

*" . . . Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error"*

*The*  
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## WHY PEOPLE BECOME THE VICTIMS OF THE CULTS

*Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor*

A great deal has been written about the numerous cults of our time. In fact, there never has been more informative material on the teachings of these spurious groups than at present. Our office handles some of the best books and pamphlets available which refute the cultic teachings. It is of real importance that each Christian understands the areas where the cults have deviated from historic Christianity. It is seldom, however, that we find adequate explanations as to the reasons why so many people are victimized by the modern charlatans and quacks. The distressing fact is that approximately 10 million people in our country have been swept into the many cultic groups of our time. My purpose in writing this article is seeking to explain how the phenomenal inroads of the cults have been possible in recent decades in a so-called Christian land. During the many years that I have directed the work of Religion Analysis Service, I have tried to find the basic causes for the current situation, that is, why millions of people have been ensnared by the cultists.

### THE INFLUENCE OF CULTIC LITERATURE

The major cults, which have been so extremely successful in gaining such a large number of followers,

have used the printed page on a massive scale. Usually a denominational publication considers itself fortunate when it has reached a circulation of 50 to 100 thousand. The Jehovah's Witnesses now print 7,850,000 copies of *The Watchtower* magazine in each issue, and they print 7,500,000 of *Awake* each issue. These figures are correct as of this date. When you add the total, the Jehovah's Witnesses print about 15 million copies of these magazines twice each month. No other publication in the country equals such a figure. The Herbert W. Armstrong organization follows the same technique in printing an enormous quantity of the *Plain Truth* magazine. The Armstrong program is less than 40 years old, yet the publication of its magazine has exceeded nearly every religious periodical in America. The Mormons, and the other cultic groups, have adopted the same pattern, namely, distributing very widely their literature. The cultic writers are past masters in making their presentation appear plausible. The material published by these groups is written in a clever manner, and slanted so as to disarm the prejudices of the readers toward such cultic literature. Some of the finest kernels of Scriptural truth are woven into their writings, and

oftentimes the false teachings are not detected by ill-informed people who read such publications. These false teachers have discovered that an unprecedented outpouring of their literature will contribute substantially to the expansion of their organized activity. I wish to say with great emphasis that it is time that Bible-believing Christians redouble their efforts in spreading out sound material based on the truth of the Scriptures. Too often this important avenue in reaching people has been neglected by the followers of the Lord. As a very young boy I remember how a cultured woman, a devotee of the Christian Science cult, utilized every opportunity she had in promoting that cult through the continuous distribution of its literature. And, in my first pastorate I saw the work of two daughters, of a respected man in that community, who succeeded in poisoning the mind of their father with Christian Science literature. Somehow, that man lost the power of discrimination between truth and error, and not long thereafter he accepted the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy. These young women had done the damaging work before I arrived in the community, and it seemed I could do nothing for the man. In fact, he was wrenched out of a lifelong Christian fellowship. He died with a mind confused through the teachings of Christian Science. Cultists are extremely clever in sugar-coating their heresies so that ill-informed people are unable to detect the error. Many people are curious, and they read such literature until they become blinded to the unscriptural areas of these teachings. The Herbert W. Armstrong cult has succeeded in misleading many naive people, and in

almost every church certain individuals have accepted the Armstrong writings. By means of the *Plain Truth* magazine, and through the widely heard radio program, this cult has grown immensely during recent decades.

#### **MILLIONS BECOME VICTIMIZED THROUGH THE PERSONAL CONTACT BY THE CULTISTS**

In no area have the cultists been more consistent and aggressive than in carrying their message to the homes of millions of people all across the land. Both the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons have utilized this method successfully. During the past few months the emissaries of the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormon Disciples have rung my door-bell and sought to interest me in the teachings to which they were committed. They were not seeking, they said, to take away my religious views, but insisted that they had something exceedingly important to add to my spiritual experience. I took the opportunity and gave them my personal testimony that I was saved and had found complete satisfaction in Jesus Christ. In order to help them to see the error of their teaching, I offered them some pieces of sound literature (I always have such literature available in the home, and in my automobile). They took the literature, as I first agreed to take what they had to offer. These representatives had been completely brain-washed by that which their cults teach, and now they were continually making contacts with people and peddling their literature. I watched them as they proceeded from house to house on that block. It was really surprising how many opened their doors to them. We must remember this kind of con-

fact is made throughout the land, every day, by these blind adherents of the cultic dictatorship that sends them out. The fact of the matter is the Mormons alone have more missionaries out in continuous activity than all the Protestant denominations in the land. Indeed, they have adopted the New Testament method in reaching people (going from house to house), but tragically none of these disseminators of literature have a Gospel message to present. Jesus sent out His followers two by two, and He equipped them with the power of God. They were to enter every village. We recall how the 70 disciples returned with a glowing report to their Master about the effectiveness of their witnessing ministry.

Fortunately of late there has been a renewed emphasis on witnessing among Bible-believing groups. Whether this represents only a temporary program, or a more permanent one, is not certain at this time. This type of ministry should be done continually. The cults carry on their activity in contacting people, year in and out, in season and out of season. It needs to be pointed out if the Christians fail in the witnessing ministry there simply is no other way in reaching people and combatting the cultic activity of our time.

#### **CULTISTS EXPLOIT THE GENERAL DEFICIENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRIPTURES**

For many years numerous denominations, including some of the Evangelical groups, have de-emphasized doctrinal preaching and teaching. Since I have held meetings in nearly every area of the land during the past decade, I have become increasingly aware of the present-day deficiency in the

knowledge of the Word by church people. The trend seems to be a curtailment of doctrinal teaching, and bringing into the services features of entertainment, films, and much singing. Unless consistent and continuous doctrinal emphasis is restored, we will continue to see large numbers of church people victimized by the cults. It is true that in recent years we have seen a very great expansion of Bible classes in the homes. Too often, however, many of these classes are led by those who are deficient in the doctrinal teachings of the Scriptures. Sometimes I have found amateurs leading such class studies. And at other times certain areas of the Scriptures are left un-emphasized in order to accommodate people with various religious beliefs. The objective may be noble, but it represents a weakness in not coming to grips with all the fundamentals of the Scriptures. It seems clear to me that all continuous Bible classes ought to be operated under the supervision of the pastors and the best Bible teachers within the churches. During the past summer I have been asked to bring the concluding message in several of such classes. I feel that in order to strengthen such Bible studies they should be fully supervised.

The extra-ordinary expansion of the Charismatic movement of late demonstrates a very great deficiency in sound Bible teachings within many denominational churches. Instead of building their lives around solid Bible teachings, these people have gone off at a tangent by emphasizing the least of the gifts mentioned by the apostle Paul. In other words, they are seeking to find a short-cut to dramatic power and some unusual spiritual experience.

And, the rather sudden appearance of the *Jesus People* is another manifestation of an appalling ignorance of Scriptural truth. These people are trying to recapture, as it were, what they feel is the failure of the established church. Many other people are moving into the sphere of occultism, because they lack a knowledge of what the Bible teaches. If church people were more adequately taught in the great doctrines of the Scriptures, they would not frantically seek some new dynamic experience. What we need to do, more than anything else in these days, is to lead the people into a well-rounded understanding of Biblical doctrine. Christian people today need to do as the Bereans did in their day. It was said "They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." In other words, they evaluated all the teachings to which they were exposed in the light of the Scriptures. Unless we get back to the solid Biblical base, and know what the Word of God teaches, we will be unable to stem the terrific inroads of the cults. We need to realize that the cultic representatives who are out everywhere seeking to gain new adherents to their organizations, are taught adequately and trained in presenting the positions they hold, to all those with whom they come in contact. In all probability the churches in America will continue to lose ground to the cults. It is well recognized by religious columnists that only the conservative Bible-believing churches are making definite progress and are expanding in numbers, while on the other hand, most of the larger liberal denominations are losing membership. In fact, their seminaries

and institutions manifest a decline, and this will continue to weaken these large religious bodies. And unfortunately the liberal and apostate religious organizations represent the majority of the church members in America.

#### A FINAL CAUSE

We are dealing with the subject how people are being victimized by the cults. It is unquestionably true that millions of people are greatly impressed by the total dedication of the cultic emissaries. No matter what rebuffs these people get who ring the door-bells, no discouragement seems to break their spirit. Somehow, they maintain a remarkable balance and posture regardless of the opposition they meet. I have watched them for years, and they appear to be completely committed to their work. Thousands of these people are willing to work long hours without receiving an adequate compensation. On the other hand, many Christian workers decline to serve in remote areas where the remuneration is small and where the comforts of life are few. I have discovered that not too infrequently seminary graduates ask when a call is extended to them; what will be my allowance for mileage in the pastoral work, and what length of vacation is provided, also how many modern conveniences are there in the parsonage? Of course a laborer is worthy of his hire, but it appears the present trend is seeking monetary advantages in doing Christian work. Somehow, we find a greater degree of dedication and committal to the tasks by the cultists than the general run of Christian workers. I am aware that a dedication is not lacking in the sphere of Christianity, yet I feel the cultists are demonstrating a greater concern to

achieve their objectives than what is manifested among God's people. Jesus stated this truth in a slightly different context, and it has bearing on the point that I am now discussing: "The children of the world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Lk. 16:8). While the cultists are not particularly worldly in their outlook, yet they are misguided greatly and confused about spiritual values. It is true, of course, that the cultists are not wiser in comprehension, or in their estimate of spiritual values, than God's people. They are, nevertheless, more shrewd and wiser in achieving that which constitutes their immediate goals. They have a zeal without knowledge (as the

Scriptures point out), and yet the cults manifest a very great degree of persistence in the pursuit of their objectives.

After you have read this article, I believe you will have a better understanding why so many people are victimized by the present-day cultists. For many years I have been mainly responsible in securing the necessary funds for Religion Analysis Service to carry on our needed ministry. I wish that Christian people would do more in helping us in getting out additional literature which is designed to combat the evil activities in the cultic groups. We appreciate very much those who stand with us in this important ministry.

## A TRIBUTE TO ROY DIVERS

(Given at the Memorial Service, Aug. 23, 1972)



1881 - 1972

It is fitting at this memorial service that we recognize the dedicated work and labor of love which Roy Divers gave to Religion Analysis Service. After his retirement from the public school system, where he had taught for many years, our brother saw the opportunity of giving his time to the cause of Christ in the field of specialized literature. For the greater part of two decades he and his wife gave full-time service in the office without any monetary remuneration. We believe this record of dedication to a worthy cause stands unmatched in our community.

The Board of Religion Analysis

Service is cognizant of the great contribution to the work by our departed brother, and we herewith wish to acknowledge our debt to this fine servant of the Lord. We salute the memory of Roy Divers. His example of total dedication to a worthy ministry will be remembered and cherished. As President of Religion Analysis Service, and one who was associated with Roy Divers for many years in the ministry of literature, I wish on behalf of the Board to convey our sympathy to the daughter, Dorothy Divers, and the other relatives at this time. Kindly accept our sincere appreciation for a work well done by this choice servant of God, Roy Divers. May the Lord bless the memory of our faithful fellow-worker in Christ. Phil. 1:3-5.

Sincerely,  
The Board of Religion  
Analysis Service  
John E. Dahlin, President

## HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG: DOES HE REALLY HAVE THE 'PLAIN TRUTH'?

by Leslie K. Tarr

Few denominations have a communications network to equal the far-flung radio, television and literature empire developed by the Worldwide Church of God. By radio alone the church and its spokesmen, Herbert W. Armstrong and his son, Garner Ted, are probably within reach of 95 percent of all Americans and Canadians.

Hence a radio listener somewhere in South Dakota, New Jersey, Manitoba or Alaska happens to pick up Armstrong's daily program, "The World Tomorrow." He is soon impressed by its half hour of commentary and analysis of the world situation and its confident citation of scriptural references.

The speaker, usually Garner Ted Armstrong, invites listeners to write for free booklets that elaborate on subjects on which he has touched during the broadcast. Or the appeal may be to write for free copies of a magazine, *The Plain Truth*. But never an appeal for money.

Our imaginary listener, whether evangelical or not, may be captivated—for the Armstrong appeal is usually overwhelming. And those radio messages seldom contain enough specific Bible teaching to enable even an informed student of the Bible to pin down any deviation from truth. Furthermore, they are delivered in such a rapid-fire manner that he might have difficulty in detecting it!

Nor is there any mention of a church on the program. Rather there are periodic references to Ambassador College, which publishes the literature, and to *The Plain Truth* magazine.

Maybe at the same time he is beginning to follow the broadcast, our fictitious listener picks up a copy of *Reader's Digest*. A full-color, double page ad invites him to write for some item of free literature or for *The Plain Truth*.

The slick, four-color, forty-eight-page publication is obviously designed to have a wide appeal. No ads clutter its pages. And it's free! Many issues subtly remind the reader that "although you cannot pay for your subscription, we do gratefully accept contributions, voluntarily given, though we never solicit the public for financial support." He is further informed that "volunteer co-workers" give sacrificially to underwrite the vast ministry.

Still no mention of any church!

Next he may note references to an Ambassador College correspondence course (free, of course). Anyone who has reached the point that he is interested enough to send for the course is probably a prime candidate for the Armstrong cult—of whose existence he is unaware!

The correspondence course starts on a low key, but by lesson nineteen the pressure is on! The student is warned against false churches and told that God has only one true church and that it must be a "W O R L D W I D E CHURCH." Those who have questions are requested to write to the editor (Herbert W. Armstrong) and are told to "be sure to mention you have completed lesson nineteen of the Ambassador College Correspondence Course."

Subsequent lessons condemn the eating of pork. Sunday observance

and consultation with doctors.

By lesson twenty-eight, students are warned against churches which observe Saturday as the Sabbath, but which are not called by the name of God's Church—"the Church of God." They are further told that the true pastors of the true church are Herbert W. Armstrong and his son, Garner Ted Armstrong. Those who are interested are asked to communicate with Mr. Armstrong with a request to be visited by a "true servant of Jesus Christ."

All other churches, with no apparent exception, are dismissed as "satanic counterfeits."

Local ministers of the Armstrong church call only on those who request a visit—and, in the present famine for the hearing of the Word of God, apparently thousands are responding!

The minister's calling card doesn't betray his church affiliation. The card simply identifies him as a representative of Ambassador College.

If the prospect seems to have accepted the teaching (about the Sabbath, baptism, dietary matters and tithing) and appears to be submissive, the minister may accept him for baptism by immersion and then tell him of a local Saturday meeting of the Worldwide Church of God (formerly known as the Radio Church of God).

These extremely secretive Saturday services are held in about 350 locations across the United States and Canada. Although the local meetings are not a well-known feature of the movement and are hardly mentioned in many booklets about Armstrongism, they probably account for a great deal of the growth and consolidation of the cult. They are never advertised and

the public is decidedly *not* welcome.

The services are held in rented premises—usually a school auditorium or hall. Through those meeting and centrally appointed local ministers, the Pasadena headquarters can exercise a close oversight and control over individual followers. Printed directives from headquarters—some of a "read and destroy" variety—almost have the force of medieval papal encyclicals.

Then, because there are not the usual church building overhead costs, the total income of the local churches (largely due to compulsory tithing) are forwarded to the Pasadena office. This accounts for the phenomenal income of the Worldwide Church of God (estimated at \$55 million annually), which permits it to print quality literature and produce radio and television programs—while assuring all and sundry that they are free.

So our imaginary radio listener now finds himself a member of a church which regards itself as God's one true church. He probably looks back and wonders at what point in that gradual process he determined to cast his lot with Herbert W. Armstrong and his church. It was so imperceptible!

He will discover, however, that there is nothing casual about his relationship with the Worldwide Church of God. The church, through its ministry, will exercise an all-pervasive control of every phase of his life.

If his work interferes with the Sabbath—from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown Sabbath—he will be told to give it up. He will discover that the "tithe" is no mere 10 percent but, according to one former member, amounts to more



than 30 percent. If he takes his child to a doctor, he may, like Paul Haecker of Texas, find that his wife, at the dictates of the church's ministry, has been ordered to leave him. Or, if like another member, he makes the mistake of communicating with an ex-minister of the cult, he may be expelled from the church.

Probably many others could echo the elderly Toronto woman who ruefully remarked, "I didn't know what I was getting into when I joined."

One has to stop at this point and ask more about this remarkable church. While other cults have been making a few headlines, the Worldwide Church of God has been making hay—and, in the process, avoiding publicity as much as possible. Only recently, when a temporary rift developed between founder and "apostle" Herbert W. Armstrong and heir-apparent Garner Ted did the name of the church appear extensively and briefly in the media (see *Time* magazine, May 15, 1972, "Garner Ted Armstrong, Where Are You?" and July 10, 1972, "Garner Ted Returns").

Even evangelicals, who usually have a sensitive nose for cultic activities, have often failed to be aware that the Worldwide Church of God simply must be regarded as one of the major anti-Christian movements of our time. Because they are acquainted only with the Armstrong radio program, the television shows or *The Plain Truth* (all of which are attractive bait), they are unaware of the essentially cultic message of the Worldwide Church of God.

The problem is further complicated at this point by the undeniable appeal of the Armstrong literature on such subjects as crea-

tion, the home, crime, juvenile delinquency or the ecological crisis. It seems to be calculated to appeal to the middle class and the religiously conservative.

But, beneath that attractive exterior, what is the Worldwide Church of God?

Founder Herbert W. Armstrong, a former advertising man, had been associated with "the Church of God (Seventh Day)" in Oregon. He broke with this "off-shoot of an off-shoot of an off-shoot of the Seventh Day Adventist Church" when he adopted "British Israeli" views and formed his own church which, at first, was called "The Radio Church of God."

Armstrong had commenced broadcasting in early January of 1934 on a small radio station in Eugene, Oregon. With startling candor, the Armstrong publicists tell us that the commencement of that broadcast set in motion the fulfillment of 90 percent of the prophecies of the Old Testament!

Again, in February of this year, Herbert W. Armstrong, now eighty years old, advanced this inflated estimate of himself: "Thousands know that I, personally, have been called and chosen for a very definite commission in God's service."

The official history of the movement places the "apostle" Herbert in the same category as the apostle Paul: "Jesus chose Paul, who was highly educated, for spreading the gospel to the Gentiles. In these last days when the gospel must go around the world, Jesus chose a man amply trained in the advertising and business fields to shoulder the mission—Herbert W. Armstrong."

A group which has been conditioned to regard Armstrong as *the* modern day apostle and the sole re-

storer of the gospel message is prepared to accept any and all of his teachings whether or not they square with Scripture. Anyone who has spoken with Worldwide Church of God members is aware of their unquestioning acceptance of his dogmas. It is an obedience denied to any popes in modern times!

From the outset, the Armstrong gospel has included many elements of Seventh Day Adventism (although I am not suggesting that the Seventh Day Adventist Church is related in any way to his movement). For instance, he insists on a seventh day observance and regards Sunday worship as "the mark of the beast." He further lays down rigid dietary laws, including avoidance of pork.

Armstrong, however, proceeds much further and calls for observance of the Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. His church publishes a handy pocket calendar, "God's Holy Days," to remind the faithful of the dates of those obligatory feast days.

Added to this revived "Galatianism," against which the apostle Paul had to contend, is a renovated British Israelism. Armstrong contends that Queen Elizabeth II is seated on the throne to which the Lord Jesus Christ will return. This is part of his elaborate biblical interpretation which equates Great Britain and the United States with the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

Premier Golda Meir of Israel, President Richard Nixon of the United States and Prime Minister Edward Heath of Great Britain (not to mention Queen Elizabeth!) would marvel at Armstrong's verbal gymnastics and scriptural distortions

which permit him to come up with his British Israelism.

Then, to his near-messianic view of himself, his expanded and distorted Seventh Day Adventism, his "Galatian" heresy, his borrowed British Israelism, the apostle Herbert W. Armstrong adds the Jehovah's Witnesses' rejection of the Deity of Christ and the existence of the Trinity. Then comes the Mormon teaching (actually first enunciated in the Garden of Eden—Genesis 3:5—by the serpent) that the faithful would become God.

REGARDING SALVATION, he holds that the blood of Christ does not finally save any man and that no one is yet saved.

Mr. Armstrong and his son have propagated their composite heresy with a zeal that is remarkable—and with astounding success. *The Plain Truth*, which began as a mimeographed paper in February, 1934, now has a circulation well over two million! The half hour daily radio program is heard on more than 300 stations. In addition, the movement operates three colleges, each called Ambassador College—in Pasadena, California; Big Sandy, Texas; and St. Albans, England. Visitors are ecstatic about the splendor of those campuses.

Estimates vary as to membership in the Worldwide Church of God. Probably about 70,000 attend those weekly Saturday services. At one time Herbert W. Armstrong spoke of 125,000 "co-workers"—the designation of those who support the work financially. The movement's influence, however, cannot be measured in statistical terms alone.

Herbert W. Armstrong, more than any other cultist, probably has a large sympathetic following in both liberal and evangelical churches. Salem Kirban is correct, I be-

lieve, when he states: "Many Christians, in fact, will become highly insulted if one even implies that Herbert W. Armstrong's message is contrary to God's Word."

This confusion arises, of course, from Armstrong's clever technique which gives wide exposure to the less objectionable, often positively constructive features of his message while he presents the wildly cultic and heretical aspects after the prospect has become enmeshed in the Worldwide Church of God.

What accounts for his appeal to evangelicals and liberals?

His dogmatism probably appeals to those in liberal churches who yearn for a note of conviction and authority. Starved for Bible teaching of any type, they respond to the Armstrong dogmatism and his apparent reference to the Bible.

His appeal to evangelicals in-

*Leslie K. Tarr, Canadian journalist and president of Central Baptist Seminary in Toronto, Ontario, authors the first in a two-part series on Armstrongism. Next month's feature by Roger Campbell will look more closely at the doctrines of the movement. (Moody Monthly).*

cludes another ingredient. Armstrong sounds *relevant* . . . and that's an 'in word'! He *seems* to apply Bible truths to modern life, and possibly the evangelical who may hear little reference in his circles to contemporary issues, is attracted by Armstrong's attempts to bring his version of biblical insights to bear on crucial issues.

The rise and spread of the Worldwide Church of God indicate both the biblical ignorance and the spiritual void of our time.

While decisively rejecting in its entirety Armstrongism, evangelicals would do well to emulate that group's zeal and superb use of the media which, in the short space of thirty-eight years, have contributed to making the Worldwide Church of God today's top cultic threat.

"Reprinted by permission from  
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## HAIR AND TONGUES AND JESUS PEOPLE

*By Dr. Bud Lyles*

Because King Saul was willful and disobedient, God rejected him from being King over Israel. He told Samuel to fill his horn with oil and go to the house of Jesse the Beth-lehemite "for I have provided me a king among his sons" (I Sam. 16:1). Samuel went as he was told. He sanctified the man and his sons and called them to the sacrifice.

When Samuel saw Eliab, he thought surely this one was to be the new king. "But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused

him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7).

Recently I wrote an article about long hair on boys. In that article I quoted Jerry Rubin's statement that the long hair is a badge of the rebellion against authority, law and order, decency, morality, cleanliness and purity that have been considered virtues in our country. According to Rubin, long hair on a male indicates he is against the establishment and God and all. I also quoted I Corinthians 11:14 where Paul was led to write "that, if a

man have long hair, it is a shame unto him.”

Of course there was some reaction. I might say that there were some letters from people who want to call themselves Christians who were anything but Christian in their attitude and language. One man hoped that we would print his letter. His language was such that we just could not do it.

A letter came from a man serving a prison sentence. He quoted the last part of the verse above where God talks to Samuel about Eliab and took me to task. He said that I shouldn't put the long-hairs down. Well, I didn't. I just quoted Jerry Rubin and cited that verse in I Corinthians. If the long-haired "Jesus people" don't want to be identified with Rubin and the rebellion that his crowd represents, then it seems to me they should do one of two things: either get a haircut (which would seem the simple and logical solution) or they could try to persuade Jerry Rubin to take back his statement about long hair being the sign of rebellion (which would be well-nigh impossible).

I am not against long hair. On girls I think it is beautiful. On boys I think it is silly, especially on boys who want to be called Christians. As many untaught people do, the man in prison tried to tell me that Jesus was a Nazarene. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that. He was a Nazarene. In fact, there is good reason to doubt that Jesus had long hair as some artists have pictured Him.

Then my prisoner-friend said

I should not judge the long-haired Jesus people. He quoted the last part of I Samuel 16:7. Well, I didn't judge anyone. I can't do that. But he quoted a verse out of context and misconstrued its meaning to defend something that is really indefensible. It is true that God looks on the heart. It is also true that men do look on the outward appearance. If a male-type person claims to be saved and yet to all outward appearances identifies with Rubin and that rebellious crowd, he can talk until he is blue in the face but people will still see him as a rebel.

It seems strange to me, and yet not so strange either, that many of those who call themselves "Jesus people" and by their appearance identify themselves with the rebellious crowd are so ignorant of the Scriptures that they fall easy prey to the tongues heresy of our day. That heresy is not new. It existed in Corinth in the time of Paul. He rebuked it in I Corinthians 14. Still some people take those very verses and use them as a basis for propagating their error. What truly saved "Jesus people" need is a good basic course in Bible. By reading and studying the Bible they would learn that God established the differences in the sexes and He meant for them to be maintained. They would learn that God favors respect for authority. He favors the local church. He favors decency and morality. They would learn that the "tongues movement" of our day is a heresy just as it was in Paul's day.

From *The Sword of the Lord*  
Aug. 25, 1972. Used with permission.

## CONCORD NEARER ON PAPAL PRIMACY

*By Willmar Thorkelson  
The Star's Religion Editor*

"New possibilities of concord" over the once strongly contested question of papal primacy were reported in Minneapolis by a group of Lutheran and Roman Catholic theologians.

"We find ourselves persuaded that barriers are not as insuperable as they were previously considered," the 24 participants said in a statement issued at the conclusion of the 15th in a series of doctrinal discussions.

The three-day dialogue involved discussion of the papacy as "a form of ministry in the universal church" and was limited to the question of primacy—the position of first rank given to the Pope.

"No attempt has as yet been made to enter into the question of papal infallibility," the statement noted. "We believe this limitation of the scope of our discussion is historically justified. Primacy was an issue centuries before papal infallibility become a dogma."

During the dialogue here, the statement said, "Lutherans have become much more aware of the need for a ministry serving the church's unity and mission, while Catholics increasingly see the necessity of a more nuanced understanding of the role of the papacy."

It is possible for both loyal Lutherans and loyal Catholics, the statement said, "to envision new possibilities of concord. God is calling our churches to draw closer together, and it is our hope and

prayer that our joint statement on universal ministry and papal primacy may make some contribution to that end."

Papal primacy was the latest of several subjects on which the Catholic and Lutheran theologians reported they found common ground in discussing positions which have in the past been strongly contested.

Earlier, they said, they had "found ourselves in fundamental accord on the Nicene Creed and the Christological center of the faith as well as on baptism, the eucharist and the eucharist ministry."

Discussion at the session here centered on the first draft of the common statement that it is hoped will be completed next year on universal ministry and papal primacy. Also to be prepared are separate papers dealing with Lutheran and Catholic "reflections" on the subject.

*The Minneapolis Star  
Mon., Sept. 25, 1972  
(Used with permission)*

Editor—

The above article is both informative and significant. It points out that in seeking a union with Roman Catholicism, major Protestant bodies are now more inclined, than during earlier years, to go along with the position of Papal Primacy. This will remove a formidable barrier in the union of the Roman Catholic Church with the World Council of Churches. —J.E.D.

## THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT HAS NO TRUE BIBLICAL BASE

The favorite passage of the promoters of ecumenicity is the prayer which Jesus offered, when He said, "That they may be one, as thou art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe thou hast sent me" (Jn. 17:21). They misunderstand the whole prayer of our Lord. He never prayed for ecclesiastical, external, or denominational unity, as any casual reader of this passage ought to see. Christ prayed for His own, those who were blood-bought and redeemed; it was not a prayer for organizational unity at all. Our Lord never prayed for an institutionalized, all-inclusive, external unity in Christendom. To advocate an external unity is the same as to advocate the universal brotherhood of man and the universal fatherhood of God. Christ told the biggest religious leaders of His day, "Ye are of your father the devil." Christ repudiated an ecclesiastical oneness such as the one advocated by the World Council of Churches. He said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace but a sword" (Mt. 10:34). Luke refers to a similar position taken by our Lord: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tel you, nay; but rather division" (Lk. 12:51). Christ was a disturber of men. His prosecutors said to Pilate, "He stirreth up all the people." In the synagogue at Nazareth He created a cleavage. He broke the calm. Some of the people sought to throw Him over the cliff in anger because of His teachings. When He arrived in Gadara, He stirred up the whole

community, until the people requested Him to leave their shores. He created a stir and cleavage in the Sanhedrin. Even within the family, the sons and daughters of Joseph and Mary took offense because of Him, and did not become believers until Christ had risen from the dead.

The New Testament presents a spurious ecumenical activity that will emerge in the end-time, when apostate churchianity will become so universal and all-inclusive that actually a super-church is created. According to Revelation 17, the apostate Church is a great harlot and it will ride the beast, the political Antichrist. What the present-day innovators are doing is to condition churchianity for the final apostasy. The day is not far off when Roman Catholicism, and the diluted branches within Protestantism, will move into one vast world federation. This will end disastrously, however, by divine judgments inflicted upon the whole system.

Christ divides men. The cross separates true believers from nominal Christians. Our Lord taught that unity, fellowship, and oneness can only be realized in the household of God. Not one word of Scripture can be produced which expresses a desire of our Lord to see crystallized an ecclesiastical, external, and world unity of religious organizations. It is the unity of faith which is expressed. "One faith, one baptism, one body." By no stretch of imagination can this be applied to ecclesiastical and denominational unity.

*From Prophetic Truth for Today*

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## PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Prof. John E. Dahlin*

**QUESTION . . .** Do cultic leaders and their misguided followers recognize that they are ensnared in delusions?

**ANSWER . . .** This situation is not easily explained. Many of us who have studied cultic activity for years are convinced that a kind of satanic blindness has settled over those who have tampered with false teachings. In Scripture these Christ-denying teachings are called "doctrines of devils" (I Tim. 4:1). Our Lord also made a general reference to such a situation in these words: "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you" (John 12:35). Paul refers to his own spiritual blindness and zeal while he went about persecuting the Christians. (See Acts chapters 25 and 26). As a misguided Pharisee apparently he thought that he was doing what was right until Christ met him on the Damascus road. I remember spending a whole evening and part of the night talking with a banker who was a devotee of Christian Science. Even though he was intelligent, I noticed a mysterious blindness had destroyed his judgment and discernment in spiritual matters. It is certain that the cultists and their disciples are captives of the evil forces of darkness. Paul declares, "In whom the God of this age hath blinded the minds of them who believe not" (II Cor. 4:4).

**QUESTION . . .** Is the magnitude of the present-day delusions a definite sign that the latter-days are here?

**ANSWER . . .** We have conclusive proof that the New Testament predictions regarding such developments are being fulfilled now in such passages as, I Tim. 4:1; II Tim. 3:5-7; II Pet. 2:1-3, and the Epistle of Jude. Our Lord also declared, "Many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many" (Mt. 24:11). His teaching on this subject is further amplified in verses 24-25 in the same chapter.