

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

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WHAT CULTIC GROUPS ARE DOING TO AMERICA

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

During my many years of leadership of Religion Analysis Service, I have seen an extra-ordinary change in the general status of cultic groups. Less than two decades ago most of these groups were expanding in a limited way, or step by step as it were. And they continued to bear a certain stigma for having deviated from the Scriptural position on important doctrines. We are now witnessing a major cultic breakthrough numerically speaking as well as in several other ways. No longer do they represent scattered minorities, or insignificant movements, which stand separated from the main-stream of the historical religious bodies. We find, on the other hand, these major cults represent organized activities which often surpass those of the well-known denominations. And, in addition, they command huge sums of money, and it is being channeled into enormous outpourings of literature and effective propaganda. These rapidly growing cults are now infiltrating every area of the land. Their disciples and zealous representatives are brain-washed by their leaders, and with enthusiasm they move about in every community in America seeking to gain new adherents to their cause. It needs to be stated with emphasis that these organizations are not penny or anemic in their activities.

Rather, they manifest a resourcefulness and determination not often seen within the regular denominational groups. Numerically speaking, several of the cults have doubled and even tripled in strength within a relatively brief period of time. Not all of the cultic groups furnish complete statistics, yet it is safe to state, that taken together, the total count exceeds the 10,000,000 figure as of now. On the whole the major cultic groups are directed by persons of strong leadership, and the promotional work is skillfully carried out. Any person who has given time and thought to the current situation in America will agree that the above statements constitute a factual observation.

THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE REGULAR RELIGIOUS GROUPS

In contrast to the aggressiveness of the cults, described in the preceding paragraph, statistics reveal that several of the largest Protestant denominations have lost members in recent years. In addition, this is further reflected in that enrollment in twenty Lutheran seminaries declined in 1973, with the Concordia seminary experiencing the biggest loss of students. It is the largest Lutheran seminary in North America.

Moreover, continuous dissension within a number of Protestant bodies, and cleavages due to the con-

flict between the conservatives and the liberals, have added to the present dilemma among a number of these bodies. As this article is prepared, a fundamental crisis has emerged within the LCMS, the largest Lutheran body in America. The Board of Control of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, suspended Dr. John T. Tietjen as President of that institution. It is the largest theological seminary of the LCMS. The reason for the action were malfeasance in performing the duties of the office, and advocacy of false doctrine. His refusal of accepting the inerrancy of the Scripture in all its parts brought the matter to a crisis. Forty faculty members (all but five) and twelve from the staff, together with the three-fourths of the 650 seminary students, brought a shut-down of the institution as a means of protesting the action of the Board of Control. No one knows what the full consequences will be as a result of the present cleavage. Some writers have predicted in recent months that the controversy between the conservatives and the liberals will lead to the emergence of two Lutheran denominations. The doctrinal differences are fundamental. Dr. Jacob Preus, the President of the Synod, is simply carrying out the mandate given him by the annual meeting of that denomination held last summer in New Orleans.

Other cleavages are ongoing within several major religious bodies. The Southern Presbyterians also witnessed a wing splitting away from the parent organization. It has taken the name, The National Presbyterian Church. At the time of its recent organization it reported a membership of 75,000. This new denomination follows a

conservative theological position. Within the Southern Baptists there are strong under-currents and dissension due to conflicting positions held in this largest Baptist denomination. Numerous local churches have disaffiliated from the Southern Baptist Convention and have established independent Baptist churches, some of which have joined other Baptist fellowship movements.

The Roman Catholic Church reported a short time ago that it had experienced a loss of members during the past year. A large exodus from the priesthood has weakened the entire program of the hierarchy. And, the lack of adequate funds as well as personnel, has compelled the Catholic Church to close a considerable number of their educational institutions. No solution is in sight other than maintaining the status quo. In addition to this, substantial dissension on several major issues has weakened the whole Roman system. Reform, and new pronouncements from the Papacy, are demanded by powerful spokesmen within the Church. Leading Bishops and liberal writers are challenging the inflexible position maintained by the Papacy. While it is extremely difficult to resist authority in the Catholic Church, yet we find at present internal fermentation and dissension in what once was a monolithic system. It is doubtful that ecclesiastical control can be maintained as it has been achieved in the past.

INDEPENDENT MOVEMENTS AND DISSENSION OPEN THE WAY FOR THE CULTS

Not only have the cults a fertile field in which to operate, due to dissension and cleavages within the established denominations, but

they are now able to exploit the prevailing restlessness within the whole religious sphere. The launching of new movements demonstrate the reality of considerable dissatisfaction prevalent among many people with reference to their relationship with the historic groups. Usually the new movements, which continually emerge, lack stability and experience, both of which are necessary elements for permanence. It is altogether clear that these new developments weaken the denominations, as well as the groups splintering off from the parent bodies. This in turn opens the way for the cults in gaining additional followers among those involved in the present-day fragmentation. As new movements appear on the scene, much bewilderment is present among large segments of people on a wide front. Let us attempt to illustrate this: Keven Ranaghan, co-author of the book, Catholic Pentecostals, said in an interview that there are some 750,000 Catholic Charismatics in North America. Not long ago over 20,000 Pentecostal Roman Catholics of the massive Charismatic Renewal Movement met last June at the University of Notre Dame Stadium, the largest United States Roman Catholic gathering in 1973, produced quite a noise when the masses of people in the stadium spoke in "unintelligible tongues and murmurings" all about the same time. (Such confused activity is forbidden in I Cor. 14:23-28). It should be pointed out, however, that this large audience pledged allegiance to the Pope. While the doctrinal position of the Roman Church remains the same, yet these dynamic minorities will eventually unhinge large segments

from Roman Catholicism. It will be easy for the skillful cultist propagandists to move among those involved in the present transitional position.

The charismatic tide within Protestantism is making even a greater headway, because the Protestant bodies have inferior stability to that of the Roman Catholic Church. Apart from the denominational bodies are movements which have launched activities not sponsored by the parent organizations. Some of these are motivated by good intentions, such as e.g., bringing newness and vitality back where sterility has prevailed. Key 73, with its ambitious program, fell far short of its objectives and weakened as time went on. The continent was not confronted with the claims of Christ as its exponents had so boldly proclaimed. It appears that movements detached from the church are unable to carry on a consistent program for any length of time. As we analyze the Jesus Movement we find that segments of it have lost the way, and they are now being penetrated by extremists. Other movements, which operate independently from the church, usually fail to maintain sufficient momentum and balance in order to be effective. Without a doubt the Charismatic Movement will splinter into various groups, with the extremists going in one direction, while other elements of it will become disillusioned, and perhaps many will return to the groups from which they separated.

HOW THE CULTIC GROUPS EXPLOIT THE SITUATION

The situation, as illustrated above, will provide a fertile field for the cultists to exploit for their own purpose. They are enabled to

do this as they have a unified leadership which directs their operation. Whether one refers to the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, the Armstrong program, or others, it should be pointed out that they follow a dictatorial method of operation. Their followers do exactly what they are instructed to carry out. These misguided people are indoctrinated and brain-washed to the extent that they are blind so far as judgment and evaluation are concerned. They go about peddling their propaganda with a zeal that is astonishing. One Seventh-Day Adventist came to my house the other day, not to get information as he said he intended, but he tried to convert me to his position. His mind was completely closed and he would discuss nothing except the interpretation of

the Scriptures given by his superiors. Those whom I confront through correspondence usually do not seek after the truth, but rather they present the teachings in which they have been indoctrinated.

It is safe to predict that the cults will make even greater inroads in the years ahead, as many of the regular groups are torn apart by internal strife and lack of unity. Unfortunately tens of thousands are listening to the propagandists of error, and they are being trapped in these false systems. The worst of cultic deception is before us, and we will witness millions being led away from the truth and becoming victims of quacks and charlatans. In a later issue we plan to have an article on the phenomena of exorcism.

A TRIBUTE TO TRYGVE HENJUM

(1905-1973)

As President of Religion Analysis Service, I wish to pay tribute to Rev. Trygve Henjum as a valuable member of our Board and a real supporter of our ministry in literature. Much credit must be attributed to him for the generous support given our organization by the Bible Presbyterian Church. In addition, our brother was a personal friend of mine for a number of years. I have had the privilege of ministering to his congregation on many occasions, including this month. Rev. Henjum had a very fine discernment of the times in which we live. And, in his preaching, we find that he hewed close to the line with regard to Biblical doctrine. We regret his passing at a time when there is so much compromising and lack of conviction in the general pulpit ministry of today.

On behalf of the Board of Religion Analysis Service, I wish to express to Mrs. Henjum and the daughter with her family, our sympathy in the great loss which has been sustained. Likewise to the Bible Presbyterian Church we express our sympathy in the loss of its pastor of more than 18 years. Our organization has appreciated our brother's dedicated ministry, and our prayer is that we may be equally consecrated to Christ as was exemplified by Trygve Henjum. We may say with the author of Hebrews at this time, "Being dead yet he speaketh." We believe the influence of the life and ministry of this fine servant of God will continue to stimulate us to more effective service to the Lord.

John E. Dahlin, President
of Religion Analysis Service.

This tribute was given at the Memorial Service, Monday, Dec. 31, 1973.

FACING THE ISSUES OF TONGUES

by Stanley N. Gundry, faculty, Moody Bible Institute
Moody Monthly, October, 1973

Susan Meissner, Seattle leader of the Jesus People Army: I speak in tongues. It changed my life from a bashful farm girl to a powerful revolutionary.

Singer Pat Boone: When I run out of English and find myself groping self-consciously for the way to express myself, now I find complete freedom as the Holy Spirit, in this unfettered, infinitely expressive prayer language helps me to communicate directly with my Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ my Lord.

New Report: Notre Dame University—11,000 Catholic Pentecostals meet in annual conference. Minneapolis—8,000 Lutheran Pentecostals gather in meeting.

No alert Christian can afford to ignore the many questions raised by the current interest in glossolalia or speaking in tongues. The growth of the classic Pentecostal denominations in the twentieth century has been phenomenal in itself, but in the last ten or fifteen years the neo-Pentecostal or charismatic movement has penetrated widely. Today it is found in mainline Protestant churches, Roman Catholic circles, among the so-called Jesus People and on the campuses of Christian colleges and seminaries. In fact, rare is the evangelical church or organization that has not faced or is not now confronting the issue of tongues speaking. Individual Christians who have not had the tongues experience are wondering if they are missing out on the secret of spiritual power.

What is the teaching of Pentecostalism, both old and new, that has set Christendom abuzz with more than glossolalia? Actually, the question is not an easy one, for there seems to be several streams of thought in the movement as a whole which might inclusively be called "Pentecostalism."

Generally the earlier Pentecostalism taught that a second experience called baptism in the Holy Spirit should follow one's conversion, with speaking in tongues as the necessary and inevitable evidence that it has taken place. While not necessary to salvation, this baptism is thought to be something every believer should experience in order to realize fully the potential of the Holy Spirit's ministry in his life.

The more recent charismatics, however, do not necessarily accept this view. Some seem to speak of Spirit baptism as though it were simply a decisive moment of dedication to God which might be accompanied by tongues. A Catholic Pentecostal writes, "The common denominator of the pentecostal experience seems to be inspired praise of the Lord, *either* in one's own language *or* in tongues." (italics added)

Others appear to be saying that though one speaks in tongues when he receives the baptism, the permanent gift of speaking in tongues is something God may or may not give to a believer who has received the baptism.

In other words there is no uni-

versally held view among Pentecostals or charismatics in glossolalia. Even so, all such groups accept tongues speaking as a valid gift of God. Most give it high priority as a quickening experience, which they regard as the normal Christian life in the New Testament assemblies" and "normal in the 1970's."

This lack of agreement among tongues speakers themselves makes it difficult to discuss the subject in a manner fair to all and in a way which avoids stereotypes or caricatures. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that those at the opposite poles of the discussion tend to become emotionally involved. Understandably they feel that the validity of their walk with God is being challenged. They also are excited about what they regard as climactic experience in their Christian lives.

Although it is good that recent attitudes and discussions have tended to be more moderate and conciliatory, much of the discussion has tended to ignore some very basic questions. As a non-tongues speaker, I would like to raise some of these questions in a very candid way, but hopefully without contention with brothers and sisters in Christ who may hold other views. The goal will be to clarify issues, promote mutual understanding and a more full appreciation of God's will in this important matter.

Let us focus on six crucial questions:

1. What or who should serve as the final authority in the judgment of this issue?

The obvious answer would seem to be that it should be God speaking in His Word, the Scriptures. This ideal is all too easily short-

circuited, for the temptation is ever present to use the Bible to support one's pre-conceptions. Even more subtle is the tendency to interpret the Bible in the light of the Bible. Since both the older and newer Pentecostalism tend to be experience-oriented, this becomes especially crucial on the question of tongues.

A tongues speaker recently wrote the editor of *Christianity Today*, "You cannot give fair treatment to a gift from God which you neither believe in or have experienced." This person has really said that tongues speaking is not subject to critical examination in the light of Scripture. Yet to say that the one who has spoken in tongues is the only one qualified to comment on the subject is to assume the experience is a gift of God and to put the subjective above the Scripture.

Since what has happened to the glossolalist is no more exempt from the judgment of the Word of God than any other aspect of the Christian life, the tongues speaker should be willing to examine his experience in the light of Scripture. Only in this way can he determine whether or not his experience is the same as that spoken of as tongues in the New Testament.

The tongues encounter is apparently very real to those who have had it. But that is not the question. Rather, what kind of an experience was it; what is Spirit baptism and how does an emphasis on glossolalia square with the priorities of Christian living as carefully spelled out in the New Testament? Is it the same as the phenomenon experienced in the first century Church? These are the real questions and only the New Testament can answer them.

2. Is speaking in tongues alone sufficient to validate a person's Christian experience and theological beliefs?

The question is raised because there is a tendency to assume that a person who has spoken in tongues must be a Christian and that his basic theology and practice must therefore be regarded as beyond criticism. Some readily accessible facts and sober considerations should bring matters into proper perspective. Common sense recognizes that a tongues experience can be counterfeited; indeed many Pentecostals are among the first to recognize this. Furthermore, instances of ecstatic utterance are not uncommon in non-Christian religions.

In other words, tongues are not a uniquely Christian occurrence. Then what about liberal Protestants and Roman Catholics who have spoken in tongues? Is the fact that a person from a liberal Protestant theological tradition has spoken in tongues reason to ignore the unbelief inherent in that liberal theology?

The same can be asked of Roman Catholic charismatics. In the words of a Catholic parish newspaper, Roman Catholics in the Pentecostal movement are "learning from their experience about effective use of the sacraments" (understood in the Roman Catholic sense). Other Catholic Pentecostals testify that the charismatic experience has deepened their devotion to Mary. Catholic charismatic leaders and members of the hierarchy are appealing to the movement to remain in the Roman Church and "to remain faithful to the leadership of the papacy."

Just as charismatics from liberal

Protestantism must face up to the theological aberrations of liberalism, so Catholic charismatics who hope to remain in good standing in their church must be willing to face up to the issues raised by the church's theological deviations in the areas of justification, the sacrifice of the Mass, penance, papal infallibility, the doctrines of Mary and the authority of church and tradition alongside Scripture.

This is not to say that many of these charismatics in both Romanism and liberal Protestantism may not be saved. But the mere fact of their having spoken in tongues is not proof of their salvation; and those who are genuinely saved must be willing to go on and face the serious theological errors of their churches.

As Harold Lindsell wrote in a recent article in *Christianity Today*, "No matter how many tongues a man speaks or how many times he does it, if his doctrine is defective, his tongues will not sanctify his aberration. The baptism in the Spirit cannot serve as a cover for heterodox belief or sanctify the denial of scriptural truth."

3. Was speaking in tongues intended to be an experience that every believer should have, an experience to be sought after as the ideal of Christian living?

Though some in the movement would agree with the charismatic who recently said, "I . . . was baptized with the Holy Spirit long before I even heard of tongues," many if not most Pentecostals place a high priority on tongues speaking as the desired Christian norm. Specifically this third question seeks to examine the frequent Pentecostal insistence that Spirit baptism is a second experience to be

sought after conversion with tongues speaking as the necessary and inevitable evidence of the baptism.

That speaking in tongues is the evidence of Spirit baptism seems unlikely from a comparison of I Corinthians 12:13 and 12:30. Paul and *all* the Corinthian believers had been baptized by one Spirit into the Body of Christ (12:13), but all had *not* spoken in tongues (12:30)!

This also suggests, contrary to Pentecostal theory, that baptism by the Spirit takes place *once at conversion* when the believer is incorporated into the Body of Christ, not as an experience to be desired later (cf. also Gal. 3:26-28). This is to be distinguished from being filled with the Spirit which may recur on numerous occasions.

Filling is not necessarily associated with tongues speaking, but more with the Holy Spirit's empowering control. Nowhere in the New Testament do we find a priority put on speaking in tongues as an important element of one's Christian walk.

It is incredible that Paul should ignore it in his discussions of Christian life and character in Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philipians and Colossians if speaking in tongues really has the importance which charismatics attach to it. Paul's only discussion of tongues is in the context of the problems the practice had created and which he suggests that tongues do not have the highest priority (I Cor. 12:31-13:1).

Tongues seekers and speakers should candidly face these questions: "Does the New Testament attach the same priority and significance to speaking in tongues that I do? Or are the priorities

for Christian character to be found elsewhere?"

4. Was speaking in tongues a gift intended only for the early Church, or are later manifestations of the phenomenon possible?

Some opponents of glossolalia argue very dogmatically that I Corinthians 13:8-10 proves that a valid exercise of tongues is impossible today. The usual argument is that tongues were to cease (13:8) when the New Testament was complete ("when the perfect comes," 13:10).

Such dogmatism rests on a shaky foundation. The interpretation is highly disputable since "the perfect" is not defined and the time of cessation is otherwise unspecified. Theological dogmatism should be reserved for less debatable points.

However, having said that, perhaps it is significant that even in the first century Church, speaking in tongues seems to occupy a less and less significant place the further from Pentecost one moves. This is probably tied to the nature of tongues as a confirmatory sign for the young Church.

While unwarranted dogmatism should be avoided, it does seem appropriate to question the assertion that speaking in tongues is to be expected as a permanent and normal feature of the life of the Church, either corporately or individually.

5. Was speaking in tongues in the experience of the first century Church a speaking in unlearned foreign languages or an ecstatic utterance lacking those characteristics common to intelligible spoken languages, or both?

Pentecostals argue, and many non-Pentecostals agree, that at least in I Corinthians 12-14 the tongues spoken of are ecstatic utterances. In fact, most recent dis-

cussions of tongues have assumed that tongues include ecstatic utterance with the result that the very strong evidence for understanding *tongues* in the New Testament do refer exclusively to intelligible foreign languages has been bypassed. Though discussion of the evidence and opposing arguments could become quite technical the following considerations seem inescapable.

- a) Usually in Greek literature and in the New Testament, *tongue* refers to meaningful human speech.
- b) The word *interpretation* (used seven times in I Cor. 12-14) in such a context normally refers to translation of intelligible human languages.
- c) In Acts 2:6-11 Luke clearly intends speaking in tongues to refer to speaking in foreign languages. Since Luke and Paul were co-workers, it is likely that Luke is reflecting Paul's understanding of tongues, an understanding which would be expressed in I Corinthians 12-14.
- d) But what about I Corinthians 12-14? Many interpreters feel that ecstatic utterance is clearly implied here. But look again. In 13:1 Paul writes of the "tongues of men and of angels." It is claimed this suggests that tongues are a heavenly or angelic language which Paul spoke. But Paul does not claim to have spoken an angelic language. He says "if" and the usage of *tongues* in this verse actually presumes their intelligibility and viability as languages.

As for 14:2 which is supposed to point toward ecstatic utterance, it need not mean any more than that without translation the value of speaking in tongues is limited to

the speaker's emotions since no one, including the speaker, understands (cf. 14:9). For this reason Paul advises the tongues speaker to pray for the gift of interpretation (14:13) and commands him to be silent in the assembly when no one is present who can interpret the tongue (14:28).

It is the absence of an interpreter, not the ecstatic nature of the tongue, which makes the tongue unintelligible. On the Day of Pentecost interpreters were not needed because the audience was cosmopolitan, speaking many different languages. At Corinth, though, the audience was local and without translation a tongue might appear as gibberish (cf. 14:6-12, 16-18, 23).

Certainly 14:10-11 should make it perfectly clear that when Paul speaks of the gift of tongues, he refers to miraculous speaking in unlearned human languages. "There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning. If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me." Therefore the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret (14:13, NASB).

If the New Testament gift of tongues was the gift of speaking in unlearned foreign languages,* the implications for today are clear. Since very few tongues speakers claim to be speaking foreign languages, and since there are even fewer instances of speaking in unlearned languages, nearly all contemporary "tongues speak-

*For an in-depth study of the nature of tongues as intelligible foreign languages see: Robert H. Gundry, "Ecstatic Utterance" (NEB)?, *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S., Vol. XVII, Pt. 2, October 1966.

ing" fails to qualify as tongues speaking (unlearned, intelligible foreign languages) in the New Testament sense. Most claims to glossolalia could be rejected on this basis alone.

6. If the contemporary tongues speaking experience is not the New Testament gift of speaking unlearned foreign languages, what is it?

Here one must exercise extreme care, for once it has been determined that at least most present-day glossolalia are not the same as that exercised in the early Church, Scripture has no more to say. If not the New Testament gift, the nature of the present phenomena must be determined on other grounds. Different studies have been made and all the evidence is not yet in. However, at least five possibilities exist to explain different situations.

In some cases the tongues-speaker may be putting on an act-faking. In others, a demonic influence may be operative. While we would prefer to think that such cases are rare and should leave the judgment to God unless the indications are perfectly clear, it would be naive to refuse to allow these two as possibilities.

In some instances there is reason to think that the tongues speaker's experience is self-induced, produced by the verbal repetition of certain formula words or by turning the voice loose until self-restraint is broken and the sought-for speech occurs. Closely related are the expressions of those who may have this verbal response to a spiritual crisis because previous teaching or example has taught them to expect to have this response; in other words, their experience fulfills their expectations.

Perhaps many who have spoken unintelligible utterances in moments of spiritual ecstasy in this manner have attempted to give voice to emotions that seemed incapable of normal rational expression. In such instances the individual should recognize that the occurrence is not the gift of tongues and examine his priorities, not allowing the experience to become an end in itself.

In any case those involved in the tongues phenomena must critically examine their experience and ask themselves the question, "Has an emotional experience that produces a temporary euphoria been allowed to supersede the real work the Spirit desires to do in my life?"

Believers are admonished to "be filled with the Spirit," to "walk by the Spirit," and to "be led by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 5:18). These phrases speak of His empowering, control and direction. To the extent that the Spirit is given this place in a Christian's life the fruit of the Spirit will be produced (Gal. 5:22-23).

The Spirit's work does not necessarily come with sensational or highly emotional manifestations. In fact the expectation of tangible, sensational manifestations of the Spirit's work (such as tongues) may be an indication of spiritual immaturity and a substitute for the real work He wants to do in us (I Cor. 6:19, 20)!

The call that comes to all believers, Pentecostalist and non-Pentecostalist, is to present ourselves to God (Rom 6 and 12), to be filled and led by His Spirit, not to seek or expect to speak in tongues.

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"NEW" CULTS AND THE OCCULT IN THE AGE OF AQUARIUS

by Professor Edmond C. Gruss

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Astrologers tell us that the Age of Aquarius is supposed to bring with it a new religious atmosphere. As John Godwin observed: "It has become difficult to venture anywhere in contemporary America without being informed that the Age of Aquarius is upon us. There's no escaping the message" (*Occult America*, p. 1). Interest in religion, the occult, mysticism and Eastern religion has never been more popular in America. Religion is one of the fastest growing fields of graduate study at secular universities today. These facts are striking because during the 1960's some Protestant theologians were erroneously asserting the "death of God" and the soon demise of religion.

In their learned opinion supernaturalism of any sort was no longer a believable option for intelligent people, just as fairy tales are incredible to a rational adult. In fact, those radicals prophesied that religion as a whole seemed slated to disappear, a kind of cultural fog evaporating before the rising sun of scientific knowledge.

But to judge by the course of events in the early 1970's those radicals are going to be exposed as false prophets. Religion, whether traditional Christianity or the latest brand of spiritism, is not dying out by any means; instead, it is experiencing a tremendous upsurge. [Vernon C. Grounds, *Christian Heritage*, January, 1973, p. 51]

The significance of this upsurge is recognized and interpreted in a recent book by U.S. News and

World Report, *The Religious Reawakening in America*.

At a time when established religion has become an object of criticism, we have moved into what many consider to be one of the most religious periods in the history of the United States.

Young people particularly have sparked the revival of interest in spiritual values. Unfulfilled by the offering of the traditional church and the traditional temple, they have slipped into rebellion—not against God and religious values but against the "establishment" of Christian, Jewish, and other faiths. They are searching for new forms and ways of achieving spiritual satisfaction to offset the dulling and sterile effect of a highly materialistic and technological society. [p. 11]

The revival of interest in religion and spiritual values has led many to accept beliefs and practices which are antithetical to orthodox Christianity (and Judaism). This result is verified by Peter Rowley:

In 1970 about two and a half million people belonged to the new religions of America—Indian, Sino-Japanese, avant-garde Christian and others even more unusual . . .

Reports indicate that growth in the latter part of 1970 may be as great as a million people seeking an answer to what seems to them a frightening world; young Americans and some middle-aged and older ones all across the U.S. are joining occult religions or following Eastern and Western gurus

and abandoning traditional Christianity and Judaism. [*New Gods in America*, pp. 3,4]

What has caused the interest in the occult? What is responsible for the swing toward Eastern religion and mysticism? What are the "new" cults, and which are the most important? These questions are dealt with in the material which follows.

THE OCCULT CRAZE

T. K. Wallace investigated the question, "What's behind the Occultism Craze?" by questioning people in bookstores which specialized in occult material. What were these people seeking?

"I believe there's a master plan to the cosmos, and I want to learn it," said one person. "I need something like horoscopes or Tarot cards to make my decisions for me," said another. "My marriage is on the rocks. I need to find happiness somewhere," a third told me. Still another said, "My life is dull, and I must find something exciting." [*Family Weekly*, February 28, 1971, p. 4]

Many have been influenced to study the occult by the many books on the subject, some of which have been best sellers. It does not require a keen observer to discern the abundance of books on this topic in bookstores, on paperback racks in markets and drug stores, and in public libraries. The occult has been given much exposure in newspapers, magazines and on television. Many public schools and colleges offer courses dealing with witchcraft, astrology and like subjects.

Dr. Krippner contended that the occult revival could be traced to the fact "that many people are having experiences that are not explained by tradition or by educa-

tion" (Ibid.). Occultism seems to promise an answer. Many find the occult a place of "escape from the world's problems and from their own" (Ibid.).

Many additional suggestions might be given to explain the occult craze, but frequently the ultimate cause is ignored or rejected. The present writer agrees with Hal Lindsey's analysis as reported by John Dart in the *Los Angeles Times*:

Satan changed his strategy about 1967 . . . and has since sought to have the world believe in the supernatural.

This helps to explain the interest in the occult, witchcraft, Satanism, astrology, Oriental mysticism and similar cults in the last few years. [March 10, 1973, p. 25]

An investigation of the occult craze quickly convinces the alert investigator that the interest in this subject and its influence in American life is far more serious than one would like to believe.

THE EASTERN INFLUENCE

What has caused the swing of many Americans, especially young people, to Eastern religion and mysticism? The answer is not simple, but some valuable suggestions have been given by Oswald Guinness in his article, "The Eastern Look of the Modern West." He sees three basic reasons:

- Western science and philosophy became too mechanistic and rationalistic. They ended up with dry, arid linguistics and a cage-like universe. All this crippled human sensitivity, human imagination and sheer subjective experience. In reaction, many nineteenth-century western people . . . were already turning toward the East. It gave them a basis for imagination and experience when the West was ex-

tremely dry and mechanistic.

• . . . In the last 100 years we've seen a resurgence of the whole Eastern culture

The work of the various eastern apologists is most important of all . . .

They have traveled widely in the West and have tried to show that where western Christianity has failed and western, post-Christian philosophy has no answers, the East has provided the answers. They have a broad appeal on our campuses

• The third and most important factor behind the swing to the East is what Alan Watts calls parallelism. I call this dovetailing, the coinciding of post-Christian, western thinking and ancient eastern thinking. The primary cause of dovetailing has not been the direct intellectual influence of the East on the West. Rather, by playing with the options it has, the West has gotten to the place where its only choice is to adhere to what the East has always believed. [*His*, February, 1972, pp. 2,3]

Guinness makes another significant observation relative to Eastern religion and orthodox Christianity: "I'm appalled to see how many evangelical Christians accept eastern ideas uncritically without knowing where they came from. Many are completely naive" (Ibid., p. 5).

What can the Christian do in the light of this move toward the East? In a day when people are streaming out toward the East, the East is proving to be less than adequate at many points. We need to be among those who call our generation to be realistic, pointing out the errors in the direction they are going. We must show clearly that the East is no exit. And then we

must demonstrate the alternative that Christianity offers. [Oswald Guinness, *His*, March, 1972, p. 31]

THE NEW CULTS

As a teacher of a college course dealing with the "Cults of America" it became obvious during the 1960's that the cult scene was changing and that a number of "new" cults were becoming important. (By "new" it is to be understood that : they were new to America; new as originating in America; or new as reflecting great growth in recent years. The term "cult" is being used in a broad sense.) The usual course in cults included such groups as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and Christian Scientists. Among the new breed of cults confronting Christianity are: Zen Buddhism, Scientology, Nichiren Shoshu and Bahai.

The older cults were basically a perversion of Biblical truth—heresy—holding doctrines which had been rejected by the Church. The new cults are usually closely related to the Eastern religions and the occult rather than to Christianity.

In *New Gods in America*, Peter Rowley estimated the following of a number of "The New Religions" in 1970: Scientology (600,000); Nichiren Shoshu (200,000); Spiritual Scientists (Spiritualists, 150,000); Maharishi (Transcendental Meditation), I Ching and Yoga (125,000 each); Black Muslims and Bahai (100,000 each); Association for Research and Enlightenment (13,000); Meher Baba (7,000); Gurdjieff, Witchcraft and Satanic Cults (5,000 each); Zen (2,000); Subud and Hare Krishna (1,500 each) [pp. 3, 4]. It should be remembered that the numbers of followers of these cults must be

increased to reflect the growth since 1970 and that these figures do not include the worldwide membership of some of the groups. For example, Nichiren Shoshu (Soka Gakkai) has a following in Japan of "seven million five hundred thousands families . . ." (Ibid., p. 177). Scientology with 600,000 adherents in America has a total membership variously estimated as from two to fifteen million. Other examples could be given.

Although Rowley excluded astrology from the list of new religions, millions have substituted it for religion and it has a vital part in many of the new cults. Estimates place 10,000 professional and 175,000 part-time astrologers in America alone, and more than 40 million Americans are said to allow astrology to influence their lives.

CONCLUSION

What should the Christian's attitude and action be toward adherents of the new cults and the oc-

cult in the Age of Aquarius? The Christian must assert the claims of Christ: ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The search in life for spiritual satisfaction, peace, happiness, fulfillment, excitement, help in decision making and in the problems of life, can all be realized in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Many of the new cults speak of reincarnation — Christianity proclaims the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Cor. 15). The man "in Christ" has a satisfying present as well as a sure future (Phil. 4:19; Eph. 1:3-14). Guinness indicated that Eastern religion "is no exit," and the same may be said of the occult. Many religious, gurus and "saviors" have come and gone, but the Lord Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

Article is from the author's new book *The Cults and the Occult in the Age of Aquarius*.

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Prof. John E. Dahlin

QUESTION . . . What constructive steps may be taken in preventing the Cults from making further gains, especially among people in the churches?

ANSWER . . . One effective remedy against the cultic inroads is to re-introduce Biblical doctrine in the church and its institutions. This has been neglected for many years, and popular subjects have substituted Bible doctrine. People thoroughly indoctrinated with the Biblical truths seldom become victims to cultists. And, in addition, it is well when churches arrange study groups where false teachings are examined in order to know exactly where the cults have deviated from the Scriptures. The lack of information on the cults causes people to become easy prey to error when presented skillfully by these propagandists.

QUESTION . . . What changes in the activities of the modern deceivers may be anticipated in the years which lie ahead?

ANSWER . . . In addition to the continuous gains made by the well known cults, it is certain from careful observation that we are threatened with a rapid expansion of the extreme elements in the sphere of false teachings. We may expect that demonology and certain forms of satanic mysticism to make extensive gains during the present restless and confused generation. This expansion is predicted in the New Testament Scriptures, and we are now living at the time of fulfillment of these developments mentioned in Bible Prophecy.