that women can be influential—that which is the essence of leadership.

Though recent years have shown new trends among women in the Church that include an emphasis on the life of the mind, still rampant in women's ministry is the notion that the pursuit of knowledge is akin to the abandonment of a child-like faith. Sharp points out, this is often an obstacle or excuse, which necessitates there be an **"encourager who rallies the troops toward learning the deep things of God"** in each local church. (p99) I join Sharp in the search for and training of these troop leaders!

## Weaknesses

**People may not always live what they profess, but they will always live what they believe.** (p37)

As stated at the beginning of this review, central to DFAWM is the understanding that what a person believes affects how they live. In the quote above, this is parsed out a bit more aggressively by making a distinction between what one believes from what one professes. And, obviously, the two don't always align as is the point of the quote.

As apologists, however, we must practice wisdom in presenting our arguments, but we must also take into consideration matters additional to their logical structure. The quote above introduces the second chapter of DFAWM and, while it is a perfectly sound statement, it belongs to someone who has been

known as a controversial voice on matters of faith: Neil T. Anderson. Over the past 15 years, Anderson has not escaped theological scrutiny within Christian circles and has been critiqued in several articles for his views on the nature of man in relation to sin and on the power of evil spirits.<sup>2</sup>

As apologists writing books, articles, and blog posts to those who are in every meaningful way our students, we need to exercise caution when introducing them to thinkers who may come with excessive theological baggage. This means not enlisting their voice to help us make a point, because even if their voice provides immediate benefit, in the long run it can directly and negatively impact your own ministry. Guilt by association may be considered a logical fallacy, but it is merely the other side of the name-dropping coin.

**I do not recall one sermon, not one injunction encouraging me to examine my faith critically. Imagine your pastor preaching this from the pulpit next Sunday: "I believe the Christian faith is true. As such, it can withstand any criticism. I encourage you not to take my word that it is true, nor the Bible's word, nor C. S. Lewis' word, nor anyone else's word. Think for yourself and come to your own conclusions. Probe your faith mercilessly to see whether it can stand the test."** (pp70-71)

Although she includes the above quote from former atheist, Kenneth Daniels, Sharp qualifies her relationship with his writings as not being in total agreement. It is unclear, however, if she grants any authority to Daniels' theoretical appeal to the self. Independent of Scripture —**"Think for yourself and come to your own conclusions"**—is akin to filtering the Christian worldview through a neutral filter that simply does not exist. Whether the women reading this book who are new to apologetics will see the use of this quote as an endorsement of its full meaning and understand its implications is unclear, but certainly it is a reasonable expectation to have. We should never instruct to exclude biblical consideration from any question of the truth of Christianity. Without the Scriptures, there is no faith once delivered to the saints.

Rationalism's influence on evangelical apologetics becomes more apparent when we actively promote a belief system accessible by human reason alone. Christian Theologian Alister McGrath writes:

**The danger of forms of apologetics that respond to rationalism is that they often end up importing rationalism into Christianity, rather than exporting the gospel into a rationalistic culture.**<sup>3</sup>

Sharp continues:

—Continued on page 13

# Integral Christianity: A Warning for Our Time

By Marcia Montenegro

*Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.* (Acts 20:28-30)

*Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?* (2 Cor. 6:14)

Paul warned in Acts 20, his last recorded speech to the church, that false teachers—both from without and from within—would come into the church. Other passages speak of such teachers as not being instantly recognizable; rather they “*will secretly introduce destructive heresies*” (2 Pet. 2:1b).

Destructive teachings have come into the church with New Thought<sup>1</sup> and New Age teachers. Some Christians in the public eye have commended or adopted the teachings of New Agers and/or aligned themselves with New Age figures. Some of these people are Ken Blanchard, Rob Bell, Anne Lamott, Richard Rohr, Matthew Fox, and Sue Monk Kidd.

These New Age concepts are not overt, but rather, they are interwoven with Christian views, or New Age ideas are concealed in Christian terms. Such syncretism often appears on the surface to be Christian. Moreover, New Age language is always morphing so that it becomes increasingly subtle. Terminology is often ambiguous and abstruse, making it hard to pin down the beliefs and critique them.

## New Age ABCs

Some New Age and New Thought influences that are mislabeled as Christian include Eastern-based meditation, Christ as a figure found in all faiths, pantheism/panentheism, and a distinction made between Jesus and Christ.

*Pantheism* is the view that all is God and *God is all*. God is identified *with* creation. *Panentheism* is more subtle: *God is contained in creation and creation is contained in God*, but God is also *beyond* creation. Both pantheism and panentheism can be compatible with *non-dualism*—an idea that all is one, and there are no distinctions. Panentheism is found in mysticism, and its language is not uncommon in some writings claimed to be Christian.

A distinction between Jesus and Christ is taught in New Thought (which claims to be Christian) and is found in the writings of figures such as Emmet Fox and Edgar Cayce as well as in many New Age views. Their assertion is that Jesus was merely a historical man who realized his divine nature (contrary to Mt. 1:23). They teach Christ is not a person, but rather a *state of consciousness* that is achieved when one realizes his or her innate divinity. This allegedly is how Jesus came to be the Christ, a step possible for anyone (contrary to Luke 2:11). Another term used is “**Christ spirit**,” which is not a personal spirit, but a higher knowledge that descends on those (as it did

on Jesus) who recognize their inner divine nature. New Thought teaches that Jesus did not come *to atone for sins*, but rather that He came *to correct wrong thinking* (contrary to 1 Cor. 15:3).

The focus of New Thought and New Age is awakening people to this new awareness through various philosophies and techniques—especially Eastern forms of meditation. Teachings center on *breakthroughs of consciousness* and new perceptions

*Paul warned in Acts 20, his last recorded speech to the church, that false teachers — both from without and from within — would come into the church. Other passages speak of such teachers as not being instantly recognizable; rather they “will secretly introduce destructive heresies”*



of reality. That one must reach the awareness of “true” or “actual” reality for liberation is also a Buddhist concept. Since the New Age teachings draw from New Thought and Eastern beliefs such as Buddhism, the lines between these sources become blurred—making it difficult to ascertain the origin and nature of what is being propounded. Adding to the concoction, these concepts are sometimes blended with Christian terms and biblical references, forming a syncretistic brew of New Age, Eastern, and Christian terms and doctrine.

Following is a look at a Christian / New Age blurring that illustrates some of the New Age stances just discussed. This example is given as a warning and a way to understand how New Age perspectives can be slipped into the church via Christian language and channels.

### Integrating with a New Ager

Ron Martoia works “as a corporate leader and executive coach for Christian organizations, secular think tanks, [sic] and corporate management teams.” His expertise “is human development, mindfulness/awareness practice, and semiotics; understanding the new and shifting landscape of our postmodern culture.”<sup>2</sup> His name is included on a blog (see endnote 3) as one of the people doing a conference at the large and influential Willow Creek Community Church.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this Christian identity, Ron Martoia is part of Ken Wilber’s Integral Spiritual movement even as his work with Christian entities continues:

**Christian organizations are lucky to have someone of Ron’s skills leading them into the work of Ken Wilber and translating Christian practice at an Integral level of development.**<sup>4</sup>

Ken Wilber, who does not identify himself as a Christian, is an Inter-spiritualist\* whose ideas mesh mostly with New Age and Buddhist thinking. Wilber is a deep thinker and philosopher who has written a number of books delineating his views. One of these books, *A Brief History of Everything*, is recommended by Christian Emergent<sup>5</sup> Rob Bell, in his book, *Velvet Elvis*. This brought Wilber’s name to the attention of the Christian community, and several other Emergents have extolled Wilber as well.

In *A Brief History of Everything*, Wilber explains the Buddhist concept of the “Causal Witness,” the “pure observing Self,” which was never born and never dies.<sup>6</sup> This is the “true Self” that one must come to realize, mainly through Eastern meditation.<sup>7</sup> While embracing many Eastern and New Age views, Wilber rejects others, which puts him in a unique category he has called “Integral Spirituality.”

Wilber claims all belief systems are interrelated and eventually lead to awareness of what he terms “the one truth.”

However, not all beliefs are equal. Each belief has part of the ultimate truth or leads there, but the final goal is realization of what those who follow Wilber would call “the pure truth of non-duality”—a state of awareness that all is linked with no distinctions. On the one hand, Wilber draws various spiritualities together on the basis of what he regards as their inter-connected truths; yet on the other hand, he declares that the purest truth is

non-duality, a view not held by all faith systems, and which is contrary to many.

### Ken Wilber and Perennialism

Wilber has enormous influence through his books, web sites, followers, and organizations, which are widespread. *Integral Spirituality* is a term aligned with Wilber, expressing his stance that all religions share truth and are part of one greater whole. To accelerate this movement, Wilber has brought in people who share this view, including, amazingly enough, some Christians.

Wilber often refers to *Perennialism*, an earlier movement of Inter-spirituality

that “views each of the world’s religious traditions as sharing a single, universal truth on which foundation all religious knowledge and doctrine has grown.”<sup>8</sup>

Perennialism has an influential history in the United States:

**In the early 19th century this idea was popularized by the Transcendentalism... By the end of the 19th century it was further popularized by the Theosophical Society, under the name of “Wisdom-Religion” or “Ancient Wisdom”. In the 20th century it was popularized in the English speaking world through Aldous Huxley’s book *The Perennial Philosophy* as well as the strands of thought which culminated in the New Age movement.**<sup>9</sup>

When a Christian who influences thousands of Christians aligns so closely with Ken Wilber’s Integral Spirituality, it bears watching and investigation.

### Ron Martoia

Getting to know Martoia from his page, “About Ron,” on his web site reveals the following:

**Dr. Ron Martoia is a transformational architect. His passion is helping people, and the organisms they serve, design, build and experience revolutionary change. Over the last 10 years Ron has spoken to over 30,000 leaders in conference settings from Catalyst to Willow Creek. His area of expertise is human development, mindfulness/awareness practice, and cultural trends and how to respond to them for greater effectiveness.**<sup>10</sup>

“Mindfulness/awareness practice” is based on Buddhist meditative practices and is the seventh step of the Buddhist Noble

*The core philosophy behind becoming “mindful” in the Buddhist sense, or “aware” in a New Age sense, is to awaken the consciousness to the “true reality” (also called “ultimate truth” or “Buddha mind”). Buddhism and New Age are based on the misconception that the reality we perceive is false.*

—Continued on page 17



# Saints and Scoundrels

## Can Teach Us A Thing Or Two

A BOOK REVIEW:  
by Jonathan Miles

Imagine a book that is a cross between John F. Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage* and John Foxe's *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, and you have some idea of the semblance of Robin Phillips' *Saints and Scoundrels* (Cannon Press, 2011). Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage* was an attempt to draw lessons from the lives of courageous people. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* was written to highlight the often-gruesome sacrifices of God's people for the Kingdom. Robin Phillips attempts to do both. Not all the people in his book are Christians and a few of them are anything but courageous. Where Kennedy hoped we would learn from the courageous lives of his subjects, Phillips hopes we will learn just as much from the flaws, failures, and downright egregious errors of the scoundrels of history just as much as we will learn from history's saints.

Phillips has produced a banquet of lessons drawn from various periods throughout history and has served them up bite-sized. Each profile—from King Herod all the way to the Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn—gives us a brief over-view and timely lesson from the lives of famous historical figures such as: Alfred the Great, J.S. Bach, and Edmund Burke, as well as lesser-known lights such as Richard Baxter (Chaplain during the English Civil War) and Cultural Marxist Antonio Gramsci.

While some history buffs and scholars will scoff at the mere attempt to grasp the strengths and shortcomings of the likes of Jean-Jacques Rousseau or William Wilberforce in an average of ten pages, Phillips manages to stick to his task of pulling a few lessons from the sketch he presents without seeming to indulge in uncritical gloss. He is not attempting to do history. The point of Phillips' sketches, like those in Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage*, are character lessons after all, not history lessons. They are designed to encourage and spark reflection.

From the "Preface," Phillips writes:

**Like those saints listed in Hebrews 11, the brave men and women in the following pages comprise a vast cloud of witnesses who reach down through the ages to show us what it means to put the gospel into action. Let them encourage you to expand your vision beyond what you thought possible, to never cease striving against the dragons and arch-villains that confront us in our own day (p14).**

Don't take this to mean there isn't some good history here. Just the inclusion of Antonio Gramsci and his variant of cultural Marxism is evidence of a careful, historical mind at work. However, the reader is asked to reflect on the character lessons that can be derived from these historical sketches through questions at the end of each vignette. Both virtues and vices are on display in Phillips' whirlwind tour through history.

It's also clear that Phillips has a perspective he is not trying to hide. The book espouses what might be called conservative virtues. This is never more apparent than when he discusses the real father of conservatism as a political ideal—Edmund Burke:

**... Burke teaches us the folly of revolutionary solutions to social problems. Burke did not advocate a static traditionalism. On the contrary, he taught that 'A State without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation.' The question is *how* does change occur? Burke's answer was that change must be sought through slow, organic reform based on the constitutional precedent. If we must repair the walls, he asserted, we should do so on the old foundation (p181).**

Just as he sees Burke as a saint, he sees sown within the teachings of Gramsci and England's King John the seeds of destruction. Nonetheless, even from these scoundrels, we can learn valuable lessons of what *not* to do. From Gramsci's Frankfurt School\* we learn:

A self-deceived man will always see in other people his own faults. One of the traits the Frankfurt School took to be characteristic of the fascist character type was a rigid commitment to dominant values. Yet it seems undeniable that the ideology which emanated from their think-tank involved an exceedingly rigid commitment to the values of deconstructionism ... they used reason to attack reason, and used the freedoms of the West as a safe haven from which to attack those very freedoms ... (p105).

Longtime readers of the *MCOI Journal* will appreciate Phillips' insightful commentary on Mormon founder Joseph Smith:

The entire history of Christendom between the Apostles and Smith came crashing down under the hammer of his "restoration." To achieve this revolution, Smith masterfully drew on the anti-institutional impulses of nineteenth-century evangelicalism, using them to strip away all structures but his own. Although he began his career with a stinging denouncement of the denominational system, it was only by invoking the popular spirit of the sect and schism that Smith was able to launch the largest indigenous denomination in American history p226).

I should note there are far more "saints" in Phillips' role call than "scoundrels." The questions at the end of each sketch make for good discussion starters. Some of these are directly aimed at biblical passages, and others are philosophical by inviting the participants to ponder weighty questions like "Are all men created equal?"

What I really appreciated about Phillips' tour is that he rarely goes for the obvious figures. I was so happy to see George MacDonald in place of the often over-exposed C.S. Lewis; Gramsci presented as the representative of Marxism rather than Lenin. I became acquainted for the first time with several visionaries, as well as having some old friends newly revived in my thinking.

All in all, Phillips has struck a good balance between brevity and style and managed to produce a book along the lines of *Profiles in Courage* that is explicitly Christian, conservative, and yet, never simply the grindings of an ideologue. In the process, *Saints and Scoundrels* gives us a way to make history and biography devotional. [Q]

**\*Frankfurt School:** Formed in Germany in 1923, the Frankfurt School were the forebears of "cultural Marxism."



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## ***“Intergal Christianity” Continued from page 9***

Eight-fold Path. Mindfulness, which is now being promoted in the culture as a stress-reduction method, is actually a form of Buddhist meditation as well as the framework for the Buddhist outlook (especially in Zen Buddhism). Buddhism teaches that attachment to this (false) reality and to the (non-existent) self continues the cycle of rebirth; therefore, cultivating detachment is necessary for ultimate liberation from rebirth. Mindfulness meditation gives rise to detachment, which fosters Mindfulness as a world view.

The core philosophy behind becoming “mindful” in the Buddhist sense, or “aware” in a New Age sense, is to awaken the consciousness to the “true reality” (also called “ultimate truth” or “Buddha mind”). Buddhism and New Age are based on the misconception that the reality we perceive is false. Therefore, practices such as Mindfulness meditation are necessary, because these meditations purportedly initiate the process of realization of truth.

### **Field Gazing**

On Martoia’s web site is a link to something he calls “field gazing.”

**Field gaze is a letting go exercise that puts us in a place to approach a non-dual experience. What is that? It is our slow letting go of our ego/self sense that enables us to become more deeply connected to Silence/God, to creation and to others around us.<sup>11</sup>**

A “non-dual experience” means experiencing that you and everything are one. There are no distinctions. A “non-dual experience” (or realization of non-duality) is the goal of most forms of Eastern meditation.

Martoia’s words about “letting go of our ego/self sense” enabling us to be more connected to “Silence/God” reflect a New Age/Buddhist view that the ego is a temporary self and is not part of ultimate reality. Why is the term “Silence/God” expressed this way, as though silence equals God and vice-versa? This is because God is more of a *principle* and is often presented as being beyond any description. Consequently, equating God with silence *depersonalizes God* and promotes the idea of going into an “inner silence” to find God. However, this is contrary to the fact that God’s Word divulges the attributes of a personal God and maintains that God is known through Christ and through the Bible. The allegation that one encounters and knows God by finding silence or going within is not found anywhere in Scripture.

We are “connected” to God by grace through faith in Christ (John 4:6,21; Rom. 8:15; Phil. 3:8-11). After that, we grow in relationship through what is modeled in Scripture: reading and studying the Bible, prayer; worshipping God; fellowship with

other Christians; and yielding to the Holy Spirit as He works in one’s life.

### **Meditation and Breath**

The excerpt below is from Martoia’s site:

**Once you are rooted in your body bring your attention to your breath. After several breaths with full attention on the inhale and exhale start your gratefulness practice. On the inhale say softly to yourself “I gratefully receive all that you have for me this day.” On the exhale: “Today I walk into the world grateful for what is.”<sup>12</sup>**

On another page we find this statement: “In fact I am tempted to do a 21 day guided meditation PRACTICE.”<sup>13</sup>

Bringing “attention to your breath” is a phrase used in Eastern meditation, and the affirmations said on the in- and out-

breaths are New Thought and New Age concepts. While it is always good to be grateful, the way for a Christian to cultivate this is to see in the Bible what God has done, what He is doing in sanctifying the Christian’s life by the Spirit, and then to express gratitude directly to God. Affirmations in the New Age are a counterfeit to authentic prayers to the true God. New-Age affirmations supposedly help bring about what is being affirmed simply through affirming it.

Guided meditation is when someone guides another person to visualize a certain way after breathing and relaxation techniques. This is essentially a form of hypnosis that puts the

meditator into an altered and suggestible state. It was during a guided meditation that I encountered my main spirit guide; and, in fact, this is the main way people are advised on how get a spirit guide (fallen angel). This also happens unintentionally when a person may not even be aware that the guided visualization will introduce him to a guide.

### **Integral Christianity: Another Jesus**

The Integral philosophy of Ken Wilber applied to Christianity is displayed on web sites, through speakers aligned with Wilber, and in books. Following is an excerpt from a description on Amazon of a book, *Integral Christianity: The Spirit’s Call to Evolve*, by Baptist Minister Paul Smith (Paragon House, 2012), and endorsed by Ken Wilber. Smith is a regular contributor to Wilber’s Integral Life web site.

**The perspectives of integral theory and practice articulated by Ken Wilber help uncover the integral approach that Jesus advocated and demonstrated**

*Guided meditation is when someone guides another person to visualize a certain way after breathing and relaxation techniques. This is essentially is a form of hypnosis that puts the meditator into an altered and suggestible state.*

**“Defend Faith” Continued from page 7**


**We are coming out of an era of Christian culture in which we have been taught, “The Bible says it, I believe it, that settles it.” There is a sense in which this statement is true: God’s special revelation is the ultimate truth on what it teaches. However, an underlying message is that Christians are not open to a discussion on belief in God. ... If people who do not believe are to trust you with a conversation about God, they need to know you are open to discovering the truth, no matter where it may lead. (p74)**

At no point should a Christian, apologist or otherwise, concede that—by chance—we might be wrong. That’s what it means to be **“open to discovering the truth, no matter where it may lead.”** The fact is: Christians should *never* give the impression there is some other authoritative source that might better inform them on their belief in God. If this recommendation is merely a tactical device to get the conversation going with a particularly challenging skeptic, we need to ask if it is manipulative and, therefore, an unethical approach to doing apologetics.

Everyone comes to the discussion about belief in God with presuppositions: about God, about sin, eternity, the meaning of life, and so forth. The Christian who declares hers and asks the skeptic to do the same is in a better place to converse about belief in God and from where the content of that belief stems rather than pretending to listen for a better alternative. It is not unreasonable in the logical sense to say the God of the Universe reached out to me and revealed Himself to me through his Holy Spirit, through nature, through reason and through Scripture. At no point should authority be granted to the independent use of human reason outside and apart from our worldview claims. There is no neutrality when it comes to worldview formation.

**Conclusion**

*Defending the Faith: Apologetics in Women’s Ministry* provides a basic structure for how to prepare women—or anyone for that matter—how to engage in apologetic conversation with

those outside of the faith. Asking questions and probing into the reasons for belief is an approach that can be embraced by anyone from any apologetic perspective and, therefore, I believe Sharp’s endeavor is to be valued as a tool for women’s ministry leaders and their pastors. While the strengths of this book should not overshadow my concerns, I believe it is a helpful resource for inviting apologetics ministry into the context of women’s ministry in the local church. 



**Sarah Flashing, M.A.** (TEDS, 2005) is the founder and director of The Center for Women of Faith in Culture, a ministry dedicated to the life of the mind of women in the Christian community. She is a contributor to the *Christianity Today* women’s ministry blog, *Gifted for Leadership*, and *Evangel at First Things* online. Since 2004, Sarah has been speaking to women on a range of topics including Christian world view, apologetics, and bioethics. In addition to her writing and speaking ministry, she teaches ethics at McHenry County College and serves in women’s ministry at The Orchard Church in McHenry, Illinois. For more information, visit [www.womenfaithculture.org](http://www.womenfaithculture.org).

**ENDNOTES:**

- 1 Take note that the writer of this review subscribes to a presuppositional view of apologetics method, a fact that impacts my reading of DFAWM and this review.
- 2 For more information on the teachings of Neil T Anderson:
  - a. “Cure All Bondages”; <http://www.midwestoutreach.org/Pdf%20Journals/1999/99sum.pdf>
  - b. <http://www.equip.org/articles/neil-anderson-and-freedom-in-christ-ministries-a-general-critique/>
  - c. <http://www.equip.org/articles/the-bondage-maker-examining-the-message-and-method-of-neil-t-anderson-part-two-spiritual-warfare-and-the-truth-encounter/>
  - d. <http://www.equip.org/articles/the-bondage-maker-examining-the-message-and-method-of-neil-t-anderson-part-three-spiritual-warfare-and-the-seven-steps-to-freedom/>
  - e. <http://www.equip.org/articles/the-bondage-maker-examining-the-message-and-method-of-neil-t-anderson-part-four-spiritual-warfare-and-the-myth-of-satanic-conspiracies-and-ritual-abuse/>
  - f. <http://www.pfo.org/wdemon.htm>
- 3 McGrath, Alister. *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith*. (Baker Books, Grand Rapids 2012) p29.

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**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**“Moralophobic” Continued from page 5**

It is the same with God. He has something better for us which our self-centeredness will never fulfill.

**Is There Hope?**

There is hope, but the hope should be focused toward the Lord. Left to ourselves, we will manage to spiral into the abyss of the immoral. The task of Christian leaders is to train and to shepherd their flock in understanding and living out the Word of God. Church is the place for equipping, binding up the wounds of living in a fallen world, being examples to the flock of selfless lives in service to the Master Who bought us. In turn, the flock goes into the world as missionaries, or as Paul put it, “... *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.*” (2 Cor. 5:20) 

All Bible quotes are from the New American Standard version.



**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, IL with offices in Florida, Illinois, Iowa, and Ohio. He and Joy, his wife of 42 years, 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 including *The John Ankerberg Show*. He is a staff researcher and writer for the *Midwest Christian 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 author of articles featured 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.

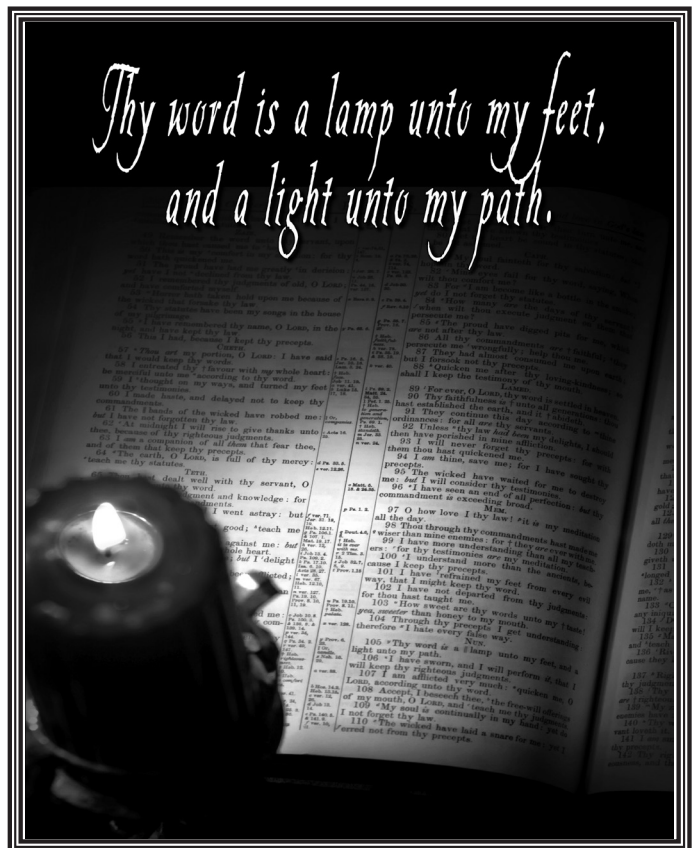


**Dr. Jerry L Buckner** graduated from California Baptist College in Riverside and earned his Master's at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary where he is currently an adjunct professor. He earned his Doctorate at San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, CA. Dr. Buckner lives in the San Francisco Bay Area where he serves as pastor of Tiburon Christian Fellowship, hosts *Contending for the Faith*, a live call-in radio program that airs on KFAQ (AM 1100), one of the largest Christian radio stations in Northern California.



**ENDNOTES:**

- 1 Don Veinot, Joy Veinot & Ron Henzel, *A Matter of Basic Principles: Bill Gothard and the Christian Life*, (Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc., 2003) 175-176
- 2 Phobia; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phobic>
- 3 **“The Tar-Baby is a fictional character in the second of the Uncle Remus stories published in 1881; it is a doll made of tar and turpentine used to entrap Br'er Rabbit. The more that Br'er Rabbit fights the Tar-Baby, the more entangled he becomes.**  
In modern usage, ‘tar baby’ refers to any ‘sticky situation’ that is only aggravated by additional contact.”  
Tar-Baby; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tar\\_baby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tar_baby)
- 4 Generations in our Nation; <http://aimysgeneration.blogspot.com/p/builders.html>
- 5 Victims of sex assaults in military are mostly men, Rowan Scarborough, <http://p.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/may/20/victims-of-sex-assaults-in-military-are-mostly-sil/?page=all>
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 “The Case for Plural Marriage: The slippery slope gets slicker and steeper,” Denny Burke; <http://www.dennyburk.com/the-case-for-plural-marriage-the-slippery-slope-gets-slicker-and-steeper/>
- 8 We discussed this in the Fall 2009 Issue of the *MCOI Journal* article, “Barack and the Borg,” <http://www.midwestoutreach.org/Pdf%20Journals/2010/Fall%202009%20FINAL>
- 9 *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 4, 2013, “Gay Marriage support about civil right, not religion, pastors say,” <http://www.suntimes.com/news/metro/19274300-418/gay-marriage-support-about-civil-rights-not-religion-pastors-say.html>
- 10 Brian McLaren on the Homosexual Question: Finding a Pastoral Response; Brian McLaren; Out of Ur, *Christianity Today*; [http://www.outofur.com/archives/2006/01/brian\\_mclaren\\_o.html](http://www.outofur.com/archives/2006/01/brian_mclaren_o.html)
- 11 Brian McLaren Leads Commitment Ceremony At Son's Same-Sex Wedding, Melissa Steffan, *Christianity Today*; [http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2012/09/brian\\_mclaren\\_1.html](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2012/09/brian_mclaren_1.html)
- 12 Rob Bell Grows Frustrated Amid Questions on ‘Sinfulness’ of Homosexuality; Nicola Menzie; *The Christian Post*; <http://www.christianpost.com/news/rob-bell-grows-frustrated-amid-questions-on-sinfulness-of-homosexuality-95209/>



**“Integral Christianity” Continued from page 12**

**in the metaphors of his time--and that traditional Christianity has largely been unable to see.**

**Smith incorporates elements of traditional, modern, and postmodern theological viewpoints, including progressive, New Thought, and emerging/emergent ones. However, he goes beyond them and moves to a Christianity that is devoted to following both the historical Jesus and the Risen Cosmic Christ whose Spirit beckons to us from the future.<sup>14</sup>**

The non-Christian influence of New Thought is acknowledged as well as the (error-ridden) Emergent movement. The historical Jesus is not compatible with the “Cosmic Christ” as put forth by Wilber and his associates. Jesus is ripped from the context of the Old Testament prophecies—His role as Messiah and Redeemer—and is transformed into a “Cosmic Christ,” a false Jesus as mystic and Universalist.

### **The Perennial Problem and the Solution**


The flawed “God” of Integral Christianity is not supported in Scripture. God is distinct from His creation, not a part of it (Gen. chapters 1 and 2; Ps. 104, Is. 45:12,18). Non-dualism would mean that there is no distinction between good and evil and, therefore, no righteous God, no sin, and no need for the historical Jesus Christ who atoned for sins. In John 8:24, Jesus said, “*Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.*” Non-dualism and pantheism/panentheism are *totally contrary* to Who God is and to His revelation.

As Paul warned in Acts 20, destructive teachings can come from without and within the church. Blending Christianity with any other faith is always an attack on the Christian faith, which Christians are called to defend (1 Tim. 6:3,12; Titus 1:9; Jude 3).

The perennial problem is that man is born separated from God and is out of relationship with Him due to man’s sinful nature and desire to go his own way (i.e., against God’s way). Jesus did not speak of *true* and *false realities* or *perceptions*. He did not come to initiate a realization of *ultimate reality* or teach men to go into *silence* to find God. Rather, Jesus said, “***Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many***” (Matt. 20:28; see also Matt. 26:28).

The crux of God’s revelation is that Jesus is the promised Messiah Who fulfilled over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament, the Redeemer long promised as the way of salvation. His death on the cross effected that way of salvation through faith in Him.

*For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.* (John 6:40)

*...but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing you may have life in His name.* (John 20:31) 

\*Inter-spiritualist is someone who believes that all religions and

belief systems are part of the same truth and eventually lead to that truth.

All Bible quotes are from the New American Standard version.

#### **ENDNOTES:**



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 ***SpellBound: The Paranormal Seduction of Today’s Kids***, (Life Journey/Cook, 2006).

1 New Thought is a movement that took form in the nineteenth century, eventually becoming the basis for the Christian Science Church, Unity School of Christianity (Unity), the Church of Religious Science and other groups. New Thought claims to be Christian and makes use of the Bible as well as incorporating the name Jesus in their teachings. However, the New Thought Jesus is a man who became the Christ by modeling Christ Consciousness for humanity through becoming aware of his innate divinity.

2 <http://integrallife.com/contributors/ron-martoia>

3 <http://mrclm.blogspot.ca/2007/09/ancient-future-conference-at-willow.html>

4 <http://integrallife.com/future-christianity/evangelical-christianity-integral-christianity>

5 Emergent is a term for some of the leaders of what has been called Emergent Christianity, a movement that started in the 90s as an outreach in the church to postmodern and unchurched young people. Some of these leaders have aligned themselves with people inside and outside the church who have departed from the teachings of historical Christianity (such as Richard Rohr, Matthew Fox, and Ken Wilber).

6 Ken Wilber, *A Brief History of Everything* (Boston: Shambhala, 2007), 330-336

7 *Ibid.*, 337

8 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perennial\\_philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perennial_philosophy)

9 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perennial\\_philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perennial_philosophy)

10 <http://ronmartoia.com/about-ron/>

11 <http://ronmartoia.com/field-gaze-a-visual-silence-practice/>

12 <http://ronmartoia.com/practices/gratefulness-breathing/>

13 <http://ronmartoia.com/770/#comment-34>

14 [http://www.amazon.com/Integral-Christianity-Spirits-Call-Evolve/dp/1557788006/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1377236516&sr=8-1&keywords=the+spirit%27s+call+to+evolve+paul+smith](http://www.amazon.com/Integral-Christianity-Spirits-Call-Evolve/dp/1557788006/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1377236516&sr=8-1&keywords=the+spirit%27s+call+to+evolve+paul+smith)

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