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The Toronto Phenomenon: Is it of God? How Can Christians Decide? - by Tricia Tillin of Banner Ministries, England -

With all the media and Church interest in what is being called "revival", and "refreshing" or "The Toronto Blessing", Christians urgently need to consider their response. While some are waiting for the genuine hallmarks of revival to develop, and others are simply undecided, many have accepted the manifestations as totally of God. But is this right? How can we judge these things?

From reports coming in, and also from the study of the Word, and of previous genuine revivals, we can make several observations that may be helpful:

1. IDENTIFIED PREVIOUSLY AS DEMONIC

The more disruptive and outrageous manifestations present in the meetings, such as hysterical laughter, growling, roaring, over-heating of the body and paralysis have never been signs of a genuine revival. They have, however, occurred elsewhere (new-age therapies/drug-abuse, for example), and been identified as fleshly or demonic manifestations during earlier revivals. Pot-smokers report they developed hysterical laughter in which everything appears to be funny. One Christian who has worked in a lunatic asylum reports having heard the same laughter there!

This quote from "War On The Saints" tells of an earlier occasion during the Welsh Revival (1904) in which laughter was identified as a work of the devil in a Christian meeting:

A strange element comes in, possibly only recognisable to some with keen spiritual vision, or else plainly obvious to all. Perhaps the speaker begins to pray quietly and calmly, with a pure spirit, but suddenly the voice is raised, it sounds 'hollow', or has a metallic tone; the tension of the meeting increases and overwhelming over-mastering 'power' falls upon it; and no one thinks of 'resisting' what appears to be such a 'manifestation of God'!

The majority of those present may have no idea of the mixture which has crept in. **Some fall on the ground**, unable to bear the strained emotion, or effect upon the mind; and some are thrown down by some supernatural power; others cry out in ecstasy; the speaker leaves the platform, passes by a young man, who becomes conscious of a feeling of **intoxication** upon him, which does not leave his senses for some time. Others **laugh** with the exuberance of the intoxicating joy. Some have had real spiritual help and blessing through the Word of God being expounded ere this climax came, and during the pure outflow of the Holy Spirit consequently they accept these strange outworkings as from God, because in the first stage of the meetings, their needs have been truly met of Him, and they cannot discern between the two separate 'manifestations' coming through the same channel."

In a passage headed, "How Demons Attack Advanced Christians", Jessie Penn-Lewis describes religious demons who offer a counterfeit of true, deep spirituality. (page 324) She cites the example of one man who:

"...felt like rolling on the floor, groaning and pulling the chairs around, but he distinctly perceived that the impulse to do so had something wild in it; and a touch of self-display contrary to the gentleness and sweetness of Jesus: and as quick as he saw it was an attack of a false spirit, he was delivered. But another man had the same impulse, and fell down groaning and roaring, beating the floor with his hands and feet, and the demon entered into him as an angel of light, and got him to think that his conduct was of the Holy Ghost, and it became a regular habit in the meetings he attended, until he would ruin every meeting he was in..."

To understand how this sort of thing was discerned as demonic, you need to read the comments in context and see the teaching of the book as a whole. "War On The Saints" (unabridged version) available from Christian Literature Crusade is invaluable at this time, as it so mirrors the present-day events.

Laughter therapy is also currently in use as a new-age therapy. Norman Cousins, globalist, new-age occultist and leader of the infamous human potential movement is famous for his metaphysical laughter teachings; "laughter therapy workshops are an integral part of the human potential movement here in Australia", reports the Christian newsletter "Dispatch" March 1994. Vol. 6:1.

2. STRIKING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PREVIOUS REVIVALS AND TODAY

A study of revivals in the past reveals major inconsistencies:

Firstly, revival is primarily for the unsaved, to bring them to Jesus. True revival has always been the powerful preaching of the Word of God, leading to a

conviction of sin and a strong desire to repent, and to seek God for salvation. If and when physical manifestations occurred, (falling down, moaning, crying aloud) they happened as a result of conviction - and they ceased once the person found relief in the Lord Jesus.

Secondly, these things were the exception rather than the rule. There was NEVER a time in previous genuine revivals when Christians lined up en masse to receive holy-laughter, or came over and over again to meetings to get slain in the spirit.

Thirdly, the attitude of the elders to physical manifestations was very cautious, in genuine revivals. They were aware of the danger of letting Satan get a foothold in God's work, and they tested and limited manifestations. This is not happening today!

"Oftentimes, excitement spreads rapidly through a congregation under the influence of sympathy, and it not infrequently becomes necessary in powerful revivals to proceed with great discretion for this reason. Where one person becomes overwhelmed with excitement, and breaks out into loud crying and tears, where he cannot contain himself but has to wail out with excitement, it requires much judgment to dispose of such a case without injury on the one side or the other. If the thing be severely rebuked, it will almost invariably beget such a feeling among Christians as to quench the Spirit. On the other hand, if it be openly encouraged and the flame fanned, it will often produce an overwhelming amount of excitement throughout the congregation. Many will perhaps be overcome, and multitudes profess to submit to God; whereas scarcely one of them has acted intelligently or will in the end be found to have been truly converted... (Finney, "Reflections On Revival" P. 42)

3. WHERE IS THE REPENTANCE? WHERE ARE THE UNBELIEVERS?

This is a "revival" that so far has affected only Christians. In reality, there is no such thing. In fact, even the leaders of the new move are wary of calling it "revival" for this very reason. They know that God's revivals reach out to the unsaved, to convict them and convert them. God's Holy Spirit, when He comes in power, calls sinners to repentance. He convicts of sin, He reminds of judgment, and He gives assurance of righteousness only to be found in the Saviour, the Lord Jesus. (John 16:8)

That being the case, a move that involves no evangelism, has no foundation of repentance, and consists mainly of Christians being slain in the spirit for no apparent reason, cannot be called a revival.

4. A REVIVAL THAT IS SPREAD FROM PERSON TO PERSON?

One major feature of this current move is that it is being spread by the use of testimonies, audio tapes, laying-on-of-hands, and so on (rather than the preaching of the Word!). There is also a scramble to travel to a place where the manifestations are occurring, in order to "get" it. However, a genuine revival is the work of God alone, a sovereign move of the Holy Spirit, in response to believing prayer over a period of time. It cannot be pinned down to a place or a

person and cannot be passed from one to another like an infection, for God deals with each person in a special and unique way.

5. THE MANIFESTATIONS CAN BE HALTED IN THE NAME OF JESUS

If this outpouring were truly of God, it would spread solely under His guidance and power, and no man could halt it. Instead, several Christians report that they have rebuked the manifestations and caused them to stop. Others say, after asking the Lord for protection during the meetings, anyone who tried to lay hands on them swerved away. Is the Holy Spirit divided, or is He praying against Himself?

6. MOCKING THE WORD OF GOD AND INTERRUPTING PREACHING

The manifestations, in particular the laughter, are not happening in response to the ministry of the Word of God. Indeed, they often interrupt the reading of the Word, and make preaching impossible. The magazine *Renewal* reports:

"As he reads his opening remarks, the power of God swept through the building **totally unrelated to the words that he had** said, which actually were rather serious and solemn. His opening remarks were, "The story of Solomon is one of the most tragic in the whole Bible", This sober comment was greeted by sudden outburst of hilarious laughter...there was no way we could stop this spontaneous, uninvited laughter...the meeting continued until 11:30 at night with no opportunity for the speaker to preach". (*Terry Virgo, "Fresh Outpourings of the Holy Spirit", Renewal, August 1994*)

Another quote from the American Christian magazine *Charisma* says much the same thing. Hugh Williams, an Episcopalian priest fell down and started laughing when prayed for by Rodney Howard-Browne ("Be filled" was his prayer!) Afterwards, manifestations broke out in this priest's home church:

"Worship became longer and more intense. Sunday services began to last up to three hours and more healing and laughter occurred. Recently, laughter broke out during the consecratory prayer for the Eucharist, normally the most solemn part of the service. 'It IS distracting', says Hugh Williams, 'but I've come to feel it is God who is distracting us from our routine ways and concentrating our attention on Him'", (*Julie Duin, Charisma, August 1994*)

When God sends miracles, it is in confirmation of HIS WORD. (Mark 16:20) Today, however, the reading of the Word is being drowned out by irrational laughter, shouting and raving. (It is demons who love to mock the Word of God). This quote is from a meeting led by Rodney Howard-Browne:

"One night I was preaching on hell, and laughter just hit the whole place. The more I told people what hell was like, the more they laughed." (*Julie Duin, Charisma, August 1994*)

7. RECEIVED AS SENSUAL EXPERIENCE/RESULTS IN SUBJECTIVE FEELINGS

Although God is interested in our bodies as well as our souls, His sphere of involvement with a Christian is primarily "in the spirit". God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. On the other hand, demons interact with people in the flesh - that is, in the physical body, and in the mental realm (emotions, desires, feelings).

They give **bodily** sensations (shivers, shakes, heat, tingles, weakness, energy, etc.) and mental feelings (overwhelming burdens, or intoxicating sensations of joy, revelations, strong desires, impulses to do irrational things, etc.)

The majority of people who experience "holy laughter" say the result is a feeling of intense love. Because they are Christians, their love is directed at Jesus. However, this does not prove that the feelings of love are sent from God.

Having experienced a time of demonic deception in my own life, I can testify that feelings of intense love and ecstasy can be demonically induced, even though YOU think you are worshipping God and praying to God. If, at the time I experienced those things, you had asked me to stake my life on the fact that it was from God, I would have done it. I was utterly convinced. It was only the challenge of judging my experiences **objectively** by the Word of God, and testing them by the power and the Name of Jesus, that opened my eyes to the truth. I was not possessed, nor was I a backslidden Christian, yet I **was** truly deceived.

Some Christians believe they are safe from deception as long as their intentions are right. But the sad fact is, that if you unwittingly fulfill the conditions for demonic activity, you WILL nevertheless experience demonic interference of some sort. We must learn to tell the difference between demonic and godly experiences, not just subjectively, but by knowing the scriptures.

Also, because the results of the "holy laughter" and so on are **subjective experiences**, we are left to decide on the basis of peoples' experiences and their impression of the meetings. This is not good enough! THERE MUST BE AN OBJECTIVE BASIS ON WHICH TO JUDGE THE EXPERIENCES.

The only objective, rock-solid foundation we have is the Word of God and the Truth of God. Thus, however overwhelming, convincing and acceptable people's experiences are, if they do not line up with the Word of God, they are not to be trusted as genuine!

*"We need fear no kind or degree of excitement which is produced simply by perceived truth, and is consistent with the healthful operation of the **intellectual powers**. Whatever exceeds this must be disastrous. In general, those cases of bodily prostration of which I have spoken occur without the apparent intervention of any external means adapted to produce such a result the excitement produced when the Holy Ghost reveals God to the soul...is not only consistent with the clearest and most enlarged perceptions of the intelligence, but directly promotes and produces such perceptions. Indeed, it promotes the free and unembarrassed action of both the intelligence and the will.*

Now it appears to me of great importance to distinguish in these cases between things that differ. When I see cases of extraordinary excitement, I have learned to inquire as calmly and affectionately as I can into the views of truth taken by the mind at the time. If the individual readily and spontaneously gives such reasons as naturally

account for this excitement, I can then judge of its character. If it really originates in clear views by the Holy Ghost, of the character of God and of the great truths of his government, the mind will be full of these truths and will spontaneously give them off whenever there is ability to utter them...But where the attention seems to be occupied with one's own feelings, and when they can give no intelligible reason for feeling as they do, very little confidence can be placed in their state. (Pp. 49-51 Finney, "Reflections On Revival")

8. THE RESTORATION FACTOR:

What is happening at this point, to the Church, must be understood in its proper eschatological framework - that is, we have to look to the prophecies about the endtimes to see if we can identify what is happening at this present time. The truth is that the scriptures do not predict a widespread revival, but they DO predict a great falling away from the truth. There will be false teachers, false prophets and lying signs and wonders taking place. The greatest concern of Jesus and the apostles, when considering the endtimes, was that Christians might get deceived.

9. RECEIVED MAINLY BY THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN MENTALLY PREPARED

Since God is no regarder of persons, any genuine outpouring of the Spirit should have affected all churches alike. But this is not so. The manifestations are occurring in charismatic churches that had previously accepted unbiblical teachings, such as kingdom-now, word-of-faith, and replacement theology. The Toronto church that has been a focus of this phenomenon is part of the Vineyard Fellowship, which promoted the infamous Kansas City Prophets a few years ago. Vineyard prophets, like Rick Joyner, have been building up expectancy for worldwide revival for some years now. The churches that accepted the Kansas City Prophets and others like them will have been mentally prepared for this outbreak of power. They are therefore much less likely to be objective about it.

10. NO FEAR OF GOD

Revivals in the past were conducted in an atmosphere of great reverence and awe of God. When the presence of God came, it was to bring a holy awe, and those who cried out did so in deep conviction of their sinfulness. However, today many have been disgusted at the irreverence, hilarity, lack of control and downright silliness of what was going on. Supporters speak in terms of "fun" and "partying", and sneer at sobriety. *Charisma* magazine, in its futile attempts to support holy laughter, cites one case in the revival at Cane Ridge in 1801. But this only serves to emphasize the differences. Out of a reported ten to twenty thousand people attending the meetings, one or two laughed out loud.

"it was a loud hearty laughter...the subject appeared rapturously SOLEMN, and his laughter excited SOLEMNITY in saints and sinners." (*Charisma*, August 1994)

How different it is today! The tone of today's laughter is mocking and maniacal, and excites nothing but amusement or disgust in others.

11. STARTED BY RODNEY HOWARD-BROWNE

This phenomenon did not start spontaneously, but was promoted by Rodney Howard-Browne, a South African who at one time worked as associate pastor with the Rhema Word-of-Faith Ministries (Ray McCauley). He can be seen on videos and heard on audio tapes commanding people to laugh by repeatedly invoking "Ho-ho! Ha-ha!" over them, and saying things like "Be filled! We loose the powers! Have another drink!". Browne likes to call himself "The Holy Ghost Bartender".

12. WHAT DOES THE WORD SAY?

Scripture references to laughter are nearly all adverse, to do with mocking and derision. There is no biblical "gift" of a spirit of laughter. Christian joy is an inward peace and assurance, not an hysterical outburst of laughter. The Bible tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is "self-control" and commands: "*Let all things be done decently and in order.*" (1 Cor. 14:40)

Some of the wilder manifestations, such as roaring and growling are linked in scripture with the Babylonian religious festivals, which were abandoned orgies of drunkenness and immorality. God says He will make the feasters drunk so that they "shout with laughter", then judge them with a perpetual sleep out of which they will never wake. (Jer. 51:37-40 NIV)

CONCLUSION:

Wherever Christians are, there God will be at work - and in the midst of the bedlam no doubt some are being truly healed or converted. But these isolated incidents in no way explain or excuse the current manifestations.

If the root be bad, then the fruit will be rotten - for no bad tree can bring forth good fruit. If we look at the roots, at Rodney Howard-Browne's ministry, at the theology behind the "revival", at the legacy of the Word-of-Faith preachers and the Kansas City Prophets, and at the headlong downward spiral into apostasy in certain parts of the Church, we cannot conclude that this present move reverses the trend and anoints with God's blessing things that have been so abhorrent and deceptive before.

There seems to be a bland assumption that Christians cannot be deceived, and that rituals like "claiming the Blood" make one immune from demonic attack. On the contrary, Jesus warned: "*For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand.*" (Matt. 24:24, 25 NKJ)

Good intentions are not enough! Not only a thorough knowledge of the Word of God, but other precautions are required, such as keeping conscious control of our minds and bodies; guarding against the flesh; dying to self (emotions, desires, etc.); and testing the spirits to see "if they be of God". (1 John 4:1)

A Conspiracy To Take Over The World? Wow!

- by Joseph J. Carr -

"Do you know about the illuminati conspiracy to take over control of the World?" The lady was quite serious, obviously worried and sounded a little bit conspiratorial herself as she told me what the pastor of her church had recently told the small congregation. "Well,..." I replied, "...I heard it was actually the Trilateral Commission, the L'Trocm Group, the Bilderbergers, the International Bankers (read "Jewish"), and all of them are controlled by a band of Oxford-educated expatriate Jewish Eskimos who come and go from the center of the Earth through a giant hole at the North Pole leading to the molten interior...and, of course, the U.S. Air Force knows that they use Flying Saucers to make the trip."

Whole ministries, not just a few scattered ill-informed pastors who ought to know better, are dedicated to scaring the daylights out of Christians with these stupid, unproven, and terribly idiotic theories. Some of them, I suspect, are just milking the faithful because they know such tripe sells. Others are simply misguided.

Some conspiracy buffs, however, are quietly talking about forming an underground Christian Government to rule in place of the established U.S. Government...which, they assert, is controlled by the conspirators (no matter who wins the White House...some conspiracy buffs even claim that all Presidential candidates are in on it!). Others talk openly of forming an armed civil militia and going to Washington, D.C. to "demonstrate." If those people are serious, then I dare call it treason!

By the way, if anyone is tempted to join some hare-brained armed march on Washington, D.C., they had better be well-advised to remember that D.C. has one of the strictest gun control laws in the U.S.A. Although local cops can't keep the place from being the murder capital of the nation, a group of Conservatives or Christians carrying their rifles and shotguns to D.C. will face arrest. But now, back to our topic...Conspiracies to take over the world.

Fellow Christians, enough is enough! It's time to be rid of these silly things, and stop spending our precious energies on rubbish. If Satan, in his demonic cleverness wanted to neutralize the Church, he could not improve on the destructive efforts of our own brethren who pump such trash into the sanctuary. We are to be a light to the world...we are to spread the Great Commission. We are not called to stop an international conspiracy...especially one that does not exist...the job of the Church is first to gain converts to Jesus Christ and second to minister the faithful. Everything else is of little use.

Let's take a look at one common form of the conspiracy to take over the world: the Illuminati Myth. Although many variants of these myths exist, the Illuminati myth has a particular staying power.

The Illuminati Myth

Founded in Central Europe about the time of the American Revolution, the Illuminati have been blamed for every political intrigue and deviant religious movement in Europe and America since 1789. A lot has been written about the Illuminati by fundamentalist Christians. Invariably, such sources lack proof, often scream a shrill anti-Semitic polemic that nauseates responsible Christians, and provide only a basis for fear. Illuminati stories abound among

Christians. Books are written, tracts are printed and radio broadcasts are made on the basis of absolutely no proof: None; Zip; Zero; Nada. "Scholarly" citations are invariably missing, or merely cite other like-minded bigots. The problem is so serious for the Church that I call it the "Fundamentalist Folly."

One man answered my point regarding the lack of proof by pointing out that it is a secret organization, so would leave no tracks for the investigator to follow. Such a view is not viable, however, because there are no truly secret organizations over so long a period of time (centuries). Secret organizations are like sharks in the sea. Sure, they are hidden beneath the surface of society most of the time, but here and there a ripple breaks the surface and a dorsal fin slices across the waves to cause fear and loathing. It is unlikely that a real secret society could remain totally secret for more than two centuries (at least - some claim six centuries!). If it did, then there certainly wouldn't be so much "information" around for people to write about them!

Who were the Illuminati? They were a secret (or partially so) society founded in Bavaria, Germany on May 1, 1776 by a man named Adam Weishaupt. The alleged Jewish connection to the Illuminati is usually based on the identification of the name "Weishaupt" as a Jewish name. Even if it is a Jewish name, there is something absurd about claiming a conspiracy of a whole race on the acts of a few members of that race. An analogy would be to assume that all Baptists are adulterers because there was recently the case of a Baptist pastor, who was dismissed from his pulpit because of sexual immorality with a young female member of his congregation. Is such a suggestion reasonable? No, of course not it's absurd, isn't it? So why blame the Jews for the alleged supposed (but not proven) acts of a few?

What's more, the name "Weishaupt" is not necessarily Jewish; it is German. A German-speaking person told me that "Weishaupt" means "wise (or prudent) leader (or chieftain)." It is probably that "Weis..." part that sounds so Jewish to gentile Americans. It must be pointed out that "Jewish sounding" doesn't necessarily mean anything in German. There are many family surnames that are shared by Jews and gentiles. Consider an example: most people would probably identify the name "Rosenberg" as definitely Jewish until they find out that Alfred Rosenberg was a top Hitler deputy and Chief Ideologist of the Nazi Party! So much for "Jewish sounding" names!

Adam Weishaupt may have been Jewish, but his known background strongly suggests otherwise. Weishaupt was born in Ingolstadt, Bavaria in 1748. His father was a professor at Ingolstadt University. While Adam was very young, his father died leaving Adam in the care of his godfather, Baron von Ickstatt. The Baron was a politically powerful man, and a member of the Electoral Privy Council. All of these factors argue against the Jewishness of Weishaupt. Jews rarely attained professorships in anti-Semitic Central European universities during that era; second, political power and baronies were not normally given to German Jews. Jewish barons did exist, to be sure, but they were very rare. Another factor that argues against a Jewish Weishaupt is that he was an educated under a Jesuit scholarship. Although this Roman Catholic connection is probably immensely suspicious to those in love with various versions of the Fundamentalist Folly, it strongly argues against a Jewish background for Adam Weishaupt: those Jesuit shock troops of the Roman Catholic Church of that era were more than a little anti-Semitic, and it is unlikely that they would grant scholarships to Jews! Weishaupt was a Professor of Canon (i.e. church) Law in a Roman Catholic college an

unlikely position for any Jew even today. Incidentally, both Weishaupt and his father were controversial in the college because of their tolerance of Protestant writers.

The system created by Weishaupt was patterned after Strict Observance Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism. It was a secret society that followed the silly initiation lore common to other such societies. They attracted attention based on a supposed secret wisdom that would be partially imparted after the questor was fully initiated.

There is little doubt that the illuminati were at least a minor force in Europe. They were just one of many political societies that worked to subversive ends. This facet of the secret societies was commonplace in the late 18th century, and not limited to the illuminati. The role of the illuminati in the French Revolution is uncertain. It is likely that some members (or individual illuminati Lodges) were among the revolutionaries. It is also likely that many of the sinister doings attributed to the Illuminati, were actually done by other groups. It should not be surprising that secret societies were involved in the French Revolution. The very nature of such societies makes them an attractive vehicle for revolutionaries.

The illuminati were eventually suppressed by German authorities, and Adam Weishaupt went into exile in Switzerland. After that, the Illuminati apparently disbanded and dispersed throughout European society. There is little or no evidence that the illuminati survived into the 19th century, much less to present times; the bleatings of certain Christian writers notwithstanding.

The Illuminati myth surfaced at the time of the French Revolution, and has remained with us ever since. Along with this specific conspiracy theory comes a host of related or similar conspiracy theories. In all cases, the roots of these theories are in troublous times. When political or social change engulfs a society, the mass of people see hideous forces at work and need a scapegoat to make real what more advanced thinkers would see as abstract or transcendent forces. All too often in Christian cultures, the Jews are easily made the scapegoats.

The evidence presented by conspiracy buffs tends to be terribly circular, which means that it is also terribly poor. Such evidence declares itself valid simply because it asserts what it claimed to be proof...no real evidence emerges. In addition, many of the conspiracy theorists rely on such dubious sources as Nesta Webster and Lady Ann Queensbury. No solid proof, only assertions made in old books. Unfortunately, being mentioned in an old book still does not make fiction fact, or resurrect a lie as the truth.

I want to ask those who believe in conspiracy theories to ask themselves a simple question: If there really is an all-powerful conspiracy to take over the world, then what's taking them so long? A conspiracy in force for 200 to 600 years would surely have succeeded by now...unless it is totally inept. But, given that they are allegedly so utterly powerful, then we must conclude that a better explanation for their apparent lack of success is that the stories are fake!

Fellow Christians, please stop all this foolishness. We cannot be a light to convert the world when our energies are sapped by satanic diversions such as the Conspiracy to Take Over the World.

References:

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The Spirit Behind The Lion King - by Bent Kjos-

Betrayed, rejected, running from responsibility, growing strong through adversity... Disney's smash hit, *The Lion King*, is full of Biblical parallels, colorful characters, and personal struggles that help us identify with a lovable lion made in the image of man. But watch out! Behind the spectacular scenery and noble sentiments hides the timeless earth-centered view of reality that has always lured God's people from truth to myths.

In other words, *The Lion King* - the first cartoon in a new politically correct genre of Disney movies - demonstrates an alarming shift in values. While the old fairy-tale cartoons like *Snow White* linked sorcery to the evil characters, *The Lion King* uses tribal magic for "good". While most children in the seventies knew enough truth to place divination in the forbidden realm of the occult, today's children - who often feel more comfortable with occult games than biblical truth - see nothing wrong with pagan practices.

The new Disney story is simple and timely. Like his two-legged fans from coast to coast, Simba, the lion cub, must conquer a maze of obstacles inside and outside himself in order to fulfill his role in "the circle of life." Since Simba's destined role is to rule, the movie opens with a spectacular celebration in honor of the newborn prince. The animals of the land flock to Pride Rock, where the mystical baboon Rafiki, cracks open an egg-like gourd, dips his finger into the dark liquid, and anoints the little lion with a mark on his forehead.

While Pride Nation worships its royal heir, Simba's devious uncle, Scar, wishes him dead. As soon as the infant king grows to cubhood, he becomes a vulnerable target for Scar's cruel schemes. Scar's first plot fails, but the second assault kills King Mufasa. Scar blames Simba for his father's death, sends the heartbroken cub into the wilderness, and tells three savage hyenas to finish the execution.

Simba escapes through a web of thorns and collapses under the hot African sun. A warthog and a meercat find the little prince, revive his exhausted body, and teach him a new philosophy: No worries! *Hakuna matata!*

Back in Pride Lands, Scar reigns. The evil hyenas have invaded the land, which now lies dry and barren. One day, Rafiki looks into his magic gourd and sees Simba's living image. He sets out to find the reluctant heir to the throne, gains his attention with a mystical chant, then demonstrates a worldwide pagan tradition: reliance on help from ever-present ancestral spirits.

"I know your father," says Rafiki.

"My father is dead." answers Simba.

"Nope! He's alive. I'll show him to you." The baboon shaman leads Simba to a pool of clear water. **"Look down there."**

First Simba sees his own reflection, then the face of his father.

"You see, he lives in you!" says Rafiki.

Simba hears a familiar voice call his name. He looks up. His father's ghostlike image appears among the stars.

"Look inside yourself, Simba," says the apparition. **"You are more than what you have become. You must take your place in the circle of life. Remember who you are..."** The vision fades.

Simba believes. He sees that the dead are not separated from the living, nor earth from the realm of spirits. Everything is connected. Empowered by a new sense of identity, he races back to Pride Lands to challenge his uncle, win the throne, and restore the land. Soon Pride Nation celebrates the birth of the next lion prince, the son of Simba and his cubhood friend Nata. Again, Rafiki lifts a royal infant for all to worship. The cycle of life continues.

Ponder the seven concerns listed below. Remember; the beauty and delights of *The Lion King* enhance its power to persuade. Good entertainment tends to dull critical judgment.

1. King Mufasa tells his son, **"Look at the stars. The great kings of the past look down on us from those stars. They will always be there to guide you....and so will I."** This fatherly advice blends the world's timeless trust in astrological guides, spiritism, ancestral worship and multiple gods. The Bible tells us to shun all such expressions of paganism.²

2. "Simba, everything you see exists together in a **delicate balance**," explains Mufasa. "As king, you will need to understand that balance and **respect** all creatures because **we are all connected** in the **great circle of life**."³ Meanwhile the theme song identifies this circle as the guiding force behind the scenes: "It's the cycle of life and it moves us all, through despair and hope, through faith and love..."

"The circle of life...is a cycle of evolution. Birth, growth, maturity, decline: nothing is immune to change..."⁴ explains a *New York Times* review of *The Lion King* aptly titled "The Hero Within The Child Within."

Mystical connectedness, a spiritualized *circle of life*, a cosmic force that guides evolution, and *respect* or *tolerance* for everything - no matter how evil by God's standards...All fit into today's new global paradigm or world view. Educators, entertainers, media leaders, and global-minded politicians like Al Gores are promoting these pagan concepts as moral ideals needed to save the earth and bring global peace. In contrast, God's Word tells us that nature-worship, communicating with the spirits of dead ancestors, and oneness with pagan cultures will bring destruction both to-land and people.⁶

3. To **"look inside"** for wisdom and guidance usually implies that each creature can tap into an inner source of uncorrupted wisdom because all are one with some sort of a pantheistic god or global intelligence. Liberated from *outside* authorities, children can freely follow the ruinous ways of ancient Israel, where *"everyone did what was right in their own eyes."*⁷

4. The two times Simba and his feminine friend Nala scuffle playfully, Nala wins: "*she was too quick for him and flipped him onto his back.*"⁸ Could this be an expression of "gender equity," a euphemism for today's emphasis on politically correct feminist power - perhaps to appease viewers offended by the sort of *patriarchy* shown in this movie?

5. Today's attraction for the gross, bad and cruel can be measured in audience responses to evil or ill-mannered characters. In *The Lion King*, the devilish Scar, the bloodthirsty hyenas and the flatulent warthog Pumbaa drew the loudest laughter. Like the sordid success of *Beavis and Butthead*, this phenomenon reminds us that in our culture **bad is good, and good is boring.**

6. A more subtle message is hidden in the characters who speak through the meercat Timon and the warthog Pumbaa, the two "outcasts" who befriend Simba in exile and share his glory at the end. "These are the first homosexual Disney characters ever to come on the screen."⁹ says Ernie Sabella, Pumbaa's voice, during a New York Times interview. Apparently, only insiders noticed. Did the producers know?

7. *The Lion King* matches the new earth-centered *paradigm* or *world view* that is transforming children's view of reality. While God told us to communicate truth to our children when we "*sit... walk...lie down and...get up,*"¹⁰ today's culture trains children to see reality through a global, earth-centered filter. This "new" mental framework distorts truth, stretches the meaning of familiar words, and promotes mystical "insights" that are incompatible with Christianity. Packaged as entertainment, this message usually bypasses rational resistance, desensitizes opened minds, and fuels general acceptance of pagan spirituality.

Yet, families can use *The Lion King* as a tool to reinforce God's truths. Look together for biblical parallels. Some are listed below. Examine the differences. But remember that the most deceptive spiritual counterfeits look most similar to God's truth. Pagan cultures around the world teach myths and rituals that simulate Biblical events and practices. Since only God's Word, out "sword of the Spirit," stops occult suggestions from taking root and distorting our Biblical world view, discuss Scriptures that counter the deceptions. Then thank God for His *genuine* truth and *His life within* those who follow Him.

Ultimately, our response to a movie like *The Lion King* depends on what we want most in life: to *have fun* or to *follow Jesus*. Sometimes these options are incompatible. 11

THE PRIDE LANDS	GOD'S KINGDOM
One day a new king will rule the land.	In that day, all will bow to the true King.
The jealous Scar hates the new king.	Satan hates Jesus and all who follow Him.
Scar lures Simba onto a deadly path.	Satan tempts us to choose our own way.
"We'll always be together," says Simba.	God will never leave or forsake His own.
King Mufasa dies to save his son.	Jesus gave His life for us.
Scar blames Simba for his father's death.	Satan accuses Christians.
Simba runs away, is saved by	Samaritan "outcast" helps victimized

“outcasts”.	traveler.
Simba grows to maturity in exile.	Moses trained for leadership in the wilderness.
Simba reluctant to return to responsibility.	Christians reluctant to obey God.
“He lives in you...look at yourself...”	Christ, our King, lives in us.

To equip your family to recognize and resist the earth-centered spirituality that permeates public schools, movies, games and music, read **Under the Spell of Mother Earth and Your Child and the New Age.**

1 A mammal related to the mongoose.

2 See Deuteronomy 4:19, 18:9-13.

3 [The book version] Walt Disney Company, *The Lion King*, (Mouse Works, 1994); 17

4 Janet Maslin, “The Hero Within the Child Within,” *New York Times* (June 15, 1994)

5 In *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* (Houghton Mifflin, 1992) Al Gore promotes Native American spirituality and the world’s Mother Earth religions as spiritual models that will restore the needed “feeling of connectedness to the rest of nature.” (pages 1, 259-261).

6 See Deuteronomy 11, 28, 18:9-13; Romans 1:18-32.

7 Judges 21:25

8 *The Lion King* (book); 31, 68.

9 David DeNicolo, “A Pair of Runyon Guys Roam the Serengeti,” *New York Times*, June 12, 1994.

10 Deuteronomy 6:5-7.

11 See Ephesians 5 and Philipians

The Celestine Deception

- by Ray Yungen-

A metaphysical novel is currently producing the same kind of mass response that THIS PRESENT DARKNESS did - only from the opposite perspective! This well written action/adventure story combines a gripping plot with an optimistic view of human spiritual destiny. It is called the CELESTINE PROPHECY.

The book by James Redfield is enjoying tremendous popularity and has stayed at the top of the bestseller charts for the past 22 weeks. Many bookstores report they can barely keep it on their shelves. The book's momentum is fueled by a mainstream popularity that has resulted mostly from word-of-mouth rather than advertisement.

This widespread acceptance has absolutely delighted the New Age community. They know that just a few years ago such a book as this would have found a market only within their own ranks. Now, the fact that millions of non-New Agers are reading a book of this nature and passing it on to their friends seems to indicate that these views are starting to be seen as less strange and more normal.

The compelling story-line is just a vehicle for promoting the "nine spiritual insights" that are Redfield's main message. Basically, the hero uncovers these ancient manuscripts which are supposed to help us understand events now affecting humanity.

To briefly sum up the prophecies:

Humanity is now becoming aware it has a "spiritual void" and has a longing to fill it. "Coincidences" are propelling this awakening at an increasing rate.

The "Key" to humanity's salvation is connecting with its "Inner Source energy" (The Higher Self)

Cover the world with this message and a "Spiritual Culture" will emerge producing heaven on earth.

In two recent interviews, Redfield revealed that the process of writing the book was "delivered" to him rather than a result of his own creativity; he described it as "a real Higher Self experience." (BODY MIND SPIRIT Magazine, August 94, pg. 33)

In another interview he explained that his book was written in a "Meditative flow" state. (NEW AGE JOURNAL, August 94, pg. 64) In other words, this book was channeled!

What makes this phenomenon disturbing for Christians is that this book will propel millions of spiritually hungry and searching people into the arms of the New Age movement rather than the Grace of God.

In the BODY MIND SPIRIT interview, Redfield said he believed there is a "more fulfilling and enhancing spirituality" (pg. 24) available to people now and that this means "being connected to the divine part of ourselves" (pg. 32)

I firmly believe that the only thing that can effectively counter this deception is the plain and simple gospel (Acts 13:39). Christians must learn it, live it and preach it with love and conviction. That is our Mission!