
Editorials

THE TRICKS MEN PLAY — AND HOW THEY PREY

We have been warned! Ephesians 4:14 says very clearly “that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.”

We have been told there will be unscrupulous religious teachers who will try to prey on the vulnerable. They will devise trickery. They will craft reasonable-sounding lies. They will plan deceptions. They will claim miracles, but never document them. They will promise a hundred-fold (or more) return on the money given to them. They will guarantee a bigger home, a newer car, a better job, and a fabulous marriage.

It is hard to believe that such evil could go on, but it does every day and in every way on “Christian” television, and in “Christian” books and magazines.

The NIV renders Ephesians 4:14: “blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.”

Even the Catholic version of Scripture called *The Jerusalem Bible* renders it: “at the mercy of all the tricks men play and their cleverness in practicing deceit.”

These unscrupulous men know that there are vulnerable people out there — soft targets. Many have been

exposed repeatedly for making millions off their schemes and living a life of luxury. Preying pays very well.

No false teacher says, “We are going to rob your freedom, your mind, your family, and trash them while you give us your money. We will make you very poor in every way while you make us rich.” There is a subtle but seductive process. Cult leaders and cults do not necessarily appeal to people who are uneducated or dim-witted; being vulnerable and biblically untaught are sufficient for spiritual seduction by a cult to be successful. People are trapped in the deceit for a variety of reasons:

- Those going through difficult transitions like losing a loved one, a divorce, a separation, financial reverses, or other personal crises. Their world has been “rocked.”
- Following and connected to the above are promises of stability, predictability, security, and the pretense of absolute answers that help the uncertainty. False teachers pretend to offer all this.
- There may be the promise held out that with insider information the new follower can tap into new mind powers or great insights into the inscrutable. Theologians have wittily referred to it as unscrewing the inscrutable.
- Then there is the alluring possibility held out of no uncertainty — “We have all the answers” — which is really not possible this side of heaven.

(continues on page 22)

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

P.O. Box 26062 • Saint Louis, Missouri 63136-0062 • (314) 921-9800

Visit PFO's Website at: <http://www.pfo.org>

BOARD of DIRECTORS:

James Bjornstad	Cedarville, OH	Joan C. Cetnar	Kunkletown, PA
G. Richard Fisher	Dillsburg, PA	Gary E. Gilley	Springfield, IL
M. Kurt Goedelman	Saint Louis, MO	Robert L. Griffin	Gulf Shores, AL
Keith A. Morse	Denver, CO	David M. Tyler	Granite City, IL

BOARD of REFERENCE:

Dr. Jay E. Adams	Enoree, SC	Dr. Norman L. Geisler	Charlotte, NC
Dr. Ron Rhodes	Frisco, TX		

© 2012 – PFO. All rights reserved. ISSN: 1083-6853. These articles may not be stored on web pages or Internet sites without permission. *The Quarterly Journal* is the newsletter publication of PFO. Published by Personal Freedom Outreach, P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, MO 63136. PFO's *Journal* may also be obtained on CD-ROM in Portable Document Format (.PDF) for use with Adobe® Reader® software.

cit., pg. 166.
 7. Ibid., pg. 247.
 8. Ibid., pg. 248.
 9. Ibid., pg. 250.
 10. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1959, pg. 193. This statement is also cited in "H. Richard Niebuhr" on Wikipedia. Document accessed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._Richard_Niebuhr.
 11. George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991, pg. 29.
 12. Ibid., pg. 34.
 13. Renald E. Showers, *What on Earth Is God Doing?* Bellmawr, N.J.: Friends of Israel, 2003, pp. 79, 80.
 14. Machen cited in George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, pg. 137.
 15. Ibid., pg. 194.
 16. Ibid., pg. 50.

17. *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, op. cit., pg. 73.
 18. David F. Wells, "The Word in the World." Document accessed at: www.the-highway.com/wordworld_Wells.html. This online article originally appeared in John H. Armstrong, General Editor, *The Compromised Church: The Present Evangelical Crisis*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1998. The quotation is on page 27 of the book.



EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

- There, too, may be within the seeker a deep dissatisfaction with life in general or in one's own life that creates great feelings of vulnerability.
- There also may be a desire for spiritual meaning and direction.
- Many have a desire for a cause to live for.
- Added to that, there may be a total ignorance of group manipulation.
- There often is also a desire to be accepted and loved. This is usually encountered in the cult's courtship phase (called "love-bombing"), but not sustained by the group over the long haul. Once in, it is all work and no play.
- The cult leader can also push our greed button with the aforementioned promises of hundredfold (or even a thousandfold) in return for our investment. It is sometimes called "sowing your seed." The old nature loves to gamble. This is one of the crafty schemes that has been working for many years. The cult leader gets the "seed" and we are left with an empty plot.

Now we can understand at least a little bit of the tricks men play and how they prey. Memorize Ephesians 4:14. Be aware of the "cunning and craftiness of men." We have been warned.

—GRF

NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

Despite his believing that people have turned to the Bible because of his erroneous and, as he admits, sinful predictions, Camping fails to see how much damage his false predictions have done, including causing an unbelieving world to scoff at the idea that Jesus will return again, as He promised to do. Christians and the Bible are mocked and ridiculed because of Camping's failed predictions.

—JGS/MKG

A RIVER OF RED INK

More than a decade following the last service of the famed "Pensacola Revival," the church staff and membership of the Brownsville Assembly of God are still feeling reverberations from this so-called spiritual outpouring. The meetings reportedly drew 5,500 people four nights a week and lasted six years. Yet the results — or more correctly, the aftermath — of the revival left the church on the brink of financial collapse; a fact little known outside the church family according to a recent Associated Press report.

By the time the revival, called "A River is Flowing," dried up, it had amassed \$11.5 million in debt. That figure has been reduced to \$6.5 million after the sale of property and expense reduction. The Rev. Evon Horton, the church's current pastor, hopes to wipe out the remaining debt through a donation campaign which he claims God gave to him in a dream. "We can be debt-free if just 7,000 of the millions of people who attended the revival help out" by giving \$1,000 each toward the debt removal, Horton said.

The AP article indicated that the "paid staff is down to six from around 50." Also it said Sunday attendance at the church's two services was between 800 and 1,000, and that "most pews go empty in the 2,200-seat sanctuary."

At the height of the revival services, it was more than Holy Ghost power that was flowing at Brownsville — large amounts of cash were flowing as well. Following months of investigative work, the *Pensacola News Journal* published a series of articles which included the financial benefits acquired by the revival's leadership. The newspaper estimated that for 1997, "the total revival revenue was between \$4.3 million and \$5.4 million for that one year." It reported that the offerings from the Friday evening services — said to be a weekly amount of \$20,000 — were given directly to the revival's evangelist Stephen Hill. The church's pastor, James Kilpatrick, as well as the revival's "theologian," Michael Brown, were also harvesting their own fiscal fortunes, purchasing homes and property in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The church itself began buying homes adjacent to its campus, then razing them for parking. Horton told the AP "he's still unsure what happened to all the money."