

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

The
DISCERNER

AN
INTERDENOMINATIONAL
HERESY-EXPOSING
QUARTERLY

Vol. VIII

No. 2

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April - June, 1974

The DISCERNER

Published Quarterly
Price \$1.00 for 4 issues; \$3.00 for 12 issues;
30 cents a copy; for foreign
subscription add 6 cents per issue.

Copyright 1974 by Religion Analysis Service, Inc.
902 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, Minn. 55403
Printed in the United States

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

John E. Dahlin, *Chairman*

Dr. J. Edwin Hartill

Mr. Harold Dainsberg

"EXORCISM" AS KNOWN IN OUR TIME

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

The film version of William Blatty's best selling novel "The Exorcist" opened to capacity crowds in 24 cities the day after Christmas. Within a few weeks 4 million people had paid more than \$10 million to see the film—winner of 2 Academy Awards. Often large numbers would be standing in line for hours winding around city blocks. Even during inclement weather they came to see an occult thriller frequently shocking audiences into nausea, some fainted, or experienced more severe forms of mental and physical illness as a result of this gruesome presentation. It was reported that one teen-ager was so shaken after viewing "The Exorcist" that he was scarcely able to eat for two weeks. The film caused some others to believe they were demon-possessed and that some of their friends were in the same fearful situation. Despite such tragic experiences, there are those who insist that they have found the film a religious experience. You can't bring people to God by scaring them to death as it were. It is not possible to do a positive thing by negative means.

The publishers of the paperback edition of "The Exorcist" reported in March that the book had gone

into its 31st printing, nearly 10 million copies, with 3 million sold just since the film opened. The occult activity is big business, and it is estimated that the film version of "The Exorcist" will gross \$180 million, which may be a box-office record.

AN EXPLANATION OF "THE EXORCIST"

One scholar defines *The Exorcist* as "a parable for the 20th century" — a morality play between good and evil. Even critics of the film admit that it makes plain that evil is all-pervasive; in the East and the West, in ancient times and in modern so-called civilization. Moreover, the film recognizes that evil is personal (not just the product of bad conditions in society) and, though present everywhere, it can reach tremendous intensity when focused on idolatry and perverse cult activity. Despite the bad influence of the "The Exorcist" a central lesson may be gained, namely, that every individual needs exorcism from sin, and that Jesus Christ is the true exorcist, who alone is able to put away sin by means of His finished redemptive work on calvary. This is about the only constructive thing which can be salvaged from "The Exor-

cist" that is, when one attempts to extract some lesson from it.

CAUSES FOR THE PRESENT-DAY PHENOMENA

It is generally recognized by careful observers of the occult phenomena that it is particularly strong today among the young and less educated, because their position of unrest appears to be greater than it is among other classes. Whenever a generation is going through a time of great insecurity in economic, political, and social life, as well as in interpersonal relationships and violent cultural change, it is quite natural that people tend to reach out into the non-rational levels of reality more than in quieter, calmer times. Someone has well said, "When faith in God decreases, superstition increases." As one looks back upon history, it will be discovered that the occult phenomena has appeared and reappeared in times of conflict, especially when the old reliable standards have crumbled. In other words, when nearly every convention, every belief is questioned . . . people will turn to anything that comes up, hence the occult will gain momentum during a time of utter confusion such as is prevalent in today's society. In addition, the theological position within many denominations has been so greatly diluted in recent decades, that too often numerous churches have been ineffective in helping people with the herculean problems confronting them in this generation. A careful observer said recently that "today's craze for the occult mirrors society in turmoil!" We might add to this by pointing out that when there is a breakdown in established institutions, there is always a proliferation of

superstition as e.g., an increase in the outbreak of astrology, divinations, and all sorts of strange phenomena. The present interest in exorcism is a clear example as to that which is happening when a generation is detached from the moorings of historic Christianity. These, then, are definite causes for the unusual development in mysticism and the occult in our present-day society.

THE REALITY OF DEMON ACTIVITY

In the New Testament, particularly in the Gospel narratives, numerous examples of demon possession are set forth. Not only do we find the description of people possessed by demons, but it is recorded also that Christ cast them out, and He brought full deliverance to these people who were under demonic power. They were restored to sanity and normal life again. Mary Magdalene, who had been possessed by seven demons, is perhaps the most striking example, in the Gospel Narratives, of one completely delivered from demon power, and subsequently becoming the most dedicated follower of Christ during His ministry. A number of references on demon possession are found in such passages as: Mk. 1:23-26; 5:2-14; Lk. 4:34-41; 8:29; Acts 19:11-20. Additional references may be located, but the above will suffice. Paul summarizes the whole conflict in the following verse, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). The demon powers were particularly active during the time of

Christ's ministry on earth. This is understandable as satan's forces realized that the Lord's power was enormous, hence these organized legions directed by the adversary, increased their tempo of activity in order to counter-act the work of the Son of God. It is well to state also that satan knows his time is short (limited), hence he is redoubling his effort in view of the certainty that Christ's return is imminent. Several of the New Testament writers predict an increase in demon activity as the age draws to its close. What we witness in our time is a verification of the N.T. predictions pertaining to such developments during the end-time. It is ironic that after several decades of denial by many ministers, professors, and educators of a personal devil, and the presence of fallen beings here on earth, that demon power should now be emphasized openly in the theatrical world as, e.g., in the film *The Exorcist*. The fact of the matter is when people's faith has been assaulted regarding spiritual reality, it is obvious that many will now manifest a readiness for the acceptance of the presentation of fallen beings inflicting mankind.

THE GREAT DANGER IN EXORCISM

Every objective observer of present-day trends recognizes that there is an increasing affinity among many people for extremism. It is therefore not difficult to understand why certain disturbed people are being identified as demon possessed. But such sweeping generalizations are totally unwarranted. Many people are afflicted with natural physical disturbances, and certain psychological forces, usually dormant, often

spring into action in times of great stress. It is altogether wrong, I feel, to ascribe nervous exhaustion, mental break-down, and even insanity as demon possession. Many of the sick, and the neurotic people, should not be classified in that manner. It has been demonstrated, particularly at mental institutions, that some of the unbalanced and violent patients have been made calm and rational through the utilization of certain drugs. Were such persons possessed by demons, it is obvious they would not respond to the treatment by drugs.

In our confused generation it is unfortunate that there often is the tragic mis-interpretation of the matter of demon possession. As we pointed out earlier, there is indeed the reality of demon possession, yet we must not allow such a situation to become distorted so that we are overmastered by an erroneous view on the subject. When such a broad concept is held on demon possession, we find certain religious leaders are now coming forth as exorcists, that is, endeavoring to cast out demons in the name of Jesus Christ. Only in a very limited or isolated situation should a spiritual leader proceed in this manner.

During my wide ministry which stretches over 45 years, I have stepped into a situation as an exorcist only once. This occurred many years ago when I was pastor of a church. It was during a time of revival when a number of people came to know Christ. As one service was being concluded, I saw a teen-age girl standing in the rear of the auditorium. I decided to go down and talk to her as likely she was in need of help. I pleaded with her to get down on her knees and accept Christ. She refused to re-

spond and stood there bound in the spirit, but she would not move. I suggested that if she did not wish to make a decision, it would be just as well that she leave as most of the people had left the church auditorium. But she stood there speechless. I was led to pray in the name of Jesus Christ, that the spirit which kept her bound, would depart immediately. Within a few moments she was down on her knees, and I had the joy of leading her to Christ. Her surrender to the Lord was complete. During the next few months that I remained in the community, or until I assumed another pastorate, I witnessed the remarkable spiritual growth of that girl in her middle-teens. In fact, I think she was the most dedicated young person I have seen during my ministry. She loved the Bible studies and she usually was the first one to come with her Bible to our services. This story does not end there. Tragically as a result of a fiery explosion in the kitchen stove, she died after a week of intense suffering due to the burns which covered most of her body. My last service in that community, before I left, was to conduct her funeral. She told me before she died, that had she not accepted Christ as she did a few months earlier, she could not have done it during the terrible suffering she experienced that week. I use this experience to illustrate that there may be situations when we might step in and ask for Divine intervention. But I must point out immediately that it is unwise to attribute all strange phenomena to mysterious evil powers. I am not denying that certain people may be demon possessed. I feel, however, that one should use considerable restraint before making

sweeping generalizations on that subject, and hence go forth as an exorcist.

Personally I am convinced that a child of God cannot be possessed by demons. The New Testament teaches clearly the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit within the believer. This does not imply that each child of God has the fullness of the Spirit of God. It is illogical to think, however, that a believer can be possessed with a demon when the Holy Spirit has taken up His abode in that person. Obviously the forces of satan are active everywhere seeking to nullify the work of God, and great pressures are applied by the evil powers, but they are outward and not from within. Paul experienced the reality of such evil powers when he writes "But satan hath hindered us" (I Thess. 2:18). Among the unregenerated it is clearly demonstrated that the evil powers often exercise full control of certain people. Regarding the believers, we have this promise, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (I Jn. 4:4). We may be certain as believers that our protection is adequate, and that the evil spirits simply cannot gain supremacy in our lives. It behooves every believer to put his trust in Christ who has "all power in heaven and on earth." Even during these days of confusion and satanic aggression, He will keep us safely within His fold. Paul writes to the Colossians these bracing words, "Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15). In this time when Exorcism is emphasized widely, it is well that the Christian Church take the opportunity in teaching that God is the one to be trusted,

and that He has all power to overcome fear and explain powers that seem to be beyond human control. Christ has conquered the demonic forces arrayed against man as wit-

nessed by His resurrection from the dead. And, let us believe and declare with Paul "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

EVANGELICAL CATHOLICS AND THE IGNORED PARADOX

By Jacques Marcoux

In recent years Protestants have been riding a wave of optimism regarding Roman Catholics. This optimism is evident in Protestant literature. *Christianity Today* for example, demonstrates this when it editorializes. "Big changes are occurring in the Church of Rome, and many of those changes are wholesome, the work of the Holy Spirit and a source of joy to Protestants." The emergence of a new Protestant concern for Catholics is comforting and understandable. Protestants see the changes in the Roman church following Vatican II as steps toward evangelical Christianity.

This optimism may be a subject of praise, but there is the possibility that it may prove to be the result of pure naivete. One must be careful that this attitude is not premature. One needs a keen insight into these changes and the so-called outworking of the Holy Spirit. To properly interpret these changes and developments, one must be thoroughly acquainted with the soul of Catholicism, not just with the external apparatus but also with the underlying theological basis of the religious system.

THE CHANGES IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Many Protestants believe the Holy Spirit to be genuinely at work

in the Catholic Church. They are so convinced by external changes which have taken place since Vatican II, and mainly by the vigorous form of life which is taking place in many Catholics. When they examine individuals' experience and testimonies they suppose the Holy Spirit to be active in them. But to do so is to look at the Roman Church with Protestant spectacles, because the Catholic Church is not primarily "individuals."

What is the Catholic Church? It is first of all a religious system centered around a hierarchy. The Church's authority is found in the Pontiff, Bishops, Councils, and two thousand years of tradition. What constitutes the Catholic Church—its belief, its teaching, its dogma, its structure—comes from the hierarchy which Catholics believe to have been instituted by Christ himself.

Individuals are Catholic only as far as they are connected with, and under the dispensation of the hierarchy. When a Protestant says the Holy Spirit is working in the Catholic Church, he must demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is working in the hierarchy, from the Pope down to the priests, not the layman only.

The Holy Spirit did work in an individual 450 years ago, but he did not work in the Church. Luther saw the complete truth of the Gos-

pel but he was forced to begin the Protestant movement outside the Church. When the Holy Spirit works in individuals, it can only result in these individuals finding themselves outside the church as did Luther. If these individuals don't a paradox becomes evident.

What changes are taking place in the Catholic Church? The Church's hierarchy has always adapted to changing attitudes. When Catholics were willing to submit themselves to Church authority, the Church took advantage of it. Catholics are now thirsty for more freedom so the Church gives them more freedom. After all, it is better to change than to lose members. This is illustrated in an interview of James Hefley with Rev. (Fr.) Romagosa, editor of the *Clarion Herald*, a Catholic newspaper in Louisiana. Rev. (Fr.) Romagosa was asked how he liked saying the Mass in English. He said, "I was never so pleased with anything in my life. But at my church we still have one mass for the people who want it said the old way. Some are so set in their ways that if we didn't have this, they might quit." Hefley then asked, "What has happened in the Catholic Church in recent years?" Rev. (Fr.) Romagosa answered, "It certainly is a renewal. The Church has had to adapt to the place and the times. If the seminaries hadn't relaxed a few years ago, we would have lost many more candidates for the priesthood than we did."

Included in adaptations by the Church is also a change in the Church's attitude. The priest does not speak of Hell as he used to do. The woman is not urged to wear a hat in church as in former times. There is a new accent on love.. There is a new accent on social ac-

tion. But has the Church altered doctrine? In Hefley's interview with Rev. (Fr.) Romagosa he answers this question, "But there has been no change in basic doctrine."

What then are the changes? For Catholics these changes may not have the same importance as for Protestants. April Armstrong, a Catholic woman, in her book *What's Happening to the Catholic Church?*, summarizes the major changes. Catholics are no longer bound to avoid meat on Friday. The mass is now said in the language of the people. Catholics are no longer bound to attend mass on Sunday. One can satisfy his religious obligation by attending on Saturday evening. Catholics are allowed to have dialogue and prayer with the Protestants. A new emphasis is placed on the Bible and there is more encouragement of lay participation in the Church.

For Protestants, the important change is the new emphasis on the Bible. "The Spirit of God is at work in the Roman Catholic Church today, and the Word of God is His tool," says Robert Coote in *Eternity* (Nov. 1971).

Some Protestants are so impressed to see Catholics with a Bible in their hands that when they see one, they are ready to hug him as a "Brother in Christ." Does the Bible make a person a Christian? If so, what about the Jehovah Witnesses, the Mormons? What about the Scribes and Pharisees at the time of Jesus? The Bible is meaningful as long as its teaching is not altered by the Creeds of a hierarchy. Catholics may have a new access to the Bible, but unless this access is accompanied by major changes in the Church doctrines, this access may prove to be meaningless.

WHAT HAS NOT CHANGED IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

What is it that remains unchanged? Let us look at only a few things re-endorsed by Vatican II. Progressive Catholics refer to Vatican II for support of their attitudes. Vatican II has become their authority. James Gallagher, a former president of Tombrock Catholic Women's College, is quoted by Coote in *Eternity* (Nov. 1971) as an example: "In his writing and speaking he (Gallagher) no longer feels bound to quote St. Thomas Aquinas and the Patristic Fathers. Now, his authorities are Vatican II and the New Testament. But when Vatican II is an authority, what is the remaining authority of the New Testament? Vatican II has done nothing but reaffirm the Church's position as established at the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Another paradox!

Vatican II reaffirmed the Supremacy of the Catholic Church in matters of Salvation. ". . . Are saved those who are fully incorporated into the Church . . . Who accept the Church's entire system and all the means of salvation given to her." It also states Protestants can be called "Christian" because of their ignorance of the Catholic Church as the necessary institution made by God for the salvation of souls.

Baptism still carries the magical power of life. "By Baptism one becomes truly incorporated into Christ and he is re-born to a sharing of the divine life." The infant is born again at his baptism. He will never need that experience again.

The sacrament of Penance remains, "Confession of sins to the priest in order to obtain pardon

from the mercy of God for his offenses against God and the Church."

The sacrament of the Eucharist (Transubstantiation) has not changed. Christ is still worshipped and eaten in the substances which by the magical words of the priest are transformed into the literal flesh and blood of Christ. Therefore the Eucharist is of extreme importance in the Church's life. "The Eucharist shows itself to be the source and the apex of the whole work of preaching the gospel."

The Mass remains the renewal of Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Mary is still Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix. She is the primary channel through which all graces flow. She continues to win for man gifts of eternal salvation.

Finally, Scriptural interpretation remains subject to the final judgment of the Church's hierarchy. But, according to Vatican II, where does Christ fit into the plan of salvation? "By the preaching of the Word (Word was defined as: Tradition and Scripture) and by the Celebration of the Sacraments, whose center and summit is the most Holy Eucharist."

After having seen that the fundamental position of the Church has not been modified, can we expect real changes in the future? An editorial in *Christianity Today* answers: "But amid these many changes one must recognize that the Church of Rome had not changed and will not change in its essential theological position."

THE EVANGELICAL WING IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

How is the term "evangelical" as claimed by Catholics reconciled

with these unchanged doctrines? Is it possible that many Catholics have discovered the religious jargon of evangelical Protestants? Are they using the same language with a different connotation? How can a Catholic be evangelical and still give allegiance to these doctrines? Here is *the* paradox.

From all over the world flow reports about priests, nuns and laymen who claim to have had the kind of religious experience Protestants claim. Robert Evans, director of the Greater Europe Mission, meets with several priests for Bible study and flatly states: "I can detect no difference between their testimony of new birth in Christ and my own." It is true that many claim to have accepted Christ as Savior, they hold Bible studies, they even meet with Protestants . . . But what about the unchanged theological position in which they still believe?

Where are the evangelical Catholics who answer the paradox? In the Catholic and Protestant literature available, no instances are found where evangelical Catholics explain their allegiance to Church doctrine. This should cause the optimistic evangelical Protestant to pause before sticking an evangelical label on a faithful Catholic believer.

The evangelical Protestant can forget about the paradox and resort to rationalization. He may do like James Hefley did with his Catholic neighbors. "I couldn't argue with their lives. They were the best neighbors we had ever known. My prejudice slipped a notch and I admitted to my wife, 'I don't know about other Catholics, but Joe and Jean are Christians.'" From here Hefley began to rationalize: "I began to think

that He (God) might actually be working in the Catholic Church. Surely Satan would not be promoting Bible reading, prayer and works of charity in Christ's name."

But such rationalization is only superficial and does not solve the problem at all. Look at Hefley's conclusion in his book, *A Prejudiced Protestant Looks at the Changing Catholic Church*: "The Catholic Church has changed in style and attitude, though basic doctrines have not been altered." Hefley lost his prejudice but he did not find an answer to the Catholic-Evangelical paradox. The problem cannot be solved emotionally or rationally; it must be faced Biblically.

THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

If one believes there are Evangelicals in the Catholic Church today, he must certainly expect to find them in the charismatic movement which is spreading rapidly throughout the United States and Canada. If there are evangelical Catholics who really resolve the paradox, they should be found in that group. The movement consists mostly of young people, eager for freedom, freshness and life. They are less formal and indoctrinated than older Catholics and they might certainly have found an answer to their Catholic allegiance.

What do we find? Look at the language they speak. Anne Sandberg, a "Steward" in a Catholic Pentecostal prayer group, reports in *Christian Life*, testimonies of Charismatic Catholics: "John's wife told her mother, who also found Christ;" "He fell to his knees, received Christ and arose a new man;" "He acknowledged Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and

Savior." This is the language of evangelical Christians!

However, these people in receiving Christ, do not do it under the Holy Spirit's conviction of their lost state, but in order to become better Catholics. It is not a question of repentance, conversion and new birth, but a mere renewal of what they already possessed since infant baptism. Anne Sandberg explains the paradox in this way:

Catholics are not attempting to reconcile these (Charismatic experiences) with their centuries-old doctrines. Stephen Clark, in a pamphlet writes, "Baptism (infant) is the entrance into the church and involves the forgiveness of sins. In baptism a person begins to be a Christian."

Since a Catholic who has been baptized in the Spirit believes he had already become a Christian at the time of infant baptism, through his sponsors, then his subsequent acceptance of Christ is called a *renewal* of his baptism.

Likewise, Catholic charismatics believe they have already received the Spirit at confirmation. Kevin Ranaghan in *Catholic Pentecostals* explains: "The church already received the Spirit on the day of Pentecost . . . What this new Pentecostal Movement seeks to do is . . . to ask the Lord to actualize in a concrete living way, what the Christian people have already received." Other Catholic writers say that this Holy Spirit baptism, said to have been received at confirmation, is *renewed* at the time of the actual infilling of the Spirit.

Anne Sandberg is not alone in this explanation. She only reflects the theology of all the others involved. Father O'Connor, professor of Theology at Notre Dame University and the recognized Theologian

of the Catholic Charismatic movement speaks the same language. In *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, he gives two examples of things which would be incompatible with Catholic allegiance.

"Rebaptism" is unacceptable because at baptism (predominantly infant) one is re-born and made a member of the Church. "Rebaptism" is an anathema for the Catholic. To undergo believer's baptism is heretical or, at the least, a scandal.

Concerning salvation, O'Connor feels no one, even through an experience of faith in Jesus Christ, can receive the knowledge that he is saved. "No one can have certitude about his ultimate salvation. This is unscriptural and in contradiction with a firm and unanimous Catholic tradition, and with the formal teaching of the Council of Trent."

The most evangelical wing in the Roman Church has obviously not changed its doctrine. The paradox remains.

What is the result of the Charismatic Catholic's encounter with Christ? What is the effect in their religious life?

An important article by Killion McDonnell in *Dialogue* is revealing. McDonnell claims to write his article with scholarly perspective and bases it on observations accumulated during four years of research in Catholic Pentecostalism. He concludes: "Catholic Pentecostals tend to go back and cultivate all the avenues of contact with God that they had abandoned: Rosary, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, (The Eucharist exposed on the altar for worship), devotion to Mary . . . frequent confession, daily Mass and Communion."

The same conclusion was reached in the Report of the Committee on Doctrine of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The report reads: "They seem to grow in their attachment to certain established devotional patterns such as devotion to the real presence (Eucharist) and rosary." The report found the movement theologically sound, with a good Biblical basis.

All the information available is unanimous. In general, Catholics' experience with Christ makes them better Catholics within the structure of their former belief. What about the paradox? It remains unanswered.

Many Evangelicals have seen the paradox and have asked for an answer. James Hills in *Eternity* says: "It is especially disturbing to Protestant evangelicals to find Mary honored at times as Mediatrix, and to hear of cases where tongues are interpreted as a 'Hail Mary'."

Edward Plowman in *Christianity Today* (June 23, 1972) asks evangelical Catholics: "What about church teachings on Mary, papal infallibility, absolution, the Mass and Sacraments, and other doctrines that are impalatable to evangelicals? These things unexplained bother non-Catholics.

Is there an answer? Either we face a true paradox or something is not genuine. The evangelical Catholic is either a genuine Biblical Christian or a genuine faithful Catholic, but he cannot be both. If he is genuine Evangelical then of necessity he cannot profess Catholic doctrine. If he is a genu-

ine Catholic, then he cannot be an evangelical Christian.

THE EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTS' ATTITUDE

The Evangelical Protestants' attitude should be reservation and moderation. Christians have a mission in the world. They are called to reach the lost for Christ. The Christian must always be conscious of the times and be able to relate to his world without being deceived.

Evangelical Christians have a responsibility toward Catholics. One of their responsibilities is to present to Catholics the Word of God in a language that is understandable. We need to meet them on their wave length and relate to them in a manner that leaves no room for such a paradox as we now face in many Catholics.

Evangelicals want to see Catholics being saved. This is normal and worthy of praise. But what about the paradox? It should not be a matter of blind hope that Catholics are at last turning to Christ within the Church, but a matter of reality. Are they, or not? We are dealing with souls of people. It is a matter of life and death. It is necessary that we ask our Catholic friends for an answer to the paradox. If the answer is Biblically acceptable, then praise God! But if not, it is our responsibility to help them. How can we help a self-deceived Catholic if we take for granted that he is an evangelical?

May the Lord our Master make us wise in these last days of religious subjectivity and irrationality and above all give us a responsible love for our Catholic friends.

From March 1974 issue of *Christian Heritage*. Used with permission.

NEW CRISIS IN THE ARMSTRONG ORGANIZATION

Prof. John E. Dahlin

Two years ago I wrote an article in *The Discerner* on the title "The Armstrong Movement in Serious Trouble." It was shortly after Garner Ted Armstrong was relieved of his position as executive Vice President of the Worldwide Church of God and Vice Chancellor of Ambassador College. He left mysteriously the Pasadena headquarters. Attempts at the time to trace his movements were unsuccessful. For a considerable period of time he went into exile as it were. It was explained to the faithful followers that he had been disciplined, and that he no longer held the key positions he once occupied. Repentance was necessary, it was pointed out, yet it never became fully known to the public the exact cause for his temporary demise as the key man in the movement. It was generally believed that he was the heir apparent, not only to the whole Armstrong Organization, but also to the leadership of the three institutions at Pasadena, California, Sandy, Texas and St. Albins, England. Obviously the demotion of Garner Ted Armstrong brought anxiety to the cult's many followers, and it also caused special concern to his aged father, who found it necessary to place his son under discipline.

About six months later Garner Ted Armstrong reappeared and he assumed leadership again, although he did not succeed in getting a total reinstatement in all of the key positions that he once held. The announcement from the Pasadena headquarters indicated that all was well. It was obvious that

such a serious episode would create a lack of trust in the Armstrong leadership, by a number who occupied key positions in the higher echelon of the organization. It is well to understand that Armstrongism constitutes a hierarchy just as distinct as that of the Roman Catholic Church.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW CRISIS

In recent months the daily newspapers and several of the weekly magazines have printed articles concerning the crisis in the Armstrong organization. One leading periodical had as its heading "Trouble in the Empire." Other publications had such captions recently as: "Ministers Quit the Worldwide Church of God" and "Area Minister quits Armstrong Church." One columnist wrote the following uncomplimentary statement, "Now it appears that the founder Herbert W. Armstrong and the Heir Apparent Garner Ted Armstrong may be approaching an end time of their own—at least the end of their tight-fisted, monolithic control of their prosperous church."

When the recent split occurred the elder Armstrong was in Manila on a 10-day speaking tour. He terminated his schedule and rushed home to deal with the expanding crisis. According to reports he flew back home in his private jet. Those who split off from the Movement charged that there had been a concealment by the top leaders regarding those who were guilty of moral deviation. Even adultery had

been listed among the practices of those accused of wrong doing. Another serious complaint concerned the multiple-tithing system which has taken sometimes more than 30% of the members earnings. We have had correspondence at our office in recent years, where it has been stated that certain men have left their families in economic poverty by giving this amount of their gross income to the Armstrong cult. Those who have detached themselves from the Armstrong dictatorship also are greatly disturbed by the lavish life-styles of the Armstrongs. One of those who recently left the parent organization said, "I have seen people go poor while the Armstrongs use the Church's money lavishly." Another statement, which appeared in the press, alleged that high-ranking leaders of the church lived ostentatiously on the tithe money contributed by church members. And, it was further revealed that the Armstrongs built an extravagant auditorium in Pasadena which might end up costing \$24 million. In the same complaint it was reported at that time that the Vienna Orchestra was to be flown over here with an estimated cost of \$500,000 for the opening service.

In addition to the charges enumerated, opposition has been manifested to the inflexible position of Armstrongism on the matter of divorce and re-marriage. This policy has led to the break-up of many families. The Armstrong representatives have charged that anyone with a first spouse still living, who has married for a second time, is living in adultery, and the consequence is "eternal death" unless the second marriage is terminated. Such teaching is more rigid than the one held by the Roman Cath-

olic Church on the subject. The break-away group will no longer support the position held by the Armstrong organization over the years, that is, on the issue of divorce and remarriage.

THE FUTURE OF ARMSTRONGISM

While it is not possible to predict the future position of any cult, it seems clear, however, that the past smooth operation of the Armstrong organization will no longer be possible after the two upheavals during the recent years. The recent split in the 40-year old movement will cause mounting problems within this cult. It is likely that those who have been completely brain-washed will continue to blindly follow the Armstrong hierarchy regardless of the recent events.

The split in the ranks of the Armstrong cult doubtlessly will be permanent. It was reported recently that 40 former ministers of the Movement formed a new organization in Washington, D.C., with the name "The Associated Churches of God." The new organization will function separate from the Armstrong Worldwide Church of God. The churches associated with the new organization will be given local autonomy, which did not exist under the establishment of Herbert W. Armstrong. In other words, there will be "no strong arm rule from Pasadena," the headquarters of The Worldwide Church of God.

It appears from the recent developments that Garner Ted Armstrong is attempting to exempt himself from the Church's moral teaching. In the February Issue of the members' magazine *Good News*, he writes, "Causing people to lose confidence in their leaders is one of the most terrible things

anyone can do, especially if those leaders happen to be God's very anointed servants . . . You don't need to know about anyone's sin." According to that statement repentance does not seem to be the necessary step by a deviator from the proper standards of conduct.

The most important lesson one may learn from the recent crisis in the Armstrong organization is

that it is never justifiable to put such a blind trust in an organization as the supporters have done with regard to this cult. It is particularly sad that such a large number of people have been led away from the Scriptures by accepting the teachings of a hodge-podge system such as Herbert W. Armstrong introduced several decades ago.

FALSE INTELLECTUALISM

The basic principle of true intellectualism is set forth in the Scriptures. We read "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all they that do these commandments (Ps. 111:10). This rules out the possibility of an atheist being an intellectual. The Psalmist also identifies a false intellectual in these words: "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God" (Ps. 14:1; 53:1). In other words, such a person is unable to reach sound conclusions. When a person maintains an independence of God, even being contemptuous of God, objective thinking is not possible.

In addition, those who take the modernistic approach to the Scriptures, also fail to achieve a sound intellectual status. Their hall-mark is a continuous boasting of scholarship. The apostle Jude says "Their mouth speaketh great swelling words." On the other hand, a true scholar humbly examines all evidences, and this includes all points

of view. In my examination of writings of liberals, I seldom find an evangelical scholar being quoted. Evangelical scholarship is passed over as if it never existed. This is a non-intellectual position and it demonstrates narrow-mindedness and a bigoted position, as well as a manifestation of a lack of fairness. False intellectualism is the product of minds infected by egotism and a boundless confidence in men's own ingenuity in arriving at the right judgment on all matters under consideration. Unless God is given the pre-eminent position, which He deserves, none of these so-called intellectuals is capable of presenting a philosophy which makes sense. Yet in the secular and humanistic society of our time, a person in such a category is considered an authority in the academic discipline which he has chosen. The most proper statement regarding such an individual is that of a pseudo-intellectual. J.E.D.

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

John E. Dahlin, Editor

QUESTION . . . Are the so-called *Evangelical Catholics* a proper identification of those who intermingle with Protestants?

ANSWER . . . No. The Evangelical Catholics are either born-again Christians or faithful Catholics. It is not possible that both assertions are correct. Even the most evangelical element in the Roman Catholic Church adheres to all of the fundamental Catholic doctrines. They include, The Seven Sacraments, Worship of Mary, Confessions to the Priest, The Regular Mass, Papal Infallibility, Absolution, and other doctrines historically rejected by evangelicals. It is our judgment that those who are identified as evangelicals within the Catholic Church simply want to be better Catholics. If such were born again, they would do as Luther did, who abandoned erroneous Catholic doctrines and traditions. Good works constitute the core of Catholicism. Even at the big charismatic gatherings at Notre Dame, allegiance to the Pope was pledged by thousands who assembled there.

QUESTION . . . What is the most pronounced weakness within most religious groups of our time?

ANSWER . . . The nearly total lack of ability in discrimination between truth and error is perhaps the most conspicuous trait among the people within most of the present-day denominations, including some evangelicals. The classification of many Roman Catholics as true believers, despite their acceptance of doctrines, which conflict with N.T. Christianity, is an error of magnitude. Another example is the appalling lack of discernment when many people accept the charismatic movement as a reasonable interpretation of the N.T. Scriptures. This, they do, despite the continuous ecumenical emphasis of the charismatic groups. In other words, numerous Christians see no danger in such a non-separatistic program.