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IMPACT

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TOXIC TRUTH: mixing the covenants

Impact Ministries

"Changing the Way the World Sees God"

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Toxic Truth

By Jim Richards

The concept of toxic truth seems like a contradiction in terms. It doesn't seem possible that truth could be toxic; after all, *the truth will set you free!* Or will it? Truth isn't always true. And every believer can attest to the fact that not every truth will set you free. Some truth will, in fact, put you in bondage. Some truth will destroy you. Some truth will alienate you from a greater truth that could transform your life! As John Osteen used to say, "Religion is like a vaccination, it has just enough of the real thing so you can't catch it." The most destructive truth in the world is that which makes you immune to the ultimate truth!

The truth that will set you free is the truth that is applicable in your situation. For the New Covenant believer that truth is the fact that Jesus has risen from the dead, we are in Him, and all He has is ours because we are in Him. To add to or take away from that, even though there is some degree of truth that remains, is to remove truth from context and turn that which was designed to set us free into a corrupt toxin that poisons and destroys. Truth that is taken out of context or misapplied is no longer true. Many times it's the belief in a truth taken out of context that actually becomes our destruction! In fact, truth misused is the most subtle and dangerous of all enemies.

The Apostle Paul stood against his most despised enemies, the Judaizers, with a fury that seemed more poignant than his fight against the devil himself! Maybe it was because what they did was more deadly! The Judaizers

were a group who acknowledged Jesus' death and, on some level, recognized Him as Savior, but they insisted that you must obey the law to be righteous. Even though Jesus qualified you for Heaven, you stayed qualified for Heaven and became qualified for the promises through obedience to the law! In other words, Jesus saves you, the law makes you righteous!

In order to maintain *balance* they mixed some law and some truth, some Old Covenant and some New Covenant. They believed, after all, that the unconditional love of God was not enough to keep people out of sin; in fact, like the legalists of our day, in total contradiction to the Word of God, they believed the message of unconditional love was a weak compromising message that led people to a compromised life. And they believed the message of faith righteousness would cause people to live irresponsible, ungodly lives. In fact, when you look at the message of the Judaizer you see little difference between their message and the mainline message of the 21st century church!

When explaining the issue of faith righteousness to the church at Rome Paul called it the stumbling stone of the Gospel. In other words, FAITH RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE ONE THING WITH WHICH EVERYONE STRUGGLES AND STUMBLES! When explaining Israel's total failure to apprehend righteousness he said: *They did not seek it (righteousness) by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.* (Rom. 9:32) It is this same skewed logic that causes the church to stumble today! The church does not believe in a righteousness that is from faith to faith. (Rom. 1:17) No! It believes in a righteousness that starts by faith

and is finished by works!

Our stumbling is a mixing of the covenants where we take the *better promises* of the New Covenant and mix them with the unattainable stipulations of the Old Covenant. We have good promises that motivate us, but the same old, unworkable system of performance that even the Jews could not attain.

This mixed covenant causes us to expect more and attain to less than any message the world has ever heard! It spawns the most devastating disappointment and, as the Scripture says, *hope deferred makes the heart sick!* The church is heart-sick on great promises and bad doctrine. It makes you hope for the best and then jerks the rug out from under your feet just when it seems the end is in sight!

To address this horrendous doctrine with the fervor of the New Testament is *politically incorrect* in the current church world. We will attack the New Ager or other believers who hold some slight variation of belief from ours. We will chastise those with moral failure. We will tolerate little in departure from our understanding of the faith. But we will embrace and laud the legalist as a righteous, virtuous person, not realizing that they embrace the most despicable, disempowering deception that ever seeped into the church.

The name of Jesus is on our lips, but through the mixing of the Covenants the law is in our hearts! We pray in His name, and then check our list to see if we are qual-

Toxic Truth: Mixing the Covenants

CDs \$42
DVDs \$89.95
MP3 \$24

With all the imaginary enemies and exaggerated forces we have conjured up and attacked, the true weapon of mass destruction working against every believer is never addressed. In fact, this ultimate deception is encouraged and hailed as the pinnacle of righteousness: mixing the messages of the Old and New Covenants. By taking the promises of the New Covenant and mixing them with the requirements of the Old Covenant we completely neutralize God's power in our lives, we struggle with sin, and we live powerless lives. But breaking free from the limiting, negative, fault-finding control of the Old Covenant will set you on a new path of promise and power!

Here are just a few keys you will discover in this powerful series:

- Identify and conquer your feelings of unworthiness.
- End your irrational fear of God.
- Change your life motivation from fear to love.
- Break the power of your greatest enemy.
- Identify and eliminate the real thief.
- Access the peace of God.
- Locate the contact point with God.



This life-changing six part series will open your eyes to the places you have been seduced into mixing the covenants and close the door to the deception that has ruled your life and shipwrecked your faith. The longer you've been saved the more you need to hear

Toxic Truth: Mixing the Covenants!



Online Contributions for Impact Ministries of Canada



In order to better serve our Canadian World Changers it is now possible for you to give online and immediately download your monthly World Changer Message. Plus, purchasing all of the teaching materials and e-books online saves you time, money, and shipping hassles. And online purchases save the ministry thousands of dollars every year that can be applied to helping people.

Once Impact Ministries of Canada receives approval from the Canadian Charities Directorate tax receipts can be issued for any donations received after the application date of March 13, 2009.

For us to maintain our goals of consistently bringing this message of grace, peace, faith righteousness, and unconditional love to the nation of Canada, we ask for you to join with us as a World Changer today!

You can send your Canadian contributions to: #332, 612 - 500 Country Hills Blvd NE,-Calgary, AB T3K 5K3

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Selections on Page 5

Thoughtfulness: A Great Valentine's Gift

By: Jim Richards

Giving great gifts is more of a science than an art; as such it's a skill that anyone can learn. For me, it was very challenging because I had deep personal issues surrounding giving and receiving gifts. I hated giving gifts on special days - it seemed contrived and obligatory; but I really enjoyed giving gifts spontaneously. *To me* that represented true love and sincerity! That would have been great if I were doing it for me, but I wasn't; I was doing it for others! As it turned out, Brenda really values special days!

The first thing to learn about giving gifts or any other act of kindness is: If you're actually doing it for the other person, it has to be done in a way that *they* value! Jesus said it like this, *Love your neighbor as yourself*. So I have to find out what's important to my wife before I decide how to make her feel loved!

The second rule about giving gifts follows closely to the first: Don't give what *you think* they would like. If you're doing it for them, find out what they want and give them that. I had real issues with being frivolous. It was hard for me to give gifts that I deemed to be frivolous. But I realized that if it was for her, it really didn't matter what I thought about it; it was what she thought about it that was important.

In case you haven't figured it out, all of my issues about giving boiled down to control. I projected all of my life's pain, disappointment, and dysfunction about giving and receiving gifts onto others to justify doing what made me feel comfortable. And to borrow the wisdom of the blue collar comedian I had to ask, "How's that working?" Well, it wasn't working very well! I remember coming to the painful conclusion that if this was about the other person, I had to quit making it about me.

In Matt. 24:45 Jesus says, *Who then is a faithful and wise servant...* The word *wise* in the original language also means *thoughtful*. He equates the person found doing the Father's will, at His coming, will be the one whose wisdom makes him thoughtful! One of the definitions of thoughtful given by the Encarta Dictionary is: showing the application of careful thought. The idea we get from this Scripture and this definition is that wise people give careful consideration before they act and then they take steps to apply what they have derived from that thought!

Wise and careful thought always considers the desired outcome. What is our reason for giving? Is it to express love? Is it to make the person happy? Is it to fulfill one of his/her desires? To do that, one must be full of thought before taking action. Make sure the gift you give: 1) is what the other person wants, not what you want 2) is given in a way that maximizes the potential for expressing love and value 3) reveals that you are attentive to their slightest expressions. Nothing moves a person more than a gift that reflects awareness and thoughtfulness.

In addition to all the gifts you exchange at Valentine's this year, I recommend giving the gift of **communication**. Wrap up a copy of our book **We Still Kiss** with a contract letter enclosed that says, "Because I desire to stay in love with you forever, we will read one chapter of this book every week and discuss how we can apply what we have learned!"

Great marriages don't just happen; they come by a lot of thoughtful planning and skilled application. Brenda and I have weathered more serious storms than most people will ever encounter. There have been times we have wondered if we would recover our deep, passionate love; but we always do. *We Still Kiss* is not the story of a perfect marriage; it's about two people with real life issues who share how we faced and conquered the obstacles that most never cross. It is a book about being thoughtful and staying in love!

If you've already read **We Still Kiss** select any of the relationship series and follow the same plan. Each week listen to a CD together. Pause it and discuss how the area being covered applies to you and your relationship. Communication is the seed that prepares the heart for love! Learning to discuss those things that have previously been taken for granted will prepare you for a lifetime of love and romance!

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Dr. Jim Richards

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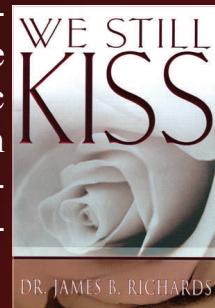
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fied by the commandments. We worship, sing, and speak in tongues to be edified, only to be torn down by the very law that He nailed to the cross. We bind the devil as our enemy, and then do his work by using the very tool he used to condemn us! We call ourselves righteous by the blood only to check the law to see if Jesus was really enough!

Jesus settled the issue of the law for us. One (and only one) person has ever kept all the righteous requirements of the law: Jesus, who lived as a man full of the Holy Spirit and is raised up as the Lord of Glory! As such, He is the only person with whom God could make a covenant. Because He died the covenant is forever sealed and unchangeable. Because He has risen from the dead He forever mediates the covenant set in place by His death! If anyone could keep the law Jesus would not have come, suffered, and died! We couldn't, He did; we're in Him - end of story for those who hope only in this New Covenant, sealed in His blood!

By mixing the covenants we take truth from the Old Covenant that is no longer in force, no longer valid. We have no right to invoke God on the basis of the Old Covenant; to do so is a complete rejection of the finished work of Jesus. We then look to the truth of the New Covenant with all of its promises, failing to recognize that mixing the two is a violation of them both; thereby, we negate the only means whereby we have the right to approach God. Under the Old Covenant looking to Jesus would have been idolatry. Under the New Covenant looking to the law is to count the blood of Jesus as nothing and to trample it under foot!

In Lev. 19:19 God gave us instructions that would ultimately apply to this very issue: *You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment*

of mixed linen and wool come upon you. These truths in the Old Testament had their ultimate reality in the New Covenant. This was not a call to segregation of people but an absolute purity of faith!

The cry of the twenty-first century legalist is, "Balance! We must be balanced!" As reasonable as that sounds, a little law does not balance grace and faith righteousness; it pollutes it! As Paul warned the Galatia believers who started out in faith and ended in law: *A little leaven leavens the whole lump.* (Gal. 5:9) It only takes a little law to neutralize grace completely! While we are being told to live by faith, mixing the two covenants **voids** faith. Faith is based on promise. Law is based on debt. Expecting payment for a debt isn't faith; it's legalism. Expecting God to reward me for my behavior is payment of debt. Expecting God to reward me based on the promise of what we have in Jesus is a work of true faith!

It's time to do house cleaning. We face times like the world has never seen. If our faith has not given us victory as we have sought to face normal life, how do we expect to stand through troubled times? Clean out every aspect of your belief system that is rooted in works. Don't allow one aspect of the Old Covenant to stand in your heart. This is what Abraham was modeling when he sent Hagar away. God said, *Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.* (Gal. 4:30-31) Abraham not only had the painful job of casting out the bondwoman, (which represented the law) but he had to cast out the son, everything the law had given birth to in his life! Let us be as the old hymn said, "My faith is built on nothing less than Jesus'

blood and righteousness!"

(This article is based on the revolutionary six-part series entitled, *Toxic Truth: Mixing the Covenants*. For information about this series see the ad on page 3.)

The Error of Ultimate Reconciliation

By: Allen Speegle & Jim Richards

Ultimate reconciliation is a deadly error that has swept through the doors of the church repeatedly since the earliest times.

It's a heresy that promotes irresponsible living, compromised morals, and hard-heartedness! Those who make the journey into Ultimate Reconciliation think they're delving into the ultimate love of God, but it's just the opposite.

What starts out as a new revelation of God's unconditional love ends in a relationship grown cold in a wasteland of deceit and error!

While ministering at Family Bible Church with Pastor Allen Speegle, I was asked to do an interview for leaders exposing the error of Ultimate Reconciliation.

Under the guise of a new revelation about grace and peace many voices are seducing believers by this heresy.

Go to www.impactministries.com and click on the link to my blog to receive the article and the free download of the interview: *The Error of Ultimate Reconciliation*.

Motivated By Your Own Purpose

God knows that men/women are motivated by their own purposes. That's why when it comes to giving or serving we should always consider what we enjoy and what moves us and find a way to link that to God's purposes. That's a scenario where everyone wins and everyone benefits.

In 2 Cor. 9:7 Paul said it like this, ...*let each one give as he purposes in his heart*. The way to be a cheerful giver is never to give out of obligation or legalism. The reason our hearts have not been prepared to experience the grace of receiving is because we have been manipulated into giving. In the same verse he also said concerning our giving, *not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver*. No one is cheerful doing that which they're forced to do!

On the other hand, the person who gives because of purpose not only gives with joy, they also give with passion. And it is the joyful, passionate givers who discover the grace of generosity in giving and receiving. I want your heart to be affected in a very healthy way through your giving. So, as much as you can, I pray you'll always link your giving to the purpose that moves you deeply!

As we enter into 2010 we will expand our reach around the world. The vision is in my heart, the preparation is already being done, the tools are being developed, and the hearts of generous World Changers are being prepared.

Here are some purposes you can give to in 2010. Special contributions toward these specific projects will be used in the areas for which they are given. Help us by choosing a special mission or project from this list:

1. Working synergistically with various prison ministries we plan to expand our outreach into prisons and make our online School of Ministry available to inmates with computer access.
2. We have several books that are ready to be launched. They are currently written, ready for the editor and printer. Some will be published in paperback and others will be published as e-books.
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 - *The Earth is Not Flat -eBook* \$10,000
 - *How to Succeed at Business Without Losing Your Soul* \$20,000
 - *Destined for Success, Programmed for Failure* \$30,000
 - Several mini-booklets approximately \$1000 each
 - Water Baptism
 - Healing
 - Gifts of the Spirit
 - Reprinting of *Escape from Codependent Christianity* \$10,000
3. Upgrades in video equipment \$25,000
4. Operation One Billion.
 - This is, without a doubt, the most daring of all our projects. In this program we desire to provide curriculum for a minimum of 100 third world Bible Schools that will follow a plan to reach one-billion people with this message over the next 12-20 years.

World Changers give for a purpose; but because we know God, we know that we will be affected by our giving. As we give our heart grows and becomes open for grace to abound in every area of our life. But more than anything, World Changers give because we have tasted this incredible love of God and we know this is the message and the lifestyle that will:

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