

“ . . . Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error’

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POSITIONS HELD IN COMMON BY THE CULTS

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

In the recent issues of *The Discerner*, I have endeavored to inform the readers of the cultic situation in our generation. I have dealt with their tactics, objectives, as well as the threat of the cults to evangelicalism. These articles have not been primarily doctrinaire. Rather, I have tried in a practical way to come to grips with the present-day activities of the cultic groups. It is necessary, I think, that we are knowledgeable with regard to these unBiblical organizations.

While it is true there is a great diversity among the many hundred of cultic groups now active, yet, on the other hand, there are certain basic positions which they hold in common. In other words, certain dominant characteristics may be discovered among them, which make them distinct from Bible-believing Christians. In a careful examination of the various cults, one should be able to see these distinctives. The similarity of their positions separates them from those groups which are true to the Word of God. Let us proceed to identify the positions which they hold in common.

SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY BY-PASSED

First of all, the absolute authority of the Scriptures is minimized by all leading cults. This is best illustrated by the special books which they have provided in setting forth their authoritative doctrinal position. In addition, we find it is common with these groups to make unwarranted changes in the Scriptural text in order to accommodate their biased teachings. More than that, the Jehovah's Witnesses have their own Bible. It is called the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. No present-day scholar (outside their group) has accepted their translation as being valid. All other translations of the Scriptures list the committees who have carried through their work. The Jehovah's Witnesses have refused to do this, and no one knows anything about the credentials of their translators. In examining the Bible of the Witnesses, it becomes clearly evident to scholars that they have deliberately adjusted certain passages in the Bible to correspond to their teachings. One classic example is in John 1:1, where Christ is

referred to as a God. No other translator has so deliberately tampered with the original Greek. Obviously this is done to make Christ to be only the highest of the created beings, but not the eternal co-existent Son, who in the Scripture is presented as co-equal with God, the Father. The Watchtower Society has chosen to violate the scholarly principles of Greek translation by hundreds of qualified men. In addition, their two leading publications, "The Watchtower" and "Awake" are to them more authoritative than the Bible in their work.

The Mormon Church has mainly substituted the Scriptures with the Book of Mormon. They brazenly claim that scarcely a verse of the Scripture has escaped errors in translation. This is absolutely a false statement, but it leads them to consider the Book of Mormon as being all-important. In addition to this, not only is the *Book of Mormon* indispensable, but also *The Doctrines and Covenants* and *The Pearl of Great Price*. These are the writings on which they base their teachings rather than the Bible. In fact, the Bible is relegated to a secondary place in their system of teachings.

Christian Science, while giving some recognition to the Scriptures, manifests no hesitation in rejecting numerous Scriptural passages by rationalizing them. In other words, such passages are not taken literally. This is also a common trait among other cults, also among the liberals in Christianity. Actually the Bible of Christian Science is the exalted publication by Mary Baker

Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. It has been the authoritative book of Christian Science for over 100 years.

In addition, it is well to point out that Christian Science has used the printed page effectively. The Christian Science Church publishes *The Christian Science Monitor* daily, *The Christian Science Sentinel* weekly, *The Christian Science Journal* and *The Herald of Christian Science* monthly, and *The Christian Science* quarterly. Except for *The Christian Science Monitor*, the other publications are printed mainly to promote the teachings of the cult for the constituents. Truly, the Bible is interpreted by them to conform to the kind of teachings wanted. This, then, indicates that Christian Science, like the other cults, minimizes the Scriptural authority.

The Armstrong cult follows the same general pattern. Much like the other cults, Armstrongism gives some recognition to the Scriptures. But it superimposes such a dogmatic interpretation of the Bible that the Word of God has very little independent authority to offer. For example, Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in 1958 that his work was the only one preaching the Gospel of the Bible. And, he had the audacity to say that it was a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy, "And the Gospel shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto the nations, and then shall the end come" (Mt. 24:14). No one has more arrogantly twisted the Scriptural Truth than Armstrong. To achieve his objective, he has relied on his magazine, *The Plain Truth* to

brain-wash his followers. Armstrong states that his magazine provides knowledge unobtainable elsewhere. (Perhaps many of you readers know that a complete cleavage has occurred between Herbert W. Armstrong and his son, Garner Ted. All the positions which he held has been taken away from him. Garner Ted Armstrong, according to reports, has launched a new organization. And, a considerable number of leaders in the Herbert W. Armstrong cult has left and have begun a separate work).

These above observations demonstrate that the Bible is not the supreme authority among the cults mentioned. All of these, as well as others, give their additional writings preeminence. For all practical purposes they become indispensable and infallible to their systems. Even The Seventh Day Adventists consider the writings of their founder, Ellen White, as being completely authoritative and binding on the followers. With this super-imposition of these special writings, the Word of God simply becomes a book to be manipulated to establish the teachings desired by the cults.

AUTHORITARIANISM

Even a casual study of the many cults of our time makes it relatively easy to discover the element of dogmatism as a position which is common to all of them. In order to operate efficiently and effectively, the cults have adopted the principle of authoritarianism especially for those at the top echelon. Democratic ways do not exist within the cultic systems. Their

pattern is usually that of a hierarchy, or a graded arrangement with a chain-command all the way. This simplifies the control over the followers by the leaders. Congregationalism, as a religious government, would not work within the cultic groups. Like the political systems of Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler, authoritarianism provided uniformity, and variations were not tolerated. To illustrate: when the President of the Mormon Church comes forth with a proclamation, it becomes the law of the Church. The most recent pronouncement came a few months ago when the President of that body declared that he had received in the temple a revelation from God, namely, that Negro men may now qualify for the priesthood. Obviously this is a false claim, but it demonstrates the power of the cultic leaders in dominating the religious systems they head. Furthermore, only three powerful leaders have been in control of the Jehovah's Witnesses during the past century. The fourth leader having recently assumed office, following the death of Nathan Knorr, is not very well known. The late leader was in control for over 35 years. As I pointed out previously, Herbert W. Armstrong single-handily deposed his son, stripping him from all his positions in the movement. Just one more example: The Korean multi-millionaire, Sun Myung Moon, exemplifies complete dominance over his movement. Authoritarianism is a fixed position in Moon's Unification Church. Other cults, which we do not have space to discuss, follow

the same position, namely dictatorial leadership in their systems.

THE DISSEMINATION OF LITERATURE

The immensity of the literature printed is another element which identifies the cultic groups, and it maintains a position held in common by the various cults. Whether you consider the Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, The Mormons and the Armstrong Polycult, it reveals the sameness, that is, the great emphasis is on literature. This is a matter held in common by the cults, namely the dissemination of literature on a large scale. These mentioned cults, and others less powerful, all avail themselves of the printed page. The Jehovah's Witnesses print approximately 20 million copies in each issue of "The Watchtower" and "Awake" magazines. The cults have discovered that literature circulated is their best channel in influencing people as well as gaining many proselytes. Unfortunately conservatives and evangelicals have not manifested a similar effort in getting the literature to the people. Indeed, Bible-believing Christians need to redouble their efforts in getting Bible honoring literature into the hands of people. What we have mentioned here is a distinctive point held in common among the various cultic groups.

CONCLUSION

I have provided in this article a kind of composite yardstick by which we may measure and evaluate the cults of our time. It is my candid judgment that the test when applied has considerable

merit. Indeed, there are common characteristics of the various cults. These earmarks distinguish the cultic groups from the mainstream of Christian denominations. It is possible to make these observations by every discerning person. By the cultic groups we refer to the organizations which have parted company with the historical position held by Christianity during the past centuries. Their position truly is in direct opposition to those who have accepted the sound Biblical doctrine. In fact, the cults are guilty of a deviation from the Scriptural position along a wide front.

It is possible, however, to learn important lessons from our opponents with regard to their zeal, strategy and determination to achieve the objectives which they desire. This in turn should stir every Christian to seek to initiate effective methods in the extension of the Gospel ministry to the people of this generation. Jesus once said, "The sons of this age are in their generation wiser than the sons of light" (Lk. 16:8). I have given considerable thought to this statement of our Lord. He obviously had reference to the shrewdness of the worldly people in planning their activities and seeking to reach their objectives. The cultic groups are not wiser, of course, when they are measured in their understanding of salvation and the right relationship with God. In such a comparison they fall short, especially on the truths which need to be given the priority. Yet our Lord recognized the intensity with which the non-Christians were seeking to carry out their assigned

task. Not only are the cultic leaders brilliant, but they are wholly committed to achieve their goals. These were their traits which our Lord found admirable. This writer has been impressed again and again with the validity of our Lord's keen observation. It is therefore well for us to recognize the skill of the cultic groups,

despite our rejection of the misguided path on which they move. Only knowledgeable Christians are able to help those who have strayed away from the truth. It is of primary importance that we possess much enlightenment in order to minister to those who have been swept into the vast number of cults of our time.

Review of A Directory of Religious Bodies in the United States

by Gordon J. Melton, Ph.D.

reviewed by Jerry Bergman, Ph.D.

The proliferation of sects and cults in the past few years has been phenomenal. There are now over 1,300 separate religious bodies operating in America. A large number of these espouse doctrines which amount to gross deviations from historic Christian doctrine and beliefs. Dr. Melton has produced an indispensable guide to help one understand where a religious sect or cult stands on various basic issues. The directory classifies the major American religions into families according to the religion's history and beliefs. It includes even groups such as spiritualism, theosophy, flying saucerism (23 sects), pshchodelic (6 sects), and various psychic groups. One not sure of the position of a sect can easily consult the directory.

And, importantly, the directory points out how common divisions are among the various sects, many of which are blatantly unChristian.

Excepting those that are extremely unusual, eccentric, have grown very fast, or for some reason have obtained notoriety, such as the Mormons, Moonies and Jehovah's Witnesses, few attempts have been made to research many of these groups. To anyone interested in studying the full range of American cults and sects, the Directory is imperative.

The Directory attempts to meet the long standing demand for an exhaustive listing of America's many religious bodies. Included are American religions from the conservative Protestant bodies to the bizarre Satan cults and everything in between. The religions are grouped alphabetically, and include the name, address and any official publications. In addition, they are listed according to "families," such as the Latter Day Saints family (23 different denominations), the Bible Student Movement family (including

Jehovah's Witnesses and their 11 main American offshoots), the Adventist family, the Grace Gospel family, etc. This classification system helps us understand the origin and relationships of the various bodies to each other, and, in addition, helps us mentally grasp the seemingly infinite variety of religion in America today. In addition, there are almost 80 pages of expository material explaining the rationale behind the classification system utilized, the reasons for such a prolific number of religious bodies, and a discussion of the phenomena known as American religion! The expository sections of the Directory include a number of charts, graphs, and diagrams to help us understand the American religious scene.

The directory was produced by the Institute for the Study of American Religion, in Evanston, Illinois. The Institute is presently working on a major reference work with descriptions and analysis of each of the different groups listed in the Directory. The Institute's director, Dr. Gordon Melton, a Methodist clergyman, has made a lifetime career studying American religious sects.

This Directory is the only source to date which even attempts to compile the different religious bodies. The Institute's work is an outgrowth of the work of Elmer Clark (author of *The Small Sects in America*) and Arthus Piepkorn. The classification scheme developed is an important contribution to the study of American religions.

Melton brings out that American religions stems from 3 different

sources.

1. Immigrant bodies, such as the Roman Catholic and Episcopal Churches.
2. Schisms of the immigrant bodies forming many American sects such as the American Catholic Church.
3. Religions formed around charismatic leaders who put together totally new religious families including Joseph Smith, Phineas P. Quimpy and Andrew Davis.

Among the many factors which precipitated the seemingly endless religious splits includes the Revolutionary and Civil wars. Even though many major religious movements came from the formal divisions over internal disputes, Melton brings out that the growth of the number of new religious bodies has in many ways paralleled the growth of the population (see chart on p. 12).

Not all religions resulted from schisms of existing bodies. Whole new families were begun by racial religious thinkers including Joseph Smith whose teachings spawned 23 main groups, and William Miller whose teachings resulted in dozens of various Adventist bodies from which later developed groups such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and, indirectly, The World Wide Church of God (Armstrongism). These two groups, in turn, have spawned a number of other religious bodies, some fairly large. Importantly too, Melton explains how changes in society, mobility and freedom in the city, all caused the development of new religious bodies. The rapid change in urban areas and the resistance to change in both

small town and agricultural areas, alone, has influenced the development of a large number of new religious bodies.

Especially important is the summary of the development of various families of religions such as the mystics, pessimistic sects, adventist sects, etc. A thorough discussion of the traditional differences between an ecclesia, denomination, sect and cult is presented. This area has been the subject of debate for a number of years primarily among sociologists, and churchists. The classification scheme Melton opts for is what he calls family groups or where decision is made according to analysis of a group's heritage, thought world and life style.

Based on both the historical belief structure, life style and philosophy of the groups, Melton classified atheist groups in the liberal religious family. Melton included 12 members in this family ranging from the traditional liberal religion of the Unitarian-Universalism to the militant atheism of Madelyn Murray O'Hara's American Atheist, Inc. (p. 233). Atheistic groups are included because, for all practical purposes, they function as religious groups even though these groups sometimes deny their religious

base (p. 68). The common focal point they operate around is a man centered humanistic philosophy which is generally ultra rational in approach. Emotional forms of religious expression are looked upon with disdain. (p. 233).

Although the Directory is the most complete published to date (Summer, 1976), religious groups are being born and dying at a very high rate. For this reason, yearly supplements would seem necessary. The smaller groups and those on the fringes of culture are continually in flux, changing form, dividing and merging with other groups.

In summary, this review is an excellent introduction and guide for anyone studying American religion or religion in general. Not since Elmer Clark's *The Small Sects in America* has such a comprehensive discussion and guide been produced. The Directory will serve as an indispensable tool for Christian researchers, libraries, and all those interested in the American religious phenomenon. Hopefully it will facilitate more detailed studies of the large number of religious groups that a free society invariably produces. To combat these many heresies we must have knowledge of them, requiring in depth study.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE APPRECIATED

According to many letters received *The Discerner* has been informative and useful to you in understanding the various cults. In turn your friends will appreciate your thoughtfulness in sending to our office gift subscriptions to them. They will benefit by this arrangement. The price is 4 issues for \$2.00 or \$5.00 for 12 issues.

TEACHING CREATION IN THE CHURCHES

By Dr. Henry M. Morris

I believe true Christian pastors and teachers in churches everywhere should preach and teach frequently the doctrine of creation—not merely by incidental references in messages on other topics, but systematically and fully expounding this great truth, as revealed both in Scripture and in God's world. There are many reasons for emphasizing creation, but I would call attention especially to three urgent commands of Scripture to this effect.

(1) *Guard the Faith!* These are days in which many in Christendom, even professing Christians, are departing from the Christian faith, which was "once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Some have departed in the direction of cultism and occultism (I Timothy 4:1), others in the direction of liberalism, humanism and general ungodliness. (II Timothy 3:1-7). These trends will eventually become so widespread that the Lord Jesus had to ask the rhetorical question—"When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find the faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

Now if one studies carefully the history of such apostasies, in all ages, he will find they always begin with the undermining of this doctrine of special creation. There is always an evolutionary cosmogony of some sort opposing the true Genesis record of the Creator and His creation attractively presented by the currently dominant

philosophies in the name of "science" (this was as true with the ancient pagan philosophies as with the modern Darwinian philosophies; the Genesis record is the *only* cosmogony which begins with the transcendent God creating the very universe itself). This recurring tension between revelation and philosophy is inevitably followed by those men in the Christian world who seek to compromise. Compromise on special creation, however, is soon followed by a compromise on special inspiration and then a compromise on special incarnation, and so on; eventually this road of compromise ends in a precipice.

It is urgent, therefore, that each generation of pastors and teachers carefully transmit the full Christian faith to the next generation (II Timothy 2:2) especially its foundational doctrine of creation. The apostle Paul commanded, "Keep (literally *guard*) that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings (that is, ungodly and empty philosophies) and oppositions of science falsely so called" (I Timothy 6:20). The command to *avoid* such things does not mean to hide from them, but rather to keep the Christian faith utterly free from their contaminating influence! This can best be done by an informed and regular emphasis on Biblical creationism from both pulpit and classroom.

(2) *Give the Answer!* In our day and age, when practically everyone has been indoctrinated in evolutionary philosophy most of his life, the Christian worker quickly finds that some application or other of this philosophy is the greatest obstacle to winning people to an intelligent and lasting conversion to Biblical Christianity. Most people realize that, if the first chapter of the Bible is unreliable or vague, there is no reason to take the rest of the Bible very seriously.

The command of the Apostle Peter is clear. "Be ready always to give an answer (literally, an *apologetic*—a systematic, logical, scientific defense) to every man that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you" (I Peter 3:15). Whatever the problem an unbeliever may have with respect to the Christian faith, there *is* an answer! The Christian has not been asked to follow cunningly-devised fables. He must be saved by faith, of course, but that faith is a *reasonable* faith, founded on facts. It is not a credulous faith, like that of the evolutionist.

The Christian witness will not be ready always to give the answer, of course, unless he or she knows the answers. And they won't know them unless someone either teaches them or sees that they get them. This is the Scriptural function of the pastor and teacher (Ephesians 4:11-14).

(3) *Preach the Gospel!* This command is the Great Commission, given by Christ to the church and to every believer. The Commission incorporates also the obligation to

teach *all* things (Matthew 28:20) that Christ had taught (which obviously includes special creation), but is it even more important to realize that the Gospel itself must include the doctrine of creation.

The word "gospel" means *good news*, and it refers specifically in the New Testament to the glad tidings of all that Jesus Christ has done for mankind. This necessarily includes the entire scope of His work—past, present and future, from the creation of all things (Colossians 1:16) to the reconciliation of all things (Colossians 1:20).

It is significant that the final reference to the Gospel in the Bible is found in Revelation 14:6,7, in a context just prior to His glorious Second Coming. There it is called the "everlasting gospel" (thus stressing that it will be the same then as it is now), and the essential injunction is that men should "worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." The everlasting gospel thus always stresses recognition of God as Creator, as well as Savior (the reference to "the fountains of waters" is probably a reference even to His sovereign judgment on sin during the great Floodnote Genesis 7:10, 11).

The command to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15) therefore includes not only the substitutionary atonement and bodily resurrection of Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4), but also—as a necessary foundational preparation (especially in the last days when there would be widespread denial of creation)—the great truth

that God in Christ is the supernatural and omnipotent Creator of all things.

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all

things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

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DR. ROBERT T. KETCHAM WITH THE LORD

It is proper that *The Discerner* give recognition to the passing of this widely known fundamentalist preacher on August 21. He was one of the outstanding men among the General Association of Regular Baptists. Following a severe stroke nearly two years ago, he was confined to his home and inactive. Truly he was one of the highly respected spiritual leaders of the past generation.

About a year ago the editor of the *Baptist Bulletin* mailed him my book “*Glimpses and Reflections of a Ministry*.” In the volume was a chapter on Dr. Robert T. Ketcham, in which he is mentioned as being the preacher who delivered the greatest sermon I have ever heard. It was entitled, “When John the Baptist Answered Isaac.” The message was presented at the Founder’s Week of the Moody Bible Institute more than 30 years ago. It was an outstanding message and warmed the hearts of the big audience.

The editor of the *Baptist Bulletin* thought that Dr. Ketcham would appreciate this recognition and sent him my book. Soon thereafter

his secretary wrote to me that Dr. Ketcham was deeply moved by the tribute given him, and she also mailed me the book he wrote in which that particular sermon appeared among many other outstanding messages. And, thoughtfully she included a back issue of the GARBC publication, the *Baptist Bulletin*, the issue of which was given over almost entirely in honoring the life and ministry of their highly esteemed leader. As editor of *The Discerner* I am happy to have gladdened his heart with a deserving recognition while he was yet alive. At the time I did not know that he was ill.

Dr. Ketcham was an effective pastor from 1912 to 1948, and also a fine conference speaker during these many decades. He was 89 years of age. Despite his defective eyesight through the years he continually studied and had mastered the Scriptures. We salute the memory of this distinguished preacher among the conservative Bible-believing leaders whose ranks are becoming thinner each year.

John E. Dahlin

A TIMELY WARNING

Don't be neutral in the great battle which is coming upon the Church these days. The liberals, having looted and destroyed the major denominations are now working upon evangelical Christianity and major evangelical organizations. They are introducing a new gospel, a different Christ, altered definition of the work of Calvary, a new definition of the Church and several other perverted ideas that are gaining credence, even in some of our major Christian magazines and literature. Notice how many Christian periodicals have now moved to the left, suggesting that we are really here to "help the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden"

and to bring in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Notice how seldom the Gospel of the Grace of God is mentioned anymore and realize how many are drifting into liberalism in every denomination. Books like *The Battle For The Bible*, *Pagans In The Pulpit*, and *Christianity and Liberalism* (written in 1924 by the great Gresham Machen) point this up. Remember that Jesus said "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:15-16).

The above is a paragraph from the publication *Destiny Newsletter*, by David Breese, president, Christian Destiny, Inc.

THE NEW CATALOG IS NOW AVAILABLE

By the time you receive the October-December issue of *The Discerner* the new catalog will be in your hands. It also has been sent to all others who are on our active mailing list. It is a very costly project, and we appreciate your contribution in helping us meeting this big expense. The materials listed are carefully selected and offer you the best publications which are available on the various cults and unScriptural teachings of our time. Never has such material been more needed than during the present days. Every subscriber to *The Discerner* should have some of these publications on hand as the cults have penetrated nearly every community in the land. There is no better method in combatting them than through the distribution of literature to those in need of information and help. The catalog committee and our office have done a fine work in making this material available to you. Your orders will be given prompt attention.

UNDERSTANDING THE CULTS

Has someone from a cult ever come to your door or offered you their propaganda? Most of us are unprepared for such a situation. Trying to understand the diversity of cult teachings can be even more confusing.

There are, however, certain basic doctrinal errors common to most cults. By understanding where and how the cults go astray, we are able to answer their errors, and help show them the way to Jesus Christ. The following analysis, while far from exhaustive, will be helpful in contacts with proponents of the cults.

1. THE BIBLE. The cultist's foot in the door is his token respect for the Bible. Many individuals, ignorant of what the Bible teaches, are enthralled by the cultist's presentation. However, the cultist quickly announces some additional "revelation" which supposedly amplifies biblical teaching. The cults' companion books of "divine revelation" insidiously avoid the true issue of sin, substituting a religion of works for the Gospel of grace.

The truth is that the Bible *alone* illuminates the path of life. Companion books of the cults obscure the way to God. The Apostle John capsulizes the purpose of God's Word, "... these things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20:31).

2. SALVATION. The cults hold doctrinal distortions of salvation. Some hold to a false exclusivism wherein only their cult is saved. More often they are characterized by a religion of good works or universalism (believing that everyone will be saved), avoiding the issue of personal sin and denying the full atonement of Christ.

The Bible clearly teaches that all people are accountable to God for their sins and that only through faith in the finished work of Christ is there promise of salvation. When talking with a cultist, it is important to emphasize the biblical teaching on sin so that he will see his need for the Savior. Remember that salvation is God's initiative alone and by God's plan alone. He reaches down to us; not we to Him. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

3. JESUS CHRIST. Basic to the false teaching of the cults is a misconception of Jesus Christ as "a great teacher" or "the highest of all created beings" or "the divine ideal." Whatever the terminology used, the cultist does not claim that Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man.

If the cultist is willing to acknowledge his need for the Savior, he will be open to Jesus' statement that "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John

14:6).

4. THE TRINITY. Many cults do not teach that God is a personal being, nor that the Godhead is composed of three eternal, co-equal, co-existent persons; God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Bible emphasizes the personality of all three members of the Trinity. Such passages as 2 Corinthians 13:14 speak of all three collectively.

In conversation with a cultist, the most crucial issue is that the God revealed in the Bible is not an impersonal "Divine Absolute," but a personal Being to whom all men are morally accountable.

5. THE HEREAFTER. Misconceptions concerning final judgment, Heaven and Hell characterize all cults. However the Bible is vividly clear about the reality of a final judgment for non-believers and the existence of Hell. Revelation 20:12-15 is one of many passages, describing the doom of the non-believer.

6. HOPE. The logical result of the hodgepodge of the cults' false teachings is an insecure relationship to God (however they conceive Him).

But the Bible is clear about God's message: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

SUGGESTIONS FOR WITNESSING:

1. While knowledge of the cults is helpful, don't try to be an expert on foreign ground. Stick with the

Bible. By understanding basic errors of the cults, you can better point the cultist to what the Bible teaches. As you share the clear plan of salvation from the Bible, pray that the Holy Spirit would expose the cults' false doctrine. Be direct, deal with basic issues of salvation and don't get off on tangents. Also be careful to use only appropriate Bible passages in presenting the full perspective of God's plan for humanity.

2. Remember that the person you are witnessing to may still be sincerely seeking the truth, even if he is propagating a false doctrine. Therefore deal with him as a fellow human. Your grasp of the heart of the Christian faith, coupled with your personal testimony is your greatest witness.

3. If communication seems hopeless, politely close the conversation. For a continued witness, leave appropriate Gospel literature.

BOOKS FOR YOUR LIBRARY:

If you would like more information about dealing with the cults, the following literature is available:

The Chaos of the Cults. J. K. Van Baalen, 1972, 414 pp. \$6.95, cloth-bound. An authoritative, readable study of the most significant cults that challenge evangelical Christianity, with a thorough analysis of each cult.

Know the Marks of Cults. Dave Breese, 1975, 128 pp. \$1.50, paper. A helpful analysis of the doctrinal errors that characterize most cults.

The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error. Compiled by Keith L.

Brooks, 1969. 15¢ each, fold-out chart. This short chart offers a helpful overview of what several cults believe about seven major Bible doctrines.

Additional copies of this article are available for those who would like to give this article a wider circulation: 1-9 copies @

10¢ each plus 35¢ postage; 10-24 copies @ 8¢ each plus 50¢ postage; over 25 @ 5¢ each plus 10% postage.

From the *Pioneer*, published by Good News Publishers, Westchester, Illinois 60153, February-March, 1976 issue.

Order from:

Religion Analysis Service, Inc.
2708 E. Lake Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406

OCCULT SUPERMART

Some 20,000 people visited a supermarket of occultic and psychic means to self-realization in San Francisco's recent four-day "New Age Awareness Fair." Two hundred booths on the Show Place featured a potpourri of "consciousness raising" schemes through the teachings of Eastern gurus, astrologers, psychic readers, pyramid-power advocates, and a variety of meditative methods. (Satanists were excluded, say organizers.) With the stark exception of the evangelical witness of the Berkeley Christian Coalition, most of the metaphysical merchants seemed agreed on one concept: holistic health and mind-stretching power are available for all who will tap the mysterious forces within man through proper parapsychology methods, diet, psychic release, and occultic symbols.

Fifty psychic readers using astrology, tarot cards, numerology, handwriting analysis, quartz crystals, bio-feedback, palmistry, Druid rune stones, and Kirlian auras offered to predict for a fee (usually \$6) a person's future or to inform him of his past life in previous incarnations.

Physical problems were dealt with by groups pushing psychic surgery, acupressure, yoga exercises, wheat grass juice, and spine-rolling massagers.

"We want to win people to the awareness and consciousness movement, said Rousan Coronado, manager of the fair.

The Berkeley Christians viewed the event as a sample of what may be ahead for America "on a much larger scale."

Robert L. Cleath

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

John Dahlin, Editor

QUESTION . . . What has led to the recent controversy within the ranks of the fundamentalists?

ANSWER . . . There are really two positions held among fundamentalists with respect to fellowship with other brethren. Group one represents those who take a rigid attitude towards those who do not follow a completely separatistic position. They are often identified as secondary separatists who require a definite come-out-ism from those who do not follow a fixed emphasis on every doctrine and practice.

Those who are in group two are also separatistic, but not to the same extent. And, they like those of group one, call themselves fundamentalists. Their emphasis on uniformity is less doctrinaire, however, that is, in their doctrine and practice. They feel that fundamentalists need not detach themselves completely from honorable Christians who accept a wider view mainly in the area of fellowship and Christian activity.

QUESTION . . . Which group should be recognized as following the right course and is deserving of our support?

ANSWER . . . Both groups may tend towards extremism. Those who take the so-called hard line, and remain unyielding on certain positions, will sometimes become condemnatory and unbrotherly towards those who do not see eye to eye with them. And, on the other hand, those who accept a wider view of fellowship, might move too far towards accomodation with those whose concept on separation is blurred. Fundamentalists should not compromise on Biblical positions and standards. On the other hand, it is possible to fellowship with others who may not hold identical views with regard to the matter of separation.