

## Our Response to the NEIRR Analysis

During the summer and fall of 1994, Bob Pardon and Judy Barba, of the New England Institute for Religious Research (NEIRR) visited several of our communities in New England, saying that they genuinely wanted to get to know us so that they could communicate accurately and fairly with those who look to them for information about unconventional religious groups. We welcomed them into our households, had many meals with them, answering their many questions as clearly as we were able. They said they were writing an extensive analysis of our communities based on their research. They agreed to give us the opportunity to review a semi-final draft of this analysis, and that they would seriously consider whatever comments or corrections we might offer in response. We took them at their word — that their intention was to portray clearly and accurately how we live and what we believe.

We were shocked by the contents of the 90-page document we received in December, 1995. It was so far from portraying the life we actually live and what we actually believe! Several of us got together and went over the NEIRR's analysis with a fine-tooth comb and prepared a 104-page response that addresses and corrects the most glaring of its errors, distortions, misunderstandings, and misjudgments. Unfortunately, Mr. Pardon and Ms. Barba gave heed to very little of our response, and ultimately published their slanderous "analysis" in spite of the accurate information we labored so hard to provide for them.

So here is our response to the NEIRR's analysis. It is referenced to the page and paragraph numbers of the draft they originally gave us, which are different from those of the published analysis. However, as we have included brief excerpts from their analysis for every point that we take issue with, we trust you will be able to follow the thread of our argument. We publish it here in the hope that you will be able to understand the truth and not be taken in by the NEIRR's deceptions.

*[Excerpts from the Analysis are referenced by page and paragraph number. For example, "41-3" is page 41, paragraph 3. Paragraph 0 means the remainder of a paragraph carried over from the previous page. The subheadings correspond to the sections of the NEIRR analysis.]*

## Introduction

### i-3 While a part of this group she had witnessed what she felt was repeated child abuse.

The specter of “child abuse cult” is raised here and never laid to rest, although the subject is promised treatment.

But consider what Katheryn Somma had to say about the Community six months after leaving it, prompted by the misuse and exaggeration of her earlier testimony. These are notarized statements made by her on June 24, 1994. The first thing that must be noted is that she never did say she had witnessed child abuse, according to her own sworn testimony. In fact, her testimony was just the opposite:<sup>1</sup>

When I resided in the Community I did not choose to leave because of any of the concerns the D.S.S. has about the families. I found the parents loving and the children well cared for. Since leaving, however, I have become increasingly alarmed by the conduct of the individuals in the Department of Social Services.

I feel that I have been dragged into the middle of a fishing expedition. I do not wish to be party to the falsehoods I have observed throughout this experience. If the D.S.S. continues on with this investigation knowing about these breaches in ethics they should not be allowed to distort my account. I can not stand by while the department uses such tactics to harm others. [Signed by Katheryn Somma and notarized by Margaret E. Freeman]

Here is her second statement concerning an affidavit brought forth by Keziah Wilson, an employee of the Department of Social Services (DSS):

The Department of Social Services asserts that “She (Katheryn Somma) had also observed bruises and marks on the lower back of Joseph Kirby.” This statement is not true. I have never stated that I have at anytime seen bruises anywhere on Joseph Kirby’s body.

I am alarmed by the willingness on the part of the D.S.S. to exaggerate and alter statements for the purpose of their investigation. I would also like to state for the record that the parents residing at 19 Camp Street are conscientious and loving with their children. These facts were never mentioned in that report. [Signed by Katheryn Somma and notarized by Margaret E. Freeman]

The contrast between Katheryn Somma’s sworn statements and the account in the *Analysis* is striking.

---

<sup>1</sup> Photocopies of the following two letters are available.

Since Mr. Pardon knew of the existence of these letters (copies were mailed to him in June, 1994), it seems that, for the purposes of the *Analysis*, he would use her sworn affidavit, which is the most objective account available to NEIRR in its research. Why then did they not rely upon it and use it to lay to rest the accusations of child abuse in Hyannis?

**i-3 They had told her they were the only true representatives of God on the face of the earth, and to leave them was to literally turn one's back on God, inviting His judgment.**

Her shepherd while she was in the Community in Hyannis told her that it is better not to make a covenant with our Master than to make one and then to break it, for then she would come out from under the protection of the covenant. He saw that she was somewhat unstable and hoped to keep her from rashly entering into a covenant.

**i-3 She eventually pressed charges through the Department of Social Services ...**

An even more puzzling aspect of this account in the *Analysis* is the statement that it was Katheryn Somma's complaint which led to the DSS investigation. It was, in fact, Robert Pardon's official complaint to the DSS which led to the investigation — a fact he admitted to privately to Hakam, and for which he promised to publicly repent to the Community in Hyannis (which he has so far failed to do). His words as recorded by the DSS are:

He stated that Kathy had been encouraged to report what she had observed to the proper authority but she was afraid to do so. He stated that it is not unusual to find people extremely fearful and paranoid when they leave the group. He stated that he had an understanding with Kathy that she would call him, but since he did not hear from her, *he made the decision to file the report.*<sup>2</sup>

It appears, however, that Mr. Pardon lied in another very telling way, either in the *Analysis* or to the DSS in April, 1994, when he reported the Community in Hyannis for child abuse. In the *Analysis* he stated that Katheryn Somma contacted him as a distraught woman, having left a community. In his report to the DSS he is not clear as to whether she called him, or he called her, but it does seem *that he set up the call, however*

*it went*. Apparently it was through a friend of Katheryn's, also named Kathy, that he made contact with Katheryn Somma:

Investigator asked Rev. Pardon how he became aware of this woman, Kathy. He stated that although he does not now have a congregation he is an ordained minister and has maintained contact with many churches and groups. He stated that a friend of Kathy's who is receiving Christian counseling had shared Kathy's concern with her counselor. The friend received Rev. Pardon's name and phone number. The friend then facilitated contact between Kathy and Rev. Pardon.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, Rev. Pardon was motivated to establish contact with Katheryn Somma because of a judgment he had already arrived at concerning the Messianic Communities, as is obvious from his comments to the DSS, in which he refers to us as *an aberrational religious group that some members run wild with authority and child discipline*,<sup>4</sup> and *an extreme mind control organization*.<sup>5</sup>

The *Case Closing* letter of 11/8/94 from the DSS stated:<sup>6</sup>

At this time the Department believes that it is appropriate to close your case for the following reasons:

No risk factors evident. Good luck. Happy holidays!

Coupled with Katheryn Somma's comments, this would leave quite a different impression of the investigation than given in the *Analysis*. It would be consistent with Mr. Pardon's admission during his visit to Island Pond in the summer of 1994 when he talked freely with the leaders and average members.<sup>7</sup> When he came to realize the suffering he had needlessly inflicted on the Community in Hyannis, he was sorrowful to the point of tears, in the presence of witnesses, namely Hakam and his wife Havah. Why is it that the *Analysis* gives just the opposite impression?

---

<sup>2</sup> This is from the unedited, handwritten pages of the *Investigation Assignment and Process* conducted by Social Worker Keziah Wilson on April 11, 1994, page 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pages 10 and 11.

<sup>4</sup> March duPont Report, *Care and Protection Investigation Report* (filed with DSS), page 4.

<sup>5</sup> [DSS form, filed by Rev. Bob Pardon, to report suspected abuse], page 4.

<sup>6</sup> Copy available upon request.

<sup>7</sup> A curious occurrence indeed, of being able to have free access to the lives and hearts of the people in the communities he visited. Curious if we are, as the report alleges, an abusive, highly-destructive, mind-controlling, aberrant Christian group which practices behavior, information, thought, and emotion control.

ii-0 **We ... interviewed at least 75 current members, members who left and came back to the group, a variety of other "friends of the Community ... close to two dozen ex-members from around the country, distressed relatives of current members...**

Primary sources of information regarding the Community included three times the number of satisfied members as those dissatisfied, yet the preponderance of information reported in the *Analysis* is negative. Why was more weight given to the two dozen *apostates*? And why was there no attempt to verify the accounts of the ex-members with current members of the Community prior to drawing conclusions?

ii-2 **It has become very evident, upon reviewing all that we have learned, that many lives have been devastated by involvement with Messianic Communities.**

The authors are not in a position, either spiritually or professionally, to judge the *devastation* of the lives of ex-members. They don't know where they came from or what their lives were like when they came to the Community and while they were with us in the Community. His conclusions ignore the findings of academic scholars on the subject of *apostates*.<sup>8</sup>

ii-1 **The "apostle" of the group, Elbert Eugene Spriggs, essentially has a "direct pipeline" to God and no real accountability. This is a very dangerous combination in any situation.**

According to our beliefs, *every* disciple has a direct pipeline to God, and *every* disciple is accountable to Him and to his brothers. All have equal access to the Throne of Grace (Heb 4:16), and each is accountable to confess his sins (Jms 5:16; 1 Jn 1:9), submit to his brothers (Eph 5:21), etc. If we are all connected to the same Holy Spirit (the same *anointing*), then what each receives in his *pipeline* should be compatible and complementary to what his brothers and sisters receive (Jn 6:45). This is what we teach.

With regard to *apostles*, the New Testament teaches that apostles (plural) will be given to the church *until we all attain to the unity of the faith ... to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ* (Eph 4:11-16). Clearly we have not reached that stature yet, and have no hope of getting there apart from the apostolic gifting and grace in the Body.

---

<sup>8</sup> James Tabor and Eugene Gallagher, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, University of CA Press, 1995.

Those placed in authority are not merely the gifted administrators, but also the most submissive and caring and responsive to the needs of the other members. They are *more* accountable (Jms 3:1). In our experience, Yoneq proves this in his life by example and has done so consistently in all the years we have known him.

**iii-1 We have spent many hours with these people and have always thoroughly enjoyed those times. They are, without exception, truly wonderful people who evidence a level of commitment, hospitality and love that we do not encounter in many other groups we have worked with.**

According to Jn 14:12 (NIV), *anyone* who has *faith* in Yahshua (the faith He delivered to the saints) will do what He did; and Jn 13:34 makes it clear that what He did was lay down His life for us. We are commanded to love each other in this same way. This is how all men will know we are His disciples (verse 35). How then can the authors praise us for our high standard of love in one breath and condemn us as heretics in the next breath? Are we in the *faith once delivered to the saints* or not? Can you judge a tree by its fruit, or not?

**iii-1 In many respects they are orthodox theologically, but do deviate in fundamental ways that would classify them as a heresy...**

Concerning orthodoxy, see our response to 14-5 on page 17.

But really, according to the scriptures, a heresy is a faction *within* the church (1 Cor 11:19), which exposes those who are factious so that they may be warned and then expelled from the church if they don't repent (Titus 3:10). Once the factious person or persons are excommunicated, they are no longer a heresy, but are considered as unbelievers or tax gatherers. So, for example, from the point of view of Christianity, Mormons are not truly *heretics*, but rather *unbelievers*.

- iii-2 **Our greatest concern is what Messianic Communities teach, and how this compares with the “faith once delivered unto the saints.” When there is a discrepancy between these two then we need to understand by what authority Messianic Communities alters what has been understood for nearly two thousand years.**

The authors never state what is the *faith once delivered* and he never compares *our* belief and teaching to it. The *faith once delivered* will always produce the life of Acts 2 and 4. This is the only way it can be defined — by the works it produces (Jms 2:14).

The “faith once delivered unto the saints” has no coherent doctrinal definition other than the Biblical record. The writings of the Early Church Fathers (if they are not forgeries), and the decisions of the church councils, merely record how things were done and viewed after the many warnings in the epistles and Revelation were written and, apparently, not heeded.

But concerning *the faith once delivered unto the saints*, the authors would do well to consider the entire verse and context:

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about *our common salvation*, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for *the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, *ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness* and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (Jude 1:3-4)

It is precisely this *common salvation* (which we have in common with those mentioned in Acts 2:44-47) which was the *result* of the “faith once delivered unto the saints” that we are contending for, in the face of ungodly persons who cheapen His grace and make it an opportunity for living their selfish, independent lives, thereby denying our Master the tangible, visible demonstration of His Body that He died for.

- iv-0 **How free are members of Messianic Communities to express the individual uniqueness given to them by their Creator, or have they become indistinguishable one from the other?**

The question is raised, but apparently never answered legitimately, with the result that the reader assumes that the Communities are full of “brain-washed cult robots.” Anyone who knows us knows that this is not true. To us the charge is absurd, along the lines of, “All Oriental people look alike,” for we live, work, and enjoy fellowship with the most astonishing variety of people, daily benefiting from each one’s uniqueness in

gifting, personality, creativity, sensitivity, sense of humor, etc. We believe that each disciple represents a different facet of our Master's character, and that each one is vital for the part that only he or she can contribute (1 Cor 12).

We believe this testimony helps to answer the question, and we invite the authors to publish it so that the question may be answered.

In the case of the *Analysis*, Mr. Pardon and Ms. Barba go one step further in finding us guilty of things which *they* could not even observe when they were among us:

Second, we did not observe any degree of thought or behavior control that could not be found in other religious communities, be it Catholic, Hutterite, Amish, etc. People could freely express their opinions, and there almost seemed to prevail a "democratic" form of government. We thought it was important that you were careful to let any perspective members know "up front" what was required of those who joined the Messianic Communities. This was one thing we were careful to ascertain in the many informal interviews we conducted with various members. In every instance we found that people joined of their own free will and were not coerced.

Third we did not detect any excessive emotional control. This is not something that can be easily hid. We did not sense any manipulation of fear in order to control. The group did not appear to have any sense of paranoia ("people are out to get us"), or the outside world is persecuting us. We also did not detect any sense of terror or exaggerated fear of the leadership if one failed in their responsibilities or behavior. The Messianic Communities do have very high standards of behavior for all to live within, from the top leadership to the new member.<sup>9</sup>

**iv-2 We will consider ... the use of power and authority to remake individuals into the image of the group.**

Without substantiation by factual evidence, NEIRR asserts (or at least insinuates) that individuals are remade into a group mold, losing their own personalities. See comments concerning the Sociological section, beginning on page 83.

---

<sup>9</sup> Letter from Robert Pardon and Judy Barba to Hakam, August 9, 1994.

## A Short History of the Messianic Communities

- 1-1 **Out of such turmoil inevitably arise those who have “answers” to all life’s problems. They evidence a genius for attracting to their cause those seeking purpose and meaning in life. Usually these leaders are sincere ... Elbert Eugene Spriggs ... is just such a man.**

Was our Master Yahshua just such a man? The whole gospel *is* the answer to all of life’s problems. People are lost and seeking purpose and meaning. One who offers eternal life through the preaching of the gospel must make sure he preaches the *whole gospel*, and that he is sent by God to preach. Those who find true salvation through the preaching of such a sent one are not disappointed (Rom 10:11; Isa 49:23) because they find *answers*, purpose, and meaning in our Master’s life expressed in His Body. This is what we believe and teach.

- 1-2 **Very often the only source of information is the media, as questionable as that may be at times. Therefore, we have spent many hours poring over old newspaper accounts...**

Ironic. One would think that media information would then be largely ignored in favor of personal testimony, not quoted unless substantiated, and certainly not recommended to the reader, as in footnote 16, page 6, where admittedly sensationalized accounts are offered to the reader.

- 4-2 **Spriggs began teaching that the Christian Church was “the Whore of Babylon” and needed to be avoided. He referred specifically to Ben Haden as “of Satan.” The latter is born out in many statements made by Spriggs about Christianity in his teachings.**

Christianity has become a harlot (Rev 18:2). We always taught that we should love the people in Christianity, but have nothing to do with the unfaithful Christian Church. The quotation from *The Disciple* fails to bear out anything regarding Ben Haden specifically being called “of Satan,” nor will you find it in any other teaching.

- 14-1 **No longer was it acceptable to join with those outside the Vine Community to worship God. This seemed to be a radical change from the message of love and brotherhood in the body that had originally been taught. Not only was the Church to be avoided, but even family was excluded from the “inner circle” if they were not part of the Vine Community.**

Here again, we had reached no such conclusions regarding worship outside of the Community. The fact that we did not frequent denominational assemblies indicated not

a prohibition against them, but a love for the free and life-giving celebrations we ourselves enjoyed. We struggled with this for years, seeking to understand why there was such a difference between us and those who go to the denominational churches. The message of love and brotherhood that we preached offended people outside “our group.” We didn’t change the message; we just quit trying to pour new wine into an old, crusty, lifeless wineskin.

The “love and brotherhood in the Body” is still what we teach — the love that lays down its life (1 Jn 3:16) and the brotherhood which does the will of the Father (Mt 12:50). *Is this not what the Scriptures teach?* Whoever rejects that message rejects what we hold not only dear, but also orthodox. However, those who wish to participate with us in our social life are not excluded even if they are not members. We simply do not leave what our Father has given us to return to what did not give us life.

Concerning our relationships with family members who are not a part of us, we heed the words of our Master: “For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother” (Mt 12:50; see also Mt 10:34-38, Lk 14:26, etc.). That is not to say that we reject our relatives out of hand. On the contrary, we encourage them to visit us and get to know us as a people, unless they are *against* us. We have many warm relationships with family members. The only family members who don’t have warm relationships with their relatives in the Community are those who do not respect our way of life. We do not have a law against visiting family members away from the Community, but we do expect family members to uphold the dignity and respect the beliefs of those in the Community, even though they might not agree with those beliefs.

**5-1** In Dayton, the president of Bryan College stated that at first ... “We thought this group had a sound, basic Christian teaching.” But by December of 1977, concerns about manipulation and control influenced him to warn the students about becoming involved in activities at the Yellow Deli. Three months later the Yellow Deli was placed off limits to the students. Similar actions were taken by the President of Tennessee Temple Schools, J.R. Faulkner.

Here, as in other places, the chronology and order of events is confused, hopefully not on purpose. What preceded these “concerns about manipulation and control” in December of 1977 were the events described in the third paragraph on page 6:

deprogramming and the attendant sensationalized publicity. When the source of information that causes alarm is a kidnapper who makes money preying on the fears of alarmed parents, any individual, college, or religious researcher would do well to question the validity of the information. See Appendices B and C, the Neilson and Westbrooks testimonies.

**5-2 The [Covenant College study] committee concluded the church (The Vine Community Church) had exceeded its “ministerial” function and was taking on “magisterial power.”**

What the actual issue was here is obscured in the elevated language of the committee’s findings. Were they concerned that the Community was teaching authoritatively, or accusing it of taking over secular society? Given the facts of history, why would a Calvinist college be concerned that a church had taken on magisterial power? Early Calvinists took on magisterial power to the point that men were physically and psychologically brutalized in attempts to purify them.<sup>10</sup>

**6-1 Friends saw a positive work being done in the lives of many who came to Christ through their involvement in the group. Their various business ventures were seen as benefits to the Community. Even their foes did not dispute these things. Their concerns were all in the area of authority and control, and whether members would or could make decisions on their own.**

Who these foes were and whether or not they derived their concerns from deprogrammer propaganda is not clear from this report. But the line of concern is a standard deprogrammer line.<sup>11</sup>

**6-2 Clifford Daniels, one of the first Chattanoogaans to join Spriggs in 1972, left the group in 1976. He expressed grave concerns over the power that Spriggs wielded in the group. Ex-members told us that when Cliff Daniels left, he was seen as being crazy and out of touch with reality...**

A later indication of his condition was that he took up deprogramming as a profession and wound up being prosecuted for kidnapping. According to the Word of

---

<sup>10</sup> Robert J. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*, p. 455.

<sup>11</sup> *(I personally recall my former cub scout den mother coming to me with this concern. She felt that I was wasting my life, and that I could do so much more good if I was a preacher in a big church where my talents would be recognized. She wanted me to “think for myself” and no matter how much I told her that my decision to live and believe as I did was the result of my personal faith, she would not believe that I was thinking for myself, since I did not think what she wanted me to think. — Qatan)*

God, kidnapping is a capital offense (Ex 21:16; Dt 24:7), which gives you an idea of what God thinks of Mr. Daniels' character and of the character of the ex-member who stated recently, "Now I know that he [Daniels] was making total sense." Consider Romans 1:32.

**7-2 The Vine Christian Community was now known as the Northeast Kingdom Community Church in Island Pond.**

This passage is inaccurate. In the first place, the Vine Christian Community ceased to exist when we left Vine Street. Members from this and five or six other communities with different names in the tri-state area moved into the already-established community in Vermont. Those who had been elders in the south relinquished their authority and submitted themselves to the rule of the elders who had been established in Island Pond.

**14-1 While becoming more inwardly focused as a group, they began developing a stringent understanding of Scripture that narrowed their behavior and their outreach. Rather than converting people to Christ, they were now "finding" true believers. They were also beginning to spread geographically.**

This passage is unclear. Becoming inwardly focused and spreading geographically seem to be contradictory concepts. Apart from a brief decrease as we settled in and tried to survive economically, we actually expanded the outreach we had in the south. We never ceased to evangelize through the restaurant business, we expanded into many other service-type industries, increased our efforts to evangelize at concerts and other public gatherings, devoted ourselves more to walking, and increased our production of literature. We are not personally aware of rigor, strictness, and severity in our understanding of Scripture, nor any new direction to stop making disciples according to the words of the Great Commission and start finding those who had already received the message.

In Isaiah 58:1 it says, "Cry loudly, do not hold back; Raise your voice like a trumpet, and declare to *My people* their transgression, and to the house of Jacob their sins." We came to understand that there was a message to Israel and that they are His sheep who are scattered all over the different denominations of Christianity. There is a legitimate message to them. There are people who are in Christianity, many thousands

and millions, who need to be saved. Certainly there are people who follow the Grateful Dead and all walks of life who also need to be converted to the saving knowledge of Messiah. But there is no greater mission field than in Christianity. Revelation 18:4 says, “Come out of her, *my people*.”

**8-1** According to the Communities excesses have occurred, although no more so than has occurred out in the world.

Since *our* beliefs and practices concerning child training (and the resulting fruit) are not dealt with as promised in *Analysis* footnote 17, this leaves the reader open to imagine a *wide spectrum* of abuses such as take place in the world outside the Community. This is neither accurate nor fair.

**8-4** When the Communities first came to Vermont they tended to be somewhat confrontational with the local people, telling them on occasion that they were going to hell for smoking or that they were followers of the devil because they didn't belong to the group. Calling the Pope a “son of Satan” and the Virgin Mary a “whore” only antagonized the villagers in Island Pond. When they would refer to the various Christian denominations as “daughter of the great Mother Harlot, the Roman Church” it created difficulties for many of the townspeople. After the raid, such sentiments were not expressed publicly.

This passage is almost entirely slander. We do not, nor did we ever, believe that people go to hell for smoking or are followers of the devil just because they do not belong to our community. We do not refer to the Pope as a “son of Satan” and we refer to the mother of our Master as “blessed.” Our teaching on the Pope<sup>12</sup> is that he disregards, among other things, the instructions of Paul in the Bible regarding men praying publicly with their head covered. We *do* believe that the Roman Catholic Church and the denominations which have split off from her are the Harlot and her daughters described in Revelation 17:15. Both of these sentiments that we actually *do* hold are currently expressed publicly in our literature.

---

<sup>12</sup> *Take Special Note of this Man*, pamphlet published in 1986.

**10-5** Although it was apparent that Gene Spriggs, along with his wife Marsha was the driving force behind the Vine Community, his “position” lacked a title or any specific “authority.” His position and authority came with the respect accorded him...

Yoneq does not have a title now, such as “Apostle Yoneq,” “Rev. Yoneq,” or “Pastor Yoneq,” nor does he have any specifically-delimited authority or position. We consider him to have apostolic gifting and grace, and he has earned respect in our midst, but he defers to the graces and giftings in others. Some things he speaks about get done, and other things don’t, according to the faith of each individual or household or community.

**10-5** ...as a result of a vision he experienced in a California redwood forest, he realized that he, himself, needed to come under authority. (*and footnote 21* ☺ We were told that Spriggs related the specifics of this vision on several occasions. It is significant since, at the present, Spriggs appears to be accountable to no one.

He never said he “had a vision.” He simply sensed a need to be disciplined, hence his stay at the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission under Chuck Pope. He is the kind of person who is sensitive to checks in others and seeks for confirmation from his brothers, according to Ephesians 5:21 and 1 Peter 5:5.

**11-2** In the beginning the leadership was referred to as “Responsible Brothers” and consisted of approximately ten men which included Gene Spriggs. As stated above, there was no stated leader ... Currently those “under” the apostle are referred to as Apostolic Workers and oversee more than one Communities locale ... it would appear that the person closest to Spriggs (Yoneq) in authority is Eddie Wiseman (Hakam) ... As mentioned above, under the apostle are a group of men called Apostolic Workers.

Nothing has changed. There is still no stated leader. The elders in each locality are responsible to guard each other. Those who function extra-locally co-ordinate affairs between communities. Apostolic workers advise local elders, but don’t usurp their authority. They do not issue decrees to the elders; elders do not issue decrees to the people; and Yoneq does not issue decrees to anyone. NEIRR has taken a spiritual concept of submission to the graces and giftings in others and tried to squeeze it into a carnal mold of religious hierarchy, with the result that the concept has been distorted.

**11-f22** Notable here is the charge of child-abuse leveled at Wiseman in 1983 related to the disciplining of a preteen, Darlynn Church. The newspapers covered the story and the

**details are available to anyone interested. Wiseman himself spoke to us of these details and expressed his deep regret over the incident and his part in it.**

The charge was not child-abuse, but simple assault. The newspapers may have covered the story, but their accounts are slanderous, except for the coverage of the news conference in which Roland Church made a public apology for falsely accusing Hakam and Hakam repented for disciplining the girl when asked to by her father. This footnote gives the impression that abuse actually took place. Why, in seven lines of type, is it never mentioned that the charges were false or that the case was dismissed?

**12-2 Other positions of importance but with less overall authority are those of the deacons, who are servants of the Apostolic Workers, and the household heads, who are, as the title indicates, overseers of their individual household. Each household also has a bursar, usually a woman, who dispenses monies and supplies as needed. There are also those designated as shepherds who encourage and support the individual members of their household. In addition to these "positions" each person has a "job" as well; some sort of occupation or function to perform that either brings revenue into the household or keeps the house in order.**

An artificial distinction is made here between *positions* in which people exercise authority or handle money and *jobs* in which people serve. It should be made clear that there is no distinction with us. Everything we do is service. The *bursar* or *bookkeeper* distributes money and pays bills, but other women who are in charge of food, clothing, and other personal needs actually make more decisions over what is to be done with the finances than the *bursar*. Household heads, perhaps more accurately called co-ordinators, do not have a title, nor do apostolic workers or deacons (who are to assist elders as well as those who function extra-locally). Everybody just has a job.

**12-4 ...what began as a "freewheeling," loosely organized brotherhood of those who loved the Lord and desired to serve Him became something far different. Over time it became a tightly knit, highly legislated organization...**

We have always believed and taught that we should obey our leaders (Heb 13:17). There is an odd contrast between the nostalgic picture that this passage gives of the early days and the account that Clifford Daniels is reported to have given<sup>13</sup> based on

---

<sup>13</sup> *Analysis*, page 6.

his experiences in those same early days ('72 to '76), in which he expressed his concern over “the power that Spriggs wielded” in the Community.

**14-1 As early as the late '70's/early '80's concerns about Spriggs' authority were being expressed. Gene Edwards, a much respected Christian author and man with whom Spriggs had associated was heard to say to Spriggs at a meeting, "...Your view of authority scares me." To what extent must limits and structure go before true freedom is lost?**

It is not true that Yoneq associated with Gene Edwards. We came in contact with Gene in Quebec City and we came directly in contact with him out in California in 1981, as we recall. When Edwards said, “Your view of authority scares me,” it was in the context of our discussion with him after he walked out on the community that he started and wrote a book about. He completely pulled the rug out from under them in Golita. Basically he told them to go back home, that the “experiment” was over. But they hadn't signed on to an *experiment*. We confronted him with that, about how he could abandon these people, then as we continued on in the discussion and corrected him, telling him of the seriousness of doing things like that, he said, “Your view of authority scares me.” That is because *any* authority scares Gene Edwards, because he doesn't have any, and authority in anybody scares him. He is a Christian Mystic who believes basically that people just have this mystical relationship with Christ and that's really the ultimate in where we are supposed to go in our spiritual life. It's a totally independent view of what it means to be a disciple.

Concerning footnote 24, it never was Yoneq's intention to go to Gene Edwards seeking input about living in community. Gene wrote a book called *The Early Church*, and we thought that we might have common ground with Gene Edwards, so we sought that common ground with him, but found out that he was in a totally different place, especially after what he did in Golita. It was a shock to us. It was totally contradictory to everything we thought he stood for.

## Yoneq's Position and the Use of Scripture

**14-1** "The things I want to speak to you about are things that have been misunderstood for at least 1900 years. That is because the Bible is written in a way that assumes you already know what it is talking about ... But for 1900 years it has been misunderstood..."

The ellipsis omits a phrase that qualifies the entire passage. It's omission generalizes the passage beyond its original intent. The complete second sentence reads:

That is because the Bible is written in a way that assumes you already know what it is talking about *by the "second death" and the "book of life."*

By omitting that critical phrase, the authors create the impression that Yoneq was saying that no one has understood anything in the Bible for the past 1900 years. That is not what the teaching says.

**14-2** We have made repeated requests to meet with him (Elbert Spriggs). After all, he is *the* "apostle" of the group, and it is his own teachings that indicate what the group truly teaches and believes. This is also the first of any comprehensive analyses of Messianic Communities. It would seem that the "apostle" would find it important enough to meet with "these outsiders" to correct any misperceptions on their part.

As we have reminded NEIRR, they were informed that Yoneq was going to be at a gathering in Bellows Falls, Vermont in June of 1994, which they were invited to attend. One month later he left for Europe and has been away ever since. He had no intention of avoiding them and certainly not of offending them. Yoneq trusts the men with whom NEIRR has been corresponding. What is in us is the only validity he has. This is what he teaches. He trusts us to correct any misperceptions. The real issue here is whether NEIRR will correct these numerous misperceptions and misinterpretations that we are pointing out.

**14-5** This question [of authority] may arise in regards to their rituals, practices, or beliefs that deviate from an historical, orthodox understanding of Scripture.

What is meant by "an historical, orthodox understanding of Scripture?" Orthodox as understood by whom and at what point in history? Orthodoxy as defined by Keith J. Hardman, Ph.D., assistant professor of Philosophy and Religion at Ursinus College, is as follows:

...the standard of orthodoxy — the Word of God set forth in the first Christian century — continually demands that all else be measured by it.<sup>14</sup>

So it must be with *historical understandings* of the later centuries — they must not conflict with what is actually recorded in the word of God, both in belief and practice.

**14-5 We were continuously told that he [Elbert Spriggs] was only “one amongst many leaders” in the Communities, however ex-members and hundreds of his own teachings (that are disseminated worldwide to all the Communities) give a far different picture.**

We made it clear that although Yoneq is one amongst many leaders, with particular graces and gifts which we all appreciate, he is special to us in that he introduced us to this Yahshua whom we serve. He *brings* the anointing that has produced the life we have. To see him in any other way is to fail to discern the Body properly. If people see him in any sort of exalted way instead of as the servant of all, they are missing the whole point of what we are doing, and of what our Master said in Mt 20:25-28, and of what Yoneq teaches. In the Scriptures, Moses was a humble man with the attitude of a servant in his exercise of authority, but some thought that he exalted himself (Num 16:1-3, 13). They proved, however, to be in error.

**15-0 These teachings are their “inner doctrine,” and are not for public consumption.**

The teachings, as they appear in notebooks and in typed notes, are not distributed to those outside the Community for several very good reasons. They are not doctrinal statements. They are often not even accurately recorded. They are intended for teachers with a foundation in our common understanding, who can explain certain things that may not be clear.

At any rate, this accusation is not true, as can be seen in two readily observable things. First, we invite people regularly to our teachings, because we think very highly of them, feel they illuminate the Scriptures, and we are grateful when others come to listen. Bob Pardon even attended a teaching in Island Pond when he visited. Second, the editor of our freepapers for the last ten years has catalogued the teachings illustrated in the

---

<sup>14</sup> *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Douglas, J.D., et al., Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan).

articles from the 35 freepapers published during those years, covering all manner of subjects, up to and including apostolic authority, giving up everything, the twelve tribes, the nations, church history, freedom of conscience, and other “unusual” doctrines.

Robert Sage, a young man who grew up from early childhood in the Community and now lives in the Community in Boston, recently said:

Why would we want our Freepapers to paint a different picture of our life that what really exists? What would we do when people got here and saw the difference? It makes no sense.

We would like to ask for proof of this charge — the compilation of evidence showing the intentional discrepancy and difference between what is taught in the households and what we publish through various means.

**15-0 No one else in the Communities is able to give original teachings, the teachings of others are merely a rehash of what Spriggs has already taught.**

In the first place, we recognize that Yoneq’s gifting is to bring to light the words of the Bible. He is the foremost among us in this regard. He brings the anointing. In the second place they are intended as a catalyst for teachers, who are under no obligation, either stated or implied, to teach anything but what the Holy Spirit leads them to. The reason we teach from Yoneq’s teachings are primarily: 1) they bear witness with our spirit and therefore bring about in us the obedience to the Word; 2) they give us life; 3) they apply to situations in our communities that need to be addressed; and 4) Yoneq has ministered a spirit to us from the teachings that has caused us to fall in love with our Master Yahshua and with His people.

Finally, we have no desire, nor does Yoneq, to give *original* teachings. Jn 7:18 says:

He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

The following quotation from one of our teachings expresses our position very well:

We are not trying to be original. We are trying to be in the vein of prophetic truth. We build upon the revelation of other men down through history. There is truth in bookstores (mixed with error) which only those with a gift of discernment can extract. We take the work and knowledge and truth of many men, without receiving the spirit of error.<sup>15</sup>

**15-2 Sole Leadership [Three quotations are offered to establish the assertion that Yoneq is the only real leader in the Messianic Communities.]**

While other answers will be made on a Scriptural basis to the basic issue of authority raised here, we will focus here on the personal aspects of the letters and teachings which are quoted in this section.

It is hard to see our personal lives on display, misrepresented, and even more profoundly misunderstood. It adds to our sense of being violated to have to then explain what was actually going on in the lives and hearts of the people being spoken of. It is as though we have become, through trusting the executive officers of the NEIRR, something like fish in a fishbowl instead of participants in a forum for accurately representing who we are and what we believe.

Let's consider the individuals mentioned on page 15, and why they might have expressed their personal loyalty and gratitude to Yoneq and Ha-emeq the way they did from a more human, less analytical perspective. Perhaps this view will enable the reader to see their hearts, and ours as well — the individuals who make up the Messianic Communities.

**1) Marsha Spriggs**

The context of this quote is glaringly absent, considering where Marsha Spriggs was at the time she speaks of in relation to Christianity. It doesn't even mention that she is *his wife* — isn't it an honorable thing for a woman to follow her husband? At any rate, she was, before she met Elbert, "convinced there was NO GOD at all," as is stated on page 3 of the *Analysis*. However, since the quote from the *Oak* is very limited, it misses an essential part of the reason for her thinking:

I, personally, was not raised knowing anything about the Bible (unlike Elbert, who was born and raised in the "Bible Belt"). I came from California and could

---

<sup>15</sup> *The Teaching on the Mount*, June 18, 1979.

count on one hand the times I even went into a church as a child. Then when I went to college, through various philosophy courses, I was *convinced there was NO GOD at all*. The fruit I saw from the churches was rotten. The lifestyle of those who called themselves Christians proved to me that they did not really believe what they said they did. For if they thought there was some all-powerful, all-seeing God up in the sky somewhere and they actually knew Him as they claimed, surely their lives would be different than mine. But I saw their mundane daily routine, their empty expressions, their ambitions, and their pleasures to be just the same as mine — except for a once a week visit to some building which assured them a “ticket to heaven” someday. Well, that was fine for them, but personally, I preferred to sleep in late on Sunday morning.

To have quoted the larger context of her earlier statement about their being no God would have helped the reader understand, and so would a fuller appreciation of what was written in the *Oak* reader to our children:

... Passion for justice and love were going out of style. But what I felt in my soul didn't change with the styles.

Then I met Elbert. He was a man with passion — but also a man bearing two things which *greatly* offended me: 1) a southern drawl; 2) a Bible. Yet even through my offense I could see that the God he spoke of was nothing like the one I had cast off as a myth in my early college days. When he spoke to me about the love of God's Son for mankind and about the justice which His Words called for, I couldn't help but listen. This man, whom Elbert at that time called Jesus Christ, spoke of establishing a society which was like everything I ever dreamed of. But why had I never seen it demonstrated?

Somehow through his words she heard vision for the kingdom of justice and righteousness she had always longed for. Her own testimony makes plain why she was not looking for it in the ranks of Christian preachers and scholars. If the reader were to know these things, whether or not they agreed with Ha-emeq's view of Christianity, it would enable them to see her appreciation for her husband as a normal response to the one who brought her the good news,<sup>16</sup> and *such* good news.

---

<sup>16</sup> In a much-loved passage, the prophet Isaiah says, “How lovely on the mountains are the feet of those who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation...” (Isa 52:7). It seems as though this is a normal response to those who bring the good news to you, apart from which the statements of Marsha Spriggs, Shua, and the unidentified woman can't be understood.

## 2) A Woman Known as Shua

We do not in any way want to diminish the affection many people in the Edah have for Yoneq and ha-emeq because of their personal involvement in their lives and especially in hearing the good news of salvation. To do so for the sake of appearing more acceptable to suspicious people would be to deny and shame the truth of true friendship and love. However, many of the things she said both in the letter quoted, and in the one printed in the *Oak* reader, make plain the effusive language she *customarily* uses when speaking of her life in the Community. Her tone is no different towards Yoneq than many other brothers and sisters. Here are some examples:

I don't know how we could have continued without Yathar. I'm so thankful for him. He is such a blessing to us. Yathar is so good with children, and he is a worker. He is wonderful and I know that our Abba will give us all the grace we need to take care of him. We have such a wonderful Abba. He knows exactly what we need and He takes care of us. He brought Yathar just in time.

Yerusha (Caleb David's wife) is such a wonderful example of trusting our Abba in everything. We have *nothing* for her birth or for the baby and she has just three or four weeks left. I appreciate her so much, how she is trusting our Abba. I'm sure He is blessing her for that. Also, Caleb David is very wonderful; he is so humble. He works a lot on an organic farm, and for his work we get vegetables, milk, and cheese. I'm so thankful we're starting to eat good food. Many things are starting to change. I'm totally encouraged.

I'm so thankful for Almah and Obadiah. I would have suffered so much without them. They have such a good mind and they have a lot of understanding. I'm thankful to have friends who I can totally open my heart up to.<sup>17</sup>

It is so lovely when Yonathan wakes us up with his singing and then I look in Bahirah's face and I *always* get a smile from her. Bahirah sews such beautiful clothes. The whole day and half of the nights she sits at the sewing machine to make clothes for Tana. On Tuesday morning Chen and I make breakfast together. He *always* asks me if I understand things we speak about, and when I don't he explains it *very patiently* and makes things very clear. Yedidah has been, from the beginning, a mother to me. She takes *perfect care* of me. Yachath is a good father to me, but unfortunately, he is not home very often. Nun is the *best shepherd* I could imagine. He *always* knows what his sheep need. I love his cleanness and directness. Judith has *so much understanding*. Sometimes I just need to look at her and I know she understands me. She always can tell by *just one look* at me what I am thinking or when I am troubled. It was the same with you and Yoneq.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Letter to Yoneq and Ha-emeq from Shua, 6/94.

<sup>18</sup> Oak Reader, page 338.

[emphasis added]

To take the words she addresses to Yoneq and Ha-emeq out of this context is to present her in a light which makes her into something she is not. It is no different for the other people who have personally heard the gospel from this man, who is the same to them as the one the *Analysis* spoke of on page 2:

Spriggs was dedicated to saving the kids and so he would stand on the median strip on Route 1 passing out tracks and witnessing to them all day. Very often he would bring them back to the Mission, which, although not set up for them, was soon overrun with young people. He began to envision an outreach specifically to kids.

It became much more than that (Ps 68:5,6).

### **3) An Unidentified Woman**

She lived on a hippie commune which Yoneq and Ha-emeq visited to preach the gospel while we still lived down south. She and her boyfriend received the good news, were married, and moved into one of our communities. She is very thankful to Yoneq for preaching the good news that saved her from the judgment her immorality deserved.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that these quotations are given apart from their context in order to plant the impression of Yoneq as a *cult leader*. Ha-emeq's observation, quoted (perhaps inaccurately) as, "Just follow Yoneq," is, from the context, clearly not a command to give him sole allegiance but rather a contrast between the time when there was no one for her to follow but Yoneq and now, when there is a community with many leaders. The other quotations indicate only that Yoneq does for these people what Paul did in Acts 14:22:

...strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

**16-6** Of the original Elders/Leaders of the Messianic Communities in Chattanooga, Tennessee, many have left in disgrace or been "cut off" from the group ... Edwards goes on to state that it does not matter how many people come and go over the years. The issue is the *manner* of their leaving. Were they thrown out? Was it an ugly scene when they left? "Or did they encounter true Christian grace, understanding and love as they struggled through the question of whether or not to leave?" He then goes on to ask, "Of the many people who left, how many of them feel really comfortable in coming back to the group for a

visit?” Out of the scores of ex-members we have become personally acquainted with, we have yet to meet one who would feel comfortable going back for a visit.

Of the list of 18 “leaders or prominent members” offered here, all (with the exception perhaps of one) left the Community by their own choice. None were “thrown out.”

The issue here is 1 Jn 2:19. Gene Edwards discredited himself when he deserted the flock in Golita. What could he possibly know about the church when he called the common life they attempted to live an *experiment*?

**17-4 A challenge to his [Elbert Spriggs'] understanding of Scripture by one of the others in leadership would not be tolerated.**

What is the Scriptural authority for this business of *challenging* one another? Is it supposed to be tolerated? Is disagreement among leaders regarding their interpretation of the Word some sort of proof of orthodoxy? The apostle Paul wrote, “Let us not become boastful, *challenging* one another, envying one another” (Gal 5:26). He also wrote that “the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets” (1 Cor 14:32). It is a matter of attitude and motive. We do not *challenge* one another, but we do *submit* to one another out of reverence for Messiah (Eph 5:21).

**17-5 ... everything is measured by the “revelation” that Spriggs has uniquely brought, and this “revelation” cannot be countermanded.**

This language of *challenge* and *countermand* is directly contrary to the unity of the Spirit which we are commanded to diligently preserve (Eph 4:1-3). We find Yoneq to be very quick to hear and consider genuine questions and concerns (yes, even about teachings), but promoting enmities, strife, disputes, dissensions, and factions (Gal 5:20), and wrangling about words (1 Tim 6:4; 2 Tim 2:14) is foreign to us — not that such things don’t ever happen, but they are not our way. We operate governmentally from *agreement*. Yoneq doesn’t push past our checks, but hears from *the least of the brethren*, and corrects leaders who fail to do the same.

The following words of the apostle Paul paint a pretty clear picture of how his authority and his teachings were received by the early church:

I have confidence in you in the Lord, that *you will adopt no other view*; but the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is. (Gal 5:10)

If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that *the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.* (1 Cor 14:37-38)

For this reason I am writing these things while absent, in order that when present *I may not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me, for building up and not for tearing down.* ( 2 Cor 13:10)

*If anyone advocates a different doctrine* [than Paul's teaching], and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, *he is conceited and understands nothing.* (1 Tim 6:3-4)

And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness *correcting those who are in opposition*, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and *they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.* (2 Tim 2:24-26)

Now we *command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.* (2 Ths 3:6)

And *if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter*, take special note of that man and *do not associate with him*, so that he may be put to shame. And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. (2 Ths 3:14-15)

And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, *men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the faith.* But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, as also that of those two came to be. *But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance ...* (2 Tim 3:8-10)

This last passage is particularly interesting, for in it Paul actually compares the rebellion of those who opposed Moses with those who oppose *him*, in contrast to those who *follow his* (Paul's) *teachings and example, etc.*

It is easy to forget that the early disciples didn't have a canonized New Testament. Their Bible was what we call the Old Testament. They had to receive Paul's teachings and letters as coming from a *mere man*, not from a holy book. They had to make a decision to trust a *man*, and follow a *man* who had the spiritual grace to say confidently and without fleshly pride, "Follow me as I follow Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). They had to receive his words as the words of God Himself (1 Ths 2:13).

**17-6 ... if an expositor of Scripture wishes to declare "...Greek scholars cannot read plain Greek in Col 2:17," he best have very convincing arguments to demonstrate that such is the case.**

The most convincing arguments for taking Col 2:17 as literally saying that Sabbaths *are* (present tense) a shadow of *things to come* (indicative of the future) — besides the fact that Berry, KJV, NKJV, NAS, Berkeley, RSV, NRSV, Amplified, Douay, and even Moffat render it thus — are not linguistic arguments but Biblical ones. Namely:

Mt 5:17-19 clearly commands that we not suppose our Master came to do away with the Law, for it shall remain in force until heaven and earth pass away, so that whoever annuls one of the least of the commands and so teaches others shall, in the kingdom, be called least and he who keeps and teaches them will be called great. Clearly this does not mean that our Master would merely obey the Law personally and then annul it for everyone else, for then He would be least in the kingdom instead of the King of it. On the contrary, He teaches us to obey.

Even Paul, so commonly understood to oppose obedience to the Law, says in Romans 8:3-4 that God sent our Master to atone for sin and condemn sin in the flesh, "in order that the requirement of the Law *might be fulfilled in us*, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

Our Master (in Matthew 24:15-21) directs *his disciples* (privately) to pray that their flight would not be on the Sabbath. Now what difference would it make when their flight would be if our Master's personal fulfillment of the law did away with honoring the Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13)? He is speaking of flight *at the time of the setting up of the abomination of desolation* spoken of in Daniel 12:11 (3½ years from the end of all things — Rev 12:6).

**17-7 ...one of the things that disillusioned him [Larry Davis] greatly was when he taught at their community in France a "teaching" that didn't originate from Spriggs. When Spriggs heard about it he "was angry because this teaching didn't come from the head."**

The greatest witness regarding Larry Davis and what precipitated his departure is Larry's own words:

I've been a half-hearted reluctant follower of this way for nine years, too cowardly and fearful to drop out and too unbelieving to give my whole being... Even though I could expound the word and connect many verses, I really was

spiritually sterile and impotent. It never had the effect on others that I thought it should have, so I judged them as being dull and slow. That was because I was an empty husk and a *clanging cymbal*. I had never allowed the Holy Spirit of God in the church to regenerate me and completely possess me. I came to the church with my own mystical experience of Christ and I felt that I didn't need anything else.<sup>19</sup>

If there was any comment from Yoneq about Larry teaching something strange, it is not surprising. Larry had a tendency to share things that were speculative and mystical, which numerous brothers, some who were not even elders, expressed concern to him about. When we say something comes from another source than *the head*, we are not referring to Yoneq but to that to which Colossians 2:18-19 refers.

**18-f5 Mr. Davis left in 1983 and has since been vilified by Spriggs in later teachings, "Larry Davis left of his own accord because he didn't get the recognition he wanted..."**

This and other matters shared by way of example to the flock in the privacy of our own meetings hardly meet the criteria for vilification — “attempting to destroy a reputation by open and direct abuse; uttering slanderous statements against someone.” If we had published a paper condemning Larry Davis' character and offered it to society at large, or if we had spoken things that were untrue, or if he had not already destroyed his own reputation in our eyes by abandoning the people he professed to love, then we might be justifiably accused of vilification. Again, in Larry's own words:

When I got to Europe, from the beginning, I calculated my “chances” with Jose and John. I saw that their gifting and graces and especially devotion to the anointing that we have put me at a disadvantage... I know that I often led Brett into discussions on irrelevant theology to just show off my worthless knowledge. Those brothers have heard me say that no one listens to me and that I have no true authority; I'm just an honorary member of the eldership. I see now what an evil spirit this was. I was sowing discord and accusing God and the church that I was unjustly treated. I was actually undermining their faith and promoting myself to gather a following... I think too, that I've given comfort and counsel to others that would build me up in their eyes and create in them a need for me.<sup>20</sup>

**18-2 “The Holy Spirit dwells in our heart by faith ... only if the Spirit dwells in your HEART can you understand the teachings.” ... Many ex-members told us they were frequently**

---

<sup>19</sup> Letter from Larry Davis to David Jones prior to his leaving.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

**confused by Spriggs' teachings. They just did not seem to make sense or were not consistent with previous teachings given by him.**

This comes from Jn 14:21-23 and also Jn 17:17-18.

Our teachings are not intended as carefully-constructed doctrinal statements. They are not painstakingly phrased so as to avoid any possible misunderstanding. The truth is organically related, not understood in a *systematic theology*. On the whole, however, people in the Community find the teachings encouraging and understandable and feel free to ask questions when things are not clear.

**18-5 "Acts 3:19-23 ... In verse 22 when someone comes from Him there cannot be obstinance in anyone or the obstinant (sic) one will be cut off from the Holy Nation (Messianic Communities -rp). So you can see, shortly people will be cut off if we are not in unity about the anointing." Receive the Anointing, 8/2/88, p.1**  
**Spriggs is referring to himself in this teaching. It is clear that to be obstinate regarding the one who "comes from Him" is to risk excommunication from the Kingdom of God. This is very similar to statements that are frequently made by those in other highly controlling movements.**

What this person said in his notes is true. This truth from Acts 3 is made even more clear by the following handwritten notes from the same teaching:

Acts 3:21 — Heaven must retain Yahshua till all things are restored. Can't return to something mutilated or destroyed. Put in order. Acts 3:22-26 — These sent ones are spokesmen from Yahshua. Whatever comes from Him then if there is an obstinance [sic] then that obstinate one will be cut off from the people. Very soon people will be cut off because they hold their own opinion or anointing above Yahshua's.

So, regardless of whether the NEIRR thinks Yoneq was talking about himself or not, what we teach is that this passage in Acts refers to our Master's authority, and (through Rom 10:17, Jn 15:20, and Jn 13:20) to the authority of those He sends, who bring His word and not their own (Jn 7:18). At any rate, regardless of the version of notes, we do believe that those with heretical opinions will be removed from among the people.<sup>21</sup> We do not threaten people with excommunication. We do, however, remove factious people from our midst, in obedience to Titus 3:10.

---

<sup>21</sup> *And they almost always remove themselves when the people don't receive their anointing (1 Jn 2:19).*

**19-1 It was reported by every single ex-member with whom we spoke that one prominent female member of the Communities had contracted uterine cancer and died.**

Amazing that every person NEIRR spoke to reported this. Was it because NEIRR inquired concerning this?

***Response from Hakam:***

Bob, your comments on the death of my wife, Mary, were offensive, vicious, and showed me your true colors. You didn't even have the decency to ask me about the reports you received from your trusted reservoir of ex-members. It is clear that you do not believe the academic scholars who warn and caution researchers like you of the unreliability of ex-members' accounts of things. And this account of the death of Mary is convicting evidence of how you falsely accused Yoneq, had no respect for the judgment of the Body, slandered my reputation, mocked me by giving me the title of "chief lieutenant" while attempting to flatter me by referring to me as "an extremely sensitive and caring man."

The only thing I have to say to you is what Mary and I believed at the time of her illness and what I still believe with all my heart. Mary and I both believed the Word of God concerning healing. We believed that if you are sick and call for the elders and are anointed with oil after having confessed your sins, you will be healed (Jms 5:14-16). We believed that He would deliver us from the pestilence and diseases of the nations if we individually were walking in the light. We also knew that if you went to the breaking of bread not discerning the Body correctly, you would eat and drink condemnation upon yourself (1 Cor 11:29-30). We knew that in the Body of Messiah some get sick and some die from doing this. We believed that a person could commit a sin unto death if they go on sinning after coming to a knowledge of the truth (Heb 10:26). We knew that our Father is very patient and bears with us with extreme mercy until that time (and He is the only one who knows when that time is).

God's judgment became evident when *she* entrusted her life into His hands, to do with her as He pleased. He took her life. This is the truth. Some people had a hard time with this because they did not want to admit that a disciple can commit a sin unto death

or that He was that serious about purifying for Himself a people for His own possession so that He could have a pure and spotless Bride.

You seriously misjudge Yoneq, both in this incident and in the entire *Analysis*. Who do you think you are to judge him? I want to warn you! Your vitriolic attack on Yoneq is misplaced and unfounded. It was not Yoneq who took Mary's life; it was our God. Nor was it Yoneq who judged Mary; it was God's people who did, the people whom she was a part of and who loved her more than anyone on the earth. And we, above all people, believe Paul's words in 1 Cor 4:5 that if our judgment is wrong in any way, it will be made clear "when the Lord comes." But we, as disciples, must learn to judge all things as best we can in the Body, since judgment begins with the household of faith.

The account you render in your footnote on page 19 of the *Analysis* is full of lies and misrepresentations. You are not Mary's judge, nor are you my judge, or Yoneq's, or the judge of the Body of Messiah. I cautioned you many, many times about this role you have assumed. You are in great danger. If you were a man of integrity, one who is worthy of the nations, you would respect me, her, our children, and the people with whom she lived and died enough to not spread your lies to the public.

Therefore, I am not going to defend anything about Mary or Yoneq or the Body except to say that our God did not take Mary's life because "she made a negative comment about Spriggs." That incident was an indication of a way in her in which she was not willing to change after years of patience and forbearing on the part of our God and those who knew Mary in the Body. All who knew her were willing to endure with her forever, and especially Yoneq who loved her dearly, but our God knows the heart and judges according to His Word which Mary fully believed. Our God is no respecter of persons — "high ranking" or not. Mary was never "pronounced healed." She was prayed for by the elders in Island Pond, but it was immediately evident that she *was not* healed. I learned from this the absolute certainty and truth of God's word, that He cannot heal if a person has committed a sin unto death.

You, Bob, are the destroyer of Mary's character through your slanderous and inaccurate report of her death. She is still deeply loved, sorely missed, and highly respected within our ranks and she always will be. Her children want to overcome the

things she didn't overcome for the sake of our Master and His purpose. He will have His way. Mary will be purified in death in all the ways she wouldn't allow His love to reach her in life. God proves his mercy to His people even in death. She will be with Him in the Holy City forever and ever.

**20-3** "This is why Elijah (in the context Spriggs is clearly referring to himself) must come to raise up the age old foundation, restore the Church to the Israel of YHWH. Matt. 17:11 The Roman, Greek, and Protestant are completely off the foundation of Messiah." *Apostasy, Apostate Israel Today*, undated, p. 2  
These kind of claims have been repeated many times down through history.

This is true. Elijah will come and will restore all things *before* the great and terrible day of the Lord (Mal 3:1-6). He must do this work of restoration precisely because the Roman, Greek, and Protestant churches *are* completely off the foundation of Messiah. But if Yoneq is clearly referring to himself as Elijah, then print the entire context for all to see.

**20-5** **Receives Special Revelation**  
"Yoneq expressed how there have been several things which our Father has spoken to him which have kept us on course." Letter from Yoceph to Jonathan and Caleb, *Sus France*, 9/89, p.2

NEIRR ought to explain why they took this passage out of its context and didn't include the fact that the *special revelation* Yoneq is talking about is three Bible verses that teach us to love, obey, and depend on God: Pr 3:5-6; Jn 14:21,23; and Jn 15:5.

**20-6** "Our Father revealed to me that we were to observe the Sabbath – the day He made, not Sunday." ... There is a problem with God supposedly speaking to someone who leads a group that is almost entirely dependent upon him, and who teaches heresy. Please see Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and 18:20-22 and then turn to the section on theology.

Since Mr. Pardon is so keen on understanding the historical context of Scriptures, let him answer this question: who would the hearer of Moses' words think was leading the people astray after other gods, one who told them to observe the Sabbath or to observe the day of "the invincible Sun," the *Dies Solis* of the Roman empire which honored the solar deity? But see the response concerning the Sabbath, beginning on page 80.

**20-8 ...Spriggs is God's prophet for these end times, and is the *only one* preparing the "Bride" so the heavenly "Bridegroom" will be able to return.**

We do not teach or believe this at all. Eph 4:11-16 is our doctrine regarding the preparation of the Church for Messiah's return. Apostles (plural), prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers are only for equipping the saints to do the work of service. It is the entire Body which builds itself up in love until we all attain to full-statured maturity, so as to be ready for our Master's return.

**21-1 Upon joining the perspective convert must divest himself of everything he owns. People literally own only the clothes upon their back and a few personal items. Everything else is held in common. Also, there are no televisions, books, magazines, newspapers, etc. No one is allowed to use a Bible that has study notes or any other such helps.**

Based upon this mere assertion, NEIRR concludes that there is a two-tiered system in the Community, since Yoneq seems to have read commentaries or other books about the Bible. Two things must be noted:

1) We explained to the authors the day we met in the cafe in Boston that we retain legal ownership of property, but voluntarily share what we have, and consider ourselves to have surrendered sovereignty over them to Messiah. What we actually believe concerning possessions is discussed more fully beginning on page 67.

2) We do teach concerning the danger of dissipation and defilement that such media carry with them, and warn about how every factious opinion under the sun is found in Bible study notes, but it is up to each individual to be led by the Spirit. In fact, the quotations in our response from the footnotes in the Open Bible and Scofield Bible (page 66) were brought to our attention by a young disciple who supposedly is "not allowed" to use such things.

**22-3 [Yoneq] believes that agreement with the historic Creeds "is not proof of sound doctrine," and that "the acid test for detecting orthodoxy is: Is it producing love?" ... What is extremely problematic is the standard of "love" being elevated to the place where it determines doctrinal soundness. Biblical love is the hall mark of a truly vibrant Christian witness, however, love is always the handmaiden of sound doctrine and not the other way around.**

Two questions come to mind: First, where was the handmaiden of orthodoxy when German Christians knowingly sent Jews to their death under Hitler, when Puritan

Congregationalists banished Roger Williams from his home to wander in the snowy wilderness of New England, when Anglicans cut off the ears and slit open the noses of non-conformists, when Calvinists burned Servetus, when all of Christian Europe persecuted the Anabaptists, when Lutherans persecuted the Jews, when corruption of every kind riddled Catholicism from the fourth century on, especially during the 12th through 16th centuries with its merciless persecution of heretics, or when the rampant dissension of the second and third centuries necessitated the fiery apologetics and stiff ecclesiastical hierarchy that emerged during that time? These historical scandals were not the isolated deeds of disconnected individuals. They were *the policy of the so-called church*. The handmaiden seems to have had such a liberal mistress that she was given a 1900-year vacation.

The other question is, of course, what is the scriptural basis for saying that love is merely the handmaiden, especially in light of all the New Testament says about love? For example:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. *By this all men will know that you are My disciples*, if you have love for one another. (Jn 13:34-35)

By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. (1 Jn 3:10)

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death ... We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (1 Jn 3:14,16)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 Jn 4:7-8)

And if I ... *know all mysteries and all knowledge* ... but do not have love, I am nothing. (1 Cor 13:2)

So, where in the Bible does Mr. Pardon's *handmaiden* doctrine come from?

**22-f10 [scoffing at the concept that love proves anything about the legitimacy of a group's teaching]** "See how we love one another! See how we have grown! Look at our lifestyle!" are the things we continually hear. They ask, "Isn't it obvious that God is with us and blessing us?" Each of these groups believes that their particular expression has given them a real corner on the truth of Scripture, and all the other groups are wrong.

Normal rational thought supposes that if an opinion is true, then all contradictory opinions must be untrue. If one does not have assurance that what he believes is true, does he then have faith? Does NEIRR believe that its opinions are the truth? How does it differ from the groups it ridicules? To assume that no group has a corner on the truth is a departure from *historical* orthodoxy, as the following passage indicates:

**heresy** (from the Greek *hairesis*, "act of choosing"), a theological doctrine or system rejected as false by ecclesiastical authority. From the beginning, the Christian Church regarded itself as the custodian of a divinely-imparted revelation, which it alone was authorized to expound under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus any interpretation that differed from the official one was rejected as heretical ... After the 16th-century Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church continued faithful to the ancient and medieval theory of heresy, denouncing doctrines or opinions it considered heretical. *Although most Protestant groups assumed that they held the true Christian faith and that all others were heretics*, the gradual growth of toleration and the 20th-century ecumenical movement *drastically revised the notion of heresy* as understood in the pre-Reformation church. It is now possible for a person to accept the doctrine of his own church without regarding others as heretics.<sup>22</sup>

**24-4** "It is obvious that Christianity has the wrong person (who died on Friday and rose on Sunday). But the real Savior spent three days and three nights in death (not one and a half).." .. The Jews like many cultures, ours included, often used a figure of speech called synecdoche, where a part is spoken of as the whole. Jesus was in the grave part of Friday, all day Saturday, and then rose on Sunday morning.

This idea of the length of time and the specific days which the Master was in the grave is firmly established in the traditions of men, but is not clear from the Scriptures.

While the almost universal tradition has placed the crucifixion on Friday, there have been and still are some scholars who dispute that interpretation, putting it instead on Thursday, or Wednesday. Again, there is disagreement on the nature of that last supper, whether it was an ordinary meal or the Paschal meal.<sup>23</sup>

Some feel that Jesus arranged for an early Passover meal because He foresaw that His death would occur at the time of the official Passover sacrifice. Others think that Jesus and His disciples followed the Qumran calendar and ate their

<sup>22</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1979 edition, vol IV, p. 1045.

<sup>23</sup> James L. Boyer, "Chronology of the New Testament," p. 349, *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, Chicago: Moody Press, 1975.

Passover on Tuesday evening...<sup>24</sup>

The real Messiah ate his Passover and was arrested on Tuesday night, was crucified on Wednesday (the day of preparation for the festival), laid in the grave that evening, remained there all Wednesday night and Thursday (the High Sabbath), Thursday night and Friday (the Weekly Day of Preparation), Friday night and Saturday (the Weekly Sabbath), and arose as soon as the Sabbath was over. We know this from His own words:

But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was *three days and three nights* in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. (Mt 12:39-41)

A sign is a sign because it fulfills the conditions specified:

...for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger. (Lk 2:11-12)

So how did the shepherds know they had the right one? Was it enough that they found a naked baby, lying in a manger? Or would a baby wrapped in cloths, nursing at his mother's breast do? Did he have to be wrapped in cloths *and* lying in a manger?

So the Jesus of human tradition was in the grave *at the most* a brief portion of Friday afternoon, Friday night, Saturday, Saturday night, and according to Jn 20:1, had already risen before daybreak on Sunday. If the Scripture merely said three days, and you really stretched your powers of rationalization, you could get *that* Jesus to qualify for a *synecdoche*, and maybe for a sign, but certainly not for the sign of Jonah.

And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish *three days and three nights*. Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the stomach of the fish, and he said, "I called out of my distress to the Lord, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; Thou didst

---

<sup>24</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, "Lord's Supper," p. 1052, *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, Chicago: Moody Press, 1975.

hear my voice.” (Jonah 1:17-2:2)

The sign of Jonah and word of Messiah was invalidated and annulled if the sign was not three days and three nights. If Christianity’s traditional Jesus is the real one, then the Savior who gave the sign of Jonah gave a false sign. But if the Scriptures are valid, then Christianity’s tradition is a sign that it has the wrong Savior. The true one was risen three days and three nights later. A sign designates or denotes something that will be irrefutable and indisputable and condemns all unbelief.

**25- 5** “Our Master said, ‘therefore’ (in relationship to the context) make friends for yourself with all the money you have made in the world so that when it fails you may have an eternal dwelling... Submit it to the apostles’ feet who would do, with mercy and compassion, the righteous thing with that money.”

So who is the *they* who will receive you into *eternal dwellings*? Are they not the recipients of your *unrighteous* money? And to whom is the parable addressed, if not to those who possess *unrighteous mammon*, namely, unbelievers who need to be saved? So the *simplest* interpretation is that an unbeliever would give his *unrighteous mammon* to those who are able to receive him *into the eternal dwellings*, which is what the 3000 did who were saved on the day of Pentecost, according to Acts 2:44-45.

It is also interesting to note that although the NASB says *when it fails*, the Greek text literally says *when you fail*. The believer, just like the wicked steward in the story, has come to see his true condition or predicament, and is wise to make terms of peace with the One to whom he must give account. And this One specifies what those terms are in unmistakable language — Lk 14:31-33.

Our Master drives the point home in the following verses (Lk 16:10-13): *You cannot serve God and Mammon*. If you will not surrender your worldly wealth, who will trust you with heavenly riches? It is a *very little thing* to give up all you possess (and count it as rubbish) in order to gain Messiah (Phil 3:8), in comparison to the surpassing value of knowing Messiah. Anyone who is not faithful to do that *very little thing* doesn’t know the value of Messiah and is not worthy of Him (Mt 10:37-39).

The authors’ inability to see Lk 16:9 in the context of all that our Master said about giving up everything to follow Him is due to their hatred of the cross.

**26-1 This is a very interesting interpretation of this passage, and is pure invention by Spriggs.**

This interpretation is not unique to Yoneq. Clement of Alexandria, for one, thought of it long ago:

“Make to yourselves friends from the mammon of unrighteousness that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal habitations.” (Lk 16:9) Thus He declares that all possessions are by nature unrighteous, when a man possesses them for personal advantage as being entirely his own, *and does not bring them into the common stock for those in need*; but that from this unrighteousness it is possible to perform a deed that is righteous and *saving*, namely, to give relief to one of those who have an eternal habitation with the Father.<sup>25</sup>

**28, 1 What is also very disturbing is how Spriggs’ own teachings are given a place of equal divine authority with the Bible. This is true of the Freepapers as well. “The teachings (Spriggs’ teachings to the Communities - rp) kill us. The Bible – the Word of God kills our flesh. It requires our death.” *Ahavah 2* ... “These Freepapers are eternal life – the Word of God ...” *Reading Our Freepapers***

The authors seek to establish this sensationalistic charge by two quotations alone, neither of which say that Yoneq’s teachings or the Freepapers (written mostly by other people than Yoneq) have equal divine authority with the Bible. It is doubtful that any thinking reader would take them seriously on this issue, based on such scanty “evidence,” especially if the authors were honest enough to let the reader know the following:

1) The subject of the *Ahavah 2* teaching is the Biblical demand to die to selfishness and everything else that is contrary to the love of God that has been poured out in our hearts.

2) This particular teaching cites as its authority over 100 Scripture references in the space of 13 pages.

3) This is why we in the Community were neither alarmed when Yoneq mentioned the teachings and the Word of God in the same breath, nor confused as to which was which.

4) The *Stone Paper*, subject of the comment from *Reading Our Freepapers*, quotes the Bible more than 60 times as its source of authority, and cites 350 Scripture references.

5) For this reason, we have no qualms about saying that our literature would be words of eternal life to a lost person, and that for one of us to give out a Freepaper without reading it would not only be hypocritical, but would also exhibit a sinful indifference to God's Word.

If the authors, after reading what we have to say on this issue, still have the temerity to publish such an outlandish accusation, we challenge them to quote our response in their *Analysis*.

### Theological Analysis

**29-1 Essentially, the Communities are orthodox when measured against the Bible and the historic creeds of the Church. However they do deviate at certain critical junctures.**

Do we “deviate at certain critical junctures” from the measure of the “Bible and the historic creeds” or from *subsequently developed theological interpretations* of the Bible and the historical creeds? NEIRR fails to cite the historic creeds we are supposedly departing from when branding us as heretics and they seem in many cases to avoid including the Biblical basis for our understanding so that the reader can see whether we deviate from what the Bible says or not.

**29-2 Without this “outside” contact [biblical commentaries, dialogue with scholars, etc.] Messianic Communities falls into the error of many other end-time, restoration movements. Most of their theology, then, is derived from the books of Revelation and Daniel...**

NEIRR asserts without foundation that our teachings are developed without the benefit of Biblical commentaries, for on page 21 it is stated, “Spriggs ... is described as a ‘voracious reader,’ and from his teachings it is evident that he uses commentaries and reads other books dealing with the Bible...” The problem seems to be that we do not accept certain opinions offered therein or that we fail to consult them when NEIRR thinks we should — presumably when they support NEIRR’s opinions. Finally they assert without any evidence that most of our theology is derived from Daniel and Revelation, a completely absurd assumption. We do derive much of our *eschatology* from these books,

---

<sup>25</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *The Rich Man's Salvation*, 31, PG 9:637, G. W. Butterworth, tr.

but it is not inappropriate to derive teaching on the resurrections and judgments from these books?

**29-2 Spriggs also makes another critical error in his theological development by relying almost entirely upon the Gospels, Book of Acts, and Old Testament Historical books to support his major doctrines. All Scripture is God's word and is profitable, however, the historical books of Scripture describe *what was* and not necessarily *what should be* ... New Testament theological understanding must first be built upon the epistles of Paul, Peter, James and John. These give an explanation to what the Holy Spirit of God was doing in the Gospels and Book of Acts.**

NEIRR makes some very broad and sweeping statements here, without substantiation. First, they have decided, without asking us, what our major doctrines are.<sup>26</sup> Second, they ignore, seemingly deliberately, hundreds (perhaps thousands) of references to the New Covenant epistles in our teachings. Third, they seem to have a shallow understanding of the nature of the Scriptures, separating the epistles from everything else in the Bible. They do not seem to realize that the entire Bible is a historical record. Even the epistles are not theological treatises, but a record of *instructions and corrections* given by Apostles to disciples at a particular time in a particular circumstance. The Gospels also record many, many *instructions and corrections* given by the Master Himself to disciples at a particular time in a particular circumstance. The reason, apart from the sovereign will of God, that these writings were preserved was that they were found by men to be applicable outside of the particular time and circumstance in which they were written.

The apostle Paul did not take the same position regarding interpretation of Scripture as NEIRR. Paul's words in 2 Tim 3:16, *all scripture is profitable for doctrine*, were referring not to the epistles but to what NEIRR erroneously calls the Old Testament Historical books (the Law, the Prophets, the Histories, and the Poetical books), for the New Testament had not been collected as a body of Scripture. Paul said that all those *Old Testament Scriptures* are profitable for doctrine, etc.

---

<sup>26</sup> (In the *Analysis* footnote 1 on page ii, they relegate to minor importance a teaching we gave them entitled *The Most Important Teaching*, regarding faith, hope, and love. Although not one of the clearest and most thoroughly done teachings, its subject is of enough importance to us that we gave it the title we did.)

Furthermore, Paul exalts *the words of our Master*, which we rarely find recorded outside the Gospels:

If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, *those of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. (1 Tim 6:3-5)

So the standard by which everything is to be judged must be the words of the Master.

Paul, according to Peter in 2 Pet 3:16, wrote things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort to their own destruction, as they do the rest of the Scriptures. What did Peter mean by *untaught* and *unstable*? What were they not taught, and why were they unstable? From the point of view of Peter, who was an apostle and received the Great Commission in Mt 28:19-20, the only possible thing that he could have been talking about was the commands of the Master, because that is what he was commissioned to teach the disciples to obey, and these commands are found in the Gospels. Therefore, who is unstable? According to what our Master said in Mt 7:24-27, it's those who hear and don't obey His words. And where are those words found? In the Gospels. Therefore, the only possibility for a person, deriving his doctrines from the easily misunderstood letters of Paul instead of from the words of the Master, is that he would be untaught and unstable and distort the Scriptures. That's the only possibility, because if you don't have as your foundation the commands of the Master, you are not going to understand Paul. You are going to misunderstand him and you are going to go to destruction.

Although we do not expect NEIRR to change their way of thinking on this matter, we wanted to express clearly *why* we believe the way we do regarding the "sound principles of Biblical interpretation," and we invite them to print our understanding in full so that their readers can see for themselves whether we are in error. We believe that

if they have integrity, they will not be afraid to publish what we believe the Bible says about understanding the Bible.

**29-2 All Scripture is God’s word and is profitable, however, the historical books of Scripture describe *what was* and not necessarily *what should be*. Otherwise, justification for a doctrine of polygamy can be developed from a study of the kings of Israel...**

It is not in the epistles that one finds the affirmation of monogamy, but in the Gospels. The epistles only require that *elders* not be polygamous (1 Tim 3:2). It is our Master’s words in the *Gospels* that express our God’s mind about monogamy (Mt 19:5-6), and that is where we find the foundation of our *doctrine* concerning marriage. The epistles should not be given an unnatural primacy over Messiah’s words. The students are to become like their Master, not vice-versa. How is it that, to NEIRR, Messiah’s words do not have first place (Col 1:18)?

Comparing polygamy with possessions, the NEIRR’s statement, “Thus, private property was allowable in the early Church with no demand to sell all,”<sup>27</sup> could be rephrased, in light of the apostle Paul’s statements in the epistles, to:

Thus, polygamy was allowable in the early Church with no demand to send away one’s extra wives (nor any prohibition against taking more wives than the one or ones one already had).

Of course, it is the Gospels where:

...the original appointment of monogamy is confirmed (Mt 19:6, Mk 10:6-8).<sup>28</sup>

This is merely an illustration how *unstable the principles of Biblical interpretation* are in that they are not consistent with the Scriptures themselves, nor able to approve, by themselves (the principles) what the Scriptures say.<sup>29</sup> The New Covenant is not a matter of doctrine — it is an affair of the heart. To approach it as doctrinal truths to be discerned, and not as the radical call upon one’s life and sovereignty it is, misses the mark in the most profound way. It is the avowal of the supremacy of the letter over the spirit.

---

<sup>27</sup> *Analysis*, page 51, paragraph 1.

<sup>28</sup> Unger’s Bible Dictionary, page 700.

<sup>29</sup> Sadly, Qatan’s letter to Mr. Pardon addressing this matter was ignored, as were the examples it cited of such cases. They did not fit the scheme of things, evidently.

The fact that our Master was establishing a covenant between His disciples and the God of Israel, His Abba, a New Covenant greater than the old one Moses had brought them into, places the words of our Master — His so-called “hard sayings” — into the realm of a personal relationship with Him and out of the realm of doctrine. To suppose that His words are best interpreted in light of letters written to churches and individuals who had already received the gospel He had spoken, and the many different situations they were faced with practically, is to take the gospel out of the realm they themselves received it in. They did not receive the gospel by reading or even hearing the letters of the New Covenant, which were written over a course of many years.

They heard a proclamation of the Good News from *sent ones* (and it is truly a wonderful thing how our Master spoke of those He sends in *all four gospels* — Mt 10:40, Mk 9:37, Lk 10:16, and Jn 13:20; see also page 83).<sup>30</sup> And where, as an aside, is there one recorded example of someone receiving Jesus into his heart, the *sine qua non*<sup>31</sup> of Christian faith? *If the letters are to be understood as the hearers of the New Testament letters heard them, then it must not be through the artificial Christian gloss that these letters themselves were the good news. The good news they heard was contained in the gospels, all four of them, and all that is in them, because what is recorded there is what the apostles experienced in their years with the Son of God. It must be supposed that their loyalty was sufficient to Him that their proclamation of the Good News did not gut the very things He Himself said were essential to eternal life — Mk 10:17-31, Lk 14:33, etc. Further, it must be supposed that they intended to obey the words of the Great Commission, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” At least this was the situation until Gal 1:8 and 2 Cor 11:2-4 and 13-15 became the norm, as they are to this day.*

---

<sup>30</sup> The “doctrine” of the “sent ones” is thus not built on one verse as the *Analysis* asserts. Jonah was a sent one to Nineveh — look what the consequences to them would have been if they hadn’t received the prophet. The prophets were sent to anoint the Kings, Barnabas was sent to Antioch, and many instances throughout the epistles either of receiving the apostles or the ones they sent. The “doctrine” of the sent one is bound up in the very cloth of the message of salvation, not something added to it by one man acting in his own strength.

<sup>31</sup> *sine qua non* [Latin — without which not] — an essential condition, qualification, etc., indispensable thing; absolute condition.

**29-3 This isolation from the outside creates a closed environment where all thinking and critical discussion becomes non-essential and actually destructive of “unity in the body” and the “anointing.” God has spoken through the “apostle,” or the group mind. The truth has come. What need is there for any critical evaluation?**

It seems the Messianic Communities members are being portrayed as *not thinking at all* because they really don't care what they are being taught, much like members of established denominations who accept their time-honored traditions in order to fit in socially, or college students who accept professorial opinions in order to get good grades. If this is not what the authors are intending to imply, but grant that we do think about what we believe, then *legitimate* “thinking” is being defined as only that thinking which disapproves of Yoneq's teaching at some point, for it seems inconceivable to the NEIRR that someone in the Messianic Communities who *really* thinks would consistently agree with what he is being taught. Very likely this view is due to the fact that dissensions and factions (Gal 5:20-21) have become the norm in Christianity instead of what Paul described in Phil 1:27:

Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, *with one mind* striving together for the faith of the gospel...

**30-1 Outsiders also will not be listened to because they do not have the Holy Spirit, the “anointing.” The following quotes are all referring to hearing the “gospel” as interpreted by Messianic Communities. Quotations from *The Personality of God in Us, Willing, and Stone IV***

NEIRR has taken these passages out of context and distorted what we teach. The quotations cited do not support NEIRR's slanderous assertion that we will not listen to outside criticism. We will and we do, just like anyone who is concerned about the truth. But everything must be judged by the standard of God's word. What we *are* talking about in these teachings is the tendency in those who are unwilling to do God's will to ignore the message of the Scriptures. We believe and teach and have experienced for more than 20 years that it is actually the character of Christian Churches not to listen to “outside criticism.” So the quotation from *The Personality of God in Us* would better be started with

2 Cor 4:2 — but we have renounced these things and are not walking in craftiness. Christianity handles these things deceitfully — they don't talk about certain things in the Word because it doesn't fit into their lifestyle. If the gospel is veiled...

Similarly the quotation from *Willing* should at least include, "That is the key of everything — right there — Jn 7:17." This shows that the context of the quotation is what *our Master says* about those willing to do *His* will being able to recognize *His* message as being from God. Ironically the quotation from *Stone IV* does include a scripture reference, but one which supports a passage not included in the quotation. The scriptural foundation for that quotation is 1 Cor 2:14 and 2 Pet 3:16. Perhaps the authors could interpolate a brief comment such as "They derive this understanding from 1 Cor 2:14 and 2 Pet 3:16."

**30-6** How can the Messianic Communities ever be challenged from the outside? To question their authority or legitimacy is to reveal that one is not under the "anointing." Thus the group is beyond criticism or evaluation. It is analogous to saying, "We are God's group because we have the truth. We have the truth because we are God's group." This is circular reasoning that justifies its own existence. Thus no honest dialogue can ever take place.

It remains to be seen what the outcome of our dialogue with the NEIRR will be, but one thing is clear — they do not have the authority to judge us. Those who have that authority are those disciples who are laying down their lives for one another daily. They are the ones who have authority to speak the truth one to another, putting aside all falsehood (Eph 4:25). If we don't all listen to the least of the brethren, we will go into error. God's method of judging His people historically has been that He turned them over to the discipline of the nations. Gamaliel understood this in the first century. The NEIRR would do well to heed his wisdom.

**31-0** Messianic Communities theology is rather like a beautiful, ripe peach that has become disconnected from the tree and over a short period of time (25 years) has decayed more and more until it is almost entirely unrecognizable.

The authors have proven that they do not have the wisdom to even understand our theology. Anyone with any understanding will see this in their *Analysis* and will see that they have discredited themselves. The *Analysis* is written to deceive the naive, the untaught, and the unsuspecting.

### *Doctrine of Man*

31-2 “YAHSHUA also took on human nature ... He is divine. Divine nature took on human nature in order that we, the fallen human beings that we are, might take on divine nature. We will always be human but we also will partake in divine nature ... YAHSHUA became human to make us partakers of Divinity. Divinity took on humanity that humanity could take on Divinity...” This is rank heresy...

This is one of many instances in which key phrases and Biblical citations in our teachings seem to be deliberately suppressed in order to distort what we believe. How the authors handle this proves their lack of understanding. They make much of the phrase “take on divine nature” as being theologically deviant, because it implies that we human beings could become divine. But the following sentence, which the authors removed from the quotation, makes clear what “taking on Divinity” means:

We already have partaken in divine nature, tasted of the Spirit by taking on Ruach Ha Kodesh who is divine (1 Cor 6:17).

Any rational reader, having the benefit of this information, would understand that we are not “going off” but simply talking about becoming one spirit with the Lord, even as the Bible verse cited says, and that we are not talking about becoming something other than human.

If the authors wish to portray what we actually believe, they could use the following quotation from the apostle Peter:

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, *in order that by them you might become partakers of divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (2 Pet 1:4)

This scripture is mentioned in the next paragraph of that same teaching. They also might want to incorporate the following passage from a more recent teaching:

2 Peter 1:4-5 — Because our Master has granted to us to be partakers in His divine nature, we can do what verses 5-8 say. If we weren’t sharers in His glory, these words would seem hard for us, given to us by a hard taskmaster, it would be like a master’s manual without grace. We are partakers of His divine nature. What does it mean that we are partakers of His divine nature? Does that mean that we don’t have a human nature anymore, but a divine nature? Are we going to transitionalize out of our human nature and come into a divine nature? Partakers — sharers. Divine — uncreated. Are we going to be God someday? Our nature is human and it will always be human, but we have a divine nature, 1 Cor 6:17, if we’ve joined ourselves with Messiah. His Spirit is divine, but we won’t ever be

divine ourselves. He is divine, we are human, and we'll always be human throughout all eternity because our Father doesn't want us to be divine. He created us to *house* divine nature. The purpose of human nature is to make visible divine nature.<sup>32</sup>

### *Doctrine of God*

**31-4** *"God is a spirit and what He lacks is a suitable vessel to express His love. The Son was created as a human being ..."* The Triune God is by definition complete in and of Himself with no needs or lacks ... this is probably the consequence of not thinking through the implications of such statements.

First of all, we do not teach that the Son was created. This is a scribal error and should read "The Son was *made incarnate* as a human being..." But we do believe that God *needed* man, and did not create us on a mere whim. Since no man has seen God at any time (Jn 1:18) we understand that the invisible God (Col 1:15) created man in His image in order to have a means of making visible his Divine nature, which is love (1 Jn 4:8). Of course the invisible God perfectly expressed love within Himself, but since He is not selfish and self-satisfied, He needs a means of expressing His love to those who cannot see Him. The consequence of thinking through the implication of this statement is that we desire with all our hearts to be suitable vessels and to express the love He has poured out in our hearts through the divine Spirit who has come to reside permanently in us (Rom 5:5). Understanding that He created us *and* redeemed us because He *needed* us to rule with Him motivates us to deny self in order that His love might be perfected with us so that we could become just like our Master in His humanity (1 Jn 4:17).

**32-1** *"...If we aren't for Him, He sometimes leads us into temptation."* Again, this is heresy. It imputes evil intent to God.

In using the very words of the Son of God who taught us to pray, "Do not lead us into temptation ..." (Mt 6:13), we are not imputing evil intent to God any more than our Master was. We understand that there is a very real possibility that we will be *turned over to the tempter* if we do not *love* the truth, as Paul wrote:

... because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason *God will send upon them a deluding influence* so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth,

---

<sup>32</sup> *To Be Partakers in the Divine Nature*, May 3, 1994, p. 1.

but took pleasure in wickedness (2 Ths 2:10-12).

Would our Master tell His disciples to pray that their Father *not* lead them into temptation, if there was no possibility that He *would*? Our Master was not imprecise when He used this phrase. There is no more evil intent implied in saying God will lead into temptation the one who has fallen away in his heart than in saying that He hardened Pharaoh's heart (Ex 9, 10, & 11) or that He gave those who did not honor Him over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity (Rom 1:24). This is as Lam 1:14 says,

The yoke of my transgressions is bound; by His hand they are knit together; they have come upon my neck; He has made my strength fail; the Lord has given me into the hands of those against whom I am not able to stand.

#### *Doctrine of Jesus Christ and His Work*

**32-4** "*Yahshua was a man a little inferior to the angels for a time.*" The fatal error of such statements is that it unduly separates Jesus' divine nature from His human nature. Jesus was never "inferior to the angels."

This statement proves the authors' lack of scholarship and abundance of prejudice, i.e., judging us according to their mindset and how they want to define us for their own gain and reputation. In doing so they seem to be accusing the writer of Hebrews of *fatal error*:

But we do see Him who has been made *for a little while lower than the angels*, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor... (Heb 2:9)

The word translated *lower* here means *to make less in rank or influence*, according to the Lockman Foundation's concordance of the NASB. And according to *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, *inferior* means *of lower degree or rank*.

Perhaps the authors failed to note that we cited this very verse at the beginning of the paragraph from which they quote, and did not realize that we were merely quoting the Bible. It seems they should explain why in their opinion they do not think the Bible really means that He was *lower*. It is certainly their right to do so, but it does not seem fair to assert that we, the Lockman Foundation, and the writer of Hebrews are guilty of *fatal error* without backing it up.

**33-3 There are many reasons why this understanding of Jesus' name is without any Scriptural support...**

Once again, NEIRR seems to deliberately suppress certain information in order to discredit us. They do not print what we believe regarding the Name of our Master, which is clearly articulated in the article, *Name Above All Names*. Instead, they quote statements that *refer to* what we believe, but do not explain it. They even leave out a sentence in the quotation from *The Personality of God in Us* which says, “It says Joshua in the footnotes of many Bibles.” This indicates that there is scholarly opinion which agrees with our understanding. One example of this is the footnote to Mt 1:21 in the NIV Bible: “Jesus is the Greek form of *Joshua*, which means *the LORD saves*.”

We know that “the LORD” is a representation of the sacred name *Yahweh* or *Yah* and that *Jesus* is merely a transliteration (not a *translation*; NEIRR muddies the distinction between the two terms) of a Greek transliteration of the original Hebrew name. It may have been the best approximation in Greek of the phonetics of the Hebrew name as it was pronounced by the translators of the Septuagint. In our conversations with classical scholars, which the NEIRR says we do not talk to, we have come to understand the limitations of the Greek language, and why *Ἰησοῦς* came to be used in the Septuagint to represent the sounds of the name *Yahoshua* or *Yahshua*.

We seem to recall speaking of these things in our conversations with the NEIRR, but we would not be surprised if they have forgotten. We understand that the substitution of the vowel η in the first syllable was due to the suppression of pronunciation of the Name of God in the second temple era. We also know that it was impossible to accurately render our Master's Name in Greek since the language doesn't have the “sh” sound, but only the “s” sound, hence the σ of *Ἰησοῦς* in place of the “sh” of *Yahshua*. (Incidentally, as far as the name *Jesus* is concerned, neither Hebrew nor Greek had any “J” sound, such as in modern English, nor did old English, we are told, which pronounced the “J” character like a “Y” in the beginning of a word.)

Finally, granting that the trailing ζ is necessary in Greek for grammatical purposes, we can see why it was reasonable to use *Ἰησοῦς* as a Greek transliteration, because it was the closest approximation they could make, given the limitations of the language. How to pronounce it is another matter. *Ἰησοῦς* is used in Greek in much the same way as *Chaim* is commonly or

traditionally used in English to represent a Hebrew name which cannot accurately be transliterated with English letters. But in reading *Chaim*, the proper pronunciation of the name is nonetheless usually uttered. It would hardly be respectful of a person bearing this name to pronounce *Chaim* as if it began with the same sound as *Chuck* and rhymed with *maim*. So, it is doubtful that the God who revealed his “memorial Name forever” to Moses as *Yahweh* or *Yah* ever intended for his Son’s Name, which embodies the Name of the Father (as Jn 17:11 makes abundantly clear), and which was the same as that of Moses successor (transliterated as Ἰησοῦς), to be pronounced *Yay-sooce* or *Jee-zuss*.

Besides, in English we can pronounce our Master’s real name very accurately with sounds that are common to our language. And it is a normal principle of translation (and transliteration) that you always go *directly* from the source language to the target language, not taking a detour through a third, unrelated language.

Every language today utters its own version of the pronunciation of the Hellenized, Latinized transliteration of the Name of the Hebrew Savior. But we know that when our Master returns to rule the earth, and His feet stand on the Mount of Olives in Israel as described in Zechariah 14:4, there will only be one Name for this one God incarnate:

And the Lord will become King over all the earth; on that day the Lord will be one, and His name one. (Zech 14:9)

**35-1** *(Concerning quotations from Reasoning 2 about our Master’s agonizing in the Garden of Gethsemane)* Such statements as this fly in the face of Scripture. Jesus continuously prophesied the nature of His death ... not as some potential eventuality that needed God’s confirmation, but as God’s express will. Jesus’ concern in the Garden was not whether the cross was God’s will, but if there was *any other* way to accomplish that will.

We can understand the authors not grasping what this teaching was saying, since this set of notes does not clearly articulate what those of us who heard this teaching understood. The question in our Master’s mind was not *whether* He was to die on the cross for our sins — for this He needed no confirmation. The question was *whether it was the right time* — whether it was His Father’s will for Him on that day and in that circumstance. We are sorry for the confusion, but this is why we do not distribute teaching notes outside the Community.

But what is still more unclear is the comment of the authors that the Master *knew* it was God's will to go to the cross, but *wondered* if there was another way than going to the cross to accomplish God's will. This seems to be a contradiction. If He knew what our Father wanted Him to do, why would he wonder if there was *another way*? We do not believe, as the authors seem to, that He was seeking an easier, broader road. We do not think that He *wished* He could save His life. If such were the case, then by His own words — “Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it” (Mt 16:25; Mk 8:35; Lk 9:24) — He surely would not have been raised incorruptible (Jn 12:25), nor would he have authority to call others to wholeheartedly and unreservedly lose their lives for His sake. Therefore we do not see any other possibility than that He was praying to know that *this cup* — the circumstances of that moment in history — was actually His Father's will, that it was *the right time* for Him to go to the cross. If it was not, He wanted it to pass by, but if it was He wanted to embrace it.

**35-2 Regarding the death of Christ, it is also taught that His death does not cover “intentional sins” once one becomes a believer.**

We have used the term *intentional sins* by way of contrast with the English word *unintentionally* which the NASB uses to translate the Hebrew *shegagah* (referring to a sin of inadvertence). This term is apt to be misunderstood by those who are not familiar with our teachings. A better word of contrast would be *defiantly* or *high-handedly* (which is what *intentional* is meant to express) as in Numbers 15:27-31:

Also if one person sins unintentionally, then he shall offer a one year old female goat for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement before the Lord for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, making atonement for him that he may be forgiven. You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them. But the person who does anything *defiantly*, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be on him. (Num 15:27-31)

We understand that the law of sacrifices in the Old Covenant was a type of our Master's sacrifice in the New Covenant. Thus it is understandable that *His* sacrifice would

not cover the willful, defiant sin of a disciple who despises Messiah's word, either, as the writer of *Hebrews* makes perfectly clear:

For if we go on sinning *willfully* after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there *no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. (Heb 10:26-27)

Acts 3:22-23 also warns against despising our Master's word:

Moses said, "The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in *everything* He says to you. And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be *utterly destroyed from among the people.*"

This penalty of *utter destruction* implies that Messiah's sacrifice cannot be applied to those who refuse to heed *everything He says* once they have come to the knowledge of the truth by revelation of that truth in their heart. *Defiant* means going past something you know. (We know from reading the Gospels that He commanded much more than just simply that we should believe in Him.)

These passages in the New Testament scriptures are warnings to those in the Church, not to unbelievers. For example:

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is *impossible to renew them again to repentance*, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame. (Hebrews 6:4-6)

This passage leaves no doubt that *believers* can commit sins for which they cannot repent. We understand these sins to be the sins unto death that 1 Jn 5:16 speaks of:

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.

Since the wages of sin is death, there are clearly certain sins for which believers must pay the wages with their own death. These willful sins are ones for which they cannot repent in this age, for which there is no sacrifice, and for which intercession is useless.

This does not, however, mean that believers lose their eternal place in the Holy City. Death for a believer, one who is in the covenant, is disciplinary and remedial and not eternal, as indicated by the following passages:

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it ... each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ... If any man's work is burned up, *he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.* (1 Cor 3:10,13,15)

But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged. But *when we are judged, we are disciplined* by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world. (1 Cor 11:31-32)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Cor 5:10)

And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers *until he should repay all that was owed him.* So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart. (Mt 18:34-35)

I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, *that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* (1 Cor 5:5)

We believe that these passages indicate that believers will taste death if they disobey the Master deliberately (Jn 8:51) and can be assigned a place in Hades along with the unbelievers during the time of the 1000-year Messianic Kingdom, beginning at the time of our Master's return:

But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and *assign him a place with the unbelievers.* (Lk 12:45-46)

As we said in *Show It to Me in the Word* (page 30), one is on pretty shaky ground to say that Christians going to hell is not an *orthodox* belief in Christianity. Out of the billion and a half Christians on the earth today, almost two thirds are Roman Catholics, who believe that a Christian who dies with mortal sin on his soul is going to be eternally damned. And if one tries to stand on the ground of Protestant orthodoxy, then one has to ignore the millions of born-again Pentecostals who are convinced that they could backslide to the point of sinning a sin worthy of eternal damnation. We do not ignore the

Bible verses which these groups feel support their views, but we recognize that these verses apply to entering the Kingdom (millennial reign) rather than the Holy City (eternity).

It will do no good for the staunch Evangelical, who trusts in a doctrine of eternal security, to argue before the throne of judgment:

But according to my interpretation of Hebrews 10, all my sins were already paid for, even my deliberate bearing of false witness, my immorality, my greed (which was idolatry), etc. (Rev 21:8; Gal 5:19-21).

For the answer of the Almighty and Just Judge has already been recorded:

But to the wicked God says, “What right have you to tell of My statutes, and to take My covenant in your mouth? For you hate discipline, and you cast My words behind you. When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you associate with adulterers. You let your mouth loose in evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son. These things you have done, and I kept silence; you thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you, and state the case in order before your eyes. (Ps 50:16-21)

**35-4 “Everyone who does not take heed to what our Master says will be utterly cut off.” (Footnote 6: This particular teaching also equates Spriggs’ teachings with God’s Word.)**

The teaching merely quotes Acts 3:22, which draws from Dt 18:15-18, bringing it into the New Covenant. Nowhere does this teaching equate Yoneq’s teachings with the Scriptures. If NEIRR wishes to accuse us of such a grave and blatant arrogance, they should at least document it.

**35-5 Not only are there sins that are not covered by the death of Christ once belief in Him has been professed, but *most damning*, Spriggs teaches that there are essentially three groups at the end of time: those who make it to the Holy City (Messianic Communities); those who are consigned to the Lake of Fire; and worthy members of the Nations who make it to heaven *apart from the death of Christ*. They are saved on the basis of living according to the light of their conscience based on Gen 3:16-19. This is absolute heresy that has far reaching implications ...**

There are a number of errors here. First and most blatant is the assertion that we believe that some people will make it to heaven (citizenship in the Holy City) on the basis of doing good deeds. Those who believe this are not found within our ranks but within the ranks of Protestantism and Catholicism, or so it seems, according to the following sources:

Zwingli, a prominent Protestant reformer, also believed in God's mercy for "good" people of conscience: "There has not been any good man ... from the very beginning of the world even to its end, whom you will not see [in paradise] with God." Luther concluded that Zwingli was a heathen.<sup>33</sup>

Catholics believe that the *baptism of desire* comes also to every person who sincerely and honestly lives up to his best lights [his conscience]. Thus, persons who have never heard of Christ or His Church receive God's Grace and can attain salvation, provided they have perfect contrition.<sup>34</sup>

These examples are "highly instructive for comparative reasons" (to borrow the authors' turn of phrase), and we think it would only be honest of them to publish these excerpts in the interest of truth, so that the readers of their *Analysis* would have an unbiased assessment of the spiritual landscape on which the authors are trying to locate us.

The second error is to represent that we claim "those who make it to the Holy City" as solely equivalent to the Messianic Communities in New England. If this is actually what we say, the authors should be able to quote such a statement from the 500 or so teachings they have at their disposal. As we have told them, we believe one must make a covenant with the Son of God *according to His terms*, described in the New Covenant Scriptures. *Anyone* who has done this has permanent, irrevocable citizenship in the Holy City, and his name is recorded forever and ever in the Lamb's book of life. Rev 7:9 describes those who have "washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb" as a great multitude which no one could count.

The third error is that the authors do not represent what we *do* believe regarding justification. Instead, they present *their* understanding of the Scripture as the standard of orthodoxy and assert that we do not agree with it. This is errant even from the point of view of their own avowed standard of judgment — the Scriptures and the historic creeds (i.e., the decisions of the councils of the entire Christian Church) — for, as far as we know, there have been no ecumenical councils which have established Calvinist theology

---

<sup>33</sup> Edith Simon, *The Reformation*, Time-Life Books, page 58.

<sup>34</sup> J. Paul Williams, *What Americans Believe and How They Worship*, revised edition (Harper and Row, 1962), page 44.

as the standard of orthodoxy. What we see in the scriptures regarding justification is as follows:

Rom 2:5-8 speaks of the Day of Judgment described in Rev 20:11-13 and Mt 25:31-46 when all the nations will be judged according to their deeds:

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

At this judgment, after being resurrected from the first death, which is the penalty for sin, men will be judged as to whether they struggled against the sin they inherited as the fallen seed of Adam, while persevering in doing good, or whether they were selfishly ambitious like Satan and his angels, loving and practicing sin (Mt 25:41; 1 Jn 3:8).

Rom 2:13-16 also speaks of this same judgment according to deeds, at which, apparently, some will be justified to escape the second death, after having suffered the first death, not because they were Jews (hearers of the Law), but because they instinctively did the things of the Law even though they were Gentiles, who had nothing more to go by than the instinctive knowledge of good and evil in their conscience:

...for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus. (Rom 2:13-16)

The untaught and unstable (who do not have as their foundation the words of our Master) might not understand Paul's words concerning "those who persevere in doing good" and "do instinctively the things of the Law." We must not reason away what the Master said about this judgment of the nations (Mt 25:32; Rev 20:11). In Matthew 25:31-46 He makes it clear that there *will* indeed be sheep of the nations who *will* be separated from goats of the nations. The sheep will be ushered in to a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, by a judgment *based on their deeds*.

Paul's words regarding this judgment are on a slightly different subject from his comments on the righteousness of God and glory of God in Rom 3:21-24:

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus...

Here he is no longer speaking of those who are judged according to their deeds, after having suffered death, to determine whether they will suffer a second death. He is instead speaking of those who are not judged at this judgment, as our Master said in Jn 5:24:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

Here John is talking about the imputed righteousness of God, which is ours by faith in the sacrifice of our Master, which enrolls us forever and ever in the Holy City, which has the glory of God, from which all men have sinned and fallen short. No one can attain to the Holy City through any means other than *this* justification which is given by His grace through the redemptive work of our Savior.

So the Holy City, then, is a different justification and a different righteousness than what is involved in the judgment of the nations described in Mt 25, Jn 5:28-29, Rom 2, and Rev 20, for believers do not come into that judgment, and have no possibility of eternal torment in the lake of fire, regardless of their deeds prior to obeying the Gospel.

There is no explicit indication anywhere in the Bible that the wages of sin is the second death. The first death, which is not eternal, terminates at the Great White Throne judgment, and only those judged worthy of a second death of unending torment go to the lake of fire.

So it is not surprising that the apostle Peter declares Lot to be righteous (2 Pet 2:7-9), although there is no indication that he was justified by faith like Abraham or was

included in the cloud of witnesses. His righteousness was according to natural law (Rom 2:14-16).<sup>35</sup>

**36, f7** "As an aside, it is incredible that someone like Hitler would be judged "more righteous" than an ex-member of Messianic Communities simply because he never heard their "gospel" as proclaimed by one of their "sent ones."

Evidently our Master understood this principle and spoke about it in several places:

a) In Lk 10:12-16, where He proclaimed that it would be easier for the city of Sodom in the day of judgment, who rejected conscience, than it would be for the cities which had rejected Him, and the gospel He brought. (See also Mt 11:20-24 and 10:11-15.)

b) Rejecting the Good News, as our Master said in Jn 3:18-21, means you don't even qualify for the judgment of conscience — for your deeds — you don't need to go there, you are judged already. See also page 64.

c) Jude 7-13 also speaks of those who defile the Community with their sin. Theirs is a special, just punishment.

There is a reason for this. Those who hear the Good News are those who could have been used by our Father to bring about an end to the tyranny of Satan and instead bring in the everlasting righteousness spoken of in the Scriptures of the Holy Prophets (Dan 9:24 and Rom 16:26). They become guilty, like Christianity, of the blood of all those slain on the earth, Rev 18:24, especially if they leave and persecute the true Church. Then they bring all the guilt of all the righteous men slain on the earth on them as our Master spoke of in Mt 23:35.

---

<sup>35</sup> See *Yoneq's Response to Bob Pardon*, and accompanying teaching, for greater clarity.

37-3 ...they combine the critical doctrine of justification by faith with the keeping of the Law. In one of their freepapers they write, "As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:19 'Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commandments is what counts.'" The problem is what the Communities understand as being necessary for God's grace "to count" for the believer. This includes divesting one's self of all material goods and giving them to the "apostles;" living in their community as the only place where God's "anointing" resides; keeping the seventh-day Sabbath; following selective dietary laws; being totally obedient to the "elders;" ...

It is amazing that the authors can quote from a freepaper that thoroughly explains what we believe regarding faith, and yet not quote our explanations. Instead, they assert that we teach that, in order to be justified, a person must keep the law. On page 36 of that same Freepaper, *Faith that Works*, it is clearly stated:

We know for certain that it is only by grace that a person can be saved. There are no works that one can do to save himself; it is only through faith, which is a gift from God, as Ephesians 2:8-9 makes absolutely clear. But Ephesians 2:10 makes it equally clear that a person is saved for the purpose of "good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

In any case, it does no good for them to hide our conviction that *faith produces deeds of obedience* (Jms 2:14-17) or to misrepresent us as believing that we must obey certain rules in order to escape eternal damnation. (See also: Lk 14:33; 1 Jn 2:19-20,27; Ex 31:13; Heb 4:9; Mt 24:20; Heb 13:17; 1 Jn 3:22; Jn 8:29).

It is evident that the authors stumble over this, accusing us of being a classic *Galatian heresy* because they do not see the kingdom. No one will enter the kingdom who does not *do* the will of the Father (Mt 7:21). Entering the kingdom and ruling and reigning with Messiah is based on *doing* the works prepared beforehand for us to do. When we talk about obedience, we are talking about the real issue for the believer — whether or not we will be found worthy to rule and reign with Him for 1000 years. The issue of having eternal life is based solely on Messiah's finished work on the cross for us. These are two entirely different issues, but the authors lump them into one and then accuse us of being under the law because they are blind to the kingdom, proving to *not* be born of the Spirit (Jn 3:3). They apparently think that everyone who *asks Jesus into his heart* will rule and reign in the kingdom. But the King of that kingdom has made it clear that we must strive to enter it (Lk 13:24; 20:35; Phil 3:11; Acts 26:7).

**38-3** “In the Old Testament, all those outside of Israel who were to be saved had to come into Israel and be circumcised ... Today our Father is calling His people, etc.”

This leaves out an important sentence regarding baptism, and leaves instead an impression that God is restoring mandatory circumcision according to the Law of Moses, which He is not. Please replace the sentence on baptism.

**38-f11** These prescribed laws can even regulate ... the number of sheets of toilet paper allowed at each bathroom visit ...

The wording of this footnote is designed to create an impression in the reader’s mind of oppressive, exacting, demeaning behavior control. But that is a fabrication in the authors’ minds — it is not the reality of our life, which they know in their consciences, based on their own experience while in our midst. The very concept that such a thing would be regulated conjures up absurd scenarios of elders rationing out the supply or hurrying into the facilities after each visit to take inventory lest someone “break the rules” and use four sheets. Hakam explained our thinking and practice in this matter to Mr. Pardon, but he has deliberately chosen not to publish what we said.

**39-2** “The Edah is the 12 tribes – not eleven, or the witness won’t be complete – there will not be enough power to have a strong enough light. Revelation 7 is proof that there are 12 tribes in the holy city.”

Revelation 7 is not the proof that there are twelve tribes in the Holy City. This is a scribal error. It is Revelation 21 that gives proof of the Holy City (in eternity) being identified in the mind of God with the twelve tribes of Israel. Rev 7 speaks of the last days of this age, in the lifetime of the ten kings of Rev 17:12 and Dan 7:24, the very time at which the God of heaven will raise up a kingdom that will fulfill Dan 2:44.

**39-f12** In their desire to “Old Testamentize” the New Covenant, Messianic Communities claims that the term *edah*, an Old Testament term usually translated as “community,” is the appropriate Hebrew equivalent for the Greek *ekklesia*, church. Such is not the case... There is something indefinable about *Qahal*. It conveys a sense of only those who have heard the call and are following it, like *ekklesia*. *Edah*, on the other hand, conveys the idea of the permanent community into which one was born.

We believe that our Master’s words, “... I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it” (Mt 16:18), are parallel in thought and subject matter to

Jer 30:20, "...their community [*edah*] shall be established before me, and I will punish all their oppressors." The word *edah* has a rich meaning that includes *community*, *swarm (of bees)*, *witness*. According to our understanding of the limitations of the Greek language, there is no accurate Greek equivalent for this word. *Ecclesia* and *synagogue* refer to meetings or meeting-places. So does *qahal*. But *edah* carries with it, even in the opinion of the NEIRR, the sense of a permanent community. We understand, not through linguistic scholarship but through just plain common sense and the witness of the Scriptures, that what our Master came to establish was not a temporary meeting that would soon break up, but a *permanent community* against which the gates of Hades would not prevail. He gave Himself in order to redeem a purified and zealous *people of His own* (Titus 2:14), a royal priesthood and holy nation (1 Pet 2:9) that is the Commonwealth of Israel (Eph 2:12). This is clearly what our Master had in mind in Mt 5:14 (*a city set on a hill cannot be hidden*) and Mt 24:14. It is for this reason, and not for the sake of making a superficial appearance of being "Old-Testamentish" that we use the term *edah*.<sup>36</sup>

**40-2 According to Spriggs, God's original intent was that the apostle Paul would gather from amongst the Gentiles (Nations) the ten "lost" tribes...**

This would be more accurately expressed as follows:

Paul's desire was to unite the Gentile nations (into which the remnant of the ten tribes of Northern Kingdom, Israel, had been indistinguishably scattered) with the Jews (the remnant of the Southern Kingdom, Judah) in a New Israel of the Spirit. This would not have been a restoration of the physical nation of Israel, but would have contained elements of the remnant of physical Israel who responded to the call of the Spirit. However, due to compromise, leaving their "first love," and outright sinful disobedience, the early Church disqualified itself and thereby disappointed Messiah.

---

<sup>36</sup> See also Yoneq's *Response to Bob Pardon*.

40-3 **“But is it so unreasonable to think that the apostles were raising up a twelve-tribed nation of Israel, a New Covenant Israel, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, united together by the Holy Spirit? No, not at all, because the Scripture from which Paul quoted said first, ‘It is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob...’”**

This paragraph would be much clearer if it began with the quotation referred to, i.e.:

For thus the Lord has commanded us, “I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the end of the earth.” (Acts 13:47 quoting from Isaiah 49:6).

The next two pages of text do not consist of the authors presenting what the Communities believe, but of the authors discrediting that which they *claim* we believe, but which is a misconception. Our actual beliefs are well presented in pages 8-10 of *Show it to Me in the Word* (here slightly edited for continuity), which NEIRR is welcome to quote in full:

The scriptural basis for saying that we are Israel is first of all Ephesians 2:12-13:

Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Paul is saying here that those who were formerly excluded from the commonwealth of Israel are now included in Israel by a covenant in Messiah’s blood, as he said in 1 Corinthians 11:25, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” And it is very clear in Hebrews 8:8 that the new covenant is with Israel: “Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.” So the old covenant under Law is obsolete, but, the new covenant under grace has been made with Israel, the Israel of God, composed of both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul labors for all of Romans 11 to make this fact very clear, that the Gentiles who are saved are “grafted in” to *Israel*:

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. (Romans 11:25)

In fact, Paul wrote to the Ephesian church, who were Gentiles by birth:

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. (Eph 4:17-18)

The word *Gentiles* means “the nations other than Israel.” So if Paul insisted that the Ephesians no longer live like the nations other than Israel, there was only one way left for them to live: like the new covenant Israel that they were.

And this is the holy nation that Peter is writing to in 1 Peter 2:9-10, a new-covenant Israel made up of Jews and Gentiles, who were not the people of God prior to receiving mercy through the blood of God’s Son:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

We take total identity in this holy nation.

Israel has always been a people made up of twelve tribes. It was so in the Old Testament days. It will be the same in eternity, according to Revelation 21:12, where the holy city, the bride of Christ, is described:

It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are those of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

So why shouldn’t the holy nation of New Covenant Israel be made up of twelve tribes? This wasn’t weird to Paul. He said at his defense before King Agrippa:

I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers; the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God night and day. (Acts 26:6-7)

Was he saying that the unbelieving Jews were earnestly serving God night and day? Who was he trying to flatter? He said in 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16 that the Jews

... both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved; with the result that they always *fill* up the measure of

their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

Do you really think that the apostle who wrote half of the books in the New Testament was two-faced? Did he tell the Thessalonians that the Jews were under the wrath of God while he pretended to Agrippa that they were earnestly serving God? No! It was the disciples — New Covenant Israel — who were earnestly serving God night and day, not the Jews.

But if the first century church was made up of twelve tribes it seems that there would be some other mention of it besides one statement in the book of Acts, doesn't it? Have you noticed the book of James? It is obviously written to the churches, to those who believe in the Son of God. But it is addressed to *the twelve tribes*. Those who reckon this to be the Jewish converts should remember that the Jews had not had an identity as twelve tribes since the Assyrian captivity (see Jms 1:1).

Also in the book of Revelation, chapters 7 and 14, it mentions 144,000 followers of the Lamb of God who are on the earth in the last days, 12,000 selected and sealed from each of the twelve tribes. Now you may think this is talking about physical Jews, but if you look at the list in Genesis 49 of the physical tribes of Israel, you will find that one of them, the tribe of Dan, is missing from the list in Revelation 7. That may not seem very important, but Revelation 7:4 states very plainly that these 144,000 followers come from every tribe of the sons of Israel. So did the Holy Spirit make a mistake when He wrote the book of Revelation by leaving out the tribe of Dan? Of course not! Well, what then does all this mean? Are the tribes listed in Revelation 7 something other than physical tribes — that is, is their citizenship in Israel based on something other than physical descent?

We believe that they are Israel because of the blood of the Lamb whom they follow, “brought near by the blood of Christ,” like Ephesians 2:13 says.

**41-5 James, too, is not referring to the newly “restored” twelve tribes in his opening salutation. His book is probably the earliest writing in the New Testament, approximately 45 AD.**

It is amazing how easily the authors confuse their opinions with fact and jump to conclusions that other scholars consider untenable. According to Harold Lindsell, a

conservative, Evangelical scholar, there is by no means any consensus on the date of the epistle of James:

Nothing can be established as to the date of the letter. If the traditional identification of the author is correct (as James, the brother of the Lord), the letter must have been written before AD 62, the date of the martyrdom of James. Some hold it to be the first New Testament book to be written, around AD 45. Those who do not accept the traditional identification date it much later, toward the end of the first century or beginning of the second century AD.<sup>37</sup>

The *Harper's Bible Dictionary* says:

...the fact that 2:14-26 appears to be a reaction to an abuse of Paul's letters poses difficulties for the traditional view, inasmuch as James's death prior to AD 66 would allow little time for the collection and use of Paul's letters.

Also, judging from the deplorable condition of the universal church that James was addressing, it is unthinkable that the date was only twelve years after the death and resurrection of our Master.

***Messianic Communities, the Nations and End Times***

The views of the authors on this subject have so vastly distorted our position that it is almost impossible to offer correction. We hope that they will consider what we have written on this subject elsewhere in this response, and start all over again in their thinking on this subject. A couple of gross errors do leap out at us:

**43-4 Without credible reasons Spriggs states that the Book of Life mentioned in Rev 3:5 is for the judgment of the Holy Nation (Messianic Communities), while the Book of Life in Rev 20:12,15 is used to judge the Nations.**

The following is what we believe concerning the Books of Life, taken from the teaching, *More on the First and Second Death*:

Do not get Rev 20:6 and Rev 2:11 confused with the second death of the nations in Rev 20:14 and 21:8. Also, do not get the book of life in Rev 3:5 confused with the book of life in Rev 20:12-15. They have nothing in common with each other. The second death in *Rev 2:11 is the second death for believers*, the recompense (2 Cor 5:10, NAS) at the first resurrection judgment (1 Jn 2:28; 4:17). The second death in *Rev 20:14 is the second death for the unbeliever*. Heb 9:27 — After the first death (Gen 2:17; 3:19,24) he

was raised to stand judgment in Rev 20:12. His name was not found in the book of life (Rev 20:15). Many were, many were not. Rev 20:6 has nothing in common with the second death of Rev 20:14-15 and 21:8.

Rev 20:6 and Rev 2:11 refer to the same second death that is for believers only. The book of life in Rev 3:5 and Dan 12:1 refers to the book of life that believers must be recorded in order to enter the Kingdom — “worthy of the Kingdom” (2 Ths 1:4). The second death is a result of their unworthiness to rule with Messiah for 1,000 years (Lk 9:62). Rev 20:4-6 — Who had a part in the first resurrection (Phil 3:10-12; Dan 12:1; Rev 2:26; 3:20-21). The second death in Rev 20:6 is 1,000 years *apart* from Rev 20:14, as you can see by following Rev 20:1-15. You can see that the *second death in Rev 2:11 and 20:6 are the same*.

You can see the *book of life* in Rev 3:5 and the one talked about in Rev 20:12,15 are 1,000 years apart and refer to different nations and books of life. The book of life in Rev 3:5 refers to the Holy Nation Israel (1 Pet 2:9). The book of life in Rev 20:12,15 refers to the nations who are judged at the second resurrection judgment and found worthy or unworthy according to their deeds (Rev 20:12). 1,000 years before this judgment (1 Ths 4:16) the believers had been raised from the dead. Rev 20:13 speaks of the unbelieving dead who had not rejected a sent one with the good news (if they had, they would be judged already, according to Jn 3:18-21), but who lived according to their conscience or did not live according to their conscience, their knowledge of good and evil (Rom 2:12-16).<sup>38</sup>

**45-0 Because they did not really confess certain sins after their salvation, they must pay a price to finally rule with Christ. Thus, Christ’s death upon the cross does not truly save someone completely from the consequences of their sin.**

Here the authors prove their blindness to the *need* for an experiential walk in communion daily with our Master and with one another. In their theology there is no consequence for how we live as believers. If they saw the kingdom, they would know

---

<sup>37</sup> *Harper Study Bible*, introduction to the Epistle of James.

<sup>38</sup> See also Yoneq’s *Response to Bob Pardon*.

that the consequence is not ruling and reigning with Messiah in the 1000-year millennial kingdom.

We do believe that 1 Jn 1:9 is the inspired and inerrant word of God. If He had meant to convey that we are automatically forgiven of our sins and cleansed from our unrighteousness, regardless of whether we confess and repent or not, then it would not say “*if* we confess our sins.” Pr 28:13 is also God’s word and reveals what happens to one who does not confess his sin, and also what happens to the one who does.

**46-3 This understanding of Genesis 3:16-19 as being an “everlasting covenant” with all humanity is without any Scriptural support.**

This statement reveals an attitude which is to be expected from those who presume to judge the legitimacy of everyone else’s faith, based on confidence in their own knowledge and intellectual prowess. In this particular case, their scholarly opinion is not universally held, as the following quotations indicate:

John Coeccius (1603-69), an able biblical scholar in Holland, developed the idea of a covenant of works with Adam that was replaced by a new covenant of grace in Christ. This idea is still held in the Dutch Reformed and the Christian Reformed Churches.<sup>39</sup>

Genesis 3:14-21 The Adamic Covenant — The covenant with Adam is the second general or universal covenant. It could be called the covenant with mankind, for it sets forth the conditions which will hold sway until the curse of sin is lifted...<sup>40</sup>

The Adamic Covenant conditions the life of fallen man ... The elements of the covenant are: (1) The serpent, Satan’s tool, is cursed (v. 14) ... (2) The first promise of a Redeemer (v. 15) ... (3) The changed state of the woman (v. 16) ... (4) The light occupation of Eden (Gen 2:15) changed to burdensome labor (3:18-19), because of the earth’s being cursed (3:17) ... (5) The inevitable sorrow of life (v.17) ... (6) The brevity of life and the tragic certainty of physical death to Adam and all his descendants (v. 19) ... Nevertheless, the curse upon the ground is for man’s sake. It is not good for man to live without toil.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> *Christianity Through the Centuries*, Zondervan, p. 325.

<sup>40</sup> Harold L. Wilmington, D.Min., Neal D. Williams, Th.D., and Paul R. Fink, Ed.S., Th.D. *Reader’s Guide to Understanding the Bible in The Open Bible*, Nashville: Thomas Neslon, Pub., 1983.

<sup>41</sup> C. I. Scofield, D.D., et. al., footnote to Genesis 3:15 in *The New Scofield Reference Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

**46-5** However, the issue is what does "...yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" really mean? ... The "woman's desire" does not contribute to the harmony of the marriage, and the husband's rule, rather it contributes to its dysfunction.

The ellipsis represents a tedious explanation of why the word *desire* has a negative connotation in Gen 3:16, rather than the positive connotation that we believe. It is interesting to note, however, that there is a tradition among the Jews that is consistent with our belief, as expressed in the following vows from a Karaite contract of marriage, dated 26 January 1028:

I, Hezekiah, the bridegroom, will provide her with clothing, roof and food, supply her with all her needs and wishes according to my ability and to the extent I can afford. I will conduct myself toward her with truth and sincerity, with love and affection, I will not grieve and oppress her and will let her have food, clothes and marital relations to the extent habitual among Jewish men ... Sarna the bride heard the words of Hezekiah and agreed to marry him and be his wife and companion in purity, holiness and fear of God, to listen to his words, to honor and hold him dear, to be his helper and to do in his what a virtuous Jewish woman is expected to do, to conduct herself towards him with love and consideration, *to be under his rule, and her desire will be towards him.*<sup>42</sup>

**48-4** "Acts 4:34,35 there were no needy among them because people who had houses would sell them and lay the money at the apostles feet ... So you see this is a great principle in the Body, and when this principle disappeared, the church disappeared." Excessive Need, 11/24/92, p. 6.

The quotation omits what is absolutely essential to understanding the point of the quoted passage — that the fruit of giving up everything is that *people's needs are met*. That is the great principle which, when lacking, resulted in the demise of the church — *because people's needs weren't getting met!* They stopped loving one another as Messiah had loved them.

Here is the full quotation with the text the authors omitted in italics:

Acts 4:34,35 there were no needy among them because people who had houses would sell them and lay the money at the apostles feet *and then distribution was made to everyone who had need; the wealth was spread abroad in the Body. The apostles did not go and spend it on themselves. These apostles were selected, hand-picked by our Master's hand.* What you see in Acts 4:32 is a witness of what our Master taught the disciples for 3 1/2 years, and, when His Holy Spirit came, they manifested that. Even Barnabus (v. 36) who became an apostle with

---

<sup>42</sup> From *A History of the Jews*, by Paul Johnson, Harper and Row, Publishers, (1987), page 201 This is itself a reference of the book, *A Mediterranean Society*, by Goitein, iii 50.

Paul, sold his farm and put every bit of money at the apostles feet *and if he had any needs, it would be taken care of by the Body*. So you see this is a great principle in the Body, and when this principle disappeared, the church disappeared.

So the *great principle* the teaching speaks of is not simply the fact of giving up possessions, but the outworking of love in the Body through obedience to the gospel.

**49-7** Clearly there was a class of Christians in the early Church who were rich, but were encouraged to be generous. This is consistent with Paul's admonition to the rich in 1 Tim 6:17-19.

To the authors, 1 Tim 6:17-19 proves that it is all right to be rich, so long as you are generous. This is because they do not interpret Paul in the light of our Master's words recorded in the Gospels. If they were willing to do what our Master said, they would see clearly what Paul meant.

The subject of this verse is those who are rich in *this present world* and its hope is that *they may take hold of that which is life indeed*. To us, it speaks of those who have *not yet taken hold* of that which is life indeed — the unsaved. Paul was exhorting Timothy, in a way not unlike our Master's words in Lk 16:9, to preach the gospel to the rich. We can relate to his words, because there are often rich people who live around us, who are often our customers, and have shown themselves to be friends to us. We can use the contrast between our common life of sharing (that which is life indeed) and their empty life, rich though it is in possessions, to help them see their need of our Master.

And if scripture is to interpret scripture, then 1 Tim 6:17 is certainly not written to believers, because it was the *love of this present world* that caused Demas to desert Paul in 2 Tim 4:10.

**50-0** The second deals with a war between a great king and a little king, where the point is that the disciple must risk everything, even death, to be His follower.

The authors have missed the point completely. The story of the two kings has nothing to do with *risking death*, but everything to do with voluntarily surrendering your life and possessions to meet the *terms of peace*. Those who heard our Master speak those words did not miss the point — they were more acquainted with the grim realities of war than we are. The *terms of peace* of a conquering king amount to nothing less than total

capitulation. According to Dt 20:10-14, meeting the terms of peace meant becoming slaves of the conquering king — all that you have and are and hope to be is forfeited. You and all you possess become his possession, unless you wished to attempt to save your life. Then you would have to arm yourself against the greater king and take your chances against Yahshua in battle when He returns (Rev 19:11-21 and 17:14).

Of course, Christians have a way of *spiritualizing* these words so that their practical reality is comfortably distant, as the authors have done in their report. But it was the emptiness of this same lukewarm, self-satisfied mysticism that caused us to come out of the ranks of traditional Christianity. We saw the Savior who is presented in the Scriptures as *worthy* of the self-sacrificing devotion which He demands. To us there is no point in arguing that His demands are optional.

We do not see any basis upon which to take our Master's words any other way but literally. All of his twelve disciples *literally* gave up everything to follow Him (Mk 10:28). He called the rich young ruler to *literally* give up everything (Mk 10:21-22), otherwise surely when the young man went away sad, the Master would have told him he only meant to give up everything *in his heart*. On the day of Pentecost, the three thousand who responded to Peter's presentation of the Good News *literally* gave up their possessions (Acts 2:44-45). So why is it so hard for the authors to believe that our Master could have meant Lk 14:26-34 *literally*?

**50-2** The historical books simply describe what was ... it is a dangerous procedure to leap from "is" to "ought." For doctrine, one must turn to Paul's, Peter's, James', and John's letters.

With this pronouncement the authors relegate our Master's words to second place (contrary to Col 1:18; see also page 39). But the *purpose* of the Gospels is to tell the Good News — the actual words our Master spoke — so that we could obey them and receive eternal life (Jn 3:36). By contrast, Paul's letters were addressed to those who had already become disciples, in order to address problems in the churches; their *purpose* is not primarily to present the gospel, but to teach those who have already come into salvation. You can tell what Peter's understanding of the gospel was by the effect of his

preaching: people were cut to the heart and actually *died* in baptism, *surrendering* their possessions, and *trusting* the apostles to do with them as they saw fit.

What happened on the day of Pentecost is no mystery, since:

1) In Mt 28:20 the Master commanded his disciples, including Peter, to make *disciples* (Lk 14:26-33), teaching them to obey all that *He* had commanded *them*.

2) What He commanded them is recorded in the four gospels.

3) On the day of Pentecost, true to His word (Jn 14:26), the Holy Spirit brought to Peter's memory *all that the Master had taught them*.

4) Peter preached what came to his memory, and the result was what is recorded in Acts 2-4.

So what is the purpose of the two accounts of the early church in Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-37, with their vivid picture of the abundant life they experienced? Why did the Holy Spirit inspire Luke to write such a glowing description? To be *ignored* and explained away? And where *can* that life be found in the churches of Christianity today? How does the fruit of Peter's gospel, based only on his intimate knowledge of his Master's words and life, compare to the fruit of the gospel that Christians have extrapolated from Paul's letters (apart from our Master's commands) to the churches which were already experiencing the seeds of decay?

**51-0** Thus, private property was allowable in the early Church with no demand to sell all.

This is an amazing conclusion, given that the context of the passage is the very strong and clear precedent:

For there was not a needy person among them, for *all* who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales, and lay them at the apostles' feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need. And Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means, Son of Encouragement), and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. *But a certain man named Ananias...* (Acts 4:34 - 5:1)

The overwhelming emphasis of that passage is the *normalcy* of giving up *all*, and the story of Ananias and Sapphira is only meant to emphasize that by way of contrast.

The interpretation that the authors allude to in our freepaper article, *An Object Lesson*, is one that we had already judged as incorrect before we ever discussed the issue with them. When they brought it up in our meeting at the *Common Ground Cafe* in April '95, the author of that article told them that it was in error and explained to him our understanding of the passage. That day in the cafe they made it clear that they understood what we were saying. The fact that the *Analysis*, written during the eight months following that meeting, represents us as holding to that incorrect understanding makes evident that the intention of the authors is not to report what we do believe, but to discredit us. This is particularly clear in their treatment of the issue of possessions, in which they present a caricature of our thinking on the subject, with one terse sentence and three truncated quotations from teachings. Then they spend the remainder of the four pages allotted in refuting our position.

We told the authors that we agreed with their translation of Acts 5:4:

(The land) remaining as it was, unsold and in your possession, was it not yours to do with as you saw fit?

The apostles did not seize the property of disciples — it had to be freely given. And that is the way it is with us also — we do not seize anyone's property, but we rejoice when new disciples show their love for our Master and His people by freely surrendering everything they own.

What seems obvious to us is that Ananias and Sapphira knew that the apostles and the community of believers *fully expected* them to give up everything — that is why they conspired to deceive. They wanted it to appear as though they were doing what Barnabas had done, but they did not really trust our Master or His Body. They wanted to set aside a little “nest egg” just in case things didn't work out, in case the Body of Messiah proved to be a *cult*.<sup>43</sup>

Ananias and Sapphira conspired to deceive their supposed brothers and sisters, but our Master, who takes total identity with His Body, took it personally. The gospel

---

<sup>43</sup> (*This is exactly what my Christian friends advised me and my wife to do when we came to the Community — keep some of our money in a savings account somewhere just in case we decided to leave the Community some day. — David Zerubbabel*)

they heard called them to give up everything, *literally*, but they reasoned it away, just as countless Christians have done after them. The Holy Spirit revealed to Peter what was really in their hearts, for He did not want the community defiled by their treachery — He made them an *object lesson*, so that others would fear (Acts 5:11). So does that make the apostle Peter a dangerous, manipulative, oppressive cult leader who uses fear tactics to control people's lives, as the NEIRR accuses Yoneq of being?

**51-1 Never once does Jesus demand that Zaccheus give all his possessions away to be His true disciple.**

The authors cite the case of Zaccheus as one whom our Master proclaimed a *true son of Abraham* without calling him to give up all of his possessions. But our Master didn't need to call him to do what was already the response of his heart — Zaccheus voluntarily impoverished himself by giving away half of his wealth to the poor and using the rest of it to repay, four times over in obedience to the Law, those whom he had defrauded. As we pointed out in our April '95 meeting, if just 12% of his wealth had been gained by fraudulent means, which it most certainly was, this process would have left him virtually penniless. His heart was far different from that of the "rich young ruler." The difference in their hearts (as seen in their responses) is why salvation came to one and the other went away sad. Zaccheus saw the worth of our Master, which Mr. Pardon and most Christians today plainly do not see.

The mention of Peter's house in Matthew 8:14, and the collections for the Jerusalem church in 1 Cor 16:1-2 and 2 Cor 9:7, and other similar passages, do not take away from the gospel that our Master and His disciples preached, but must be understood in light of it. In doing that we have seen how naturally these passages fit into the context of the common life that is the fruit of that gospel. Many of us have come into salvation as owners of houses, cars, and other possessions that have much practical use in the communities we entered into. Although they became common property, because of our heart to give them up, often they were commonly spoken of as "David's house" or "John's car" or whatever, as long as they continued to be in use. And from time to time we need to take collections to help a needy community. Naturally we usually call upon

those who manage money — industry heads, household bookkeepers, etc. — when such needs arise. But often individual members will offer pocket change or money set aside for a personal need out of the burden of love in their hearts.

The underlying problem is that the authors, and Christianity in general, will not embrace the *heart* of the Good News, and so they look for “escape clauses” in the New Testament to justify their independence and their unwillingness to obey the gospel.

**52-1 ...a believer named Erastus...**

Erastus is not described as a *believer* or a *disciple*, but as the *city treasurer*.<sup>44</sup> *In fact, by way of contrast, the same passage makes reference to Quartus as a brother.* Probably Erastus was a public servant who had shown himself to be a friend to the church. We have such friends, with whom we have built relationships over the years. For example, a friend we got to know up in Island Pond, who is a state legislator, stayed at our house in Providence when he was here on some business. If we had been writing a letter to our brothers in Island Pond at the time that he was visiting us, we might well have said, “Gordon (you know, our state legislator) sends his greetings.”

It is important to remember that the letters of the New Testament were written by human beings who didn’t know that what they wrote would later be combined together with the Old Testament as *the Bible*. It is not reasonable to assume that Paul included a greeting from Erastus, making a point that he was the city treasurer, in order to justify Christians in holding on to their own careers, wealth, and independent lives, when Paul himself had given up everything to follow our Master Yahshua (Phil 3:8).

**52-3 ...he takes a few isolated verses out of context (Lk 14:33; Acts 2 and 4) and creates major doctrine.**

This is a gross distortion of our position. We do not base our beliefs regarding possessions on those verses alone. “Forsaking all” is a *major theme* of our Master’s teachings, not just “a few isolated verses.” And the life that resulted from forsaking all is

---

<sup>44</sup> For, of course, no soldier in active duty gets involved in civilian affairs (2 Tim 2:4).

a major theme of Acts 2-6, as well as an historical fact. In fact, the angel who released the apostles from jail told them:

Go your way; stand and speak to the people in the Temple [the religious establishment of their day] the whole message of this Life.

*Forsaking all* is the practical reality of the death that we must die to be *in Messiah*.

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For *if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death*, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, so that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. (Rom 6:3-7)

What does it mean, *the likeness of His death*? It's really important to know what this means, because if we *have not* become united with Him in this way, then we can have no hope of being united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection. That's pretty serious! Is saying the *sinner's prayer* the likeness of His death? Is Christian baptism the likeness of His death? When do Christians get saved — when they say the sinner's prayer, or when they get baptized? What is their status between the time they say the sinner's prayer and their baptism? What about those who are baptized as infants? Was that the likeness of His death? How cheap and easy can we make the likeness of His death?

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Phil 2:5-8)

Our Master *emptied Himself* — He divested Himself of all that was rightfully His as God's Son, and became a *slave*, and then He went even beyond that and surrendered His own physical life, allowing Himself to be nailed to the cross. So what is *the likeness of His death*? How do we *empty ourselves*? Could it have anything to do with *our possessions*, the things (both tangible and intangible) that are rightfully ours?

There is no being born again without dying first. You must be buried with Him in baptism (Rom 6:3-8), and of course no one would bury a *live* person. Because of your sin, you are under the sentence of death (Rom 6:23). While it is wonderfully true that Christ died for your sins, in order for His sacrifice to be of any value to you, you must voluntarily be united with Him in His death (Rom 6:5), otherwise you will not be made alive with Him. Your *old man* must die (and your estate distributed to your beneficiaries — the ones whom you desire to bless with your wealth — which is what normally happens when a person dies).

That is what happened in Acts 2:45 and 4:34-35 as the result of 3000 people giving up their lives — the new *commonwealth of Israel* (Eph 2:12) was formed as the new disciples made their wealth common to all. They all believed the Master's words recorded in Lk 14:33: *No one can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions*. It is obvious from what they did that the gospel Peter preached to them included these *hard words* of Jesus, which today's preachers carefully avoid.

Acts 2:42 records that the early disciples devoted themselves to *fellowship*, and there is no true fellowship where there is inequity — where the rich politely greet their poor brothers in church and fail to supply their needs. In fact, the Greek word *koinonia*, translated as *fellowship*, also includes the meaning *distribution*. Those true disciples were devoted to distributing whatever they had to meet the needs of their brothers. Of course they were! For the love of God had been poured into their hearts (Rom 5:5) through the Holy Spirit, who gave them the power to obey the new commandment of their Master:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do what I command you. (Jn 13:34; 15:12-14)

Lest we misunderstand the Master's words or spiritualize them into nonexistence, the Apostle John made the practical application for us:

We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God

abide in him? (1 Jn 3:16-17)

The answer, of course, is that it doesn't.

Obedience to the supposedly *hard words* of the Master is what gives birth to the church, as it did on the day of Pentecost. The church is a people who have all left everything to follow the Son of God, decisively putting to death their *old man*, and in doing so have entered into a covenant with Him to live no longer for themselves but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf (2 Cor 5:15). In fact, they *can* no longer live for or by themselves because they have given up all their own possessions and have left their careers behind. And the only way they can live for Him is by living for their brothers (1 Jn 4:20-21).

The miracle of Pentecost is that all those disciples could give up all their own possessions in obedience to the gospel *and* continue to stay alive by sharing all things in common with everyone else who had obeyed the gospel. That is what being a *church* entails.

So entering into the *likeness of His death* qualifies us to receive and participate in a rich, abundant life that is the *likeness of His resurrection*.

It is amazing how so many Christians, upon seeing or hearing about our common life, respond with something like, "Oh, that's really nice, but I could never live like that. I'm too selfish. I need my space." But Romans 6:7 says, *he who has died is freed from sin [the selfish nature]*. And our Master said, *If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me* (Lk 9:23). So we see that *death* is the missing ingredient in the Christian gospel — they do not know what it means to enter into *the likeness of His death*, so they never experience *the likeness of His resurrection*.

But really, the reason Christians find strange and offensive the way we understand *the likeness of His death* is that they have never come to see the worth of our Master and the indescribable love that He lavished upon us by His death on the cross, for if they really did, they would understand that total surrender is the only fitting response to His love. Anything less is like spitting in His face.

**53-4 Again this doctrinal understanding is built primarily on the Book of Acts ...**

Not so. Consider: Jn 17:11,21-23; 14:12; Eph 4:3; 5:21; Mk 12:28; Jn 11:51-52; Jn 10:16; Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:32; Rom 12:3-5,10; 15:5-6; 16:17; 1 Cor 1:10-13; 3:1-4; 12:11-13, 23-25; Phil 1:27; 2:1-3; Col 3:12-15; 1 Tim 2:8; 6:3-5; Gal 5:20-21; Mt 12:25; Mk 3:24-25; Lk 11:17. Unity and love expressed in *deeds* produces the life described in the Book of Acts.

**53-4 ...this is an argument from silence at best. To assert that Paul never addressed this issue [living in community] because it was just the natural outcome of obeying the "words of the Master" is incredulous.**

Ironically the authors argue from silence in the very next paragraph, saying that the lack of specific reference to community in Paul's letters proves that it wasn't the norm in the early church. But, if one reads Paul in the proper context, his corrections and instructions only make sense in the context of living a common life. The common life of the Edah was a presupposition to all of Paul's writings because he had the right hand of fellowship (*koinonia*) with the twelve and all that it entails. If one reads Paul's letters to the churches *in that context*, it becomes evident that the churches were falling away to one degree or another. That this falling away was indeed happening is verified by the writings of the apostle John in Rev 1:19 - 3:22.

For example, in 2 Ths 3:10, Paul exhorts them not to let anyone eat who will not work (even though, according to verse 9, there was a support structure in place that would provide for those in need). This presumes a degree of authority and connectedness that fits the pattern of our life far more easily than that of Christianity. It is consistent with what Paul says in 1 Ths 2:13-14 about them being imitators of the churches of God in Judea, for which they were persecuted by those who would not *obey* the gospel (2 Ths 1:8). The love they had for one another was obvious by the way they cared for one another (1 Ths 1:8; 4:9; 2 Ths 1:3-4).

And then there is Paul's admonition in 2 Cor 6:14-18 to *come out from their midst and be separate*, which suggests a distinct society of believers who are not "yoked together" with unbelievers.

54, 3 All true believers are already one spiritually by their living connection with Christ via the Holy Spirit... Jesus and the Father are One by an ineffable, divine interpenetration. This is the *kind* of oneness ... that believers share ... this unity shared by believers is a mystical oneness ... this unity is of necessity invisible and does not consist in some outward organizational structure.

How is the *world* (who, according to 1 Cor 2:14, cannot discern spiritual things) supposed to perceive this “ineffable, divine interpenetration” so that they can know that the Father sent the Son, as Jn 17:20-23 demands:

I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us; *that the world may believe that You sent Me*. And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, *that the world may know that You sent Me*, and have loved them, even as You have loved Me.

The apostle Paul exhorted those in his care to have *one mind* (Rom 15:5; 1 Cor 1:10; Phil 1:27; 2:2). Is this *cultic*? Or is it the prophetic mandate of the New Covenant, that we have *one heart and one way* (Jer 32:39; Acts 4:32)?

And this good news of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come. (Matthew 24:14)

*Witness* means an attesting of a fact; evidence; testimony as to the existence of something tangible or real by firsthand observation.

The good news shall be proclaimed in the whole earth as a *testimony* to the nations of the *existence* of the *kingdom* by those who have *observed* it or *experienced* it through their *senses*. Or, as the Apostle John put it, “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled ... we proclaim to you” (1 Jn 1:1-2). This is what it means to bear *witness* — to speak of what you have seen and heard and touched.

Our Master wanted with all his heart for Matthew 24:14 to be fulfilled. But the good news could not be a *witness* of the kingdom apart from the *demonstration* of love as a visible, physical reality. That demonstration is the life of a people who live the common life of Acts 2:44-47 and 4:32-35, loving one another as Messiah loved them, laying down their lives for each other *every day* (Lk 9:23). That common life of love is the evidence of

the kingdom that gives credibility and confidence to those who are sent out to proclaim the good news. It is the life of the Body of Messiah, the physical representation on earth of our Master who is in heaven.

It is a myth that the Holy Spirit can dwell in a divided body, just as the human spirit cannot dwell in a human body that is hacked into pieces. The Christian “Body of Christ” is a mystical, invisible body — a concept that would have appealed to the Gnostics of the first century. Indeed, the spirit of Gnosticism is very much alive in Christianity today. Like the Gnostics, Christians today find their security in what they *know* or believe in their minds, not in the fleshing out of the Master’s commands. They might as well deny the incarnation, for they deny the very purpose for which the Father sent His Son to earth:

[He] gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. (Titus 2:14)

This *people* is the demonstration that the Holy Spirit was sent to produce, as He did on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41-47). Without that demonstration, the good news cannot be proclaimed as a *witness*, because there is no *evidence* of the kingdom.

What we have labored to explain to the NEIRR is that the church is *not* “some outward organizational structure,” but a common life together. Being one as our Master is one with the Father is the *result* of communion with Him. It is organic, alive, vibrant — the Edah, community, swarm, witness.

**55-1** Then there are the numerous references to *your* home, or the church in *your* home, Philemon 2; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 11:22; 16:19; Colossians 4:15.

That is precisely what we are saying — the church was *in their houses*! The church is in our houses (the ones we *don’t* sell and lay the proceeds at the apostles’ feet). To force the possessive pronoun “your” or “their” to imply or require a legal or exclusive ownership is foreign to the realities of normal speech. We in the Community commonly speak of “my” house and “your” house in a quite natural way without there being any assumption of exclusive ownership. But the point of these passages is that the church was *in their houses*.

**56-0** “The light is shining from the 8th day, the millennial Sabbath makes the shadow on this age ... The shadow will be here until the light no longer shines to make the shadow.”

In place of the ellipsis (...) should have been the sentence, “*The shadow does not pass away until the anti-type comes.*” It might cause people to think of the Sabbath in the same light they do of the Old Covenant animal sacrifices, a type which had its fulfillment in the New Covenant. Then the Sabbath would be seen, in light of Col 2:16,17, to be a type whose anti-type has not yet come, as the word *Sabbatismos* in Heb 4:9 would support, instead of something that has already passed away. Then, like any other type, it would still be kept by the people of God as a sign of what is to come, and as a sign of who God’s people are.

**57-0** Within the New Covenant, Christians are never encouraged to remember the Sabbath as the seal or sign of this covenant. Instead, believers are to celebrate the Lord’s Supper “in remembrance of” Him “until He comes again.” Thus, the Lord’s supper is the New Covenant sign between the Lord of the covenant and His vassals.

It is interesting, then, that the early church kept the Lord’s Supper at the close of the Sabbath (Lev 23:32) and the beginning of the first day of the week — that is, on Saturday night, as is clear from Acts 20:7-8. In fact, the Good News Bible (TEV) translates this, “On Saturday evening ...” And that is what we do, too, followed by teachings on First Day (Sunday).

Why did our Master instruct his disciples, speaking of the days of the great tribulation at the end of the age, to pray that their flight may not be on a Sabbath? What difference would it make to Christians today? But to His people who love and keep his commandments, it makes complete sense. God ordained the Sabbath as a sign *forever* (Ex 31:13,16; 2 Chr 2:4), and *forever* has not yet come to an end. This still applies in the New Covenant because *the church is the twelve tribes of Israel* (Eph 2:12; Gal 6:16; Acts 26:7; Rev 21:9-12).

**57-1** Next, Paul now moves on to food, drink, festivals, new moon (celebrations) and Sabbaths. These things he declares to be a mere shadow of “what is to come.”

The word *mere* is not in the text. The literal understanding of the present tense of *are* in Col 2:17 is quite natural in relation to the future tense of the phrase that follows,

*what is to come*. The rich social life of the Body of Messiah is a foretaste of the reality of the Kingdom age that is to come, to which the phrase *the substance belongs to Christ* refers. In other words, the reality of the Kingdom that Messiah will establish when He returns casts a shadow on this current age as we anticipate His coming. Our festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths are to be a foretaste in this age of what the coming Kingdom age will be like.

There is no indication that the Judaizers were trying to force the keeping of festivals and the Sabbath on an unwilling church. Furthermore, in the verses in Colossians that follow, it seems clear that the people Paul was warning the Colossians against were inclined to be *ascetics*, who would be more likely to judge the Colossian believers for entering into the festive New Moon celebrations that were occurring every month than to try to force them to keep feasts that they were not celebrating. In fact, Acts 20:6 mentions matter-of-factly that Paul left Philippi *after the days of Unleavened Bread*, and the next verse indicates that he intended to continue his travels on the day after the Sabbath, for of course he wouldn't travel on the Sabbath.

**58-4 The practice of the early Church also evidences this change from Saturday to Sunday. Note the following quotes from early Church fathers...**

It is interesting that in one place the authors criticize us for making use of extra-biblical sources, and then in another they make use of them to try to prove their point. At any rate, we acknowledge that by the beginning of the second century, the church had already fallen away, and it is not surprising that they abandoned the Sabbath.

So, the issue concerning the Sabbath and this "council" is not whether the early church worshipped on the Sabbath, but that the Catholic Church subsequently assumed the power to change God's word, as the following teaching<sup>45</sup> says:

The substituting of the Sunday for the Sabbath day is not a thing which the Catholic Church either denies or attempts to conceal. On the contrary, it frankly admits it and points to it with pride, as evidence of its power to change even the commandment of God.

This is an excerpt from *Catholic Catechism* (with the apostolic blessing of Pope Pius X on this subject of the change of the Sabbath):<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> From *Sabbath Day — A Sign*, April 28, 1990.

"Question: Which is the Sabbath Day?

Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath Day.

Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

Answer: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church in the council of Laodicea (AD 336) transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."

The council at Laodicea, if there even was one, seems to have been insignificant in stature, compared to the ones which produced the creeds. We believed the catechism to be telling the truth regarding an event in history. While perhaps we are to be faulted for not checking up on it, in a larger sense, of course, the catechism was telling the truth. The Christian Church has transferred the day of rest from the Sabbath to whatever Sunday means to Christians. There is no dispute about that. That was the simple and clear point of the teachings.

### ***Signs of the Sabbath***

Much is made of the improper dating of this council, but the entire context of the quote from the teaching would make it clear that it is not the date which is important, it is the separation from God's purposes and word which is important:

Heb 6:4,5,6 talks about a people who have tasted the power of the age to come. The Edah are the people who have tasted the power of the age to come, who will be obedient to His law, who keep His holy feasts, who keep the appointed times because they are shadows of things to come (Col 2:16). The Sabbath has not passed away. The Catholic Church and all her daughters have changed the Sabbath to Sunday in 336 AD at the council of Laodicea. *How [much were they] spit out of Messiah's mouth by this time to annul Ex 20:8-11? When they did that, of course, they took away the sign that they were God's people ...*

### **59-3 Messianic Communities has taken the narrow way of Matthew 7:13-15 and made it microscopic.**

So concerning the narrow way, which our Master said *few* would find (Mt 7:14): Are the 1.8 billion people of Christianity the *few*, or is it just the 500 million Protestants? Is that what our Master had in mind when he said *few*? Clearly Christianity is more comfortable with the *broad way* of Mt 7:13.

---

<sup>46</sup> *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, Second edition, January 25, 1910, page 50.

**60-6** The Communities' doctrine of the "sent ones" seems to be based almost exclusively upon Romans 10:14. But it is isolated from the rest of Scripture and interpreted in a vacuum.

When our Master sent out his disciples in Mt 10:5-14,40, Mk 6:7-11, and Lk 10:1-16, He said, "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." This, along with Jn 7:17-18, is the context of Romans 10:14 and of our doctrine of "sent ones." There is no other basis for preaching or receiving the gospel. There is not a single instance recorded in the New Testament in which a person was saved apart from receiving a *person* filled with the Holy Spirit and bringing the good news.

### Sociological Analysis

**62-2** "Free will is the most basic and inviolate spiritual principal on earth." Indeed, even God Almighty does not violate our free will and "make" us come to Him, but desires we come to Him.

The Sociological Section of the *Analysis* claims to be built around the premise that human being possess free will and that this gift comes from their Creator. However, the Calvinism of the Executive Director of the NEIRR does not allow such a premise. This theology, and much of Reformation theology, denies the freedom of the will. It is absurd to be accused of violating another's free will, as this entire section of the *Analysis* does, by those whose basic presuppositions deny its very existence. It will also be easily shown, from teachings and Freepaper articles too abundant to quote, that the Messianic Communities teaches that men have free will and will be judged accordingly.

The authors' espousal of the freedom of the human will in the above quote are completely undermined by their embrace of the double predestination theories of John Calvin. To quote the *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*:

Calvin's early interest in predestination gave place in controversy, and under increasing influence from Augustine and Bucer, to the full-fledged doctrine of double predestination which has sometimes been regarded as the heart of his theology. Though he shudders at the decree of reprobation, he holds it an unavoidable inference from scripture.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by A. Richardson and J. Bowden, The Westminster Press, (1983) page 80.

One is at least able to have a measure of human sympathy for Calvin in spite of his inhuman doctrines (and their violent applications in the city of Geneva in which he exercised magisterial power<sup>48</sup>); at least he shuddered at them. The decree of reprobation states, simply put, that God has already foreordained those who will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. Since both the saved and the lost are predetermined in Calvin's and Augustine's theology,<sup>49</sup> it is ludicrous for someone on this foundation to speak of the free will of human beings.

The decree of reprobation would, as an interesting sidelight, seem to classify as an *inner doctrine* of Christianity. It is treated much like the doctrine of infant damnation<sup>50</sup> because both, with good reason, are no longer publicly proclaimed. They are reserved for the well-indoctrinated.

Calvin, like other luminaries of the Reformation, had no use for the doctrine of *free will*. He said:

We declare that by God's providence, not only heaven and earth and inanimate creatures, but also the *counsels* and *wills of men* are governed so as to move *precisely to that end destined by Him*.<sup>51</sup>

Free will did not conform to his theology. Luther's position on it is even better known. He wrote books railing against the very concept, as well as those who taught it. This is well illustrated by the *Encyclopedia Britannica*:

Erasmus, in his *De libero arbitrio*, or "Concerning Free Will" (1524), attacked Luther's doctrine of the enslaved will and provoked a resounding reply in Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio*, or "Concerning the Bondage of the Will" (1525), a one-sided, violent treatise ...<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> "Calvin used the state to inflict more severe penalties. Such penalties proved to be much too severe, fifty-eight being executed and seventy-six exiled by 1546 (from 1541)." Cairns, Earle, *History Through the Centuries*, page 311 (Academie Books, 1954). Calvin lived another 18 years.

<sup>49</sup> Mr. Pardon has personally told us he is both an Augustinian and a Calvinist.

<sup>50</sup> While infant damnation is no longer openly taught, as it once was, it is still very much a part of the Christian world view, and indeed inseparable from the Christian doctrine of justification — after all, every man is born in sin. Infant baptism, then, is needed to counter infant damnation. See the Freepaper article, *Judgment*, in the first *Imagine* Freepaper, 1993.

<sup>51</sup> From *Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity*, Wm. B. Eerdman's Company, (1977), page 380 (Emphasis added).

<sup>52</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1979 edition, Volume 11, page 194.

So, one may choose to believe in free will, or one may choose to be a Calvinist, *but* one may not choose to do both, nor believe in free will *and* subscribe to the teachings of Luther, at least not on *their* terms. John Calvin's theology and his entire view of God is fundamentally in error. Men's choices in this life are of the utmost significance, to be *rewarded* with eternal life or *punished* with eternal — the second — death, as their deeds deserve.<sup>53</sup> From the most fundamental principles and doctrines we teach that men and women have free will.

The following paragraphs are a very small sampling of what members of the Messianic Communities are taught about man, his actions, his thoughts, and their consequences.

From *First and Second Covenant*, March 20, 1991, pages 15-17:

After all is said and done, all men should fear God and keep His commandments, for there will be a judgment, Ecc 12:13-14.

Every good or bad deed done in secret will be brought to judgment. If you broadcast your good deeds, they will be recorded as bad deeds.

After all is said and done, He will find two categories of man who are worthy of eternal life. All others are worthless. Revelation 22:15 calls them dogs — worthless people who love and practice falsehood. They are not worthy of the nations but of the second death. They didn't live according to the highest knowledge they had — just like Satan didn't.

Genesis 12:3 speaks of Abraham's seed. We are Abraham's seed according to Galatians 3:29. Whoever treats them well will be blessed; whoever treats them badly will be cursed (Mt 25:34-36). *Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.* You can see in that whole list who is cast into the Lake of Fire and who is not...

From the teaching, *First and Second Death*, April 2, 1991, pages 1-3:

Those who have done good will live. But what good deeds is our Master speaking of? Many people do good deeds (homosexuals do good deeds), but if they are not based on Genesis 3:16-19 and Genesis 9:5,6, they are only self-righteous. It is not the employers who have gathered great wealth while neglecting to treat their employees with fairness and respect (down to clean bathrooms) and who then can give away large sums of money (and put their name on it) who have done good deeds. No, it is the hard-working men and women who have abided by the covenants, who have done good deeds consistent

---

<sup>53</sup> Ps 62:12; Pr 24:12; Mt 16:27; Rom 2:6-16; Rev 20:12,13, 22:11-12. Or do these verses only speak of a *perfunctory* judgment — one done only for a show — and it simply does not matter what people do, only whether they believe in Jesus or not?

with keeping the wonderful covenants of Genesis 3 and 9 who will be resurrected to life.

It is these men and women who persevere in doing good (Rom 2:7) who will be granted immortal life. Their good deeds were not self-righteous endeavors to soothe their consciences for breaking the covenants of Genesis 3 and 9. All of Romans 2:6-16 is based on Jn 5:25-29. Verses 9 and 10 — to the Jew first and also to the Greek — this is the judgment of the nations, not the Edah. Verses 10 and 15 are those who will find life.

He knew they would be amazed that all who are in the graves would hear His voice and some would find eternal life. It may have been that being Jews they couldn't imagine Gentiles having eternal life — like Christians today think...

The fundamental difference between Protestant Christianity and the Messianic Communities is that we teach, like our Master in Jn 5:28,29 and Matthew 25:31-46, that a man's choices, apart from his ever having heard the gospel which could make him a disciple, have eternal significance. We believe in the dignity of man, and the greatness and goodness of God, not that He is as Bob Brooks wrote in our *Billy Graham* paper of the Summer of 1990:

When I was seventeen, I had a Bible class on the book of Acts. Our teacher was a Calvinist. She taught us that one day God walked through a field of dead human beings, and according to His unfathomable reasoning, He chose some to live forever and some to go to eternal damnation; and since all were worthy of burning forever it didn't really matter. I sat there wishing His reasoning was a little more fathomable because it left me feeling bad. Was God really that way? If all men deserved the sea of fire and He could save all, why didn't He? I wasn't too attracted or inspired by the idea.

The NEIRR stands with Calvin and Luther on predestination and the human will; we do not. God is not that way. The NEIRR's preoccupation with mind control reflects their view of God, not ours. They find common ground in the heart of their theology with militant secularists who deny God and free will completely:<sup>54</sup>

*All alternative religious groups are merely machines for pseudo-religious manipulation of persons who have lost their capacity to choose, and therefore participation in these groups is not to be considered an expression of an authentic religious impulse. (Emphasis is in the original.)*

Contrary to popular treatments, existing research by sociological investigators indicates there is no reason to believe that entry into an alternative religion

---

<sup>54</sup> *The Cult Experience — Responding to the New Religious Pluralism*, by J. Gordon Melton and Robert L. Moore (The Pilgrim Press), 1982, page 44.

evidences any different decision-making processes than entry into any other voluntary associations and activities common to a comparable population. One of the fascinating and disturbing aspects of this controversy is the manner in which some theorists — arguing from a deterministic mechanistic and/or positivistic philosophical anthropology — lament the alleged loss of the capacity for free will and free choice.

It is amazing that the rest of the Sociological Section finds us guilty of a control which our basic theology denies — a judgment made by those who espouse a freedom their theology denies!

**62-2 With that in mind, we now consider how much of what does occur within the Messianic Communities is actually the result of uncoerced, well-informed, free choice.**

In light of all that is written on in the Sociological Section, and especially in light of the *authorities* the *Analysis* cites, Lifton and Hassan, it is apparent that the authors believe that mind control exists. This is an amazing conclusion. It gives cult leaders, Chinese communists, deprogrammers, and exit counselors a greater access to the human soul than God Himself. He has to knock to gain access to the human heart (Rev 3:20). Neither God above nor the devil below have free access to the human heart — both must gain admittance through the consent of the individual. This upholds the dignity of humanity created in God's image.

Further, how are the authors to find these things out, when they trust those who view Messiah as a hard task-master instead of those who see Him as a wonderful King? How are they to know that each individual makes his decisions to obey the Word or hold onto to his own life,<sup>55</sup> when they trust the words of bitter ex-members over the testimony of happy, current members?

**62-3 "...tremendous success of the advertising industry demonstrates a great susceptibility to being influenced. It is because of this influence people often make decisions they might otherwise have chosen not to make."**

As the following excerpts show, each with its responses, the Communities are portrayed as a totalistic environment where conformity of thought, action, and emotion

---

<sup>55</sup> And remember, our Master said, "For whoever wishes to save his own life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it" (Mt 16:25).

is strenuously imposed on the unfortunate “average members.” However, to understand what is written in the *Analysis*, one must understand the sources which are drawn from. Steven Hassan’s simplification and application of Robert K. Lifton’s thinking in *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* is the principal one. Mr. Hassan is described on page 63 of the *Analysis* as “a fine researcher, excellent author, and former member of the Unification Church.”

On page 30 of his book, *Combating Cult Mind Control*, he puts these words in the mouth of Robert Lifton, “What you are saying is so much more sophisticated than what the Chinese did in the 50’s. It’s like a hybrid mutation of a virulent virus strain.” This was in response to Hassan’s description of workshops conducted by the Unification Church. After participating in some of these, Mr. Hassan voluntarily joined the church. Two years later he was forcibly removed through deprogramming. It is not surprising then, that he believes in mind control. Apart from the verified inability of these workshops to persuade more than one out of every 200 people who actually make it to one of the Unification Churches centers where they are held,<sup>56</sup> the statement of Lifton is simply astonishing in the context of the things he himself wrote of in his study of Chinese thought reform techniques.

There he describes the massive physical and psychological assault these unfortunate men were subjected to. They lived with the continual undercurrent of the fear of execution. They were sometimes made to stand upright for days at a time, chained so tightly their ankles became open, infested, and infected sores. They were subject to beatings, haranguing, hopelessness and despair. The various responses of the men who had every reason to believe they faced a lifetime of this is compared — with a straight face — to what Mr. Hassan went through at teaching seminars where he could have gotten up and walked off any time he wanted to. It is worse than compared — the sufferings and the stresses on those imprisoned by the Chinese communists are actually *belittled* in Mr. Lifton’s words, by saying that these lectures were a more effective inducement to cooperation than the imminent fear of death and the unrelieved prospect of misery.

This is truly amazing. It is a good thing the Roman Empire did not know this, or they would have dispensed with the lions and brought on the *ferocious lecturers* of the anti-Christian movement. To echo the apostle Paul, *I speak as one insane*. This exalted concept of mind control is a slap in the face to the very people Mr. Lifton wrote about, not to mention the martyrs of the early Christian era, the victims of the Inquisition who would not recant, the Jews who would not convert, and the Jehovah's Witnesses who would not cooperate — like the good German Christians did<sup>57</sup> — with Adolf Hitler's criminal regime, all these at the cost of possessions, life, limb, and often the most excruciating and humiliating physical agony. I think they could have taken a few lectures and retained control of their minds.

The success of the advertising industry does demonstrate a great susceptibility to being influenced. This is part of human nature, and everyone is accountable for the choices he makes — even the things he listens to.<sup>58</sup> This aspect of men touches on the power of the gospel in Paul's words. Paul was fully persuaded himself of the good news, "Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor 5:11). If we're not, then we won't have the confidence to persuade others. Faith is the absence of doubt, and we speak from that faith.

**62-5 What is of concern, however, is the extent to which one is expected to acquiesce in a totalistic environment.**

We are thankful to serve the Savior who spoke these words:

Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. (Mk 12:29-30)

*Totalism* is defined on page 63 of the *Analysis* as "behavior control ... (which) invades even the most insignificant areas of a person's life." The question for us is, in Mk 12, what did our Master leave out? We want to give Him everything. We cannot find the areas of our life He is not concerned about, but neither are we looking. The Savior we

---

<sup>56</sup> See Barker, *The Making of a Moonie*.

<sup>57</sup> See the article or pamphlet, *The Legacy of Martin Luther, 1994*.

<sup>58</sup> "Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it shall be measured to you; and more shall be given you besides." (Mk 4:24)

serve is worthy of a total commitment from His disciples, beginning with their possessions (Lk 14:31-33) and reaching down to their very thoughts (Mt 5:21-6:34; 2 Cor 10:5). We have seen His worth, and we can only respond by valuing Him higher than our fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, even our own lives (Mt 10:37-39).

So the question is once again one of the will: whether we have had our lives invaded or whether we have voluntarily surrendered our lives. This cannot be determined by mere observation of whether we conform to certain standards. It can only be determined by our personal testimony.

We want to be like Him, coming to the place where everything we do, say, and think is what our heavenly Father wants us to be doing and saying and thinking (Jn 5:19 and 12:49). We want to be able to say, like our Master, that we do nothing on our own initiative (Jn 8:28). Those who think the New Covenant asks *less* of them *have never known Him*. Those who teach He asks for less are preaching *another gospel* (Gal 1:8).

**62-5 An environment where all is proscribed and the member's very salvation and eternal life are at stake.**

To begin with, we believe and know to be the truth, "Whoever keeps My word will never taste death" (Jn 8:51), and that those who don't keep His word will taste death. So one's destiny is at stake in the issue of obedience to Messiah, for He doesn't even give His Holy Spirit to those who do not obey Him (Acts 5:32).<sup>59</sup> Nor does He save those who do not obey Him (Heb 5:9). In fact the wrath of God abides on them (Jn 3:36). Confessing His name as Lord will not allow a person entrance into the kingdom (Rom 10:9-10) if one does not do the will of His Father in heaven. On that day, He won't even know who such a one is (Mt 7:21-23).

Romans 5:1-5 makes clear that those who are justified by faith are those who have His Holy Spirit. Therefore, faith is a gift from God which enables a person to obey our Master's commands to give up his life, to die with Him and be given new life in Him by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

---

<sup>59</sup> See the teaching, *Willing*, taught 13 November 1992, especially page 2 about Acts 5:32.

The problem with Christianity is there is no environment, as Yoneq says the Edah is,<sup>60</sup> where obedience to the many commands of Messiah and in the epistles is even possible. This is what the *Dysfunction 3* teaching says about the process of decay which began in the early church:

The church began to live by this counterfeit faith (Rom 1:17) of living by principles in the Bible but not obeying the new commandment — since there was no longer the environment for this kind of love to exist (Acts 4:32). Jn 5:24 was the doctrine but 1 Jn 3:14 was not, and could no longer be the practice (1 Jn 1:6). Jn 13:35 could not even be attempted to be obeyed, so no one else could be saved (1 Jn 3:23). The world went into utter darkness. It was utter darkness since the light of the gospel was counterfeit..

Mt 5:14; Isa 49:6; Acts 26:7; and Mt 21:43 were “no where to be found.” 1 Jn 3:22 was taken away from man’s conception. It was out of the question altogether, as was Jn 17:11 and 21-23. This was because the house built on sand could not stand; it could not stand against the world’s flood of deception. Heb 3:6, Lk 1:33 and Eph 2:22 were put off until another day, and for another people, Dan 2:44; Psalm 102:18; Jer 30:20 is the community (in the NIV), the *Edah* (Hebrew 5712,5713: the *witness*, the *swarm*). (page 5, taught July 12, 1993)

The preaching of the gospel produced a “totalistic” life. This life was a common life in which they were *devoted* to the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. Fellowship requires total immersion into the Body.

So, yes it is true we teach the disciples to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God in their lives (1 Pet 5:6), for it is only by so doing that they will receive the grace to do His will and resist the evil one (Jms 4:6-7). We further believe our brothers and sisters can speak His very word (1 Pet 4:11). We believe our shepherds are to watch over our souls, and that to resist *them*, is unwise and unprofitable (Heb 13:17). We love the Word, and if the New Testament word, spoken with faith on the earth once again, creates a “totalist” environment which others find objectionable; we find that we must obey God, for He has put it into our hearts to do so.

Secondly, if what the authors are saying about the Community is true, in the spirit they are saying it (not of a willing submission to a loving Savior, but of a subtly coerced obedience) then the fruit would be to stunt maturation and self-judgment. This is not what we have experienced and it is contrary to the needs of our King in His coming

---

<sup>60</sup> *Saving Our Soul* (11/18/92), pages 4-5.

Kingdom. In every aspect of our life we want to let His Holy Spirit have free reign because Yahshua will not return until He has overcomers whom He can trust to rule over the nations in absolute righteousness (Rev 2:25,26). All of our personal enemies have to be put under our feet (Heb 10:13). So, the Holy Spirit is bringing us to self-judgment (2 Cor 10:5-6) in all things. He is causing us to grow up into the Head, which is the whole purpose of the five-fold ministry of Eph 4:11-16.

Contrary to the spirit the *Analysis* is written in, as soon as each disciple's maturity permits we entrust him or her with increased responsibility, and will do so in increasing measure as the tribes are raised up in their fullness on the earth. The process of Isaiah 9:5-6, the never-ending increase of His government, has begun again on the earth.

Thirdly, it is obvious that the authors do not have eyes to see the freedom and range of choices continually before us every day. All day long we can choose to go to His throne of grace (Heb 4:14-16), since we have a high priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses, or we can choose to do our own will in how we react to one another, to our children, to the people we meet. We are always called to bear the fruits of the Spirit.

Fourthly, the Old Covenant, whose vision of the dignity and freedom of man the proponents of thought control decisively reject, takes total acquiescence to God's word as normative (remembering as well, that the Law was itself the most sweeping piece of social legislation in antiquity):

I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So *choose life* in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your GOD, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him" (Dt 30:19-20).

**62-5 How much should a person be willing to "give up" for the sake of belonging to what someone else has determined is God's "only" kingdom on earth.**

Everyone has to make that decision based upon what he hears. Some people hear that *everything* means everything.<sup>61</sup> If not everything, then how much? Where do you draw the line and of what value is Messiah to you? What does His word mean to you? It depends on what you see His kingdom to be — whether you see it to be a new social order on the earth or whether you see the kingdom of God to be something co-extensive

---

<sup>61</sup> Lk 14:31-33 and 18:22, Mk 10:29-30, Mt 19:21, Phil 3:7-9, etc.

with the culture of man (as Reinhold Niebuhr does). Is the church to be something that we are just hanging on in until Jesus comes back in some kind of mystical way?

We really do believe that Messiah came to establish a new social order.<sup>62</sup> He was the first born of a new creation (Col 1:18), so what is that new creation? What is the New Covenant priesthood? What is the holy nation, the *peculiar* people of 1 Peter 2:9? What does that mean? What context is that in and what kind of light, what kind of demonstration is that supposed to be to the world? It's really not what we want to give up, but it's what social order do we want to be in? What social order do we want to give our strength to? *Cultivating the Cursed Ground*<sup>63</sup> makes it really, really clear what we believe about that.

In summary, the reality is that a person will not give up one single thing to become part of *the kingdom* unless he himself has determined that it is *the only way*.

**63-1 In an attempt to answer these questions with regards to Messianic Communities, we will use as our basis for consideration certain criteria developed by R. J. Lifton and further elaborated by S. Hassan.**

First, this statement is misleading and deceptive. It presumes there was a search for the answers, when in reality, before they had any contact with us, they had come to these conclusions in detail (see page 3).<sup>64</sup> This is because these conclusions stem from their fundamental presuppositions about Christianity and the world, which has always regarded as heretical any exclusive groups which sought to purify themselves from the defilement of the world. In this context, the terms *mind control* and *brainwashing* are simply effective propaganda tools, especially when coupled with the word *cult*, much as *heresy* and *unorthodox* were in times past.

The criteria developed and applied by Lifton and Hassan, including the negative statements made about various groups and individuals in the *Analysis*, present an extremely large section of society as practicing unethical mind control, especially if their thinking is developed to its logical conclusions. To begin with, Mr. Lifton equates

---

<sup>62</sup> See the teaching, *The New Social Order*, taught in 1988.

<sup>63</sup> An article in several of our papers, including the *Stone* paper of the summer of 1994.

<sup>64</sup> There can also be seen the author's willingness to report, and hence to believe, unsubstantiated, slanderous reports of the Communities because they fit it with his general picture of *cults*.

*fundamentalism* with *totalism* by definition.<sup>65</sup> We hope the authors are honest enough to let their readers know this because it would enlighten them to Mr. Lifton's world view. Mr. Hassan calls Pentecostalism cultic,<sup>66</sup> as well as groups like Amway and Shaklee, where, "Housewives attend 'psych-up rallies' so they can recruit friends and neighbors into a pyramid sales organization."<sup>67</sup> Included also are diverse political groups which have offended his *church*, the now-bankrupt *Cult Awareness Network*,<sup>68</sup> as well as everyone else on their hit lists. This is not to mention such commercial cults as door-to-door sales companies, groups which advertise glamorous travel and benefits but which prove to supply difficult and often menial work (like the US Army, I suppose). The listings in these three sources are really extensive. For instance, Benny Hinn, the featured speaker at the nationally televised *Washington for Jesus, 96*, is called "highly controlling" in the *Analysis*, along with Kenneth Copeland. There are many millions within the ranks of American Christianity who qualify — many. Christianity is truly a house divided against itself.

**63-4 This [totalistic and destructive behavior control] we have observed not only personally, but also in helping those who leave the Community.**

This goes against their own words in the Introduction:

We have spent many hours with these people and have always thoroughly enjoyed those times. They are, without exception, truly wonderful people who evidence a level of commitment, hospitality, and love that we do not encounter in many other groups we have worked with.<sup>69</sup>

It also contradicts their words to us — part of the reason we trusted them enough to continue our relationship with them — of August 9, 1994, in their letter to Mr.

Wiseman:

---

<sup>65</sup> See the *The Future of Immortality and Other Essays for a Nuclear Age*, by Lifton, the introductory pages.

<sup>66</sup> See *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, by Steven Hassan, pages 174-175, where he explicitly equates speaking in tongues with cult behavior and control.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, page 35.

<sup>68</sup> Recently found guilty of violating the civil rights of one Jason Scott by attempting to deprogram him, a member of a Pentecostal Church in the state of Washington, to the tune of 4.8 million dollars. (In various media reports, I forgot to write down the reference. — Racham)

<sup>69</sup> *Analysis*, page iii.

First, we were impressed with the love and care that was evident between the many parents and children that we watched. We came expecting to possibly observe a systematic rigidity or abuse of children because of what we had in the media from years ago. We observed just the opposite. We saw a casual, loving familiarity that did not evidence a fearful child, nor a child who was anxious to please an excessively strict or abusive parent to win their love. The children obviously loved their parents and vice versa. The discipline was consistent, loving and firm, and the children readily responded to this. My associate has twenty years experience of working with parents and children in both a teaching and counseling capacity. Her assessment was that the children were very well adjusted and developmentally appropriate for their age group.

There are other places in the *Analysis* which read the same way. Mr. Pardon and Ms. Barba deny the things they saw with their own eyes and voluntarily committed to paper. Perhaps it would be better to deny the conclusions they came to after talking to ex-members who are carrying a grudge against the Communities and reading the teachings in the light of such prejudicial views.

**64-0** "It was clear when our Master prayed ... He was creating an environment for His people to be in – the Edah." *Saving our Soul*, 11/8/92, p. 4-5.

**Thus the overall general environment of the Community is praised for its isolation from the world.**

In place of the ellipsis should be the words, "to His Father in John 17," which points to the kind of environment our Master died to establish, a place of love and unity.

The quote from the teaching *Saving our Soul* is no different in spirit than 2 Cor 6:14 - 7:1. This is the believer's "Emancipation Proclamation." By the authority of God's word we exclude corrupting influences from our midst, voluntarily and gratefully. If we were not distinct from the moral corruption of the world and its lust (2 Pet 1:4), truly there would be nothing for the anti-cult movement, in either its Christian or secular arms, to talk about. We also would and could not ever be the Kingdom of God.

How, though, are we isolated at our cafes, on our crews, going to home shows to sell our crafts, walking (evangelistically), going on *Grateful Dead* tours with that bus, taking walks with our children and to pray, going out shopping, hiking, etc.? This comment in the *Analysis* which, in its spirit of presenting a fearful leader wanting to

close his people off from human contact with the *world*, has no bearing on the Community's actual life. This can be seen by simple observation at any of our Communities, which the authors themselves have made.

**64-2 Dress is very tightly regulated in the Communities. All men must wear their hair in short ponytails with a long, trimmed beard... In any religious meeting the women are required to wear a head covering...**

There is a lot of variation within the Community. It would be honest of the authors if they would compare the variety in our manner of dress to the Amish, to such organizations as the Armed Services, Boy Scouts, postal service, UPS, IBM, or even the dress codes of high schools in the '50s and early '60s.

We do have a common understanding about what modest dress is and about headcovering (1 Cor 11:3-8). It's revelation that we've chosen to believe. We've also chosen that we want to have our own culture. We are a new social order. We are a royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9), so we dress and wear our hair in a way that is appropriate to our priesthood. We want to find out what pleases Him (1 Jn 3:22), and we have come to see that our God is actually concerned about our whole being — even to our clothing, hair, and beards.

A priest would never “cut the corners of his head” so as to crop or tuft his hair on the sides, even because of the death of his most cherished loved one (Dt 14:1-2; Lev 10:6; 21:10), following the customs of the nations. At the most he would only let his hair *hang loose* — which shows that he always had it tied back during regular times, or somehow *bound* to the head. We prefer to tie it back neatly, keeping it neither long nor short, but only trimming it. *Only trimming* means you never let it grow long, nor does it become too short. This is what *only trimming* means in Ezekiel 44:20. It is never too long or too short, but only like the hair of those who have heard from YHWH of Hosts about the hair of a priest (Lev 19:27).<sup>70</sup> We want to be a distinct, set-apart (holy) nation of priests. We choose to live this way, for if we lose our distinction, we become common — just like the rest of the world.

---

<sup>70</sup> This is drawn from a passage in the teaching, *Concerning Hair*, which the *Analysis* quotes on page 64, paragraph 4. But for some reason they omit the principle supporting scripture reference, Eze 44:20. Why?

**64-2 No deviation would be tolerated from these guidelines.**

This is not true. What we do is based on revelation. People are encouraged not to do anything that they do not have revelation of. If people came forward and said, “I don’t have any revelation of this; I’m going to wear this, that, or the other thing,” we would treat them the same way we treated Nitsan, Qatan’s father-in-law. He didn’t have any revelation about why we wear our beards as natural as possible, so he decided he would continue doing what he had done before baptism, until he had understanding. We shared our hearts with him, the revelation we had, answering his questions, being patient. In time he understood and he too had revelation. Then he started wearing a full beard, not before.

**64-7 Food restrictions are also tightly regulated. This is not only true in regards to what a member can eat but even his enjoyment of food and fast he eats.**

What is seen as regulation is received by us as necessary encouragement to have self-control. The point of the quotes is how any kind of selfish desire alienates you from your fellow human beings. So much so that Paul calls some people’s belly “their God” (Phil 3:19).

There are a lot of people, all these years after this teaching, who still eat fast in the Community. They don’t have much revelation about it. They are not excommunicated. They are not taken away from the table. A lot of these things that are said like this are things that we need to see if we can see. Eventually as we go along, we will see. It is really true that eating is the highest form of fellowship. Eating is centered on fellowship and this is what we teach. We say that a person should not eat for pleasure because it is greed. It’s referring to people who have a *spirit* about fine dining.

We are not taught that we should not enjoy what we eat or that we should not see eating as enjoyable. This is not what we teach. It is greedy to eat fast. It’s greedy to not consider others. That’s what we believe. If there are people in the Community who don’t believe that, we don’t kick them out. We bear with them.

The authors might have realized this from reading the teachings they quoted. It seems that they took pains to remove any sentences from the quotations that didn’t fit

their view of what we teach, as this one which is replaced by the ellipsis in the *Sexuality* quotation on page 65, paragraph 1:

Eating is social intercourse, a social event where you extend the conversation as long as possible, eating slowly, *enjoying your food* (emphasis added).

**65-3 The regulation of where one lives is also a given in the Communities life...**

The statement from the *Reasoning* teaching has to do with where people live and it means that we should be willing to go where we are sent and come when we are called. Imagine when Nehemiah came back to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and he thought the enemy was planning to attack, and he blew the trumpet and said, "Go over there and build the wall." Do you think his men at that point were reasoning with him as to why he wanted them to go over there and build?

It doesn't mean that there is not room for legitimate conversation and discussion and factors about one's family and their needs, etc. But it's that if our heart is toward what we are doing and we have revelation of what we are building, then we won't have any qualms about coming when we're called and going where we are sent. This is what we have always taught that a disciple does. We have vision for what we are doing. We are committed about the life we live and the Kingdom we're building.

It is still the same as in Dt 20. We teach that if you have something better to do, then go back. This is a foundational teaching from what Joshua told the children of Israel. If you're going to be in this army, you are going to come when you're called and go where you're sent because you have revelation about what you're doing and you are absolutely convicted by your faith about it. That's the foundation of what the authors mistakenly call, "controlling where people live."

**65-4 "...no matter how good you may do in the flesh, you cannot go past that rebellion."**

Just one more sentence further after the end of the quote would have revealed the essence of the *Reasoning* teaching:

If all His commands must pass through our reasoning, we are still operating under a satanic principle, *setting oneself up on an equal place to God*. Christianity says Lk 14:33 only means that you have to be willing to give up everything, but

that is reasoning, a satanic principle.

The issue of Lk 14:33 gives the clearest example in the Scriptures, the verse more than any other where Christianity is clearly shown to be in thrall to the same voice as deceived Eve:

Has God said, “You shall give up all your own possessions to be His disciple?”  
(See Gen 3:1)

**65-5 Their explanation might be, “We are creating an environment ...**

This is another example of the overwhelming tendency of the authors to take issue not with what we do or say, but with what they *imagine* that we do or say. This “quotation” is neither a theological nor a sociological analysis of our Community — it is merely fiction.

We are not trying to make an environment. We are obeying the word of God and the things that we do and the way that we live is supported by the word of God. We do believe that God is restoring all things, that he is restoring the gospel. We know these things have to happen or heaven is going to keep on holding onto Yahshua and this world is going to go on and on, and it doesn’t deserve to (Acts 3:19-21). It is so corrupt. We do believe that we should be living in a way that hastens the return of Yahshua (2 Pet 3:11-12). We do believe that elders are chosen. It better be by the leading of the Holy Spirit, and sometimes it isn’t. Such elders are taken out of their positions when they prove not to have grace. Elders are there to guide and direct the people. They do know what is best for the people and when they make mistakes they are called to account.

**66-1 Nothing, essentially, can be done without permission. Numerous ex-members have told us of the need to have the “covering” ... to pursue some task outside of the community.**

We love and respect authority, whose purpose is to shepherd our souls and cause us to grow up into Messiah, into the Head (Eph 4:11-16). Every individual is expected to grow up and take initiative in the areas where he functions. In doing so he is expected to be led by the Holy Spirit. Here are some examples in teachings:

Phil 1:9,10 — We have to use our fullest potential. That's why we have to cry out to our Father to get in there and restore it and use it.<sup>71</sup>

The final objective of child training is not to control a child, but to teach him what is right so that he will control himself. Teaching provides the explanation for rules for which the child then becomes accountable. What the parent teaches the child ranges from manners to morality. The test will be in how the child behaves in conformity with his instructions. The well-trained child will learn to accept his parents' standards... As he grows older he develops internal controls — which replace the need for his parents' external controls.<sup>72</sup>

Many other examples could be cited.

**66-f6** At one point Edwards very insightfully writes, "Dear Ken, ... you've come from a movement that taught people to 'consult your covering.' Now, how did anyone get that out of Scripture? ... I do not need to tell you that it is always easier to have someone else announce what the will of God is for your life than it is for you to find it on your own."

Edwards merely shows he has no understanding of authority. One simple verse is Heb 13:17 — that we are commanded to obey our leaders. What does that mean? How much do you obey them? Does it say to obey your leaders every now and then, when you want to, when it's convenient for you? It's not just that someone else announces what the will of God is for your life, but there is a confirmation that comes in your heart because you have agreement in the Spirit.

What about Eph 4:1-6, which says that we are to make every effort to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace? How do you do that when you're going off on your own and you don't even know whether your brothers have a concern about what you're doing? How do you obey Eph 4 according to what Gene Edwards says in this quote and according to what the *Analysis* says. If what we teach and practice about covering is a horrific concept of totalism, then ultimately the Bible itself will have to be thrown out.

The real issue is the whether we want to walk the way our Master walked. That is where our concept of authority comes from — His relationship with our Father. That is how we want to be, not doing anything on our own initiative — the way He was (1 Jn 2:4-6). See also our response to 62-5, page 89.

---

<sup>71</sup> *Loving to our Fullest Potential*, 23 March 1995, page 2.

<sup>72</sup> *Control and Training*, 12 June 1990, page 23.

**66-2 One ex-member told us that three sheets of toilet paper were all that was allowed at one bathroom visit...**

Hakam explained this at length to Mr. Pardon. We don't understand why he uses this as an example of behavior control instead of understanding our desire to be frugal. We labored to explain that "three sheets" is not a law, but a standard that helps us to consider how wasteful we may be and the enormous expense of things we take for granted — like toilet paper.

If the authors keep this point in their *Analysis*, given what we've made clear to them, it will be further evidence of their agenda to present us in a light that will make a name for themselves, and lack of integrity in leading us to believe that they want to present our life as it really is.

**66-2 Along this line, bowel movements are also regulated.**

This is seemingly deliberately insulting language, saying bowel movements are *regulated* when the notes are talking about respecting our fellow man who may happen to walk in the woods after us.

The actual teaching of October 3, 1989, page 8, says:

Note Dt 23:12,13 for the sake of verse 14. He sees everything, even how we deal with our bowel movements. He moves about in the camp, let Him not see anything that would turn Him away from you. What intimacy He has with us. This is how we must be with our children.

However, the full import of what is written is only seen in light of the Word of God:

You shall also have a place outside the camp and go out there, and you shall have a spade among your tools, and it shall be when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and shall turn to cover up your excrement. (Dt 23:12,13)

The reason for this is found in the next verse:

Since the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to defeat your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy; and He must not see anything indecent among you lest He turn away from you. (Dt 23:14)

We see His heart in these verses. We are glad He is so intimately concerned with us. We no longer want to be Gentiles in our hearts. We teach that the God of Creation is

not separate and opposed to the God of Redemption. The Son loved the Father and His word and did not come so we could ignore the word and the Spirit He loved (Mt 5:17-19). This teaching has nothing to do with the *regulation* of bowel movements, it has to do with the holiness we are to maintain before our God at all times and in all things. It has to do with the sightly and sanitary disposal of waste in situations where there is no indoor plumbing; hiking or traveling where there are no facilities.

The NEIRR's *Analysis* does not evidence even an attempt to understand what the Spirit is saying. Mind control seems to be "proven" by our even being concerned about such matters. Moses would certainly have been viewed as a cult leader by these standards. The Boy Scouts of America would also be considered *cultish*, considering these directives in the Boy Scout Handbook:

Find a secluded spot at least 200 feet (75 steps or more) from water, camp, and trails. Use your heel or a camp shovel to dig a shallow hole no more than 6 inches deep ... [use] *small amounts of toilet paper*. After you have used it, fill the cat hole with soil and replace any ground cover. Push a stick into the ground to warn others against digging in the same spot... always wash your hands when you are done.<sup>73</sup>

**67-1 Numerous times we have been told that permission has to be sought to receive medical care. In one instance, a member who had suffered for years under a particular imbalance and was taking medication for this condition, was encouraged to lay that medication aside. It was believed that if she exercised enough faith they would be healed. It wasn't until their life was in jeopardy that they were then given permission to take the medication once again.**

This reference to Joellen Griffin and her thyroid medicine is not true. Neither she nor Roger can honestly say that they were told they had to get permission to use the medicine that she was taking. This is just not true. Everyone has to judge his own conscience and stand on his own faith (Rom 14:22). We do teach Jms 5:14-15, however, concerning calling for the elders, and we do take note of the thing held against King Asa by our God (2 Chr 16:12). To do any less is to take away from faith and to ignore and subvert the full purpose and council of God (Acts 20:27).

---

<sup>73</sup> Robert C. Birkby, *Boy Scout Handbook*, 10th Edition (1990), chapter 2, page 50.

**67-2 It is also the case that the average member has to get permission to call outside the Community.**

We do, from time to time, limit outside personal phone calls because of the enormous expense. We try to inform the members of our households of our financial situation so that each person can learn to be sensitive. We live *together*, therefore we must learn to communicate with one another. If we are in a hard place financially, we may ask people to check before they make toll calls, but this is not done to hinder contact with the “outside world.”

Also, there are other considerations in “being covered” about making phone calls. Each household sets up its policy and everyone chooses to abide by that policy. The standards are different from one community to the next. Sometimes it depends upon the financial situation.

**67-2 Permission to see someone on the outside, even a parent, is also necessary.**

For us, checking with the shepherds has to do with wanting to know what our Father’s will is, and consulting with your spiritual leaders because you trust them. The Proverbs are full of the concept of taking counsel; there is wisdom in many counselors (Pr 15:22). So we take counsel. We don’t seek permission, we take counsel. This is how things get distorted. Permission is not what we teach. It’s always concerning taking counsel; being covered means you took counsel with your brothers or your sisters and there is the peace of the Holy Spirit about what we are doing. This is the spirit of everything we teach about authority. We’ll be submissive to each other according to Eph 5:21, out of reverence to Messiah in each other.

The only time we discourage communication with particular members of families is when it is obvious that family members do not respect their adult child’s (or sibling’s) choice to be in the Community. We do not expect them to agree with it, or move in, but we do expect *respect*. The history we have had with the vicious crime of kidnapping has caused us to have a caution here we wouldn’t otherwise have.<sup>74</sup> That is why our standard is one of respect for the free choice of the child or sibling living in the Community. This

---

<sup>74</sup> See Appendices B and C, the testimonies of Neilsen and Westbrooks.

was carefully explained by Hakam to Mr. Pardon before the *Analysis* was written in regards to Michele Caprio, a young disciple from the Community in Hyannis whose parents had sought out the assistance of the NEIRR.

To sum up, our personal experience and what we have observed in the Community is entirely consistent with what the officers of the NEIRR witnessed with their own eyes:

We also observed that family members outside the Community were encouraged to visit or call at any time. A parent even called while we were there, and we overheard other members speak of visiting relatives in other parts of the country.<sup>75</sup>

Evidently our explanation with regards to Michele, and the authors own eyewitness observations, have been ignored in favor of the NEIRR's doctrine of mind control and the poisonous lies of ex-members. This is condemned by their own authority: "This sterile language reflects another characteristic feature of ideological totalism: *the subordination of human experience to the claims of doctrine.*"<sup>76</sup>

**67-3 The vast decision making power of the leadership is also consistent with extreme behavior control. This control is absolute and equated with God's authority.**

We do give weight to the greater grace of the elders who have greater wisdom. If they are just up there in a position and they're not exercising wisdom and not exercising leadership qualities, then the fruit will be obvious and they are going to be asked to step down. This is something that the *Analysis* does not bring out.

Sometimes when the elders counsel with someone to be cautious what they do with their parents or advise them if they think it would be better not to go see them or things of that nature, the "child" in the Community ends up putting it on the elders. Instead of standing on their own faith, they say, "The elders don't want me to, or the elders don't think I should." A lot of times it's because they are intimidated by their parents from their past relationships with them, but sometimes they do not agree with their leaders. They do things out of principle. But whose fault is that? We teach the

---

<sup>75</sup> Letter of August 9, 1994 to Hakam.

<sup>76</sup> Lifton, *Thought Reform*, page 430 (emphasis added).

obedience of faith (Rom 1:5).<sup>77</sup> They put it on the elders because they don't have the honest relationship they need with their parents in order to be real. This is the sociological nature of our life and these are the things we have to address all the time.

We find people from one end of the spectrum to the other on how they relate to their parents, but really the intent of the elders is to give them wise counsel, not to control them. We don't want to "talk" anybody into being "saved," because we would have to talk them into everything else they would ever do. We want people to see who Yahshua is right from the start, as much as they can, and do the things they do out of the conviction they have. Every individual has to decide in his own heart what he wants to do.

Should we throw out the whole idea of authority because some people are afraid of authority, or they don't realize that they have room to speak? Or should we throw out the concept of elders because some of the elders did need to increase? Should we throw the whole concept out or should we work through these things?

As the Body of Messiah we won't divide over these things because we sense in our heart what the truth is and what faith is teaching us. We can sense what the word of God and the spirit of God is teaching us. How should we be on this? Should we go ahead and divide like the Christians do or should we stay together and work through things until we come to the absolute truth, to the reality of what our God wants in our lives?

It is true that if you have a problem with authority then you have problem with God. It is *not* true that if you have a problem with someone in authority who is not displaying the spiritual attributes of a leader, that you necessarily have a problem with God. But it is really true that the problems in the leaders bring out the rebellion in the people. They forget, they lose their communion with the Spirit that teaches them to abide (1 Jn 2:27) and work through these things because of the vision we have of what

---

<sup>77</sup> "Paul said in Rom 1:5 that grace and apostleship was given to him to bring about the obedience of the faith among the Gentiles. He first mentions grace. There are different types of obedience. There is the obedience of faith and the obedience of the law or obeying out of principle, so you won't get into trouble and whatever could motivate you to obey. To obey according to the law doesn't require you to surrender. It is done in your own strength for your own glory. It is not acceptable because it is not done by faith and grace. In 1 Cor 3:10, Paul cautions the Corinthians and all those who have his Lord (1 Cor 1:2) to be

the Body of Messiah should be and of the grace that is available to us. We can't throw out authority. God does nothing apart from His authority. What is quoted there from the *Elders and Deacons* teaching is absolutely true if we have our Father's choice of elders. This has to be clear. Such an elder does not have to defend his authority. Those elders who do defend their authority in the Community probably aren't elders. We also teach that.

The *Analysis* only presents one side of the issue of authority. We *should* stand on the side of authority always. If we divorce ourselves from authority in order to save our own life (Mt 16:25), we violate our Father's heart. This is true, absolutely true. God hates divorce (Mal 2:16) and the breaking of a covenant. We have to help each other to come into the mind of Messiah and to grow up into the head. It takes a total effort on the part of the Body in order for there not to become this division between the clergy and laity that God hates — the deeds of the Nicolaitans (Rev 2:6,15).

**68-2 Individualism that in any way is contrary to the group identity and its authority, whether intentional or not, is also discouraged. This takes on many subtle forms.**

If we had been asked us about these things we could have said that the reason the brothers in Brazil did not have a good conscience about this man in Brazil (Zaccai) is the violence he had shown in the past. The connotation that we were watching everyone is not true. For the sake of our women and children we cannot tolerate people with violent tendencies. If they can't resolutely come to an end of their sin, they have to leave. It can't be any other way.

**68-6 This emphasis on conforming to the "Body" also prevents the average member from challenging the leadership at any level. Thus the leadership is effectively insulated from any criticism. The non-conforming member of the "Body" is cut off.**

It is our belief and our practice that these people are to find an outlet somewhere. We say that if you're not received in your local community then you always have a place where you can be heard; that has been taught from the very beginning. The *Analysis* itself portrays a different picture:

---

careful how they build. He wanted them to build with the obedience of faith and not any other obedience."

Regional meetings are held every couple of weeks or once a month, depending upon the need, where the Apostolic Workers deal with pertinent issues. Anyone who has something important to contribute can go if they are sent by the household. They can approach their household and make the request to attend the meeting.<sup>78</sup>

People also write letters and make phone calls constantly to their friends and these apostolic workers about problems they are having a hard time finding peace about in their own community. Hakam gets letters all the time. Many leaders get letters. Yoneq gets letters from individual people in the Body about the apostolic workers. It's just not true that the leadership is effectively insulated from any criticism. That has happened sometimes with individual leaders, but that is certainly not what we teach or practice. Defensiveness in certain leaders has caused them and their families suffering. We really work against that. It's not that a non-conforming member of the Body is cut off. All things are considered.

We find out what the story is if there are extenuating circumstances as to why people act the way they do. Many, many times we find that there are extenuating circumstances and people are not cut off. The only reason people are cut off is because they really are in rebellion against the word of God<sup>79</sup> — not just because they don't conform or they don't understand.

Life and government in such a complex thing as an interconnected, international community of faith cannot be fathomed by looking at the bare words on a teaching typed out on a page. It requires a depth of sensitivity and compassion to even begin to comprehend how things work, unless one is content to classify human beings and their relationships in terms of mere doctrinal insights.

---

(From *The Fall of the First Church*, taught April 9, 1995, page 26)

<sup>78</sup> *Analysis*, page 12.

<sup>79</sup> This was even seen in the story of the man who had seemingly obviously broken the Sabbath in Numbers 15: “and they took him into custody because it had not been declared what should be done to him” (Num 15:34). The word instructs us by both precept and example to consider every side of an incident or problem, and judge with righteous judgment.

**68-6 [in the realm of an isolated leadership] “Let’s don’t ever be around someone who speaks about a brother, especially a prophet. God Himself says, ‘Do no harm to my prophets.’ 1 Chr 16:22 If we speak against a brother God will hand us right over to temptation and you sin a sin unto death.” The Ten Commandments/Sowing Discord/Priesthood, 4/8/94, page 3**

This is a twice-repeated injunction in the Scriptures, here and in Ps 105:15. The prophets in the Old Covenant spoke the very word of God to lead, correct, and encourage, even deliver God’s people. In the New Covenant their words are primarily seen in light of 1 Cor 14:1-5, of encouraging, consoling, and exhorting.<sup>80</sup> Prophecy is the spiritual gift believers are to especially earnestly desire. Prophets are the first rank<sup>81</sup> of co-workers under apostles in Eph 4:11-16 — essential in the raising up the Body of Messiah. The spirits of prophets are subjected to other prophets who observe their lives and listen to their words. If a prophet speaks and it is judged to be wrong, that prophet must repent publicly. We have seen this many times. But it is true that those outside the Body have no authority to judge anyone in the Body.

The absence of prophets and apostles in the Christian Church means Eph 4:15-16 can never come about in Christianity. Accordingly we value such brothers and their reputation, as the Word teaches us to value the reputation of all.

**69-0 There is no room for anyone to complain against anyone or anything in the Body ... We do not tolerate a faction ... They go to the second death, the lake of fire. Titus 3:10-11. Breaking of Bread, 2/24/96, page 1**

It is true that we don’t tolerate people who accuse the Body. There is a difference between accusing and people who are complaining all the time. You can look in 1 Cor 10. The children of Israel complained all the time. What did God do to them? Who is that written for? It was written for us, whom the end of the ages have fallen. We have to take that into consideration in our social life. There isn’t room for that. There is room for instruction, for correction, there is room for criticism, but *not* complaint. There is room for constructive criticism, but not to take it to the point of being factious and dividing and accusing. Titus 3:10-11 is the word of God and it is clear about factious people and accusers of the brethren. Such conduct reflects the nature of the evil one (Rev 12:10).

---

<sup>80</sup> Acts 15:32, although other, more prophetic roles (in the sense of foretelling the future) are seen as well, Acts 11:27,28.

<sup>81</sup> Also 1 Cor 12:28.

**69-2** "Just like our physical bodies have many parts, all the parts of the Body are working in coordination to build up the Kingdom. If you're not here to build up the Kingdom then go – leave! Don't hold everyone else back. We'll even give you bus fare to leave." (Seeking First His Kingdom/Washings/The Narrow Road, 4/1/94, page 2 )

It is logically impossible for us to be both encouraging the insincere to leave, as we have done since the beginning of our communities,<sup>82</sup> and at the same time trying so hard to keep people here that we eavesdrop on their conversations,<sup>83</sup> etc. (Dt 20:1-8). These contradictory accusations represent a breakdown in simple logic which is indicative of an ideologically-dominated attack on the Messianic Communities. We would like the NEIRR to explain their inconsistencies.

**69-2** In order to enforce this kind of conformity there is great encouragement to inform on others who have negative thoughts or who voice such things. This is even encouraged at a young age.

Eph 5:11 states, "And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them." We don't want corruption to flourish. In many of the Sociological criticisms leveled at the Communities, the authors of the *Analysis* betray either an ignorance of the Scriptures, or an antipathy to them.

The implicit criticism of informing on others fails to take into account the reality of the human condition today. We have to learn how to take a stand and how to teach our children to follow our example. If our children do not develop this inner sense of right and wrong, of proper and improper behavior on the part of others, they will be prey to the many perverts who dwell in society today, some of whom may don sheep's garments to deceitfully gain access to the untainted children of the Community:

If the child does not come to you when someone wants them to do something ungodly then you have lost your child. That is what Adam and Eve did and they had to leave the garden. They disobeyed their father and obeyed Satan. Let them understand by Adam and Eve's example why they had to go out into the world. They should fear going out into the world where Satan would rule over them (1 Jn 5:19, Eph 2:1-3) and cause their death. Anyone trying to make you do something bad is not your friend. They hate you really. They might act like they

---

<sup>82</sup> From the *Oak Reader*, pages 44, 46, "In the beginning of our community our Father went to great lengths to put us on a good foundation... One of the brothers came and talked to us one day, telling us to pray that all the insincere people would leave and that all the disciples would remain. So we began to pray with all our hearts." And the insincere left and the disciples remained.

<sup>83</sup> As implied in the *Analysis*, page 67, paragraph 2.

like you but they hate you and want you to die. The child will come immediately to the parents on the first instance. (Child molesters will come in over the wall.) Anyone who touches one of your children to cause them to stumble it would be better if they had a millstone around their neck; there is no forgiveness (Gen 2:15-17). The stumbling part of doing something sexually to a child is that it will never leave them. Twenty years later they will remember since it is in their conscience. We cannot have a hint of sexual immorality among us. Eph 5:2-3 is how we and our children will be. *We must be prepared.*<sup>84</sup>

**69-6** “Like when a child is foolish, the other children are to shun him. If they don’t avoid the foolish child, they are just as foolish as he is. That is why the one can defile the many. They are to shun him.” (Members of Messiah, 4/15/90, page 22)

We do teach our children about the unchanging law of God. Lev 5:1 says:

Now if a person sins, after he hears a public adjuration to testify, when he is a witness, whether he has seen or otherwise known, *if he does not tell it*, then he will bear his guilt” (emphasis added).

We teach them proverbs like:

He who is a partner with a thief hates his own life; he hears the oath but tells nothing. (Pr 29:24)

Do not be envious of evil men, *nor desire to be with them*; for their minds devise violence, and their lips talk of trouble.” (Pr 24:1-2, emphasis added)

These things are the word of God. These are just two of many such proverbs: Pr 23:20-21; 1:10-19; 2:11ff; 3:31; 4:14-17; 5:8-14; 6:23-26; 7:5, 24-25.

A fuller quote of the *Members of Messiah* teaching reveals why we want our children to shun those who do evil:

Like when a child is foolish, the other children are to shun him. If they don’t avoid the foolish child, they are just as foolish as he is. That is why the one can defile the many. They are to shun him. If you don’t tell an adult, you participate in his sin. You don’t talk to a fool.<sup>85</sup> That is the only act of love you can do for him. That is what the Proverbs say.

We are just trying to teach them about true love. We want to positively affect their social behavior among one another. This teaching on Proverbs from October 3, 1989 puts it this way:

---

<sup>84</sup> *Our Children*, 23 January 1990, pages 9-10.

<sup>85</sup> Pr 14:7 — Leave the presence of a fool, or you will not discern words of knowledge.

We'll have to train our children to avoid certain aspects in their friends. It's good we can tell them, we do have authority, but it's better to use proverbs. They are like a picture that is framed in such a way that make a definite impression. They are remembered. We should show them the wisdom in Proverbs. Sometimes it takes a lot of inquiry on our part to understand them ourselves to be able to teach them this wisdom.

The authors of the *Analysis* relate things like this, "avoiding certain aspects in their friends," to tightly controlled conformity to community life. They miss both our heart and the true import of the Scriptures concerning these things to say what they do about the Proverbs. It also misses the fact that these things are taught to the children primarily by their parents — not *the Community*. It is true that, by the wisdom of the Proverbs especially, we do want to direct and control and guide the social behavior of our children so they can develop properly. This is our commission as parents. We deal with foolishness as the Word teaches us. We certainly didn't develop properly when we were growing up. There is a purpose for every word recorded in the Scriptures, and the purpose of these proverbs is so that foolishness will not spread through the community. Our Master put it as the capstone to His list in Mk 7:21-23.

**69-4** "Don't talk to those who don't rest as much as he can on the Sabbath. We need to keep the Sabbath by resting as much as we possibly can. Don't talk to people who don't rest on the Sabbath." (Breaking of Bread, 1/14/89, page 4)

What is meant about not talking to people who don't rest as much as you do is that we should not go and correct them. It means we should not go around pointing the finger. It comes from Isaiah 58:13, that we have to remove the pointing of the finger. It doesn't mean that you don't ever talk to them, but it means if they are up and working, violating the Sabbath, just don't enter in with them. Don't enter in with them about their talk about work or whatever it is that's not restful. We teach, *don't point the finger...*

**69-7** For those who leave because they do not conform to this tightly controlled community life, or the absolute authority of the elders, there must be some explanation to the "Body" that suppresses the real issues. Usually the explanation is simplistic and the offending party is held up derisively as an object to the "Body."

Whenever a person leaves, he breaks the covenant he made with our Master and with His people. The anointing teaches us to abide (1 Jn 2:27-28) and the Holy Spirit

gives us the power to maintain the unity of the Spirit (Eph 4:1-4). He also commands us to endure unjust suffering in the Body (1 Pet 2:18) and that if we do so, we will have the blessing of God. Love is perfected in unity, so we cannot obey our Master's command to love as He loved (Jn 13:34) if we leave one another. So one who leaves does so in most cases because of sin in his own life that he's not dealing with. We know this, so the "explanation" given when someone leaves addresses the real issue, causes us to examine ourselves and allows us to learn from how a particular person may have fallen. We hate the deeds of those who fall away (Ps 101:3). But that the person is held up derisively is a lie.

Sometimes a word of explanation was necessary in Paul's day to explain how some brothers had to be treated, as well why others left or had to be sent away. This would serve the purposes of instructing and putting a right fear in the flock of God he shepherded (Dt 13:11; 19:20, etc.). Paul wanted the whole church to know how to think about these difficult things. Here are some examples:

...keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regards to their faith. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme. (1 Tim 1:19-20)

Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching. (2 Tim 4:14-15)

The apostle John also exercised this authority in the churches:

I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does... (3 Jn 1:9-10)

Are these simplistic explanations that skirted the "real" issue? Whatever they were, they probably satisfied those who loved Paul and appreciated his great labors on their behalf as an apostle (1 Ths 5:12,13). The following verses illustrate the authority Paul wielded in the matter of sending members away:

And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. (2 Ths 3:14)

For I, on my part, though absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. In the name of

our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 5:3-5)

**70-1** "If a person went out from us – made preparations to leave, left, and never came back, 1 John 2:19 says that person never was a part of us; he never received the Holy Spirit... (Members of Messiah, 4/15/90, page 10)

It should be noted that the whole context of the *Members of Messiah* teaching was people leaving and how their desire to repent and return should be judged. What is quoted here is the real issue — that those who went out and never came back never were a part of us.

**70-3** [Concerning the lives of Zechariah Martin, James Howell, Michael Painter, and Bill Tiller, as reported in several teachings.]

The quote about Zechariah is absolutely true. That's the way he was in the Body. It was a good example to teach from, but is heaven cut off from Zechariah? Can he come back to the Community? Hakam's son visited him recently and was encouraged about the things he is seeing about the world. He has hope Zechariah will be able to repent.

All these things that are said about James Howell and people like him who claim to see, that their guilt remains forever, are true. Jn 9:39-41 will apply to them; that is, if they don't repent, they will perish. If they think that they can just go along in the things that they do in their life apart from the LIFE of Messiah, then they will perish. God has to decide about that in terms of what their ultimate destiny is. 2 Ths 1:8 — There's going to be retribution to those who don't obey the gospel. Are these people obeying the gospel right now? Or is retribution going to come upon them? What is retribution? We have to understand this. We can't just let go of these things as if God is going to turn his face the other way. It is really clear that people commit sins unto death (1 Jn 5:16). If you claim to see your guilt remains (Jn 9:39-41).

**70-7 The presumption of such statements is almost beyond belief. Such tight behavior control and manipulation ultimately evidences a tremendous lack of grace and love. The real message of such destructive manipulation is “conform or die.”**

This harsh statement on the part of the authors is evidence of their lack of understanding of the tremendous grace and love that was shown to these people for a very long period of time until *they* decided to leave. **THEY** decided to leave. They can decide to come back, and if they can repent, they can be forgiven and restored. The Body of Messiah is not like Christianity where a person can leave, go down the street and join somewhere else without any accountability for his actions. It’s really true — if we don’t repent, we will perish. It’s the word of God. We will either conform to Messiah or we’re going to perish. It has nothing to do with destructive manipulation. It is the word of God. Should we throw that out of the word of God? How about Paul, who made some strikingly strong statements, not just about people who left, but even in sending people away from the Community. Do his words evidence a tremendous lack of grace and love?

But actually I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler — not even to eat with such a one... Remove the wicked man from your midst. (1 Cor 5:10, 13b)

Again, the actual observation of our life should be trusted; it is in conformity with the high standard — as much as we can be now — which is recorded in the Scriptures, and which the authors saw with their own eyes as we freely let them talk with us:

Third we did not detect any excessive emotional control. This is not something that can be easily hid. We did not sense any manipulation of fear in order to control. The group did not appear to have any sense of paranoia (“people are out to get us”), or the outside world is persecuting us. We also did not detect any sense of terror or exaggerated fear of the leadership if one failed in their responsibilities or behavior. The Messianic Communities do have very high standards of behavior for all to live within, from the top leadership to the new member.<sup>86</sup>

**71-1 Steve Hassan defines information control in this way. “Information is the fuel we use to keep our minds working properly. Deny a person the information he requires to make sound judgments, and he will be incapable of doing so. People are trapped ... because they are not only denied access to critical information but also lack the properly functioning**

---

<sup>86</sup> From the August 9, 1994 letter to Hakam.

**internal mechanisms to process it. Such information control has a dramatic and devastating effect.**

The *Leveling* pamphlet gives a good idea of the effect of being glutted with information — nothing:

Talk to any average individual in our society and you will find him to be a man of much diverse knowledge. By reading his daily newspapers, weekly periodicals, and *National Geographic*, along with watching the morning talk shows, the nightly news broadcasts, various “Specials,” plus hourly radio news reports, he has amassed a wealth of facts and figures (not to mention, a strong opinion about most every controversial question of the day). On most any contemporary subject he will be “full of sound and fury,” but as Shakespeare so aptly put it, it all “signifies nothing.” Though he is a product of years of media consumption, he will eventually die, stuffed full of it, deceived into thinking that he himself has lived a full life. Every bit of his own passion and potential were cleverly drained from him through devices ranging from comic books in childhood to complex documentaries in old age, leaving him worthless as far as accomplishing anything real and concrete. He is active in abstraction but passive in reality.<sup>87</sup>

As a community, our favorite sources of information are the spiritual people who comprise the Community and who have the Holy Spirit, because each of us can judge and is accountable for what we pass on, however we have received it. This is how we received faith — by hearing (Rom 10:14-17). The spiritual are those who have enough spiritual power to abide, to remain in Him and to preserve the work of the Spirit in the bond of peace. All others are disqualified and are themselves judged already. They have lost their privilege or right to judge those in the Body.

**71-3 The extent of information control first became evident to us when we visited the Community in Island Pond. During the course of our weekend with them we noticed there were no books, no magazines, no television and no radio.**

Concerning the Community in Island Pond, when the authors visited there they never said anything about information control or how it became evident to them during the course of their visit. Nor did they say anything about it in their letter of August 9, 1994, the whole tone of which was positive. In it they freely said they witnessed no or

---

<sup>87</sup> The *Leveling* article, appearing as a pamphlet and in several Freepapers, among them, the *Grateful to be Gathered* paper.

very little emotion, thought, or behavior control in Island Pond. It concludes with the words, “However, we believe our initial assessments are accurate and portray a general sense of what life is like within the Messianic Communities.”

People in the Community *choose* not to receive information from worldly books, magazines, television, or radio. It is a *conscious* choice. The Community is a group of individuals who have a free will to choose how they want to live. To us this is freedom — not information control.<sup>88</sup>

We do teach in our communities about the ninth commandment:

Pr 17:4. They all alike pay attention to wicked lips, in order to get a good story. The one who reads a newspaper is a liar for they also pay attention and give heed to its information reported as ‘fact’. Anyone who has a desire to read a newspaper has a desire to break God’s commandment. An evil spirit in them compels the one to pay attention to its perverted report. Not even the truth should be circulated to the detriment of a person, how much less a lie. What standard of judgment do you have to distinguish between the truth and a lie? A liar listens eagerly to a spiteful tongue, gives heed to a false witness.

To receive or reject a report reflecting upon the honor and character of any man without the most careful investigation is to be a lawbreaker whose reward is death. “For the wages of sin is death.” Sin is any violation of God’s law. A talebearer excuses himself by saying there was no intention to deceive and that the rumor was believed to be correct.<sup>89</sup>

We do not desire to control what people read and do. Not only is it impossible, it is oppressive. It does not bring anyone to the place of self-judgment that every member of the Body of Messiah will need to come to in order to fulfill 2 Cor 10:5-6 and Heb 10:13. Apart from bringing about Mt 24:14 we have no purpose in living. We have taught this from the beginning. We are like the early church, living in hope of the *parousia*, the bodily return of Messiah for His bride.

**71-f11 It is difficult to convey in words the invective, the judgmental spirit, the harshness that permeates the very fabric of the hundreds of teachings of Spriggs...**

It would seem, then, that the best thing for the authors to do would be to present what we teach, in context, without editorial comment such as this, and let the reader see

---

<sup>88</sup> (I know that Bob and Judy know this is true. — Hakam)

<sup>89</sup> *Ninth Commandment*, undated.

for himself what sort of spirit permeates the teachings. This is what we have understood from the beginning was the intention in publishing the *Analysis*.

**72-0** What was astonishing was the obvious intellectual malaise that seemed to have settled in on these interviewees. The individual often had a hard time focusing their thoughts, vocabulary had become limited, thoughts and concepts very simplistic. Consequently, it was very surprising to hear them state they have been to college. This malaise became particularly evident when called upon to think outside Community lines. The mind is like a muscle, and without exercise it soon begins to atrophy.

The first thing that must be said is that the knowledge of who Bob Pardon and Judy Barba were had a considerable affect on everyone who spoke to them. Of necessity we had to tell them what kind of work the NEIRR engaged in, that they judged the faith of others. Further, we had to tell them that they had reported the Community in Hyannis for child abuse. Since we all knew the inner suffering the parents there faced for many long months at the prospect of *losing their children*, it was somewhat incongruous to hear good reports of the people who had turned them in on this false charge — because we had also told them about the August 9, 1994 letter.

Since these contrasting reports produced in us a peculiar tension and unease, surely it did so in others. It was like we wanted to be friendly, but there was a reserve in us we couldn't erase or deny. This is something the authors have never really faced up to with the Hyannis community, supposing a repentance to Hakam on a picnic in Island Pond was sufficient apart from facing the individuals they put through such unjust suffering.

So, in light of Rom 12:2, we would ask, what is the truth and what should we be conforming to? What kind of information should we be filling our minds with? What does it mean to be transformed by the renewing of your mind? How is our mind going to be renewed if the only information we take in is the same information we took in our whole life?<sup>90</sup>

**72-2** Another reason for the control of information is the concern of the leadership regarding standard histories of the world, fictional and non-fictional works, etc. Since the true

---

<sup>90</sup> The ideal Mr. Hassan explicitly expresses many times is that of just living in the world, as much like everybody else as possible. How awful!

**church has not existed for 1900 years there has also been no anointed people of God. This has colored all the writings, analyses, music, poetry, artistic expressions, etc...**

We do not say and we certainly do not act as if there is nothing worth while to learn from the people who do and have followed their conscience. We are reluctant to learn from those who have violated it. We play music from people not under the anointing, including the folk music the authors have themselves listened to in our cafe in Boston. We learn all kinds of things about farming, gardening, midwifery, etc. from people not under the anointing. The statements in the *Analysis* in this area are really made from silence, that is, presuming to know what goes on in our communities. However, there is an even greater void when it comes to understanding the heart of our teachings.

We have learned things about government from people not under the anointing, because they are men of conscience. We have the Holy Spirit and we can tell the difference. We have to be able to do what Jer 15:19 says — extract the precious from the vile. We came out of a vile society and we have to be able to distinguish between the precious and the vile. We can make use of the world. We do make use of it, but we don't make full use of it. This applies to every aspect of our life (1 Cor 7:31).

**73-4 One ex-member told me that part of his "awakening" occurred during his time in the Community when he began to read Animal Farm, by George Orwell, a book he said he smuggled into his room. He said this book hit him "like a ton of bricks" because it revealed exactly what had occurred to the Communities. They very thing they hated in Christianity they had become.**

For the sake of the gospel, in order to write articles about the search for true community, many of us read the book *Utopia*. But, it is obvious this person had a bad conscience about what he did because he smuggled the book into his room.

One of the primary problems with statements made from silence are that they are readily disprovable either by simple observation,<sup>91</sup> or by testimony to the contrary. Racham read *Animal Farm* to his history class two years ago. They were a group of children aged 12-16, most of whom had already gone through a panoramic and often in-depth tour of American History which took four years to do. He chose to read them

---

<sup>91</sup> The authors of the *Analysis* have consistently disregarded their own observations of our life.

*Animal Farm* because of its telling illustrations of life in a totalitarian regime, and its rich use of metaphor. The children remember the lessons of totalitarianism quite well because of it, and it became the way most of them have categorized the things they were taught about the rise and nature of the totalitarian states of the twentieth century.

It is interesting that no one thought the Community in any way resembled totalitarian regimes. In fact, we condemn communism morally for forced sharing, a perversion of the Gospel where one voluntarily gives what he has out of the love of God in his heart. This love compels him to meet his brother's need. And unlike communism, we teach that one is free, just like the Son of God was, to take up our lives again, and live for ourselves (Mt 6:31-33).

**73, f18 This kind of information control has always been a dimension of closed, elitist communal systems.**

That may be, but it is curious the authors of the *Analysis* leave out the single most powerful, long lasting, and consistent attempt at the “voluntary” internal censorship of a religious group — the proscribed list of books, and now movies, of the Roman Catholic Church. We wonder why such an obvious example would be left out. It is because the authors are afraid of offending the Catholics by comparing them to such people? Is it because the Catholic Church is their spiritual mother and they don't want to offend her?

**74-1 In reading history, Church history is one of the worst things that a member of the Community can be exposed to.**

**"It is a proverb among us that whoever studies Church History will go off." Literature Meeting, 3/5/92, page 8.**

For those who put their trust in church history, it is quite likely they will go off in their understanding. This comment was made in regards to the New Covenant Apostolic Order — they studied church history and they arrived at the Eastern Orthodox Church in the third century as the standard of biblical orthodoxy. They went off. It is true that we can't rely on studies of church history. We have to gain understanding of the Word of God so that we can obey it with revelation. This is what will keep us from going off.

**74-3** This [going off because of studying church history] is because Messianic Communities is dependent upon a carefully reconstructed scenario of the early church. The issue of the Sabbath, living in community, giving up all material possessions to the Communities, and how these doctrines were “lost” in the life of the early Church are not supported by the early Church fathers and historians.

How shall we look at the Church fathers, then? Like Martin Luther perhaps?

When God’s Word is by the Fathers expounded, construed, and glossed, then, in my judgment, it is even as when one strains milk through a coal-sack, which must needs spoil and make the milk black; God’s Word of itself is pure, clean, bright and clear; but, through the doctrines, books, and writings of the Fathers, it is darkened, falsified, and spoiled.<sup>92</sup>

In fact, we find things of value in their writings, like the *Didache*, but we would stand in evangelically good company to disregard them.

Considering the whole sweep of church history there is no truth whatsoever to the statement that studying church history will cause us to go off by revealing things contrary to the anointing we have received — far from it. One would go off in his moral nature by trying to imagine, and then to internalize as true, that this great, often bloody, often hypocritical, and usually divided entity known as Christianity is what Messiah died for. This would ruin a man’s moral sensibilities and blind him to the truth about murder, justice, and respect for the rights and beliefs of others every man instinctively knows in his conscience, unless he suppresses it. One disciple, David Roth, on hearing about this report in some detail, asked, “Why would anyone want to defend Christianity?” At his father’s house in New Jersey are pictures of relatives, European Jews, whom he has never met. They did not survive the Holocaust.

**74-3** ...the historical events have been altered to fit the theological bent of the particular Communities’ doctrine (the issue of the Sabbath being thrown out as a legitimate practice as the “Council of Laodicea” in 334 AD.)”

See response to 58-4 on page 81.

---

<sup>92</sup> *Table Talk*, p. 281.

**74-4 It is fallen human nature ("the knowledge of good and evil") that compels one to seek information not provided by the "anointing", or to question the truth of that information.**

The section of the *Sent Ones* teaching quoted on page 74 of the *Analysis* in support of this statement is not to be found in the original. As such, it is problematic for us, at best, to try to say what went into someone's notes and why. It would be best if the authors feel they need teaching support for their conclusions that they find it somewhere else in the interests of fairness.

This statement is incredibly broad, and the reader is left with no guidelines as to what information, and from where, and about what, is being referred to. The scope of knowledge since the Fall is pretty vast. If the authors are implying their conclusion refers to all human knowledge, it is an inaccurate conclusion. As a matter of fact, nature books, how-to books, etc., are freely obtained and wisely used.

In reference to things which the Scriptures teach, are we to let teachers into the Body whose life we do not know, who come from we know not where, in defiance of 2 Jn 7-11? Reading what an author says uncritically is inviting him into the inner rooms of your mind. This is just as much a violation of 2 John as having him come and teach in your community. Unless a teacher bring the doctrine of the supremacy of love confessing that He, the God who is love,<sup>93</sup> came in the flesh, we will not receive him as an authoritative teacher in any fashion. We do, however, believe there are brothers in our midst in many realms who can discern the precious from the vile, and with discretion bring knowledge into the Communities. We want to keep this a pure and wholesome environment.

The fallenness of human nature in relationship to the restless quest for knowledge men have had was seen and condemned in the early communities. Paul connected with other unrestrained passions:

For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the faith. But they will not make further progress; for their

---

<sup>93</sup> It is curious it does not say God is doctrine in 1 Jn 4:8.

folly will be obvious to all, as also that of those two came to be. (2 Timothy 3:6-9)

We are quite content to walk in Paul's footsteps, down the same path he praised Timothy for, as he writes in the verses immediately following the above:

But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me! (2 Tim 3:9-10)

**75-0 The average member would most likely not receive "permission" to purchase, or borrow from a local library, books on history, novels, "Christian" literature, the current Newsweek or Time magazine, etc.**

This is another statement made from silence, based on the conclusions the authors have had about us for several years, and is presumptuous in the extreme. This is just not true. People go to libraries occasionally. Nobody is looking over their shoulder. They are responsible for what they read, they are responsible for what they give their children and the fruit of it in every way. The same goes for all the other mediums of communication mentioned here. Everyone has to judge the things that bear good fruit in their lives, or whether they rob them of time which could be more profitably be spent with their families, etc. As parents our primary responsibility in our child's education is found in passages such as Dt 6:4-7, 4:9, Eph 6:4, 2 Tim 2:5, etc. We all have to grow up into the head of the Body, who is Messiah, and learn what pleases Him (Eph 5:10).

**75-1 Thought control is the third component of a totalistic environment, an environment where all aspects of a person's exterior and interior worlds are controlled and manipulated.**

The conclusions come to in the "Thought Control" section of the *Analysis* stand in stark contrast to what the authors actually observed in our midst:

Second, we did not observe any degree of thought or behavior control that could not be found in other religious communities, be it Catholic, Hutterite, Amish, etc. People could freely express their opinions, and there almost seemed to prevail a "democratic" form of government. We thought it was important that you were careful to let any perspective members know "up front" what was required of those who joined the Messianic Communities. This was one thing we were careful to ascertain in the many informal interviews we conducted with various members. In every instance we found that people joined of their own free will and

were not coerced.<sup>94</sup>

The openness we have shown you “Christians” stands as a witness against your conclusions, as does the personal openness, the family closeness and warmth, the compassion and loyalty shown to weaker members.

Since the report states several times the leadership does not do such things (practice these various aspects of mind control) intentionally, but that they result inevitably from Yoneq’s teachings, the only way to stop doing these terrible things is to throw out Yoneq’s teachings, and Yoneq himself. That is the voice the early Church heeded as they challenged and then silenced, by ignoring, the voices of the true apostles. You can see this in several passages like 1 Cor 4:2-5; 2 Cor 7:2, 10:7-12, 13:3-6.

**75-1 Thought control often involves thoroughly internalizing the group’s doctrine, accepting a new language system, and using certain techniques to “center” one’s thoughts on that which the group defines acceptable.**

Disciples of Yahshua have come under the spell of God. This *God-spell* or *gospel* we have received has opened the eyes of our hearts as well as illuminating our minds to understand. It is from revelation that we *choose* to internalize the teachings in the spirit that we heard from the beginning. This Spirit leads us to love and unity and a good conscience. Thought control is a foreign concept to any disciple who is being transformed by the renewing of his mind (Rom 12:1-2).

**75-3 “Reason, the faculty of mind that causes you to think practically ...”**

Since this quote is from someone’s private notes, and not from the teaching of November 18, 1990, which we have, and since the handwritten notes appear to come from throughout the teaching, making it difficult for us to place them in their original context, we shall deal with salient points from the original teaching, rather than this quote.

From the original teaching:

Is reason good or bad?

---

<sup>94</sup> Letter of August 9, 1994 to Hakam after visiting the Island Pond Community.

In Dan 4:36 Nebuchadnezzar came back to reasoning. It returned to him. Before he was like an animal and now the faculty of his mind by which he could think like a human being returned to him. Man has to have reasoning.

We teach that everything you do should come from a conscious choice. That choice has to be based on how we hear. And how we are filled and led by the Holy Spirit. How we hear the spirit in our own heart. That effects our mind. Our mind is illuminated by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. It's all based on that. We encourage people to think. But we must all learn to base our reasoning from the renewing of our minds that comes from the sanctifying work of the Spirit and not from fallen, natural thinking that is the fruit of living under the curse of sin.

Isa 1:16-20 — “Come now, let us reason rightly together.” It says *now* because perhaps man did not reason rightly before this (verses preceding verse 18), but now he could — with God. Mk 11:31 speaks about a reasoning. In Mk 2:6 they were reasoning in their hearts. In verse 8 they reasoned within themselves. Our Master perceived in His own spirit that they reasoned within themselves and so asked them why they did it.<sup>95</sup>

The above quotes would be a much more accurate way to present the *Reasoning* teaching than the notes the *Analysis* does. The teaching is not hard to grasp, and it is not offensive to faith. The spirit it is spoken in is just like the words of our Master in John 14, “If you love me you will obey me.” Like the gospel of John in 3:36, it contains the warnings of what happens to those who don't obey. Jn 8:51 is of vital importance to every true believer who never wants to taste death. The thought process of a man has to be judged as to whether it leads him to obedience or else to disobedience.

The example in the teaching in Mark 2 is very telling.

And immediately Yahshua, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, “Why are you reasoning about these things in your heart? (Mk 2:8)

*That way* of reasoning (described in Mk 2:5-7) needs to be exposed, or we may find ourselves in the seat of the Scribes, questioning the authority of the Son of God in the most fundamental matters of His gospel.<sup>96</sup> This possibility is what the *Reasoning*

---

<sup>95</sup> *Reasoning* teaching, page 1.

<sup>96</sup> Like whether he meant what He said in Lk 14:31-33, for instance.

teaching inveighs against — not the reasoning process itself, because that process of questioning God is ingrained in man from the fall of the human race:

Reasoning *can be* a satanic principle. *Satan reasoned*. He *thought* he could be greater than the Most High.<sup>97</sup> And the first sin of man is that Satan made Eve reason. She reasoned that the fruit was good for food, so why would her Father not want her to have it ... *reasoning*.<sup>98</sup>

We have to learn to reason rightly. Our lives depend on it, entering the Kingdom depends on it because those who reason away the will of the Father in heaven will not enter, Mt 7:21-23. This is what the *Reasoning* teaching is talking about. It is not hard to see:

Reasoning is earthly wisdom. Our parents taught us to reason wrong. We must teach our children to reason right. We must train our children to reason properly. Hence, actually our reason *can* be properly oriented. The gospel is not earthly wisdom (1 Cor 1:18). The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but we have learned not to reason away the gospel and the commandments because it is the power of God to us who are being saved.<sup>99</sup>

**75-f20** Flowers also have no brain, and birds have no will power. However, Spriggs point is that they live completely under authority and so also should human beings as an antidote to reasoning. Of course this is submission to the authority of the leaders of the Messianic Communities, the only focus of God's anointing on the earth. It is interesting how Spriggs takes this famous figure of speech from the Sermon on the Mount ("consider the birds and the flowers...") and uses it in a fashion foreign to its original usage. Its intent was to convey, in context, a life lived in utter dependence upon God to supply the necessities of life. Spriggs uses it to shore up his concept of authority and refute "reason."

It is also interesting how the quote of the teaching in the footnote truncates enough to obscure what it was actually saying (everything after the hyphen was not included):

To live by reason is so complicated. Consider the birds and flowers how simply they live. The more we subject ourselves to authority, the simpler our lives become and the more our offspring will be full of grace. The flowers and birds do not have reasoning. We have to live like them — as if our flesh was crucified. Our Master says, *If you obey Me you will never die* (Jn 8:51). If you obey Me you will never be separated from Me; you will always be near to Me.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> Isaiah 14:13,14

<sup>98</sup> *Reasoning* teaching, page 2.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, page 2.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, page 11a.

The part of the teaching right before this dealt with the inability of parents to expect their children to obey them, if they, the parents, are not obeying the Word of God. In worldly terms, it is like a parent who drinks telling their child not to do so because its bad for them. The example drowns out the wisdom of the counsel. In the same way, the example of Messiah, for those who are of the faith, can, by His grace, outweigh the powerful voice of reason in our lives which seeks to preserve our comfort, our pleasure, ourselves, even at the cost of our lives (Mt 16:25). The teaching says this about Yahshua: “Our Master submitted Himself to His Father’s authority (Jn 5:19, 6:38, 8:28, 12:49,50), never questioned, only obeyed.”<sup>101</sup>

This is the way we must walk, or finally be proven to be liars who only claim to know Him (1 Jn 2:4-6). It is the flesh in us, which must be put to death, just as Paul says, “for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom 8:13). And if there are other places where God’s true anointing is on the earth today, we know one thing, they will teach the disciples to obey *all* the commands of our Master. They won’t reason them away.

**76-1** Even though reason may initially be defined as a “faculty ... that causes you to think practically,” which is a positive statement, there is very little *if anything* said about the positive use of reason. Rather there is a steady diet of the evils of using the mind’s critical faculties.

We train our children to reason rightly. We don’t just let them reason, but we train them how to reason. So it is in the Body of Messiah that if we can reason rightly, we can think according to the mind of Messiah that Paul speaks of 1 Cor 2:10-16, and our minds can be renewed and our thought processes can be healed. We cannot think and use our brain to its fullest capacity if we are limited and stifled by the reasoning that insists on walking by sight and not by faith (2 Cor 5:7). *This is what the Reasoning Teaching is talking about, walking by our fallen human reasoning and so judging the word of God instead of letting it judge and guide us.*

---

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, page 11a.

The spirit of *reasoning* allows us to disobey the word, like Eve did in the beginning, and receive that thought in our heart, which then dominates our thinking, “Did God really say that?” This is the attitude of so many towards what are called the “hard sayings” of Yahshua. It is not that we don’t use reasoning as the *Analysis* so relentlessly and inaccurately says. We don’t say that. Our reasoning can lead us to submit to authority. Very solid, sound reasoning can lead us to surrender our life to Messiah. This surrender is not based on no reasoning whatsoever — it is not blind faith with no use of the thought processes. That is not what our God is looking for. It is not what will endure. It is the *conscious* choice to surrender that brings glory to Him.

So, just like many “higher criticisms” of the Scriptures have fallen by the academic wayside with new archeological discoveries, so many conclusions come to in the *Analysis* are simply statements made in ignorance of the richness of both our life and our teachings. For instance, here are some of the things we do teach regarding reason and the mind:

Without understanding Proverbs they will not understand anything. Proverbs teach conceptualization. They are one of the main teaching and training devices of Israel. Pr 1:1-6. You can see the essentiality of Proverbs. The Proverbs are a device given to obtain the mind of Messiah along with the rest of the Scriptures. But Proverbs are essential. Math, history, etc., are no good unless they know Proverbs. The Word says that Proverbs give prudence and wisdom to the simple.

The purpose of the teacher is to awaken the spiritual and mental aspects of a child and to serve the mental and moral education of youth and further instruction of the mature. Proverbs mentally awaken you. They awaken your mental powers and that awakening goes on to spiritual also and moral. It helps you understand a figure, metaphor, parable, allegory.

We want to awaken the knowledge of the truth in our children. We want them to know who they are, where they came from and where they are going. To know their purpose for living and acquire all the skills needed to accomplish that purpose.<sup>102</sup>

The following excerpt from a teaching explains the complex human thought process by which one reaches a conclusion:

(Strong's 7919) To be wise, behave wisely, be instructed, to wisely consider, to be prudent and intelligent. “Sachal” is the word that describes the complex, intelligent thinking process that occurs when one observes, ponders, reasons,

---

<sup>102</sup> *Training Meeting*, 5 September 1989, pages 1, 2.

learns and reaches a conclusion. The word is sometimes used as “prosper.” 1 Kings 2:3 — David urged Solomon to be obedient to God’s instructions so that he could prosper — literally “do wise” in everything he undertook. A derivative of Sachal is “Maschil” which means to give instruction — to make wise and skillful. Jer 3:15 is a promise. Isa 49:17 is also a promise.<sup>103</sup>

A teaching explaining the purpose of parables teaches the ability of the mind to perceive the truth:

... a parable’s message is found by letting the metaphor stimulate the imagination is a *new* way. Parables do not obscure the truth but present the truth in a new way.<sup>104</sup>

From the Educational Statement of the Community in Island Pond:

With this foundation firmly laid we begin an accelerated education between the ages of 5 and 12. Taking full advantage of their natural curiosity and love of learning, we seek to establish mastery of reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic skills by the time of adolescence, where we are just beginning to develop an apprenticeship program.

There are no failures in the Community — no one flunks out — but all are encouraged to fulfill their potential, not as isolated individuals, for the sake of their own worth, but as integral parts of the Community because each one does have worth. For this reason “academic” training is only a portion of the whole education of each child. Much more is taken into account, according to the child’s need. Some may be “early bloomers” in one area and “late bloomers” in another. One may progress rapidly, gaining a foundation in math and language skills at an early age, while another may seem to lag behind. We see to it that both will get to where they are going (full maturity) if they progress at the pace which is appropriate to their individual needs and gifts.

From the *Literature Meeting Notes*, which the authors of the *Analysis* had in their possession, come the following:

Imagination is neutral — you can use it either way. We can’t see what lies ahead without imagination... (page 4)

We don’t discipline our children for the use of imagination. We do, however, correct them when they leave reality and go off into another realm — into fantasy. We lead them back into reality. This is right reasoning versus reasoning to get out of your discipline. (page 4)

---

<sup>103</sup> *Refractory Disciple*, February 22, 1995, page 3.

<sup>104</sup> *Parables, Allegory, and Metaphor*.

Most Scripture is plainly written. There are only a few places, like Yacob getting the blessing ahead of Esau, that are vivid. Generally, you need to use your imagination to see the story to be able to bond to it and so internalize it. (page 5)

There are three main types of questions teachers and parents can use to develop their children's ability to understand and form concepts (i.e., to think):

1. Questions whose answers come right from the text or the facts of a situation.
2. Questions whose answers require deduction or reasoning from the facts presented either in the text or in the situation you are dealing with.
3. Questions that cause you to draw conclusions from what you have read or what you have done.

Questions from the third category are the least favorite for the children in training — and even the second makes them insecure ("I can't find the answer," they say) — but the third type are by far the most valuable. Without developing that ability, then education has largely been in vain. This is precisely where proverbs fit in because proverbs teach concepts. Without concepts there can be no self-judgment. We will need proverbs till the day we die. The forming of concepts allows us to unite our experience — past, present, and what we will encounter — with what we have been taught. Our children need this critical ability and as Qatan put it, "It is never too late to be stimulated." (page 17)

If we didn't have the ability to think critically, we would have no way to come to any kind of rational understand of the word of God. It is obvious from the above quotes that mindless, robotic obedience is not what we teach. We love the positive use of reasoning.

**76-2 Christianity is the "Great Satan" of Messianic Communities. Thus it is consistent that Christianity is at least one of the major sources of "reasoning."**

We don't teach that Christianity is the "Great Satan." We teach that Christianity is the Harlot of Revelation 18. It's true that Christianity has reasoned away many essential things in the Bible. This is why there is so much confusion in her ranks. She has the nature of babel — confusion — hence she is called the *Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth*. Much of the theological section of the *Analysis* itself was devoted to misrepresenting what we believe and arrogantly flaunting Mr. Pardon's Calvinistic theology as "the standard" of orthodoxy. This comes out clearly in the areas of what the Word says about the nations, the judgments, the kingdom, possessions, etc.

**76-5 The point is that a prior understanding of Christian doctrine is a corrupting influence upon the life and spirit of a new convert to Messianic Communities.**

It is true when it says the harlot has corrupted the whole world (Rev 18:23). It's pretty clear that Christian doctrine is a corrupting influence on the life and spirit of anyone. Not just new converts to Messianic Communities but to everyone. That's what we believe. It has corrupted and confused so many people that within Christianity it is okay to be a homosexual. There is so much division in the Christian church over their doctrines that it speaks for itself.

**76-7 Such reasoning is a "work of the flesh" and evidence of great spiritual darkness. It is ultimately the height of pride to "reason." So the communities teach:**

We say what we say about works of the flesh and spiritual darkness because of the fruit that it produces. That's what the Word teaches. Those who know Him live and walk in the light of His love. They have crucified the flesh with its reasonings of the flesh.

**76-8 If you live according to reason, you have your mind on the flesh which results in death (Rom 5:8)... Those who know him live and walk in the light of His love; they have crucified the flesh with its reasoning of the flesh....To reason is to walk in darkness.**

This severely-abridged quotation from *Reasoning* (11/18/90), p. 12, is a clear indication that the authors are not merely ignorant of what we believe regarding the improper use of reason, but are deliberately suppressing it. The unabridged passage is clearly not forbidding rational thought, but contrasting fleshly reasoning (which argues against the Word of God) with obedience to God:

*Only the obedient know Him. If you live according to reason, you have your mind on the flesh which results in death (Rom 5:8) To live in obedience is to keep your mind on the Spirit and have life and peace. Those who do that do not argue or complain. Those who know him live and walk in the light of His love; they have crucified the flesh with its reasoning of the flesh. Reason is judged by the light. We cannot say we know Him and walk in darkness. To reason is to walk in darkness. To reason with God's words means that God needs our consent for what He does (1 Jn 1:6; 2:4).*

77-3 Since such reasoning is sinful and contrary to the "anointing", finally leading to being cut off and spiritual death, it is critical to control the use of reason. Spriggs teaches:

"We are to know Him with an undivided — loyal — heart. Let nothing come in. Don't let thoughts come in like unclean birds, such thoughts are Satan's messengers." (No Cause for Stumbling, 7/18/94, page 3)

The whole context of the teaching is:

1 Chr 28:9 — Eternal life is a relationship with our Master. (We can only have a relationship with Him on His terms — Mark 8 and Mark 10 and Luke 14 — total surrender.) Verse 8 — Be careful to seek out all the commandments of the Lord your God. Verse 9 — We are to know Him and serve Him with an undivided — loyal — heart. Let nothing come in. Don't let thoughts come in like unclean birds; such thoughts are Satan's messengers. Christianity is full of these unclean birds, that is what Rev 18:2 says. They flew in over the wall.

We don't want to *control* the use of reason but we want to understand reason in the light of God's Word. So we can only teach what the Word of God says, as it says in 1 Chr 28:8 and 9:

So now, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek after all the commandments of the Lord your God in order that you may possess the good land and bequeath it to your sons after you forever. As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.

This is how we are to know him with and undivided, loyal heart, and it does no one any good to know Him any other way because He searches everyone's heart. He knows whether they are willing to do His will or not, and His eyes are looking to and from on the earth to find those people and strengthen them (2 Chr 16:9). So we can't do or teach anything less, because that is the way He is and we love Him for being that way.

It is just like the teaching says, "Don't let those thoughts come in like an unclean bird, since those thoughts are Satan's messengers." The teaching is not even in the context of reasoning as it is put in the *Analysis*. It is dealing with doubts and accusations, just like the next quote of it on the same page shows.<sup>105</sup> Are we to entertain doubt? How

---

<sup>105</sup> The *Analysis* got the page number wrong — it is on page 1; there is no page 5 in that teaching.

about accusation and other things that tear down? To do so is against the word of God, like 1 Tim 5:19 and Phil 4:6-8. We are to take every thought captive. Should Yoneq not teach the Word? (2 Cor 10:5,6)

Do the authors of the *Analysis* deny that thoughts come to you from spirits? That thoughts that come to you are not your thoughts as the quote of the *Thoughts* teaching says? If so, the authors must not know about the voice of the accuser. Again it should be noted that the *Thoughts* teaching is out of place in the author's discussion of reasoning. Should we listen to the condemning thoughts that come to us? (Rom 8:1 — So often the *Analysis*' criticism of the faith of the people in the communities seems to be urging us to disobey the Word. I can't understand why they are doing that. They must think the first Church was a mind controlling cult.) Someday the accuser will be cast down because there will no longer be any room for him (Rev 12:8,9). Right now he is before the throne of God accusing but he's also accusing believers night and day. Paul knew about these things. These teachings speak for themselves.

**77-7 A current member we have had contact with "hums" when they go out in the "world" or during conversations with loved ones not in the Communities who bring up disagreeable subjects.**

What are we to do with people who have slight mental problems and they come to us looking for God's home on earth? We take them into our homes. The *Analysis* is referring to one very new disciple, coming from a background of meditation, drugs, and following the *Grateful Dead*. But he makes it sound like this is what we teach — you get around somebody and they start saying things that are contrary to the anointing, just hum.<sup>106</sup> The definitive quote on the *hummites* is this:

Our criticism of the community sociologically would be as follows: first is our sense that, at times, the community has fallen prey to one of its own stated goals — to take in anyone. —Robert Pardon<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> (Somewhere between the years 1236 and 1254) "St. Louis advised his people not to discuss religion with Jews; "the layman," he told Joinville, "when he hears any speak ill of the Christian faith, should defend it not with words but with the sword, which he should thrust into the other's belly as far it will go." (*The Age of Faith*, by Will and Ariel Durant, Simon and Schuster, 1950, page 393) How many people would have been so pleased if the Christians had just hummed! How many lives would have been saved? Since we are regularly compared with the heretics, perhaps it is fair also to compare us with the "saints."

<sup>107</sup> August 9, 1994 letter to Hakam.

**77-7 This is another thought stopping technique that deadens reason, preventing any possibility of value judgments. But that is just the point according to the teaching of Spriggs. The solution to “reasonings” and being pleasing to God, is obedience.**

If this is *another*, what are the first ones? Since none are mentioned, the whole statement is barely anything more than slander. The teachings of the Messianic Communities do not have as their goal the ceasing of making value judgments. The solution to being pleasing to God, is however, obedience. Many verses to that effect have already been cited.

**78-6 “Jean Marc – If you trust in our Father you can put your foot on reasoning. I learned reasoning by day and by night. When I came here one day, I gave up my head. (He sighed with relief.)” Reasoning, 11/18/90, pages 18,19**

**This last comment by a relatively new member (Jean Marc does not yet have a new name) is most telling and disturbing. This is almost total abdication of one’s decision making power and responsibility to the “group mind.”**

It is not an abdication of one’s decision making power which is being described here. In fact he said, “I gave up my head” which means that he gave up his sovereignty over all his decisions — he gave up his inability to trust others. He gave up his decision to only trust what goes on in his own head. That is what he means by “giving up his head.” He surrenders to a higher authority which is our Master Yahshua. He chooses to submit to his brothers and sisters out of reverence to Messiah (Eph 5:21), and to consider what they say and make no decisions apart from the unity he has with his brothers. That’s a conscious decision.

Now he engages his mind in that direction, to be in unity, and he no longer disengages his mind to mindlessly follow someone else, or go off on some whim of his own. If he were to do this, he would be unfit for the Kingdom.<sup>108</sup> This is the epitome of the lack of understanding that the authors have concerning anything about the spirit and how the Holy Spirit works in individual people.

It is also an unfounded assumption that someone with a non-Hebrew name is a new member. There are disciples who have lived here for many years without receiving a new name.

**78-8 Emotion Control** This last aspect of mind control is the narrowing of a person's emotional responses.

Again, one of the most instructive comparisons we can make is what the authors saw with their own eyes and later understood after talking with people who left the Community and after reading the teachings:

Third we did not detect any excessive emotional control. This is not something that *can be easily hid*. We did not sense any manipulation of fear in order to control. The group did not appear to have any sense of paranoia ("people are out to get us"), or the outside world is persecuting us. We also did not detect any sense of terror or exaggerated fear of the leadership if one failed in their responsibilities or behavior. The Messianic Communities do have very high standards of behavior for all to live within, from the top leadership to the new member (emphasis added).

However, there appeared to be a great toleration of "weaker" members. This was particularly evident in the woman who came Friday evening to the Sabbath Celebration. It was obvious the woman had caused the Community problems in the past by her behavior and had been difficult to handle. Yet she was working through these interpersonal problems with the support of the community and not their coerced conformity.<sup>109</sup>

**78-8** There is a "prophet" amongst us, an "apostle," who has a direct pipeline to God. There is no longer the need to individually discern the will of the Lord. God now speaks directly through His "apostle" of the anointing.

This is not true. The individual has to discern the will of God. He has to have the same witness in his heart as what the anointing teaches or else he wouldn't be in agreement with it. The unity of 1 Cor 1:10 is deep. One heart and one way of Jer 32:38-41 and Acts 4:32 is deep. The Holy Spirit wants to reestablish Acts 4:32 on the earth in full measure. This takes what it did then, *all*. That is why each individual has to use the abilities of his or her spirit, soul, and mind to discern the will of God. We understand that the will of God can't be discerned apart from the unity with our brothers and sisters that comes from offering our bodies as one living sacrifice, morning and evening, and not conforming to the pattern of thinking of this present world (Rom 12:1-2). How can it be since apart from unity there is not even the blessing of eternal life (Ps 133)?

---

<sup>108</sup> Lk 9:62.

<sup>109</sup> From the August 9, 1994 letter to Hakam.

**78-8** Within this kind of climate there is usually the manipulation of two powerful emotions, fear and guilt, to keep people under control. The manipulation of these two emotions produces an intense compliance and conformity.

The manipulation of guilt and fear he talks about is nowhere to be found in the Community. It is not taught and it is not our experience. We teach that guilt is dealt with by confessing our sins (1 Jn 1:9). We teach that fear is dealt with by loving each other perfectly (1 Jn 4:18). Each individual is responsible to deal with guilt and fear in his own life. Some don't do this. Some live with a bad conscience and some hold onto their lives, not giving up their lives for their brothers and sisters. *Compliance* comes from guilt and *conformity* comes from fear. Many who left the Community are surely full of both. We are abiding because of the love of God in our hearts which casts out fear (1 Jn 4:18).

**79-2** **Redefinition** In this instance commonly understood "sins" are redefined and narrowed to the point where the member is perpetually in a state of transgression.

We do not teach that people are under a perpetual state of transgression. We teach that we ought to be constantly going to the throne of grace (Heb 4:14-16). He can sympathize with us. We would defile our gatherings if we were to come there in a perpetual state of transgression. Our spirit knows when our conscience is clouded. We teach that the Holy Spirit speaks to us with clarity, like it speaks of in Jer 23:29. It is the accusations of the evil one which debilitate and leave one in a discouraged state. They are vague and unclear, and do not require evidence or the proof of bad fruit. All that is necessary is to plant a thought in our minds.

So, we go to the throne of grace when we are being oppressed. We go when we need to confess our sins. The very first milk of a new disciple is 1 Jn 1:9. It says that if we confess our sins, he is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us and that is the absolute rock bed of our belief.

**79-3** "It is all right to have opinions, but never bring them across as if they were the mind unless you have the Amen of the Body." (Lack of Overweening Self-Confidence, undated, page 2)

That is what we teach right there. That nullifies so much of what is being said on all these pages of the *Analysis*. We do not say that every time someone expresses his own likes or dislikes, his own emotion or opinion, that he is *off*. It's all qualified in that last

sentence. It's all right to have opinions. It's all right to have likes and dislikes. We have all kinds of emotions and that's how we find out what the mind of the Body is because we talk about these things. We talk, talk, talk about these things (Mal 3:16; Eph 4:15). Satan is always trying to shut people down and get them to not talk to prevent us from coming to the mind of the Spirit in agreement by talking and expressing our hearts to one another. That's how we believe. That's how we come into the unity in the Spirit. This is how we treat one another, and this is how we listen to one another, as brothers and friends. We appreciate the distinct and wonderful qualities of each brother and sister. We have to or we wouldn't be able to live in such close proximity as we do.

However, the rest of the paragraph of the teaching (omitted by the authors) makes it even clearer what the teaching is talking about:

Be careful that you don't inject your own thought or overly stress your own opinion and expectation so that the facts are changed and it becomes a lie. This happens especially in the case of negativity or harshness.

The "average community member" would focus on this last statement, about the dangers of negativity or harshness presenting a false picture of a person or a situation. That is the focus of the teaching — not the bizarre thing the *Analysis* had made the teaching to be. It has to do with sound self judgment, not a guilt-ensnaring concept of lying.

**79-4** Rather, the truth is now determined by its conformity to the amen of the body...

Well, of course we trust the wisdom of the Body. That is why we are in it. We trust in many counselors. We come to an agreement. That agreement is in the Holy Spirit. That's what the Holy Spirit always brings us into. He does not function or dwell in discord because that is not His fruit (Gal 5:19-24). Sometimes we lack in our ability to hear from Him, therefore sometimes we make bad judgments. When we do, we repent.

**79-4** Thus, the member continuously carries the *burden* of potentially lying when they strongly express their opinion. This produces great fear of “lying” when an opinion is stated strongly, or having done so, dealing with the guilt such a “transgression” now creates. More than one ex-member, caught in this “catch-22,” told us they stopped being spontaneous and kept their opinions and true feelings to themselves.

This stuff about lying is unreal — about how the member carries the burden and potential of lying when he expresses his opinion. This is totally ridiculous. We are sensitive in our consciences to expressing strong opinions. You can tell by how your brother draws back and finds it hard to be in agreement with you.

It’s true that there are ex-members who stopped being spontaneous and kept their opinions and true feelings to themselves. They did this for all kinds of reasons — either they had a bad conscience about something, or they stopped confessing their sins, and so they became apathetic. It could have been that they were under a leader who really did shut them up and who really wasn’t listening and didn’t respond to what they expressed. This can happen in the Body. But it *is not* what we teach. It is not where we are going. It is not what the Holy Spirit in our midst is cooperating with.

**79-f22** Lacking a dictionary, how would anyone in Messianic Communities know the meaning of “overweening?”

The way the average community member would know what *overweening* meant would be to listen as the teaching was taught. *Overweening* is defined on the first page as:

Arrogant, presumptuous, immoderate, exaggerated: a person who comes in and takes over.

Yoneq often defines words in his teachings. We regularly use dictionaries to look up the meanings of words. Our children have dictionaries, many people have dictionaries. Our leaders and teachers use them and it inspires us to do so as well. We like new words. The criticism in this statement, if the word had not been defined in the teaching, is presumptuous. Since it was, the criticism seems to be a deliberate attempt to influence people about the Messianic Communities with a false picture of what we believe and how we, especially the leadership, behave.

**79-5 Pleasurable experiences are also redefined and narrowed to create a sense of guilt, shame and fear.**

**“Do we eat to live or live to eat? We have been trained wrongly. We must be restrained. (Phil 3:18) Overeating is a sin: an evil that kills us...”**

It is not true that pleasurable experiences are redefined to create guilt. It is just not true. Over-eating is not a pleasurable experience. *It is a sin*. Eating is a pleasurable experience, because of the food we eat, and hopefully the way it is prepared, the way it tastes, and the fellowship we have while eating. Eating is the highest form of fellowship. It means you are at peace with everyone present; there is no undercurrent between you and anyone else. *Bob, did you really experience people in Island Pond not enjoying the meal they shared with you?* If you deny the normalcy of what you saw and experienced, then the word — Pr 17:4 — proves you to be a liar.

**80-1 However, simply taking a second helping or enjoying dessert, now makes the Community member an “enemy of the cross of Messiah,” and causes them to “walk in darkness.” The fear of enjoying the taste of food, or the guilt of gaining a pound can be very controlling.**

Simply reading what is recorded of the teaching in the *Analysis* and the conclusions drawn from it would allow one to confidently assert the authors have missed the point in significant but predictable ways. For instance, there is no fear in enjoying the taste of food. The teaching does not say that; it speaks of overeating and of eating dessert for the pleasurable sensations when one is full already. This is the beginning of gluttony. So, we have to really judge ourselves as to whether we do or don't eat, just like we have to judge everything else.

But there is a deeper problem at work here in the quote of the teaching, pages 79-80 of the *Analysis*. It is one we have found in a good number of the “quotations” of the teachings and has to do with all that is left out in the ellipsis (the ...) which changes the whole picture when restored. Then one can have an understandable view of what problem the teaching is actually trying to help with. The spirit of the teaching is then transformed, when the excerpt is seen in its context, as having nothing to do with trying

to instill guilt in people or manipulate behavior. Of course people who consistently overeat should feel guilt — they are slowly killing themselves:<sup>110</sup>

Do we eat to live or live to eat? We have been trained wrongly. We must be restrained. (Phil 3:18) Overeating is a sin: an evil that kills us. We must stop short of being fully satisfied at meals. *Takes about one month to be restrained. Hunger — primitive instinct that triggers the body's need for food. Appetite is based on memory of past sensual experiences (eating pleasure stored in brain and the autonomic nervous system). We want certain foods rather than just food. Notion of appetite is particularly important for those who tend to overeat.* It is when our hunger is satisfied but we could still eat a little more that the taste of food becomes paramount in our decision to eat more or not. We only overeat something tasty. In doing this we become an enemy of the cross of Messiah (Phil 3:18) Second helpings. Eating dessert when hunger is satisfied. *Giving into this appetite leads to being overweight. Control your appetite and you will control your weight. If you cut down on sweets it will help a whole lot. (Eze 33:34; 1 Cor 10:13) We are walking in darkness if we gain weight.*” (This is the whole teaching.)

Yoneq is talking about practical and spiritual advice concerning what to expect when changing one's eating habits. A portion in accordance with actual need — instead of desire — will take about a month to feel right as the stomach slowly shrinks. Our stomachs accommodate our portions, and a large stomach does not feel satisfied until a large amount of food is in it. There are exceptions due to glandular problems and some deep-seated family type disorders, but most overweight people eat too much and too fatty of foods to ever lose weight, or keep it off when they do. This short teaching was meant to help people see the inner motives for their eating too much. If they could have this objective word in their conscience it would help them understand and judge the self-destructive desires at work in them. Such desires speak of idolatry, and this what Paul was getting at in Phil 3:18,19.

The setting of the quotation in the *Analysis* changed or twisted what it was trying to say. It is hard not to see (considering what was left out and what was said about what remained) this editing as deliberate — an intentional bearing of false witness. The conclusions come to in the *Analysis* are simply nonsense.

---

<sup>110</sup> Words in italics were left out of the quote in the *Analysis*.

**80-2 2) Guilt Most often within the Communities this is a guilt over past actions or the lack of conformity to the group and its leadership. It appears life in the Communities is one of guilt. This is because expectations are so high in every area of life that perfect compliance is impossible. Laboring under guilt, as an individual, begins when a person first becomes a member.**

Aside from the issue of the misquoted teaching which follows, there is a very real issue in the high expectations the authors correctly surmise we have in the Community. They are what has to be taught. We may fall short every day, but we go to our Father and confess the ways we fall short. We will not be perfect as He is perfect until we have glorified bodies, but we can be blameless. So we have to teach the high standards of love and unity our Master upheld in the New Covenant or we won't know when to confess our sins. We are guilty when we violate the word of God, no matter in how small a matter. Jn 8:51 includes everything our Master said — that's why He spoke the way He did in Mt 5:17-19 and Mt 28:19-20, because He knew we would taste death if we didn't see the importance of obedience. He sent His apostles so they could teach disciples how to obey His commands. Not even one jot or tittle is going to pass from the law, so we have to see it in the right light, or else it looks like we live under this incredible burden. But our burden is lifted because we've been forgiven for our sins and we can experience this forgiveness every day. Rom 2:11-12 applies to every man, and 2 Ths 1:8 apply to those who have heard the gospel and refused to obey it. He does not want to pour out His wrath on us — He wants us to walk in His ways. He came so we could be forgiven and become like Him, not so we could live like all the Gentiles.

In every way we can, Mt 5:48 is the standard we want to attain to. We can encourage someone with the same grace and warmth as Messiah could. This is the standard that we are attaining to. As the teaching says on page 4:

A person looking to *be loved* places an impossible burden upon others, for a person like that can never be pleased or satisfied... Our job and responsibility is to *love*, and not even to seek love *in return*, or we will still place an impossible demand upon others...How do we know love? What is its nature? How are we called to love? As our Master died on the cross. We are to be of this nature.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> *The Treasure of a Good Foundation*, page 4.

We need the Holy Spirit in order for this good foundation of unselfish love to be laid in our lives. What makes us thankful and full of praise is that we perpetually and constantly have access to the throne of grace to help us in our time of need. We can go boldly there, as Eph 3:12 also says. When we are tempted or when we fall we can go there and find forgiveness. It is not that we live in a perpetual state of guilt. *We wouldn't say these things if there wasn't a remedy in the blood of our Master Yahshua.* We point people to Him, to where we can be forgiven. It's through confession, according to 1 Jn 1:9, that we find forgiveness and *cleansing* and that's how our soul is cleansed and healed (Pr 28:13). It's the only way healing can come; it is His way. We have to know the standard, in order to know what to confess. Without that standard our lives *in fact* would be full of guilt.

The context of the quoted teaching, *The Treasure of a Good Foundation*, can be seen in this longer quote:<sup>112</sup>

Mt 5:21-22 ... One of the signs of anger is self-pity, hurt feelings (because of craving attention and not getting it as much as you think you ought to.) ... You sulk and pout and become resentful. This leads to another sin — *withdrawal*. We can't bring this sour disposition to the communion table or we will die.<sup>113</sup> When you find yourself getting into this trap it's time to take immediate action. The worst thing you can do in this situation is to attempt to avoid the issue altogether by crying on God's shoulder (*prayer — without thanksgiving*). For your benefit, because God loves you, He will not listen to you — your heart is condemning you. It is time to obey the Sovereign if you really love Him.

So, this teaching has nothing to do with when someone first becomes a member; it has to do with a self-centered immaturity which demands the attention of others and then, like an untrained child, gets angry when he doesn't get his way. This is the withdrawal the *Analysis* misleadingly speaks of. Since so many of us were raised to look at life this way, that others existed to meet our needs and give us pleasure, a teaching like this serves to raise our standards to what His love in our hearts will do (Rom 5:5).

---

<sup>112</sup> Words in italics were left out of the quote in the *Analysis*.

<sup>113</sup> 1 Cor 11:27-30.

**80-6 Only perfection in the member's relationships with others creates a "guilt free" zone in their life.**

This is a misrepresentation of our belief. It's not perfection in our relationship that creates a guilt-free zone, it's confessing our sins that makes us guilt free. If you confess your sins according to 1 Jn 1:9, you'll have wonderful fellowship with one another. It's fellowship, not perfection in relationships. Our life is in fellowship and this is what disciples are devoted to — fellowship (Acts 2:42), which means they are devoted to doing all they can to make sure the social life of the Community is full and satisfying. This is impossible without confessing our sins.

**80-6 And it is only this perfection that will allow the world to believe the "Father sent the Son."**

It's not perfection that allows the world to believe that the Father sent the Son. *It's love being perfected in unity.* They missed that very important word — love being *perfected*. This is critical.

**81-1 "Every reaction, every response must be perfect. For instance you go to the laundry room. It's your time to do laundry. Someone has just finished putting their clothes in the machines. There is so much opposition to reacting as Yahshua did. He always brought peace. There's no other way for the world to believe that the Father sent the Son..." Elders, Part II, 1/8/89, p. 16.**

The response being perfect means that our love is perfect. Love is what is perfected. The only way that our response can be perfect is if our love is perfect. We love the way He loved. That's what we are commanded to do (Mt 5:46,48).

**81-3 "Our houses are getting filthy. Everyone has a sexton who is working all the time to fix it up and keep it clean. If your house doesn't have a sexton don't go to work; just board up your windows and leave. Don't fool yourself — you are not part of the Body of Messiah if your house doesn't have a sexton." The Ten Commandments/Sowing Discord/Priesthood, 4/8/94, p. 3.**

This is in a particular context and it is coming against a particular problem. We have to understand that. If you have a house without a sexton it means you don't have any real discernment of the Body. It means you don't care about your house. You don't care about how it looks; you don't care about how people view Messiah — because all they have to see of Him is His Body on earth. It would be like being unkempt in your

appearance; it would mean you don't care about your own body. And the way we treat our houses physically has everything to do with the way we see and live spiritually. There is no way around it.

**81-4 Not being part of the Body of Messiah is tantamount to being outside the Kingdom of God.**

There are people who are in the Body who, if they continue on in a state of dullness, not caring about the Body, not forgiving their brother, lording it over him, etc., they are going to be outside the kingdom, the thousand year kingdom age. They won't be ruling and reigning. It does not mean they are going to damnation and the Sea of Fire.

**81-4 Ex-members told us that whenever the "apostle", Spriggs, came into town there would be a great amount of effort expended in fixing and cleaning everything.**

The communities that have done what those ex-members told about whenever Spriggs comes to town have gotten rebuked for doing it — really rebuked — because we have been instructed to keep our houses clean all the time, for the reasons listed above. Cleaning and fixing should be done when needed, not when the apostle comes to town. That is the wrong foundation to build on.

**81-5 Guilt also becomes a prominent experience group wide.**

**"Everyone who gathers together will have a song ...Breaking of Bread, 1/14/89"**

This statement is made in a context of a breaking of bread where there was dullness and silence. This was an exhortation to the Body. The scripture says that every member has a song (1 Cor 14:26). That is the word of God. When we gather together in the Holy Spirit, everyone has a song. If we gather and nobody has a song, what does it indicate? That is the context Yoneq was speaking in at that breaking of bread.

**81-7 "If a shepherd is depressed everyone is depressed. That is why a shepherd always has a light spirit, a receptive spirit. They do not have a heavy spirit. Shepherds are sober-minded [sic] but they do not have a heavy spirit. They encourage everyone." For Shepherds Only, undated, p. 1.**

Shepherds are trusted to keep watch over the flock, and they are expected to have encouragement for the sheep because they know where to find it, either at the throne,

that is, in prayer, or by being open about their needy condition with their fellow shepherds, their wife, a friend. They are shepherds because they are trusted to know where to find the grace they need, either for others or for themselves. They *do not* have to have it all themselves, but they are expected to know where their grace ends and where they need help. When elders have ignored these internal warnings in their conscience and their spirit, they and/or their flock have suffered. We trust elders to be open with their lives, otherwise they are incapable of being an example to others.

**81-9** Even a person's physical health can become an opportunity to use the emotional lever of guilt... Spriggs replied, "*He can't do this. He's got to set an example. Tell him to get down here. Everybody will be laying down.*"

Hakam himself has something to say about this report:

Either this ex-member is misquoting, misrepresenting, misunderstanding, or else Yoneq didn't understand what was told him about me because when he came up to see me, he was very compassionate about my condition. I know from my own personal experience during that time that I didn't feel that I had any guilt that I had this sickness. I didn't feel guilty and he didn't make me feel guilty. It is just not true.

Also, hepatitis has broken out only once.

**82, 1ff [Story of Hobab's repentance at the sacrifice.]**

In personal conversation with Hobab after giving him a copy of the May 19, 1994 notes which accompany the *Analysis*, he said,

Well, to tell you the truth, I didn't hear much of what was said. I left the Community a week later, and came back a few weeks after that. What I see out of it is that you shouldn't miss the sacrifice.

**83-5** 3) Fear This is another very powerful emotion that can be manipulated to bring people into line.

This is followed by quotes of several teachings. If we fail to obey His word we will taste death. It is His word, and you can count on it. If these quotes are the manipulation of people through fear then Yahshua and Paul did the same thing. (See also response to 17-5 on page 24.)

**84-1 This is a form of phobia indoctrination where a panic reaction can set in if the particular injunction is transgressed.**

As noted earlier, for such a strong reaction, and with such an encompassing array of things to have this reaction from — so many commands to transgress, etc. — it is more than a little odd the authors did not see it on their visits to the Community. Is this a particular kind of phobia that acts up when the person leaves the threatening community but is quiet in it?

Might it not be the devastation which occurs emotionally and spiritually in the lives of ex-members be a result of their own sin and guilt. We don't know how anybody could leave the communities with a sense of well being any more than anybody could leave a marriage with a sense of well being (see response to ii-2 on page 5). Why would they have good feelings about the group if they left? Why would they leave if they were in agreement with the life and the teachings of the group? The overwhelming majority of the people are happy in the Body, obeying the teachings, living in the Holy Spirit, confessing their sins, enjoying fellowship, working toward the purpose that our God has saved us for.

This is a fact which the authors do not wish to face, but prefer instead to construct on paper a fictional tale of oppression based on isolated “proof texts” wrenched from their context and edited so as to conform to the bias of the authors.

**84-3 Messianic Communities evidences all the classic traits of mind control...**

This conclusion is based upon the authors' misinterpretation of our beliefs and our practices. They *analyzed* us into the mold of a “mind-control cult.” If they had stated what *we* believe and not what they think we believe, the reader would have the opportunity to decide for himself.

**84-3 The devastation emotionally and spiritually that occurs in the lives of ex-members is heart wrenching...**

All the things he says he finds in these people he won't find in those who are abiding in the land. He won't find people feeling ripped apart from their families, incapable of functioning. In the words of the psalmist, “If I forget Jerusalem, may my

hands forget their skill and my tongue her speech” (Ps 137:5-6). This is normal; this is what true Israelites will feel. They can do nothing but hang their harps in Babylon.

Once again, we think that the authors should be careful and consult their colleagues and learn from the error of Ronald Enroth, in giving so much credence to the testimony of ex-members — two dozen unhappy ex-members versus two thousand happy current members.

## Conclusion

**85-1** “Those who have a critical eye must discipline themselves in this way so that they do not lie, by injecting their own opinions, standards, and expectations into what God is saying, especially about someone else’s life. Woe to those who mix man’s opinion with God’s word and man’s effort with God’s work.” *Lack of Overweening Self Confidence*, undated, p. 4.

To get the sense of the teaching as when it was taught (a good exegetical principle), the sentence preceding it in the teaching should be included:

We must respond in love, seeing the needs of others and seeing their heart, not in reaction against their faults.

**85-3** “Nobody decides to join a cult. They just prolong the decision to leave.” Source unknown.

Well, it may ultimately be unknown, but the source is Mr. Hassan’s book.

**85-5** “... some people have a psychological flaw to control.”

Yoneq does not have it in his nature to control everyone within his environment. This is the clear testimony of those who actually know and live with him. We don’t sense that from him at all, that he has some need to control us. On the contrary, we have always seen him giving tremendous amounts of liberty to people — more and more as time goes on.

**85-5** *Messianic Communities*, under the leadership of Spriggs, has tended towards an *extreme* authoritarianism.

The authors are not connected to the reality of our life if they can say that the Communities have tended towards an extreme authoritarianism. It is just not true. The very notion is antithetical to our belief and hope in Yahshua’s coming Kingdom. As we go on, responsibility is being shared by many more people, and Yoneq now functions kind

of like an advisor to people in government. He really doesn't tell them what to do. You can't get him to tell people in government what to do. He only makes suggestions because He knows God's government has to be raised up on the earth. One man is not the Kingdom. God will not cooperate with that.

Very rarely now does he express himself strongly about anything. He allows us to learn from our mistakes. He allows us to find out. He acts this way because of the faith he has in our God's ability to hold it together. We teach not steadying the cart (1 Chr 13) as Uzzah did. It's the arm of the flesh. This has been taught from the very beginning. It is Yoneq's own words and that's what he practices in his own life.

**85-f1 A short time later Edwards did visit for an afternoon and commented that "people looked like they were living in terror."**

It is funny that Gene Edwards would say this. We used to go to Quebec City all the time. Not one time ever did Gene Edwards say anything to Yoneq, Hakam, or anyone else to the effect that people looked like they lived in terror. If he did really feel that, he made no effort to try and help us to understand. The whole thing is a lie on his part.

**86-1 It is our conclusion that had the Messianic Communities truly been led by a "Responsible Ten" who were accountable to one another and shared in all decision making the group would be radically different and far less controlling.**

This — the *responsible ten* — is exactly what happens in every single community. It's exactly what Yoneq has established. There are brothers who work together in every community. The reality of brothers functioning governmentally in every community, and tribally in the apostolic workers' meeting, undoes everything said about a domineering authority. Their characters, their schedules, and the love they have for the sheep under their care give them the authority from God they are to have as elders and the respect of the people they live with.

**86-f2** And when a person leaves the group, they have not left the Kingdom of God, having only the “Lake of Fire” awaiting them.

We don’t teach that when someone leaves us they have nothing left but the Lake of Fire awaiting them. This has already been explained to the authors both personally and in the preceding pages of the *Analysis*.

**87-1** Major concerns for Communities members now consist of the “correct” name of Jesus, beards, ponytails, Sus pants, head coverings, complete obedience to authority, establishing the 12 tribes, dietary restrictions, name changes, Sabbath keeping, etc. This appears to be Phariseeism.

To say that these are major concerns is grossly misleading. It implies that a majority of our conscious effort goes into “obeying the rules” in these areas. But most of the subjects mentioned describe the *culture* of our tribal people. These are mostly external details which give outward expression to our identity as a holy nation of priests. Our major concern is by loving one another to earnestly serve our God night and day out of gratitude for sending His Son. It is He who has made us what we are, and when by His divine power he gets a twelve-tribed nation who will be a light to the world, the end of this age will come.

**87-3** This (Phariseeism) is all managed with the greatest sincerity.”

Many statements in the Sociological Section and the Conclusion *effectively hedge us and our motives in as evil* just as thoroughly as we allegedly hedge the world and all critical contact out as evil. This *closes the circle of judgment around us*, and makes into totalistic mind-control any concern of the shepherds for the state of the souls they will be called to account for one day (Heb 13:7 and Acts 20:26-28). The effect of such a view is to place us beyond the pale of human decency. What has happened to groups placed there in the past makes for grim reading, however.

**87-3** The devastation in most ex-members lives ...

There is a great difference between what ex-members have to say and what people in the Community have to say. The fruit is going to bear itself out — it already does. It would be wise for Mr. Pardon and Ms. Barba to pay attention to their colleagues

and not put so much emphasis on the interpretation of the people who leave. They had better judge the fruit, and not forget the love they said they saw in the beginning. I think that is what the world is going to see. That's what we are going to strive to demonstrate wherever we go.