

heresies" from men and women who distort the truth (2 Peter 2:1). Apart from Scripture, we will all too easily believe and tolerate false and unorthodox teachings. The Church needs Bereans who "examine the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so." We must commit ourselves to a lifelong and daily study of Scripture in order to grow in our knowledge and understanding of God. We must not allow ourselves to become weary in our passion for the Word. We should be like the Psalmist whose very being was consumed with a longing for God's Word in his life (Psalm 119:20). We must never become bored with the Scriptures so that we search for truth apart from the Bible. Regrettably, for many Christians, they're looking for truth in all the wrong places.

The Church does not need modern-day prophets, like Kenyon, Copeland or Meyer, to uncover for us principles of God's redemption for man, that have been missed down through the centuries. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, who would "guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). Whether knowingly or unknowingly, Meyer, with her call to "spirit revelation," is supplanting the work of the Holy Spirit.

The current wave of self-proclaimed prophets and esoteric teachers only pretends to enhance biblical truth. In employing their mystical repertoire, they try to usurp the authority of Scripture. Despite claims to the opposite, these men and women are really linked to liberalism. Their doctrine and practice draw one away from the Bible and dilute Scripture. PFO, as believers in Christ and under the authority of the Scripture, will strive to stand up for the truth and be witnesses for the truth when error is being propagated.

British author, Peter Jeffery wrote: "The doctrinal health of the church is of paramount importance in the New Testament. False teachers may be lovely, kind, charming men but their doctrine is poison."

Indeed, it is *not* a lot to say about nothing.

—MKG

NEWS UPDATES

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my being there, it became more of a 'you need to be there and support what we are doing or don't take a paycheck from me.'"

One employee, Anita Pillow, told the Baptist news service, "I was told that because the direction the company was moving towards, my position was being replaced by someone who attended her Remnant Fellowship church." Pillow added, "[Shamblin] thanked me for my hard work but said my services were no longer needed. Because I was not a member of the Remnant

Fellowship, I was being replaced." Pillow is a member of Park Avenue Baptist Church.

Amid the revelations of her heretical theology, Shamblin sought to play down her unorthodoxy. "A few people have been on a witch hunt in the last month," she told *CT*. "People don't care about this. They don't care about the Trinity. This is going to pass. What the women want is weight loss. They care about their bodies being a temple and their lives turned over to the Lord. That's what my ministry is about," she said.

Shamblin says that despite the disclosure of her beliefs, she continues to receive the support of "many ministers," from Baptists to Episcopalians.

In less than a decade, Shamblin's diet program went from her garage to a multimillion-dollar business. Her 1997 volume, *The Weigh Down Diet* sold more than 1 million copies and at its apex, the ministry had 30,000 locations, including thousands of evangelical churches, which hosted weekly meetings of her Weigh Down Workshops.

—MKG

ARMSTRONG FURTHER SILENCED WITH AID OF COURT

The Philadelphia Church of God, a religious group based in Edmond, Okla., which strictly adheres to the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong, had its efforts to publish and distribute the last written work of the late religious leader quashed by a federal appellate court in September.

A year before his death in 1986, Armstrong, at the age of 92, completed a 315-page book, *Mystery of the Ages*. Armstrong taught "the Bible was a coded book, not to be understood until our day" and that his *Mystery of the Ages* enabled the Bible to be "clearly understood." The book's copyright was bequeathed to the Worldwide Church of God, the church founded by Armstrong in 1934. Over 9 million copies of the book were distributed free of charge by the WCG.

In the months following Armstrong's death, the Pasadena, Calif.-based WCG began a radical and protracted departure from the doctrine and practices of its late founder. This deviation led to the founding of the PCG in 1989 by two former WCG ministers in order to advocate the undistorted teachings of Armstrong.

While the WCG ceased distribution of the *Mystery of the Ages* in 1987, the PCG continued distributing existing copies of the book. In 1997, the supply was exhausted and the PCG began reproducing the book without permission of the WCG. Later that year, the WCG sued in federal court for copyright infringement. When a federal district court ruled in favor of the PCG, stating

the sect was within "fair use" protection of the copyright law, the WCG appealed to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

On Sept. 18, a three-judge panel of appeals court reversed the lower court's decision and ruled 2-1 in favor of the mother church. Two members of the judicial panel stated that wholesale reproduction of the book by the PCG did not fall within the perimeters of fair use of a copyrighted work.

The dissenting judge, Melvin Burnett, contended the PCG acted within the fair-use clause. "In this lawsuit, WCG appears less interested in protecting its rights to exploit MOA (*Mystery of the Ages*) than in suppressing Armstrong's ideas which now run counter to church doctrine," Burnett said.

—MKG

POPE ATTEMPTS VATICAN EXORCISM

Vatican officials recently acknowledged the involvement of Pope John Paul II in an attempted exorcism at St. Peter's Basilica. On Sept. 6, during the pope's weekly appearance, a 19-year-old girl began "screaming insults" toward the pontiff as he moved to bless her. Vatican guards struggled to restrain the girl but, according to witnesses, she possessed "superhuman strength" and violently pushed them away.

As the Secretary-General of Vatican City, Bishop Gianni Danzi, stepped in to subdue the girl with a crucifix, she began "insulting him, uttering disconnected phrases, and speaking in unknown tongues."

Reluctant to discuss specific details of the episode, the Vatican stated that the pope spent time in prayer with the teenager. Other reports divulged that, "the Pope talked to the girl, exorcised her, and stayed with her for half an hour," but further revealed "that the Pope's intervention had only a temporary effect on the girl."

The girl is said to have been possessed since she was 12 years old. It is said that her demonic affliction was the result of a curse placed on her by someone in vengeance against her parents. She was brought to the pope's weekly audience by her parents in the hope that a blessing by the pontiff would cast out her demons.

The attempted exorcism is said to have been John Paul's third in his 22-year papacy.

In the United States added emphasis among Roman Catholics is being employed against purported demon possession. "For the first time in its 160-year history, the Archdiocese of Chicago appointed a full-time exorcist," the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported. In New York, the archdiocese claimed a total of 300 cases in the past decade. The Rev. Robert Barron, a Catholic theologian, stated, "I've heard that about 95 percent of those who present themselves for exorcisms are not really subjects," the Chicago daily reported.

—MKG

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH — STATEMENT OF BELIEF

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