

## AND THE TRUTH

by

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While coping with the dismal election of a "pro-choice" president, amidst subdued holiday festivities, this pro-life activist perused **Prophet**, written by Frank Peretti and published earlier this year (1992) by Crossway Books. This novel, however, offers more than escape into fiction. It addresses the power of news media to sell their carefully slanted images of "news" to an unsuspecting public. We have, for example, lately seen a "miraculous" recovery of our economy that, by most reports, was in deep recession just prior to November 3rd. Peretti's engaging story, however, focuses upon the "pro-choice" bias of the media which censors the raw reality of abortion from the "news" it reports to the American public.

John Barrett, anchorman of NewsSix, is dragged into reporting a story, exposing botched abortions at a local abortuary. Most of his colleagues won't touch it for fear of experiencing premature career burnout. A "pro-choice" governor, Hiram Slater, is in the midst of his campaign for re-election. Slater campaign ads mean big bucks for Channel Six and the governor is a close friend of the station's owner. The story sets Barrett on a trail of investigative reporting fraught with setbacks and punctuated by new revelations of falsified death certificates, etc., designed to coverup the botched abortion that killed the governor's daughter Hillary. The truth about Hillary's death finally becomes "news", a two-minute item, leading to the departure of Barrett from Channel Six.

The reader is taken into the world of broadcast news that lives by "soundbites" deciding what is "news" and what is not. The nitty gritty of how "pro-choice" bias is injected into the "news" is presented in a plausible manner. Peretti's novel has a fairly "bare-bones" quality about it with the minimal amount of characters and subplots needed to build the main plot. Nevertheless, it does have some interesting extra baggage.

First, and most helpful, is the perspective presented on the Truth. Barrett's father, John Barrett, Sr., advises him that "The Truth can be your best friend or your worst enemy. . . . Make friends with the Truth, John, as quickly as you can" (p-44). Later, John passes his father's counsel on to Hiram Slater, as he confronts the errant governor with "news" of his coverup of the botched abortion that killed his daughter Hillary (p-365). Since Jesus Christ is the "Truth" (John 14:6), John's prophetic warning merely restates the burden of the Messianic Psalm that urges both kings and judges to "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, . . . Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Psalm 2:12). Christ is Saviour, yet He will also be our Judge (II Timothy 4:1).

Second, and somewhat questionable, is Peretti's investing of the John Barretts, father and son, with second sight, a supernatural ability to peer into the hearts of the troubled souls whose sins they denounce. This literary device, known as "deus ex machina", was used by heathen Greek writers to rescue their heroes from jams and advance their stories by artificial means, e.g., a magic sword. It should be first remembered that the prophet who denounces the violation of God's law-word is not a Greek demigod nor an object of heroic awe. Further, it should be noted that Peretti's use of second sight is really excess baggage that distracts from an otherwise compelling tale of the re-emergence biblical prophecy in a modern industrial setting.

**Prophet**, in a number of ways, can be seen as a modern retelling of the story of John the Baptist who came in the "spirit and power" of Elijah (Luke 1:17). Indeed, an overcoat becomes the prophet's "mantle" (II Kings 2:13-14) passed from father to son and then to the grandson, Carl. Yet, unlike John Barrett, there is no evidence that John the Baptist required or used second sight in his most effective confrontation of a "generation of vipers" (Luke 3:7) with their

transparent transgressions of God's law. Like, John the Baptist, who was executed for daring to denounce the incestuous marriage between Herod the tetrarch and Herodias (Mark 6:17-28), John Barrett, Sr. perishes while censuring Governor Slater's sin.

Further, like John the Baptist, John Barrett, Sr. does not call down fire from heaven as did Elijah (II Kings 1:1-15) to insure the safety of the prophet's person. It is also clear that prophetic second sight was not essential to the story reported by John Barrett, Jr. at cost of his job. Once the "Chinese water torture" of investigative reporting began, Governor Slater was politically a dead duck even though he, as Richard Nixon, still had the momentum needed to win the upcoming election. As Barrett informs his news director, Ben, his story is "going to get bigger, a lot bigger, and it'll be interesting to see how big it has to get before it can't be swept under the carpet anymore. . . I suppose you could sweep an elephant under the carpet and get away with it -as long as you keep everyone looking the other way" (p-358).

**Prophet** leaves nagging questions. How was a whole society conned into ignoring savage pachyderms swept under Roe's rug of abortion rights - a 300% increase in risk of sterility, a 500% increase in lethal tubal (ectopic) pregnancies, etc. among aborturary clients? How has America become deaf to "silent screams" of over 30 million unborn Americans since 1973? The awful answer is that God's people have been miserably derelict in spreading the light of biblical law upon the medical and judicial arenas (Matthew 5:14-16). Divine judgment upon our blood-polluted land will rightly "begin at the house of God" (I Peter 4:17). The instruments of judgment may well be our new president and his helpmate, Hillary. Our only hope ultimately of breaking free of the media's sin-biased images is submit ourselves to the Truth of God's law (II Timothy 4:16f). To all who thus become disciples, Jesus promises that "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).