



Books in Review

STRANGE FIRE?

Assessing The Vineyard Movement
And The Toronto Blessing

by Eric E. Wright

Evangelical Press, 368 pages, \$14.99

Some say, "If you have not had the experience you can't critique it." Maybe the opposite is true. Having "experiences" like those in the "new wave" make one less able to be objective, biblical and sensible when it comes to discernment. This "new wave" is shot through with contradictory messages.

Author Eric Wright has all his faculties, facts and discernment intact as he analyzes John Wimber, the Kansas City Prophets, Rodney Howard-Browne, John Arnott (Toronto) and a host of other cross-pollinating extremists in the new Charismatic extremism.

This may be the definitive text on the issue. It not only examines the "barnyard" worship services of the "Vineyard" in the bright light of Scripture but looks at the history of the major revivals and explodes the myth that there is any comparison to the Charismania of today's so-called "new wave."

Wright makes perfect sense as he looks at the physical phenomena and shows how these things can be viewed through the lens of expectation, suggestibility and altered states of consciousness. He shows the eerie similarities between hypnosis phenomena and the physical results produced by proponents of Vineyard-like activity.

His chapter titles are catchy and give a flavor of what to expect in this well documented book. They include: "Surfing the Third Wave — Without Going Under," "Confusing Signals — Diverse Vineyard Interpretations of Events in Toronto," "Phenomena — Biblical or Bizarre," "Divine Disorder or Cultivated Chaos" and "Putting the Cart of Experience Before the Horse of Scripture." There also is an appendix on Jonathan Edwards and another on the Great Awakening.

PFO has surveyed other books on this topic. They falter, fudge, flounder and fail. They give with one hand while taking back with the other. Wright remains biblical and consistent throughout.

You can call him a cessationist, but he makes an incredible case. He does a meticulous job and cannot be ignored from either side of the debate. If we could only have one information source on this topic we would vote for *Strange Fire?*. The title says it all. We applaud Eric Wright for his exhaustive research.

—GRF

SECRETS OF THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

by Randall Price

Harvest House, 531 pages, \$10.99

Randall Price's book is a valuable new addition to scroll research for a number of reasons: It is evangelical, current, and was produced with much of the research done on site in Israel. It is one of those books that makes you feel you are really in touch with the situation.

It contains a chapter on politics and the scrolls and lets the reader in on new scrolls and new scroll discoveries through 1996.

Price also looks at the ways in which cults misuse the Dead Sea Scrolls to promote spurious doctrine. This occurs within Mormonism, New Age teaching and through the teachings of Edgar Cayce and Edgar Szekely.

Price also refutes the sensationalists, including Texe Marrs, Vendyl Jones, Barbara Thiering and Robert Eisenman.

If one has some acquaintance with the background of the Dead Sea Scrolls the chapters can be read in the order of interest not necessarily in sequence. Included are a glossary of terms and 20 pages of chronology which makes the content available to even a novice on the subject.

The biblical analysis of the Scroll Communities theology and theological system is insightful and helpful. Price is perceptive in showing its sharp differences with Christianity. The charts, maps, and pictures are extremely helpful.

Price states the purpose of the book in the Preface: "My purpose in writing this book is to help to remove the popular mystique that has surrounded the Scrolls and, in as nontechnical a way as possible, reveal their significance for us today." He succeeds admirably.

There is a huge amount of material here for the money. There is also a large detailed index that makes instant retrieval of material possible. This book delivers. It should be a welcome addition to any Christian's library.

—GRF

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