

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

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WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THIS GENERATION?

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

There has never been perhaps more confusion than now regarding the spiritual status of this generation. Christian people in considerable numbers, believe that we have turned the corner, as it were, and that the biggest expansion in evangelism ever known has already taken place, and that it will continue until tens of millions will be brought to Christ in the foreseeable future. Slogans are used such as, "changing the world" and "evangelizing the world in our generation." In explaining all of these activities, optimists point to the ongoing mass evangelism being held in the big cities of America, Canada, and in several other lands. Moreover, these people also point to the effective present-day techniques by which the United States, in particular, will be saturated with the outreach of those engaged in the program of evangelism. Organized plans are being promoted with the purpose of reaching tens of millions with the Gospel. All of this may be true so far as the extensive plans are concerned in evangelism. But, for one who thinks logically and objectively such a stated position is a distorted view, and statistics are misleading which are used. It is my candid judgment that all of these combined activities in evangelism have gained less than *one per cent* in genuine conversions

when measured with the yardstick of our total population. I am a supporter of all honorable efforts in evangelism, of course. But I am convinced that the concept of many is warped through all of this present-day optimism. We remember the high hope expressed in the famous "Explo" a few years ago and "Key 73." The latter was designed to confront every one in the United States with Christ. It ended that year with this ambitious program having evaporated. What concerns me is that many well-meaning people speak of spiritual activity outside the framework of reality, and they use statistics recklessly. Of course it is a plus whenever a single soul is won to the Lord. But entertaining unrealistic hopes, or making sweeping statements unsupported by facts, only lead to subsequent frustration and disappointment.

Without a doubt our country is the most open area of the world for the preaching of the Gospel and for extensive evangelism. I am certain these many sustained efforts will reach thousands for Christ, but not tens of millions. And it does not bring America back to God. In fact all the new converts counted does not begin to keep up with our population increase, which has been over 18 million in the last decade. Despite the present low birth-rate

we have still a substantial population increase in our land. Certain outstanding conversions, and limited successes in reaching many for Christ, have not changed the status of America, however. There is no advantage of looking at the present condition in our land with rose-colored glasses. I remember once during my pastorate in a big city, we contacted one-thousand people in one week, but in checking our records, we had only three or four new people at the services the following Sunday. Doubtlessly we did the right thing, but the results were small. At another time we sent out many teams, two and two, confronting the people of the homes in the area with the matter of personal salvation, but again the outcome was quite disappointing. I do not believe there is any magic formula which will turn a misguided nation back to God. Faithfulness in witnessing is the New Testament way, but there is no promise of distinct results, or what the harvest will be following these efforts.

THE PRESENT WORLD SITUATION

Before we deal with the present-day situation in America, we might well take an inventory of the world at large. At least one-half of the world's population, (now 4 billion people) live in areas where no open evangelism is allowable. In Russia with its 250 million a major thrust in evangelism is not possible, and about the same situation prevails in Eastern Europe with a population of 85 million. And, in China, with its 800 million, to my knowledge, no missionary from other lands is permitted to engage in evangelism there, such as was possible earlier in this century. Radio broadcasts from outside countries, with some Bibles and literature have

infiltrated the iron and bamboo curtains. We believe some have been saved. Most Christians in such areas must maintain their walk with God in secrecy. India, with its 550 million is open only in a limited way. Visas are next to impossible to get if the persons seeking to enter are going there with the purpose of converting the natives to Christ. Doctors and educators, and vocationally trained people, find it usually possible to obtain visas. In addition to these enormous populated areas mentioned, we have several hundred million people living in countries where extreme nationalism prevails and revolutionary activities are ongoing. We have now identified over one-half of the world's population which is very difficult to reach, despite certain glowing reports often heard.

Christians should not talk glibly about changing the world, or evangelizing the globe in one generation. But witnessing that reaches out to the uttermost parts of the earth is the Scriptural injunction, and it has been mainly achieved, broadly considered. When Paul, the greatest missionary of all time, found the doors closed, he did not attempt to batter them down; in fact, he and his party went wherever the doors were open, and they did everything possible in an unfavorable world situation. Fortunately, it is written, "He left not Himself without a witness" (Acts 14:17). Everyone of the New Testament writers points to an unparalleled apostasy during the latter days. A spiritual declension of extra-ordinary dimension is depicted as the end-time approaches. A golden day of evangelism and an unprecedented harvest is foreign to the prophetic Scriptures. There is no reason to believe that these clear

predictions will be overturned by favorable developments, even when such efforts are sincerely initiated. As a long time teacher of Secular as well as Church History I find no generation in all of history which stands as completely befuddled as our own. Our Lord predicted a repetition of Noah's days as well as the time of Lot. See Mt. 24:37-39 and Luke 17:26-30. Violence on earth is a major sign of the latter days. Jesus predicted unprecedented "iniquity (lawlessness) would abound." Mt. 24:14. Moreover, he pointed out, that which we now witness, "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Mt. 24: 7). Paul's prediction of the latter-days also is a solemn one. (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN AMERICA?

First, we might provide a general statement before we treat specific developments. Crime has reached an unprecedented expansion during the past decade. Nearly every form of criminal activity has been on an increase. Our prisons are filled to their capacity. All the states have found themselves in a dilemma in not having adequate penal institutions to cope with the expanding prison population. Judges and pardon boards have turned loose thousands of so called less dangerous persons on parole, to make room for others. Convictions are difficult to obtain with present-day legal maneuvers by criminal lawyers. Soft hearted judges feel punishment for lengthy periods is no solution for crime. We find therefore repeaters are turned loosed recklessly until it has been demonstrated that the recent social theories are totally unsound. Society is unprotected. The half-way houses have been largely ineffective in reforming ex-convicts.

Rape has become the most dreaded experience daily for thousands of women and girls, largely due to the release of those persons from prisons with warped minds. Prosecution of rapists have been extremely difficult due to the embarrassment of victims whenever they appear at public hearings. Thousands of rape cases are unreported for fear of retaliation by those guilty. Children are molested in nearly every community in America. The leniency of the courts is a national disgrace and a miscarriage of justice.

An epidemic of kidnappings has created fear all across the land, particularly the holding of innocent people as hostages. The most recent outrageous act took place right in the very shadow of the national government in Washington, D.C. It was led by a band of Hanifi Muslims under the dominant Hamas Abdul Khaalis. One hundred thirty four people were held hostages during a 38-hour seige. One man was murdered and a number were wounded or beaten with weapons. Yet in the negotiations for their release, concessions were made to the leader of this infamy in order to have the hostages released. He was allowed to return home without bail; several others received the same lenient treatment. This was done to save lives according to the statement of the Mayor of Washington. Many senators exclaimed, that this was an outrage, and a failure of justice. Fortunately the hijacking of aeroplanes has tapered off due to vigorous screening of passengers with their luggage at every public airport in America.

Immorality is on a rampage. Several leading Congressional Committee chairmen have been found guilty of gross immorality, and forced to

resign or having left office. Schemes and shenanigans of people in high places come to our attention in nearly every newspaper each day. A few years ago both the President and the Vice President of the United States were forced out of office because of illegal and unacceptable activities while in high office. Graft and fraud are taking place on every level, national, state and local. To a great extent we are losing our national character. Large scale fencing activities, so called, are common practices in every area. The late Dr. Petrim Sorokin at Harvard University, head of the Sociology Department for a quarter of a century, said when such conditions become general and permeating society, those nations guilty, will find no remedy. They will be deposited to the dust heaps where all immoral kingdoms have gone. Such conditions as now mentioned, he said, have lifted empires off their hinges. Our nation is not exempt from such divine judgments.

PORNOGRAPHY AN ABOMINATION

It has become necessary for cities from New York to California shutting down sex parlors, degrading movies, magazines and peep-shows which have been excessively offensive. The District Attorney of San Francisco ordered police to close a movie called *Young Loitas* or *Youthful Lust*," a 45-minute film showing girls aged 6-11 having oral sex with adults of both sexes. This corrupt program has degraded numerous children and leaving them scars for life.

The most widely published development was the conviction of Larry Flynt, publisher of the *Hustler*. It ranks third behind *Playboy* and *Penthouse* with a circulation of 2.5 million and achieving a profit of

\$10 million for 1976. For being responsible of the production of smut he received a sentence of seven to 25 years in prison with \$11,000 in fines. Obviously this will be appealed. The extent to which pornographic material has permeated America is simply incredible. It has turned newsstands into cess-pools of degradation, the like of which this country has never experienced since its founding.

City governments have been unwilling, generally speaking, in taking a hard line on the matter of pornography. And the Supreme Court has been reluctant in allowing a censorship by the authorities. Only the most vile kind of pornographic material may be suppressed according to the ruling of the high court.

VIOLENCE ON THE MOVIE SCREENS

Comprehensive studies have been made involving the movies, mainly those seen by millions of children on the television. The correlation between viewing violence depicted on the films, and the producing of aggressive behaviour among youngsters have been established in numerous tests being made. Often times many have gone out and practiced the identical kind of violence shown on the screen. The tragic fact is that for millions of children televised programs and movies have shaped their view of what the world is like. Strong pressures are brought on the net works to phase out these extremely objectionable movies. Since our generation has lost its way, there is very little hope for any noticeable improvement of the movies and television programs.

CRIME IN THE AMERICAN HOMES

The *Minneapolis Star* gave a report in the February 25th issue by Gordon Slovut. The survey was fi-

nanced by the National Institute of Health and 2,143 couples were surveyed. They were representative, like those being surveyed by Gallup and other pollsters. Three professors from higher institutions of learning made this alarming report. It was presented before the meeting of The American Association of the Advancement of Science. The findings provided the following statistics: One out of six couples used some form of violence in the home, or a total of 7.5 million couples. Four per cent of husbands and wives had used some physical violence against each other, which involved 1.75 million married couples. At least 1.2 million had been attacked by lethal weapons (guns or knives). Eighty per cent surveyed had used some physical violence against each other. And one child out of three had been hit by a parent during the year. And 4.2 per cent had been beaten up. Moreover, 2.9 per cent had used a gun or knife on children by threat or reality. In addition, 2.0 per cent had been hit with an object, or a dangerous weapon. If we couple all this with the break-up of nearly one marriage out of two, one wonders how long family life in America will survive. Nearly 10 million children have only one parent to supervise their lives. And multitudes of these often are assigned to others to rear.

Fire-bombing of buildings all across the land is common, and arsonists destroy tens of millions of property each month. Vandalism continues without any abatement. A lady managing a fine candy store in my city told me she locks the doors of her store when the schools close, or until the children are dispersed. Teen-agers and those younger rush in not to buy but to take

the candy they want without a thought of paying for it, hence she must lock the doors during such periods.

Tens of thousands of teachers quit their profession yearly due to nervous breakdowns and frustration with the problem of trying to maintain discipline in the class rooms. The beating of instructors is a daily occurrence in many large cities. In numerous places police guards are required in the corridors of many schools to maintain safety for teachers and students.

In view of this disaster overtaking the nation many naive Christians believe we are on the eve of a national repentance or revival. I might mention before I conclude the article, I heard the newscaster on WCCO report today that the Holiday Inn released a statement that guests occupying their thousands of rooms throughout the land that they were losing three-fourths of a million of towels each year. There seems to be no boundary for thievery.

In conclusion, we find that twenty-billions are spent for alcoholic beverages by the American people, and there are now approximately 12 million alcoholics in our land. One-half or more of all fatalities and injuries received on the highways are caused by drivers under the influence of alcohol. Over one-million abortions were performed last year. It has been authorized nationally by the Supreme Court for women on demand. This slaughter of the unborn will surely bring on a national judgment by God. The next step obviously will be to put away the physically incurable and hopeless mental cases. When this dangerous

(Continued on page 15)

TEN REASONS WHY I CANNOT BE A MORMON (Latter-Day Saint)

By Rev. John Hornok

Director of Utah Bible Mission, Salt Lake City, Utah

1. MORMONISM DOES NOT TEACH THAT THE BIBLE IS THE INFALLIBLE WORD OF GOD.

"We believe the Bible to be the Word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the Word of God." (Articles of Faith, No. 8).

As Christians we believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:20-21; Matt. 5:18).

2. MORMONISM TEACHES THAT GOD IS AN EXALTED MAN AND HAS A PHYSICAL BODY.

"God Himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pg. 345). "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's . . ." (Doc. & Cov., Sec. 131:22).

The Bible says, "God is not a man . . ." (Num. 23:19). "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). "A spirit hath not flesh and bones . . ." (Lk. 24:39).

3. MORMONISM TEACHES THAT CHRIST AND THE DEVIL ARE BROTHERS.

". . . that Lucifer, the son of the morning, is our elder brother and the brother of Jesus Christ" (Mormon Doctrine by Bruce McConkie, pp. 163-4).

The Bible says the devil is a created being, created by God. "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till in-

iquity was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:15). "For by Him (Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him . . ." (Col. 1:15-17).

4. MORMONISM TEACHES THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS MARRIED AND THAT HE IS POLYGAMOUS.

"We say it was Jesus Christ who was married at Cana of Galilee" (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 2, p. 80). Mormonism teaches that Jesus was the natural child of Adam and Mary. "When the Virgin Mary conceived the Child Jesus . . . He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is his Father? He is the first of the human family" (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, pp. 50-51).

The Bible says, "In the beginning was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; . . . The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us . . ." (John 1:1, 14). "Then Mary said unto the angel How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered . . . The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee . . ." (Lk. 1:34-35).

5. MORMONISM TEACHES THAT THE TRUE CHURCH CEASED TO EXIST UNTIL IT WAS RESTORED TO JOSEPH SMITH.

The church (LDS) was restored April 6, 1830 by Joseph Smith (Doc. & Cov., 20:1).

Jesus Christ said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11). ". . . And

are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20).

6. MORMONISM TEACHES ANOTHER (PERVERTED) GOSPEL THAN THAT OF THE BIBLE.

The gospel to Mormonism is: "Faith, Repentance, Baptism, Receiving the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands, Morality, Loyalty, Tithing, Word of Wisdom, Duty, Celestial Marriage (for eternity)" (LDS chart on FREE AGENCY and Articles of Faith, No. 4).

The Bible says, "Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel . . . how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:1, 3-4). "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:9).

7. MORMONISM TEACHES SALVATION FOR THE DEAD BY PROXY WATER BAPTISM.

This doctrine is based on one misunderstood Scripture: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" (I Cor. 15:29).

Paul did not practice baptism for the dead. He excluded himself by using the pronoun "they" rather than "we" or "ye". He is asking a question rather than making a statement. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

8. MORMONISM TEACHES GENEOLOGICAL RESEARCH FOR THE DEAD.

"Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present

in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptation" (Doc. & Cov., Sec. 128:24).

The Bible says, "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies" (I Tim. 1:4). "But avoid foolish questions and genealogies . . ." (Titus 3:9).

9. MORMONISM TEACHES THAT THERE ARE MODERN DAY PROPHETS AND MODERN DAY REVELATIONS FROM GOD.

Mormonism claims that Joseph Smith received the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist. The Melchizedek Priesthood and Apostleship was restored by Peter, James and John shortly afterwards in 1829 (Doc. & Cov., Sec. 13).

The Bible says, "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1-2). The test of a prophet is given in Deut. 18:20-22.

10. MORMONISM TEACHES THAT SALVATION DEPENDS UPON GOOD WORKS AND ACCEPTANCE OF JOSEPH SMITH.

"No man who rejects the testimony of Joseph Smith can enter the kingdom of God" (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. I, p. 190). "Men have work to do if they would obtain salvation" (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. III, p. 91).

The Bible teaches that salvation is provided by Jesus Christ alone, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10-12). "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

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VICTOR PAUL WIERWILLE AND THE WAY

By Kevin N. Springer, Mansfield, Ohio

I. THIS IS THE ABUNDANT LIFE?

Since 1968 a sect led by Victor Paul Wierwille called The Way has experienced a steady and impressive growth all over America and abroad. The Way being especially strong on high school and college campuses, one follower of Wierwille estimates there are over 1,500 "twigs" (i.e. local chapters). In Ohio there are 200 "twigs" and New York boasts of having between 300 and 400. How is it this sect which calls itself Christian, yet denies the Deity of Christ, has attained such a following?

Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille started his course titled "Power for Abundant Living" in 1953 after becoming disenchanted with the United Church of Christ in which he was a pastor. Dr. Wierwille (he received his Ph.D. from Pikes Peak Seminary, a fact not highly publicized in his literature, which leads one to believe he graduated from Princeton) emphasizes the attainability of the abundant life spoken of in John 10:10. "When I was told that God wants us to have an abundant life right now and He gave us the Word as His will to know how to gain that abundant life, I was drawn in," one of Wierwille's followers shared in an interview. Indeed, the emphasis on the attainability of the abundant life in the here and now and a "roadmap" or "course" in principles of how to attain this life seems to be the very heart of the sect's success. An Ohio "limb" director related: "We don't tell people what they should do, but how they should do it. We feel that in God's Word are the keys to the abundant life — when they are told how to

then a bureaucracy is not needed to control them (there is no formal membership in The Way) — they function and share with others about The Way." Therefore, part of the success of The Way revolves around the fact that their "Power for Abundant Living" course works to some degree.

All You Need in 12 Easy Lessons

For \$85.00 anyone can enroll in the twelve lesson course. Most of the courses today are given via video tape, with Dr. Wierwille teaching. Each session is approximately three hours long. Because Biblical principles are emphasized as the way to a successful life, one is not surprised that many people have their lives improved through taking the course. Time and again it is said that the Word must be "rightly divided" and its "accuracy" upheld. So, in one sense, The Way is "fundamental" in its view of the infallibility of the Scriptures. Of course, it is Dr. Wierwille who teaches how to rightly divide the Word. The course "covers all the basic keys in the Word of God that enable anyone who believes to claim victory in all of life's situations, no matter how difficult or hopeless, to bring to pass the deepest desires of his heart, and to manifest a life of rich abundance." With these principles which Dr. Wierwille has "re-searched" one is on his or her way to the abundant life. "I've taken the whole course or parts of it fifteen times," said one of the national leaders, adding, "The more you take it the more successful you'll become."

Another emphasis of the course

is Wierwille's teaching on the baptism of the holy spirit — or, should I say the gift of the holy spirit. New Testament baptism, on the basis of Acts 1, is said to not be by water but by the gift of the holy spirit. Therefore, water baptism of any mode is not generally practiced by The Way ("Although," added a follower, "if you want to that's O.K. — we won't tell you not to do anything." The holy spirit is the power of God, and one has the reality of that "dunamis (Wierwille often quotes the Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic) of God" when he speaks in tongues. In this regard The Way sounds like a pentecostal group, yet that similarity is only on the surface. For Wierwille, the holy spirit that the believer encounters is not God, he is only a "gift" or attribute (i.e. power) of God. As one follower I interviewed said, "God is Holy and God is Spirit, but the holy spirit is not God."

A gauge of the outreach effectiveness is a recent "Rock of Ages" conference in Lima, Ohio (August 28-31, 1975), which drew around 10,000 people. At this time over 2,000 young people signed up to give one year of their lives as W.O.W. Ambassadors. Also, The Way has their own press, The American Christian Press, which prints many books and pamphlets and *The Way Magazine*.

Victor Paul and Paul of Tarsus

When asked, "Do you consider yourselves in the line of historic Christianity?" one of their leaders answered, "We're not concerned with what somebody else taught." Indeed, Wierwille claims to be the only true preacher of the Bible since Paul. The only similarity the followers of The Way see with any group in church history is with the first

century church. "There have been very few organizations like us in history that want a perfectly Biblical view," one Ohio leader said.

The emphases of their local church organizations are: home meetings, breaking of bread, meeting everyday whenever possible, and witnessing. This form is appealing and draws many who are disenchanted with their institutional church involvement.

II. GIVE ME THAT OLD TIME RELIGION

Victor Paul & Paul of Samosta

When first encountering The Way one is given the impression they have an evangelical theology. As was true in the fourth century A.D. during the Arian controversy, members of The Way often use language which has a totally different meaning to evangelicals. For instance, terms such as "Praise God," "Praise the Lord," "Baptism of the holy spirit," "Christ our mediator," "Christ the Song of God" and other assorted sayings are common. But the content of these words is not common. Wierwille himself says, ". . . we must define our terms. Many people may be misled because while using the same language or words, we don't mean the same things." Let me give you an example: while interviewing a leader at New Knoxville I asked the question, "Do you believe in the traditional doctrine of the Trinity? (i.e. for instance, would you accept the Nicene or the Apostle's Creed)." He confessed, "Had we not been talking for the past hour about this issue I would have answered, 'I believe in God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son and the power of the holy spirit,' however, you are aware that in that statement I am ascribing Deity only to God the

Father — Christ and the holy spirit are not God."

Ecclesiastes 1:9 states, ". . . there is nothing new under the sun." Although followers of Wierwille like to think of themselves as "holding forth the accuracy of God's Word" they are actually only repeating one of the oldest heresies of the church in a slightly modernized form. Wierwille stresses maintaining the unity of God at the expense of His diversity as three Persons. In the third century those who proposed such a doctrine were called Monarchians, a title coined by Tertullian, since those of this persuasion compared God to a divine Monarch. Wierwille also compares God to a Monarch. Tertullian states:

The simple, not to say ignorant and uninstructed, who are always a majority among believers, are alarmed at the doctrine known as the Economy, because the rule of faith itself implies a transition from the many gods of the world to the one true God; and they do not understand that faith in the Unity is to be taken as including faith in the Economy. They assume that the number and order of the Trinity from itself is not impaired thereby but brought into administrative exercise . . . so they talk loudly of our preaching two or three God's, and assume they themselves are worshippers of the One God . . . 'we,' they say, 'hold the Monarchy.' As Dr. Wierwille approaches the Trinity then, he sees the following:

(1) God, who is Holy Spirit, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2) Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the son of man, and (3) the holy spirit, God's gift, which God

made available on the day of Pentecost.

Christ is seen as having been uniquely created by a form of divine insemination so He was born sinless and, therefore, was able to die for the sins of the world (He is the "only-begotten"). Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch from 260 to 272, taught essentially the same doctrine. This is called Dynamic Monarchianism. Basically, Paul of Samosata held that Jesus was the Son of God by adoption (thus Paul was called an "adoptionist"). Wierwille states Christ to be the Son of God via divine-artificial (miraculous) insemination (so, might we call Dr. Wierwille an "inseminationist"?). God is said to create a perfect sperm in Mary. Many young couples in our culture are not able to have children because of a biological male deficiency. The traditional approach to obtaining a child under these conditions has been through adoption, but some go through the process of artificial insemination of the wife. Thus, artificial insemination is a substitute for adoption. Dr. Wierwille has taken this modern idea and adapted it to traditional adoptionism (which often had Christ being "adopted" by God at His baptism). Christ is not the "adopted Son"; Wierwille claims He is the Son through miraculous insemination who was given only dominant "sinless" genes.

Although Wierwille is more sophisticated and possibly better at attempting to deal with Christ's sinless nature, he and Paul of Samosata say essentially the same thing: Jesus Christ is not God, but He is the Son of God tailing off his thought. The Way teaches that Christ is totally subordinated to God, thus also exhibiting seminal shades of later

Arianism though, to be sure for different reasons. If Christ is not God, but a creation of God, then to worship Him is idolatry. Therefore, however, much Wierwille might love and adore Him, he does not worship Him. Indeed, he states: "Those who teach that Jesus Christ is God and God is Jesus Christ will never stand approved in 'rightly dividing' God's Word, for there is only one God, and 'thou shalt have no other gods!" He also says, "If my research is a wrong-dividing of God's Word, then I stand before God as an unapproved workman. Either way I accept full responsibility."

Therefore, in its crude form, The Way is not really a form of Christianity because they do not worship Jesus Christ. Yet, this is confusing to see because as the "Son of God" Christ is important to Wierwille as a "Meditor," or "Redeemer." So he often uses Christian sounding language. Jesus is the highest form of communication — a "concrete form" — from God to man. Jesus' existence before he was born was only in God's foreknowledge. Again, this view of Christ follows Paul of Samosata.

Wierwille and Scripture

Although the scope of this paper is not to give a Biblical exegesis of the doctrine of the Trinity, I must comment here on Wierwille's approach to Scripture. It would be impossible to systematically give all of Wierwille's Biblical "proofs" and refute them. However, it might be appropriate to summarize his approach to John 1:1-2 and expose his fallacious hermeneutics. B.B. Warfield says of John's prologue to his Gospel: "John found it necessary to insist upon the elements of the person of our Lord — His true

Deity, His true humanity and unity of His person — in a manner which is more didactic in form than anything we find in the other writings of the New Testament." For those who challenge the Deity of Christ the most difficult section of Scripture they must face is John 1:1-18. Dr. Wierwille devotes a whole chapter in his book *Jesus Christ Is Not God to John 1*.

Wierwille states: "The Bible teaches that there is only one true God, that God was in Christ, that God is Spirit, and that God is eternal in contrast to Jesus whose beginning was his birth." The basic approach to circumventing John 1 is postulating not the pre-existence of the Word (Christ), but the foreknowledge of God of the Word and Christ. "How was Jesus with God in the beginning? In the same way that the written Word was with Him, namely, in God's foreknowledge." Wierwille grants Jesus is the logos because ". . . he was God's plan for man's redemption and salvation . . . When Jesus was born, he came into existence . . . Foreknowledge became a reality." Because God is Spirit He had to reveal Himself in words and manifestly in His Son because Spirit cannot communicate with the soul of man. Thus the need for these "mediators." "God in His Word the same as you are your word and I am my word. My words are my communication of my thoughts, feelings and ideas to you." Finally, this "literal translation" is given for John 1:12:

In the beginning (before the creation) God was the Word, and the revealed Word was in God's foreknowledge (which was later communicated to man in spoken Words, written Words and the incarnate Word). This Word ab-

solutely was in the beginning before the foundation of the world together with the one true God in His foreknowledge yet distinctly independent of Him.

The above probably ranks as one of the more fascinating "literal" translations in the history of the Christian Church.

Conclusion

In conclusion we can see The Way has captured a form that is appealing to many people today. An emphasis on how to live the abundant life, concern for the individual, and centrality of the Scriptures are all attracting a wide variety of people. However, if one only looks at outward appearances one can be very easily deceived.

Is this the abundant life? I think not. The Way is well organized and

is emphasizing certain doctrines (i.e. how to be successful, personal "body life" meetings, "how to" encounter God, spiritual release through tongues, "freedom" in Christ) that are sucking many into their sect. Yet, in the final analysis The Way is only abundantly leading people to hell. This sect is not Christian in that it does not assent the Deity of Christ nor worship Him. The sect also rejects the Deity of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille has accepted responsibility for the sect's teachings and will receive a just penalty of judgment before the throne of God unless he repents. There is nothing original about this heresy, as it has been shown to be a modern day form of Dynamic Monarchianism.

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THE SCRIPTURAL PREDICTION OF FALSE DOCTRINE

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Our Lord often warned His own of many things. One of His greatest concerns for them was that they might be made aware of false teachers and false doctrine. Many of His comments regarding false teachers who would come in the future arose out of a context in which He was dealing with false doctrine and teachers of that day. Already in His day there were false prophets. Concerning these the disciples were warned because the false prophets were deceptive. They "come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7: 15).

Paul, the Apostle, did not hesitate to warn the leaders of the

church at Ephesus concerning the coming of "grievous wolves." He had the "flock" or congregations over which the elders had oversight in mind. He feared for them. There was no question in his mind that after his departure these false teachers would "enter in among you, not sparing the flock." For this reason he warned the pastors and commended them to the sovereign care of God (Acts 20:28-32). The Holy Spirit gave the same great Apostle a similar concern for the believers at Corinth. He feared that just as the serpent beguiled Eve, so the minds of the Corinthians would be "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3, 4).

There was no doubt in his mind that there were those who were preaching "another Jesus." This was his same concern for the saints in the church at Galatia. Some of the believers were there following after "another Gospel" (Gal. 1:6). Some false teachers even in Paul's own day had already succeeded in "bewitching" the Galatians so that they would not obey "the truth" (Gal. 3:1). The "gospel" these false teachers were preaching was another gospel of a different kind. It was a false gospel and not the gospel of Christ. Under the inspiration of God Paul could therefore pronounce an anathema, "let him be accursed," upon such.

With dogmatic certainty the young preacher Timothy was told that "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith" (1 Tim. 4:1). Instead of declaring the doctrines of God they give heed to the "doctrines of devils." Timothy was told also that in the last days many would have only "a form of godliness" (2 Tim. 3:1-4). Hymenaeus and Alexander had already "made shipwreck" of the faith in Paul's day (1 Tim. 1:19, 20). Lest Timothy fall into similar error he was warned to take heed.

The saints addressed in the Book of Hebrews were also alerted to the presence of false doctrine in their day. In the midst of general

instruction concerning holy living the writer said, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines" (Heb. 13:9). Truth was constantly under attack because of the presence of error. The Apostle Peter reminded the scattered and persecuted saints to whom he wrote that their day was not much different from Old Testament days at least in one particular. There were "false prophets" among their forefathers and there would be "false teachers" among them (2 Pet. 2:1). John, the beloved disciple, firmly but graciously told the saints, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

Even a surface reading of Scripture brings one face to face with the issue of false doctrine. It was already present when the New Testament was being written and it was predicted as a certainty for the future. Close examination of these and many other texts reveals that the kind of false doctrine spoken of revolves around a false view of the living Word — Jesus Christ — and the written Word — the Bible. These have always been centers of the controversy, and they remain the most crucial doctrines of the Christian faith.

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BOOK REVIEW

Glimpses and Reflections of a Ministry. Subtitle: *Stars of Retrospect.* By John E. Dahlin. 1976. 141 pp. \$4.25.

This book's title accurately describes its contents. John E. Dahlin completed 50 years in a variety of Christian ministries in America's bicentennial year. In his introduction to the book, John F. Walvoord gave a fitting description of the author's ministry: "For more than a generation the name of John E. Dahlin has been synonymous with understanding of Biblical truth and a strong defense of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God."

The book's dedicatory page describes the author's intent in writ-

ing "To the younger ministers and Christian workers, who serve God in a very difficult time, this volume is dedicated."

Most of the book consists of the recollections of the author concerning his life in the ministry. The two final chapters deal with an evaluation of the current theological scene and a presentation of the author's belief in the Lord's imminent return.

R. P. Lightner,
Prof. of Systematic Theology,
Dallas Theological Seminary

This volume may be secured from Religion Analysis Service, 2708 E. Lake Street, Suite 231, Minneapolis, Minn. 55406., and an autographed copy from Prof. John E. Dahlin, 5917 Chicago Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. 55417.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THIS GENERATION?

(Continued from page 6)

road has started no one knows where it will end.

A few outstanding conversions, and a limited success in evangelism cannot reverse the trends. The fact is the latter days are here. Violence on earth is the most clearly identi-

fiable sign of the latter days. It is clear, however, that a faithful minority will continue to witness and be engaged in true evangelism until Christ returns. Many hundred thousand will be reached for the Lord, but it won't change to any great extent the lives of 214 million Americans which constitute our present population.

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

John E. Dahlin, Editor

QUESTION . . . What might God's people do constructively in opposing the distribution of pornographic material?

ANSWER . . . As individuals and as groups letters or petitions may be sent to those who are guilty in this regard. Publishers read their mail. And, objections to smut, especially when such objections are considerable in volume, will receive some attention. A few years ago numerous people canceled their subscription to a magazine which allowed unfit material to appear. It was the proper thing to do. When it appeared that religious broadcasting might be banned, the FCC was deluged with letters protesting such curtailment. Letters kept coming at the rate of 6,000 a day. Chairman of the FCC, Richard E. Wiley, pleaded with the people to stop this massive flow of letters. No such ban was planned, he said.

QUESTION . . . What proportion of the U.S. population was contacted by the Campus Crusade for Christ's "Here's Life, America!" program?

ANSWER . . . From their reports 6.5 million personal contacts were made or about 3 per cent of the population, and 536,000 expressed a desire to receive Christ, or $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 per cent. This was perhaps the most comprehensive program ever undertaken. As I pointed out in this issue of *The Discerner*, at best, the percentage is always small among those who express a desire for a spiritual decision.