

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

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MAINTAINING SPIRITUAL BALANCE

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

Our age is a time of incomparable restlessness with reference to religious issues. The lack of stability on the part of many people has led them to grasp for new formulas which are being propounded these days. In my wide ministry, which has extended over four decades, I have never seen greater pressures on people than now to turn from the old paths and accept new teachings. Our next issue of *The Discerner* will have a major article on the new forms of deviations which we witness these days. My article written for this issue is to alert the readers with regard to the peculiar patterns which are being promoted, and the background causes for their appearance in these perilous times in which we live.

The lack of present-day stability regarding beliefs is no longer a minor trend, but rather, I feel, it is something which has involved most religious denominations in our day. A leading columnist recently observed that "American Catholicism is in a state of crisis." He goes on to point out that in former generations this great ecclesiastical system was a formidable body flourishing under the canon law administered by bishops re-

vered by the faithful. Today all is different. Dissent is the order of the day and the American bishops are fighting a losing battle in a continuing series of clashes with authority on every front. The writer concluded that "if American Catholicism is to be saved from moral collapse, leadership of a most skillful and subtle character is essential." One wonders what the same writer might have to say about American Protestantism! Dissent from Protestant circles is hardly less vocal than among American Catholics. It is proper to imply, I think, that the author might say that "the future of Protestantism in America does not look bright and that leadership of a skillful and subtle character is essential." While religious optimists might dispute such statements, the evidence is convincing that all of the religious world is in a state of perpetual crisis.

What we need, more than anything else in these days, is a reliable spiritual stabilizer. Shipbuilders have worked tirelessly for decades in seeking to provide the ocean-going vessel with a stabilizer which will respond quickly to the tempest which often besets the vessel at sea. The airplane in-

dustry is even more actively involved in devising the kind of stabilizer which will keep the aircraft on an even keel in times of atmospheric turbulence.

The religious sphere is definitely in need of stabilization these days. Very few organizations remain consistent any more. Old institutions are crashing down these days, as it were. Society itself is being shaken to its foundations. There is a very real danger that even Bible-believing people will lose their balance and get thrown off their course. The pull of many strange voices are clamoring to be heard these days. The author of Hebrews has a timely exhortation for all who are living in days of perplexities. He writes "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering for He is faithful that promised. And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:23-25). Paul, the Apostle, also points to God's arrangement for maintaining stability and how we might be kept from drifting hither and thither: "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14). Inspiringly the Scriptures reveal that by faith Moses was kept on an even keel during 40 years of turbulence caused by the rebellious people whom he led. He became one of the most enduring monuments of stability that history has recorded. This he achieved by keeping before him the eternal values and by refusing the transi-

tory things which glittered. Faith is the reliable stabilizer and hence all the heroes mentioned in Hebrews, Chapter 11, qualified for a place in God's picture gallery of the faithful because each one of them remained steadfast during extremely difficult days.

CAUSES FOR ALL THIS COMMOTION

In a broad evaluation it may be well to point out that shortly after the turn of the century John Dewey, an educational philosopher, introduced completely new ideas in the sphere of education. His concepts, generally accepted in secular education, have been called progressive education or socialized education. His main purpose was achieving a pragmatic approach hence leaving behind the more rigid curriculum adhered to earlier. After 50 years of this kind of emphasis, discipline was lost as well as respect for the older and tested concepts. This philosophy of education has to a great extent unhinged the present generation from the more solid moorings. More and more in America education has been disengaged from the older *directive patterns*. These new formulas or experimentations in education have had wide repercussions and they have opened the way for a general abandonment of the older methods. Obviously, this emphasis being given tens of millions of children and youth through several decades would also spill out, as it were, into the religious sphere where new patterns of thinking have been incorporated. It may also be well to remind people that new paths are not necessarily good. For example, modern mathematics which was introduced some years ago has been found wanting, and it is now being de-

emphasized because the new formula has proven to be more time-consuming and less productive than the older system. In some schools other experimental patterns of education are on a rampage, and they have no resemblance of the older methods. It took something like the Dewey philosophy to jar loose people from the more stable educational system in this country.

A second development which has unhinged denominations and organizations from the historic moorings is the liberal theological emphasis in the past generation. The rejection of Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures and Biblical authority has done immeasurable damage in that it has removed the needed spiritual stability of Christians. When Scriptural truth is rationalized, in a wide manner, it is obvious that the minds of people will be exposed to all kinds of error. This is precisely what has happened during this generation. If there are no absolutes, and if the Bible is no longer authoritative in all matters, it is understandable that daily living will be influenced adversely. Liberal theology, when applied, allows divorce and remarriage, abortion when so desired, social drinking, acceptance of homo-sexuals in the churches, and other practices which were disallowed in former decades. Obviously there are some variations among liberals as to the extent that these accommodations may be practiced in the church. To put it properly in focus, it must be said that liberal theology is bankrupt when it comes to providing stability in living. In dealing with homo-sexuals and the Church, Dr. Harold Lindsell writes in *Christianity Today* "A church that decides to show compassion toward the homo-sex-

ual by admitting him to full rights and privileges shows a false compassion that confirms the sinner in his wicked way." And he goes on to say "It is dangerous to permit within the churches those who insist upon diminishing the Biblical standards and compromising the law of God." The above statement is a timely one and is on the side of those concerned about maintaining a spiritual balance.

THE IMPACT OF THE EXPANDING CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Perhaps no development in recent decades has done more to disengage church people from their own denominations than the dynamics offered by the charismatics. The movement has turned out to be extremely ecumenical in all its implications. Several decades ago most people associated "pentecostalism" with the Assemblies of God and the Foursquare Gospel Church. People in the mainline denominations have known of these groups, but usually they were associated with an unacceptable form of religious emotionalism. Little did Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, or Presbyterians imagine, even a decade ago, that there might come a day when pentecostalism, with its emphasis of an immediate experience of spiritual dynamics, would find its way into their own groups, with the continuous emphasis on "baptism of the Spirit" and "speaking in tongues." Now this movement has entered into the very center of many Roman Catholic groups. In mid-June some 25,000 participants attended a healing service at the University of Notre Dame where the International Conference of Charismatic Renewal met for several days. Cardinal Suenens, who was also present, commented on

the movement by describing it as "a grace for the whole church." In Philadelphia, Cardinal Kroll told more than 2,000 charismatics who packed in the SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral that "they were helping to renew the church. It is estimated that there are now 750 thousand charismatic people within the Catholic Church." Certain Lutheran leaders have initiated a strong emphasis in the same direction, and immense gatherings have assembled, where speakers from various denominations have been invited to participate, including Roman Catholic spokesmen.

Kathryn Kuhlman is perhaps the best known leader today who is giving major emphasis on healing. She is described as a faith healer. It is reported that she averages about 125 big healing services a year involving many hundred thousand people. William A. Nolen, M.D., a highly respected physician, decided to examine the records of a certain number who claimed to have been healed at the Kathryn Kuhlman meetings. It was a case study where those who had been classified as being healed were followed up, and in practically every case, the malady from which they supposedly were healed, returned and the many claims given simply evaporated. But thousands of charismatics pay no attention to such reliable case studies by a reputable physician. Rather, they blindly follow Kathryn Kuhlman. The findings of the doctor have appeared in respectable publications, and his book on the subject is being published by the Random House.

It should be pointed out that there is no problem for skillful and gifted personalities to exploit needy people and take advantage of their naivety. When one assem-

bles together all these conditioning influences, it is relatively easy to understand why millions of people, lacking in Scriptural knowledge, are being wrenched away from the sound moorings, and are grasping for the great claims being made by modern charlatans and quacks. When one takes the massive charismatic impact, along with the widely emphasized program of so-called divine healing, then you find sufficient reasons for the present-day confusion and bewilderment of many people. In dealing with the end-times, Jesus declared "Many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many." He was referring to the delusions of the latter-days. Indeed, we are now witnessing a major fulfillment of this particular prediction of our Lord.

THE CURE FOR SPIRITUAL IMBALANCE

There is very little merit in pointing out the many causes which have contributed to the lack of stability in our day, unless one simultaneously seeks to provide some remedy for the current deplorable situation. I wish to conclude this article by listing some positive steps that will have a remedial effect if embraced. The first step in offsetting the widening activity of confusion among church people is a return to doctrinal preaching and teachings. Our time has been a period of horizontal emphasis instead of the vertical. There is an almost endless amount of writings and teachings which seek to provide remedies for the ills of our time by advocating certain formulas. In other words, they claim, we will achieve the results that we want if we follow certain steps. Much of this is stemming out of Christian psy-

chology. This involves counselling and a long process of instruction. No doubt some of these procedures are helpful, but too often they bypass the fundamentals. Strong Christians and stable-minded believers emerge as a result of possessing knowledge with reference to what the Bible teaches. All Biblical doctrine must be given primary consideration, and Christian living should be based on conformity to the Biblical truths. None of the great doctrinal truths ought to be minimized. Remember Paul declared, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). The popular Bible study classes, which have expanded all over the land, somehow tend to avoid emphasis on those Biblical matters which might lead to some controversy. The objective seems to be to center the studies in those truths which are non-controversial. The purpose in this is to secure the support and interest of people representing many denominational groups, including not only Protestants but Catholics as well. These arguments, while plausible, are not really sound. In my long experience as a Bible teacher (and I have had some very large classes through the years) I have never minimized or passed over doctrinal matters even if such might be controversial. In these audiences I have taught many people with very different background experiences, but all the doctrinal matters have been given the proper emphasis. I realize that some will not agree with me regarding this procedure, but years of teaching Bible doctrine have convinced me that one should not avoid a matter simply because it could upset some one in the audience. The ecumenical spirit is so subtle that at times it finds its way into good

evangelical circles. The present-day ecumenical evangelism leaves much to be desired because when that method is followed it cannot be truly directive in dealing with converts. An all-inclusive crusade makes it nearly impossible to single out the sound churches which should be recommended to the new converts. This is a very serious matter and it deserves our prayerful consideration. Christian growth and stability should be our uppermost goals in all our spiritual activities. These practices of accommodations are expanding more and more. I find often that committees at work designing constitutions, or rewriting such, have the tendency to strike out or dilute certain statements which might be controversial or objectionable. In reading the Gospel narratives, I find that Christ came right out into the open on every subject. Once when he gave a very demanding message, it is mentioned that many no longer continued in the fellowship. But Christ was prepared to lose any fair-weather follower if such an individual did not want to recognize the full meaning of cross-bearing.

Furthermore, I believe strong positional statements should come from the pulpit and from the church concerning issues on which people need pertinent information and direction. In other words, guide-lines ought to be provided by churches and organizations regarding that which constitutes acceptable Biblical teachings. I have been in a score of churches where no uniformity prevails in this regard. New converts and ill-informed people need continuous guidance in a kind of directive ministry, and not a Smörgåsbord type, that is, take what you want and

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WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT SEPARATION

by Roy E. Knuteson, Ph.D.

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The call to separation echoes from one edge of the Bible to the other. In Genesis 14 Lot is called out of Sodom because he had "vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds" (II Peter 2:8). In the book of Revelation, God issues His final call of separation from "Babylon", saying: "... Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins . . ." (Revelation 18:4). Centered in the heart of the New Testament is this clarion call: "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you . . ." (II Cor. 6:17).

The desperate need among Christians today is a simple obedience to this command to separation. Many profess to know Christ, but in life-style deny Him. Spiritual abortions are being performed in the name of evangelism which produce a head knowledge but no life change. The majority of evangelical denominations today in my opinion have succumbed to the worldliness that pervades all of Christendom. Aside from church attendance, there is little difference between the professed Christian and his unchurched neighbor. The tragedy of the whole matter is that they are compromising and they don't even realize it!

PRINCIPLES OF SEPARATION

The Bible graphically illustrates several principles that are designed to help delineate God's plan for His people. In understandable, simple terms these fundamental tenets of the faith are set forth on the pages of scripture.

THE IDENTIFICATION PRINCIPLE

This might also be called the "wolf-lamb" principle. Jesus said in Luke 10:3: "Go your ways, I send you forth as lambs among wolves." This is a strange situation. Earthly shepherds endeavor to keep their little lambs away from the wolves, but the Heavenly Shepherd sends His in among them! This is the biblical concept of separation, and it's based squarely on the principle of identification. Jesus likened the unsaved unto "wolves" and called His own disciples "little lambs." Many Christians fail to see this marked distinction between the worldly and the believer. We must always remember that the world is "wolf-like" by nature and can devour us. This is not a description of the atheistic Communist or the fervent cultist alone. This characterization applies to those nice religious people you know. It applies to every unsaved person. Likewise, the Christian must realize his own identification. He is a "little lamb." He has no strength on his own. He is in constant danger and his only protection is his nearness to the Shepherd. Then the lamb is safe.

Jesus declared: "As my father hath sent me, so send I you" (John 20:21). He too, came as a lamb. The wolves did their worst, yet He was victorious, because He never once lost sight of His true identification and purpose.

Today, religious leaders are trying to put lambs and wolves together thinking the mixture will work. In the name of Evangelism, the two groups are mixing freely causing untold damage and detriment to the true gospel. I am not

advocating isolation; that is not God's plan. I am preaching *insulation*. We are to be "in the world, but not of the world" (John 15:19). Jesus prayed that the Father would not take his followers "out of the world, but that He would keep them from the Evil One" (John 17:15). This means we must not become monastics and build walls around ourselves to separate us from the world. The only hope of evangelism is for the true believer to associate freely with the unsaved, and witness sincerely, endeavoring always to win the lost to Christ.

If a "lamb" forgets his identity and tries to act like a "wolf", he is in serious trouble! Instead, he is to realize his constant danger and stay close to the Shepherd. He must win a hearing among the "wolves" so that they will ask for the miracle of becoming "lambs"! That is the New Birth. We are to be distinct, yet not distasteful. We are to be separated unto God, but not from people. Jesus was called the "Son of God", but He was also the "friend of sinners." We should be like Him.

THE ASSOCIATION PRINCIPLE

In the balanced Christian life, all the principles of scripture must be put into operation simultaneously. In addition to the identification principle, we must also consider the principle of association. This might also be called the "unequal yoke principle." Paul clearly enunciates this in II Cor. 6:14-17:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with

an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

Plainly God's Word forbids the joining of Christians with non-Christians. The contrasts are extremely sharp here. It is "righteousness" versus "unrighteousness"; light versus "darkness"; "Christ" versus "Satan"; and the "Believer" versus the "infidel." The illustration Paul chose to show the impossibility of association is the "unequal yoke." This real-life concept comes from Deut. 22:10, where God forbade the hitching of an ox and an ass together for plowing purposes. The reasons are obvious and the lesson most practical. A "yoke" is that which binds two together in a common task. The Old Testament did not prohibit the farmer from putting the ox and the ass in the same pasture. They could feed together, but not work together. Marriage can be such a "yoke" and godly pastors refuse to marry a believer to an unbeliever. It could be a business relationship where a Christian could not be excused from some unethical, unscriptural activity or practice by a simple request for release. Certainly it applies to the religious or spiritual realm as well. In fact that is the main thrust of the Corinthian passage of scripture.

Jesus never once joined forces with the unsaved religious leaders of His day. They were in a constant clash, simply because He continually refused to become as-

sociated with them. They had absolutely no common ground of meeting. Keep in mind that they were good people, moral, upright, and extremely devout. In fact, they used the same Bible as Jesus, yet He refused association with them. Why? Because "koinonia" is impossible between the righteous and the unrighteous. It is absolutely unthinkable to imagine our Lord joining with the local "Ministerial Association" of the Pharisees and Sadducees to promote a common cause for community betterment. Can you see our Lord appealing to the religious world of His day for financial or moral support? Can you envision Jesus speaking in a public forum under the sponsorship of the religionists of their day? Is it conceivable to you that they would ever compromise their straightforward preaching in order to win a hearing? No! No! — A thousand times no! In fact, they exposed the Liberals and the Neo-Evangelicals of their day for what they really were. Jesus called them "Hypocrites"; "Whited sepulchers" and "snakes." Jude calls them "clouds without water", and "twice dead trees without fruit." Peter called them "servants of corruption", and "cursed children." Paul denounced them as "reprobates" and urged Timothy to separate himself from such religious men of his day. Not one of the Apostles would have ever been given the title "Man of the Year" in his day nor in ours. Instead they were considered the "offscouring of the earth" and were "stoned, sawn asunder, and were slain with the sword (Hebrews 11:37). This is the price of practicing true separation.

LEVELS OF SEPARATION

Somewhere every Christian must

draw the line of separation. In order to "mark the boundry" for that's what the Greek word "separation" means; we must recognize that there are various levels of separation.

On the *personal* level Jesus never disassociated himself with individuals. He spoke freely to the harlot Mary Magdalene, the rejected Samaritan woman, and the respected leader of the Pharisees, Nicodemus. In each case it was always a soul-winning venture. He would talk to anyone — anywhere — at anytime. He never lost touch with the individual and his personal need for repentance and redemption. When, however, the person rejected his claims and teachings, our Lord rejected them and taught his disciples to do the same! (Luke 10:10-11)

It would appear obvious that soul-winning and Bible doctrine becomes the basis for the various levels of fellowship and separation. Anyone who rejects the cardinal doctrines such as: Inspiration of Scripture (including its inerrancy and uniqueness); the Virgin Birth, deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, salvation by faith alone, the Second Coming of Christ, and eternal punishment must also be rejected as preachers or partakers of "another Gospel" (Gal. 1:6).

Those persons become prospects for evangelism. They are "wolves in sheep's clothing" or poor deluded people in need of divine light through salvation. For this reason, the Bible forbids the believer from even allowing such false teachers to (even) entering our homes (II John 10).

There is another level where we Christians must draw some lines to mark the circle of our fellowship. This is the *doctrinal* level. For instance, I can have limited fellow-

ship with a believing "Charismatic" or Pentecostal, whether he be preacher or layman because of our common faith in Jesus Christ. He is a Christian and so am I, but on a doctrinal level our fellowship ceases because of their peculiar and unscriptural teachings regarding the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts which affects their total message and life style. Therefore, I cannot suggest that people go to his church, nor would I exchange pulpits with this man. The line has been drawn on a doctrinal basis.

There is another level where Christians must draw some lines to mark the circle of our fellowship. This is the level of *cooperation*. Many Christians, churches, schools, and denominations pride themselves for their "irenic" spirit. In actuality they mean they are not biblical separatists. They feel free to invite liberals and infidels into their pulpits and schools. They have no reservations about joining in evangelistic crusades sponsored by modernists and others whose theological position at best is hazy. Their doctrinal statements are generally so broad as to include most of Christendom under their umbrella of acceptance and toleration. Herein is the error. When doctrinal positions are weakened for the sake of unity or cooperation, it will ultimately affect life-style. No longer are teenagers and adults admonished to dress appropriately and modestly. Whatever is "Mod" in the world is in the church as well. Soon adjustments are being made for divorced leadership, questionable amusements, and the world's music. The distinctive walk of the believer has vanished.

Alert Christians need to constantly evaluate their associations and when the doctrinal position

and practice is in violation of Scripture, they have no other choice but to separate themselves unto God. The basis of that decision is subjective, and must be made in many areas of revealed truth. For instance, can a Pre-Millennialist truly fellowship with and support an A-Millennialist or his schools or denomination? A study of Thessalonians would reveal that Paul would have made a decision on this level. It's time for Christians who claim the Bible as their supreme authority to do the same!

DEGREES OF SEPARATION

Ultimately the question will be raised: "Can I fellowship with Christians who are doctrinally sound, but who associate with others who are not? The answer is "yes." Separation is always based on a one to one basis in the Bible. There is no scriptural authority for the practice of "secondary separation", or the isolation from someone, who because of his conviction or allegiance, has associates who are less than orthodox. This, however, will change when the association in question is one with the group, a denomination, or a movement. At this level a person may be forced to withdraw fellowship if the influential leadership is doctrinally in error. The decision is not a chain-reaction of secondary separation but a one to one relationship upon which the decision is made.

ULTIMATE GUIDELINES

Because of the subjective nature of the doctrine of separation, the personal conviction of the believer based squarely upon the plain teaching of God's Word must always guide his decisions and actions. Then, and only then, will true separation be experienced.

OCCULT EXPERIMENTATION: AUTOMATIC WRITING

by Prof. Edmond C. Gruss

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One aspect of the current interest in the occult has been experimentation with automatic writing. Many persons have been drawn into such experimentation through books giving directions for the practice, the written experiences of writers like Ruth Montgomery (*A Search for the Truth*), and instructions which they have received through the Ouija board. In these cases the ones who worked the board were told to "get a pencil," or words to that effect. Automatic writings have often led others to Ouija board use.

Automatic writing has been defined as "writing done in a dissociated state of varying degree. The writing is done without conscious muscular effort or mental direction" (*The Guide Book for the Study of Psychical Research*, p. 174). The potential automatist is often instructed to dismiss all conscious thought from his mind, to relax, and to allow himself to write "automatically." The writer may go into a trance or a trance-like state, or he may be able to carry on a conversation and direct his attention elsewhere as messages are recorded. Sometimes an automatist writes with both hands simultaneously and produces two different messages. Automatic writing may also "progress" to the automatic use of the typewriter, to "inner ear communication," or to the vocalizing of the messages received. While automatism is often correctly interpreted as only a reflection of the subconscious mind of the person involved, in

some cases there is evidence which points to the intrusion of an outside influence (demon). Whether it reflects the subconscious mind, or the work of other intelligences (demons), automatic writing often becomes a compulsive drive which damages the participant physically, mentally and spiritually.

Not realizing its occult nature or the dangers of such involvement even Christians have been attracted to the practice. One example of "Christian" automatic writing is found in the book *God Calling*. Its foreword indicates that two women were convinced that they were communicating personally with the "Living Christ." Author-counselor Tim Timmons examined the book and commented on it:

"These women were using nothing more than the occult technique of automatic writing. This book is full of good thoughts, but careful examination will show that many of the concepts sound as though they originate from the angel of light [2 Cor. 11:14], rather than the Living Christ. This whole experience is inconsistent with God's Word, that is our only reliable guide in examining this kind of activity" (*Chains of the Spirit*, p. 30).

In a recent issue of *Teen Challenge Times* (Vol. 2 no. 2, 1973) a Christian woman recounted how she was drawn into automatic writing because she was led to believe that it was one of God's ways

of communicating today. The method was made to appear even more legitimate when the source she read on the subject stated that to avoid potential evil influence she was to draw a cross at the top of the page and to write the words, "In the name of Jesus." One would do well to remember the warning of Dr. Kurt Koch and others that occult practices are often cleverly concealed beneath the cloak of Christian symbolism and terminology.

Several experiences might be used to illustrate the fact that automatic writing is both deceptive and dangerous.

1. In an older work, *The Dangers of Spiritualism* (pp. 98-103), John Raupert told of a man who practiced automatic writing as a form of entertainment. Raupert warned him concerning the practice, but the warning went unheeded. The writing soon became a compulsion over which the man no longer had control. Eventually, instead of a pressure to write, overpowering thoughts suggesting some absurd or unreasonable action came to his mind, and his attempts to resist them met with failure. One day, as he rode on the streetcar, the idea came to him that he should jump off the vehicle, run along side it and jump on it again. His attempt to resist the thought was unsuccessful and in carrying out the suggested action he lost his footing and the wheels of the streetcar passed over both of his feet, which necessitated their amputation. Through his experience the man came to believe in evil spirits behind his experiences and he escaped the impulse to write along with the other pressures, but at what a cost!

2. In a letter a woman explained

that she had tried a number of psychic experiments. Her "break-through" came during attempts at automatic writing. She said that she contacted a spirit that gave the name Jester and since that contact he had been with her constantly. She went to spiritualists and submitted to a form of exorcism — but to no avail. She stated that the experience had almost wrecked her marriage and put the thought of suicide into her mind and that the pressure of this continuing situation was almost too great for her to bear.

3. Author-psychic Daniel Logan told of the experience of one of his former students, a middle-aged woman who became heavily involved in automatic writing. After gaining her confidence the messages changed their nature and eventually undermined her trust and confidence in all of her friends. She recorded reams of material and progressively isolated herself. Eventually she suffered a mental breakdown and after months of hospital treatment she was released. But the experience had altered her personality (*America Bewitched*, pp. 103-109).

4. A Lutheran woman was thrilled with her successful attempt at automatic writing. But in a matter of weeks she was committed to the county mental hospital. She reported unusual experiences both in and out of the institution. She began to hear voices which grew louder as each day progressed. After the stay in the mental hospital she was released, but she told how the voices still persisted. Her experiences were also accompanied by visual phenomena and intense pain which made her life miserable and caused her dif-

ficulty in sleeping. She expressed regret that she had ever attempted automatic writing.

Many additional examples of experiences and the potential dangers of automatic writing could be given, but from the Christian standpoint, the greatest danger is often found in the philosophical and theological content of the communica-

tion received. Often a message supports reincarnation or spiritualist "progress" and presents a view in direct contradiction to what the Bible says concerning the Person and Work of Christ.

Because of these dangers, it is a wise and biblical policy to stay away from automatic writing and other similar occult practices.

CANADIAN REPORT

ARMSTRONG CULT — A GROWING THREAT

by Leslie K. Tarr, editor

Many Canadian evangelicals are probably unaware of the phenomenal growth of a major cult which in 1957 had only five baptized members in Canada, but now claims an average weekly attendance of 8,000. It's the Worldwide Church of God, an aggressive cult headed by eighty-two-year-old Herbert W. Armstrong and his son, Garner Ted Armstrong.

Many Christians are also unaware that the cult is dangerous and a threat to the proclamation of the gospel. Among other things, the Armstrongs and their church reject the deity of Christ, believe that the blood of Christ does not finally save any man and that no one is yet saved.

The WCG's Canadian following is second numerically only to its United States' membership. A recently-appointed minister to Canada described his new field of operation as "perhaps the most rapidly developing area in God's worldwide work (meaning WCG) at the present time."

The Armstrongs rely heavily on their radio and television outreach. In Canada it has paid handsome dividends. In the early 1960s the

radio broadcast, "The World Tomorrow," was aired on three stations. Now it's heard on sixty-one Canadian stations, including some French. The Armstrongs' telecast blankets the country, and Garner Ted's face is a familiar one on Canadian TV. The circulation of the Armstrongs' *Plain Truth* magazine has soared from 5,000 to 200,000 (roughly equal to the Canadian circulation of *Decision*).

The American section of the church was rocked earlier this year with the defection of more than thirty ministers, formation of a rival group, and charges of immoral conduct against forty-two-year-old Garner Ted Armstrong. So far, the Canadian section of the cult seems relatively unaffected by the rumblings.

All thirty-nine Canadian congregations are located in major cities (with two in Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal). Every Saturday they meet in rented quarters, usually school auditoriums. The smallest attendance is at North Battleford which reports fifty, but most of the churches are in the 100 to 400 range in reported attendances.

Dean Wilson, director of the Canadian work since its inception in 1962, says he is aiming for fifteen new churches this year. Thirteen were started in 1973.

The Worldwide Church of God has congregations in every province except Prince Edward Island.

Its expansion in French Canada has been remarkable. Regarded by many Christians as one of the hardest mission fields in the world, French Canada has only a small evangelical population. The French-speaking congregation of the WCG started in Montreal in 1972 with 110 in attendance reached through readership of the French edition of *Plain Truth* and the French radio broadcasts). In two years that attendance has risen to 283.

The cult claims a Quebec circulation of 10,000 for the French edition of *Plain Truth* and a Quebec mailing list of 40,000.

The Armstrong church is making effective use of the media. In addition to the radio, television and magazines, the WCG (usually operating under the name of Am-

bassador College) is using multi-color ads in *Reader's Digest* and offers free literature on contemporary subjects (drugs, ecology, the family, juvenile delinquency) and administers a correspondence course.

Ministers, who sometimes pose as "representatives of Ambassador College," are strategically situated in major centers and can quickly follow up those who indicate interest.

From that point on, the Worldwide Church of God exercises an iron hold over the members' lives.

The growth of the Armstrong cult in Canada has not attracted the same attention as have such flamboyant groups as the Children of God or Hare Krishna. But in terms of numbers and threat to the gospel, the Worldwide Church of God far surpasses the other five-day wonders.

Without a doubt, it is the fastest growing and most dangerous cult in Canada today.

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leave other items alone. It appears that many churches are not particularly concerned about the positions people take on vital issues.

If we are to avoid being overpowered by specialized emphasis given by speakers and writers, we need to know what we believe and why we believe as we do. In fact, we should be prepared as Peter puts it, "Be ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh you for the reason of the

hope that is in you with meakness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). To be kept on an even keel one needs to follow the example of Moses who knew when to say "yes", that is, when the occasion demanded an affirmation, and also saying a decisive "no" to situations which lacked the Scriptural way of separation. Let us turn our backs to those dangerous paths which lead to worldliness, spiritual poverty and a diminishing vision of values that lasts.

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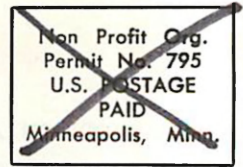
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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

John E. Dahlin, Editor

QUESTION . . . Does the present Charismatic Movement contribute to expand ecumenism?

ANSWER . . . From all the accounts of the large gatherings of the charismatics it is clear that such serve to break down denominational barriers. Within the movement are Protestants and Catholics who freely intermingle at these services. Speakers appearing at the meetings are identified with many religious groups. Those drawn together are united on the issues of Baptism of the Spirit, Speaking in Tongues and Faith-Healing. On these positions there is complete agreement among the charismatics.

QUESTION . . . Why are those who uphold Separation so generally criticized in our time?

ANSWER . . . Unfortunately Separation is associated with narrow-mindedness and spiritual bigotry. Such a disparagement of those who believe in and advocate separation is unjustifiable. Biblical separation of those who desire to walk with God and separate from others, is taught from Genesis to Revelation. In a day when accommodation and co-operation are so freely emphasized, it is understandable that anyone who challenges such a position will be the object of criticism and even scorn. Yet II Cor. 6:15-18 is completely clear that separation is a divine injunction which should be recognized and practiced by all Bible-believing people.