

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

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CULTS, A CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

by Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

The expansion of the cultic groups has been nothing less than phenomenal in recent decades. It is true, however, that during the past year some of the cults have experienced a setback, at least temporarily. But on the whole these off-center groups are maintaining an extra-ordinary activity throughout the land. In view of their determined efforts in seeking to gain new followers, we might ask, what should be the position of Bible-believing Christians towards the spurious groups? Truly, satan is busy these days in multiplying his efforts in deceiving and misleading people into counterfeit systems. One of his best tools is to ensnare people in false religions. I wish to point out some steps which might be taken toward the cults.

THE HANDS OFF ATTITUDE

During recent decades a considerable number of church people have conducted themselves as if these spurious groups did not exist. In other words, no attempt has been made by them in opposing and combatting their unscriptural teachings and activities. This is an unrealistic position, and it seems inconceivable for a Christian not to

lift a hand in opposition to groups which have deviated from the Word of God, and especially when it is a known fact that the cultists are snatching away naive and unsuspecting people in practically every community in the land. A do-nothing attitude is both unscriptural and unwarranted. The church ought to oppose false teachers wherever they appear and counteract their propaganda.

A FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THE CULTIC THREAT

Closely related to the position discussed in the previous paragraph is the fact that many people seem unaware of the great threat of the cults to each local church. They have made inroads in every community in our land. During my 25 years as director of Religion Analysis Service, I have found that once people are ensnared by the cults that it is seldom they are able to free themselves from the grip of these false systems of religion. Usually those we are able to help are people who have not gone any farther than giving some consideration of identifying themselves with the one or the other cults. Many of

these can be helped by literature and counselling before they are swept into the cultic group. The church ought not to fail to recognize the threat of the cults to every community where they appear.

MAINTAINING A MORE EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

The challenge of the present-day church is that of surpassing the activity of the cults in effective spiritual service. Those of us who have evaluated cultic groups for many years are acquainted with the zeal and determination with which these misguided zealots work to gain new adherents to their organizations. These are commendable qualities, of course, but they are nullified when error is being promoted instead of the truth. The fact of the matter is that all cultists are spiritually blind and unfamiliar with the major doctrines of the Scriptures. For example, during my many years of leadership in combatting cults I have never found one Jehovah's Witness who has a clear understanding of the grace of God and the Scriptural way of salvation. While we may not be able to exceed them in their propaganda technique, it is relatively easy to outscore them in pointing out what the Bible teaches. Truly, we may qualify in being more knowledgeable than the cultists in the understanding of the doctrinal truths of the Scriptures. This in turn may be reflected in the printed material which we distribute, such as pamphlets, tracts and other informative publications. In this area we

should offer a superior ministry in effectively explaining the teachings of the Bible. In other words, our presentation should be clear and positive in covering all vital points which concern the Gospel. The Apostle Paul makes this matter clear in his words to Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." (2 Tim. 2:15) The whole context indicates by implication that one should be more knowledgeable and skillful than the opponents with whom you are being confronted. Through this passage mentioned, as well as in scores of others, it is clear that the church is challenged to carry on a more effective ministry than those who promote false systems of religion.

A MORE COMPLETE DEDICATION

In this comparative study involving false systems of religion, one must not fail to observe the commitment of cultic emissaries to their assigned tasks. It is well to be aware, however, that their service is to an authoritarian leadership under which they carry on their activities. In other words, their position is not one of dedication to the person of Jesus Christ. This distinction should be recognized as being exceedingly important. It is therefore not too difficult for Bible-believing Christians to surpass those people whose commitment is to spurious and misguided leaders rather than to our Lord. Notice how beautifully Paul refers to his spiritual dedication, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I

live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

It is important that we recognize that the cults in our day do constitute a challenge to the church. We simply must not allow them to rob our churches of people who are not established in the faith without a strong counter-action on our part. This action, which we take, can be effective, yes one which will surpass anything which the cults are able to offer. We ought to have a real concern and compassion for people who are being misled and do everything which is possible to prevent them from going over to the cults. And, we need a daily reliance on the Word of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in helping people in

such a time of crisis. We read, "For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). In this relationship with the Word and the Holy Spirit, our position is spiritually superior to that of the cultists. The dedication to the Lord should be complete. Our lives need to be consistent and the commitment to God must be without any reservation. Those who have strayed from the truth cannot match these spiritual virtues of consecrated believers. The cults constitute a challenge to the church of today. We need spiritual insight and divine guidance in meeting this challenge.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW OFFICE MANAGER

Beginning October 1st Rev. Ewald Eisele of Crosby, Minnesota, assumed the management of our office. Rev. E. Loren Pugsley, who has been with us for 11 years concluded his service and is returning to Kansas. We owe our brother thanks and appreciation for the work which he has done during these many years, and we wish for him and his good wife God's blessing in their time of retirement.

Rev. Eisele comes to us well recommended. His education has been at Biola Bible College of Los Angeles, California and at the North American Baptist Seminary in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Our



brother accepts the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. And, he is committed to all the basic Biblical doctrines without any modification. We appreciate his positive attitude towards the Scriptures.

For more than 25 years he has had pastoral experiences in a number of churches in South Dakota, California and Minnesota. His most recent pastorate was the Deerwood Baptist Church at Deerwood, Minnesota. Since he has held a number of pastorates, we believe he will have many opportunities to speak in churches in the Northwest area. He is recommend-

ed by a number of people who have known him and appreciated his ministry. Wherever he appears he will represent Religion Analysis Service.

As President of Religion Analysis Service and Editor of its publication, *The Discerner*, I feel that I am speaking for the entire Board in welcoming our brother to his new position. We definitely feel that the Lord has led us mutually in this arrangement, and we are convinced that Rev. Eisele will make a fine contribution to our ministry in literature.

—John E. Dahlin

AFTER ELEVEN YEARS

by E. Loren Pugsley

I was born in a four-room farm home, six miles SW of Loup City, Nebraska. I was born-again in the same community in the early Fall of 1924. After completing our studies at Moody Bible Institute, of Chicago, Illinois, in August 1939, Mrs. Pugsley and I began our life's vocation of a varied type of ministries in the Word of God. We have been in the ministry continuously, with the exception of about one year.

On September 11th, 1968, I began my responsibilities as Office Manager and Field Director of Religion Analysis Service, and have just now completed eleven years in this ministry. In many ways these have been the richest years of our ministry. My main responsibility has been in the R A S office, but I have also carried on an active ministry of representing R A S in

various meetings, pulpit supply, etc., plus a nearly eight year stretch in a Thursday night Bible Class in the home of Mrs. Louise Anderson in South Minneapolis. Mrs. Anderson has been a real help in doing some of the posting for R A S.

For the past five years I have also been associated with the Twin Cities Bible Church, in St. Paul, where I have served as Bible Class teacher, Church and Church Board chairman, and, during most of the past year, done a lot of pulpit supply. All the time, though I have been most active in the ministry of R A S, which has been a real joy and blessing.

As I leave, and turn the office responsibility over to Rev. Ewald Eisele, I confess to mixed emotions. I will miss that work, and the fellowship of those with whom I

have worked. My wife and I are moving to our home in Wichita, Kansas, where we will be actively engaged in whatever ministry the Lord has for us there. It is my earnest prayer that the Lord may

continue to bless the ministry of R A S. After October 1, 1979, our permanent address will be

Pastor and Mrs. E. Loren Pugsley
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Wichita, Kansas 67204

ISLAM IS HERE IN NORTH AMERICA

RAYMOND H. JOYCE presents the challenge of reaching the two million Muslims in the United States and Canada.

Islam is here in North America — seen and heard and felt. Islam — the world's largest religion — with its belief in God and Jesus the Son of Mary, in heaven and hell; and with its prayers and pilgrimages, fasting, and alms-giving. Its mosque minarets now probe the skyline of a number of our great cities. Its adherents include second-or third-generation citizens and a multitude of more recent immigrants. There is almost an invasion of technology-hungry students, professionals, businessmen, and diplomats.

A responsible Muslim authority puts the total Islam population of the United States and Canada at two million. "Of these," he says, "about half a million are black people, which includes both the followers of Elijah Muhammad (the Black Muslims, who are rejected by mainstream Islam because of their racism), and the other black Muslims who reject the teachings of Elijah Muhammad (now deceased)." Compare these two million with the half million estimated ten years ago!

Islamic English publications in

North America — books, newspapers, and magazines — are multiplying. One periodical claims a circulation of 740,000. Book titles include *Islam-Unique & Universal*, *Islam-The Religion of the Future*, and so on. A recurring thesis is that Christianity has failed . . . Christian America is corrupt, and corrupting the world . . . Islam has the remedy-and the incentive and means to apply it.

One of its writers proclaims that it is "about to assume its historical, eternal role on the American continent . . . It is the Islamic Revolution which holds the greatest promise for the American nation and the world . . . People who are fed up with their godlessness and materialism will join the great Muslim brotherhood of peace, equality and submission to Allah."

To help bring this about and in support of specific projects such as building mosques, Islamic centers and schools, and "sending Muslim lectures to colleges and churches," super-wealthy Saudi Arabia is donating large sums. Oil-rich Libya is said to be levying a special four percent tax to promote Islam, particularly in America and Africa.

Seen and heard. And felt. As one Muslim group holds hostages in the nation's capital, other Muslims — a religious scholar and

three ambassadors—quote the Koran to the Hanafis who hold the hostages. So it is claimed the “Holy Book” brought their release. Muslims in Canada, led by a university professor, demonstrate publicly in protest against Ontario School textbook descriptions of the Prophet Mohammed. Result: the offending textbooks are to be withdrawn. Boxing champion Mohammed Ali has been called “Islam’s most loquacious supporter.”

Reports from Minneapolis tell of Black Muslims employing modern methods of evangelism—renting halls, showing Islamic propaganda films, distributing literature and decision cards calling for acceptance of Wallace D. Muhammed as leader in a movement towards a pure Islam with equality and justice for all, especially blacks! At a gathering which we witnessed, of at least 2,000 Toronto Muslims performing the annual “Feast of Sacrifice” prayers, there were tables of Islamic literature in English for sale, and two Canadian Muslims were peddling phonograph records proclaiming the truth and relevance of the Koranic “revelation.”

How are the churches in North America responding to this challenge? What is their attitude and the measure of their involvement? Generally speaking, it is very sad to say, there is a tragic and almost total ignorance of what Islam really is. Where there is an attitude expressed, it is usually one of apathetic dismissal of the task of reaching Muslims for Christ as being too hard and unproductive.

So naturally there is little or no involvement.

But there are exceptions. Bubbles of concern and activity are arising with regard to Islam from the morass of Christian inertia. Many letters coming into our Fellowship of Faith for Muslims (FFM) office, especially from young people, show God increasingly burdening believers to reach Muslims. Individual Christians in all walks of life are meeting them as never before—at college, in the office or factory, housing establishment or just on the street, in the store, or while traveling.

Some Christian organizations are making special efforts to reach the followers of Islam, such as International Students, Inc., with its many workers across the country and now with a special relationship of assistance to the FFM. Operation Mobilization has sponsored repeated campaigns among Arabs in the Detroit area. These have proved to be a training experience in reaching Muslims for the young people involved. Door-to-door literature distribution was a main feature.

A most significant project has been that of mail evangelism, operated by a young lady out of Montreal and gradually being extended to other large cities across Canada. Carefully selected literature is sent to those with Muslim names found in the phone book. Follow-up is by correspondence and personal visitation. This method has tremendous potential for at least acquainting a large number of Muslims throughout North America with

the Gospel. Radio should be added to that in areas where Islam is strong, as is being done in Chicago in Arabic by Bassam Madany of the Back to God Hour; in Detroit also there is to be a broadcast slanted to Muslims. A wide range of Arabic literature authored by Rev. Madany is available for follow-up.

In Toronto, Canada, with its 25,000 or more Muslims, the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches has an Indian pastor employed full-time in an Asian immigrant ministry which gives many contacts with Muslims, especially in the universities. In both Montreal and Ottawa university Christian groups were visited by the Muslim Students Association to sessions of sharing their respective ideas of God—not a confrontation, but giving a good chance for positive Christian testimony.

The above are just some of the methods being used to witness to Muslims. Others no doubt could and should be devised, but the supreme means certainly is the individual Christian's concern and watching—indeed seeking—for opportunities, combined with genuine friendliness, loving understanding, and long patience. Some knowledge of Islam is a tremendous help. Not for argument (though sometimes needed

for answering questions) but for communicating the Gospel in terms and ways that will help the Muslim to understand it.

To assist the individual Christian or organization in this great task is the purpose of the Fellowship of Faith for Muslims. This is a prayer, information, and literature service. A prayer news bulletin covering the Muslim World is issued every four months, also notices of conferences and other activities in North America related to Muslim witness. FFM makes available books on Islam, the approach to the Muslim, missionary stories and biographies, etc., and literature for giving to Muslims. A catalog of 150 or more items is available on request. Its own special publication is entitled *Your Muslim Guest—a Practical Guide in Friendship and Witness for Christians Who Meet Muslims*. Membership is on an individual, donation basis.

In every way the stage is set for a new crusade of love among these followers of the Arabian Prophet. In obedience to our Lord's command to go to everyone, let us move forward together with Him.

[The Rev. Raymond H. Joyce is Executive Secretary of the Fellowship of Faith for Muslims, 205 Yonge St., Room 25, Toronto, Canada M5B 1N2]. Reprinted from *Interlit*, the David C. Cook Foundation quarterly newsbulletin, December 1977.

FAREWELL GATHERING FOR THE PUGSLEYS

Our office manager, Rev. E. Loren Pugsley, who has been with Religion Analysis Service for 11 years, concluded his work here on October 1st. He and his wife are

returning to Kansas from which they came to Minneapolis in 1968. Mrs. Pugsley has been employed at the J.C. Penney Company these years. We wish them well in their

retirement.

A dinner in their honor was held at the home of Rev. and Mrs. David L. Larsen, who invited the members of the Board and their wives for this gathering. Rev. Larsen is the Vice President of the Board, who also has contributed a number of timely articles for our magazine, *The Discerner*. The regular quarterly meeting of the Board also was held the same evening.

REVIEW OF 'MOM AND ME'

by Jerry Bergman, Ph.D

Mom and Me: Twenty Years Jehovah's Witnesses, by Debbie Oakley and Helen Ortega (Vantage, 1978, \$5.95) is a story of a mother and daughter who were Jehovah's Witnesses for 20 years.

The book is divided in two parts. Part I relates Helen's experiences as a Witness and Part II tells of Debbie's experiences. The book gives good insight into what the life of a typical Witness is like, including what attracts and holds people to the Watchtower Society. As commonly happens in time, disillusionment with the Witnesses sets in, and eventually both Helen and Debbie became evangelical Christians.

As is often the case of those who leave the Watchtower Society, both Debbie and Helen were extremely active Witnesses, very conscientious in their duties and in most every way, at least at first, exemplary Witnesses. The book gives good insight into the problems of leaving the Watchtower Society, and especially the difficulties of accepting evangelical Christianity. The account is very lively and

At this occasion an appropriate gift was presented to Rev. Pugsley as a token of appreciation for his service. Our brother has maintained a consistent interest in our ministry through literature during these many years. We say thanks to our friends as they leave and we wish them God's continued blessing as they anticipate other areas of service.

readable, exuding human compassion and feelings throughout.

The authors give good insight into the internal workings and problems of the Watchtower organization. Instead of focusing purely on doctrinal matters, the authors focus on the feelings, attitudes and problems which occur in the everyday life of Witnesses.

What Attracts People to the Watchtower Society?

Oakley feels that people are attracted to the Watchtower Society by the promise of a paradisaic kingdom on earth. In addition, the friendliness and concern the Witness usually express towards newcomers is another important factor. In view of these attractions, a question often asked is, "what causes a person to leave the Watchtower Society?" One of the first things that bothered both Debbie and Helen was the high level of authority the Watchtower, in many ways, imputes to itself, actually, above *all other authorities*. On page 11, Ortega brings out that, "If we discovered any 'untruth' in the teachings (of the Watchtower

Society) we were to 'hold fast' until the Society made the change, if it did at all." The Watchtower authority was to be above all other authority, even if it is obvious they were wrong.

In this case, it is clear that other Christians and ex-Witnesses spend a great deal of time working with and helping both Debbie and Helen. There was not any particular doctrinal issue that arose, at least at first, but the contrast between the kindness shown by active "hard line" Witnesses, later focused on doctrinal issues. This kindness and concern showed to them that what Witnesses are taught, namely that all within the organization are fully good and all or most outsiders are fully bad, is a serious distortion of reality. Changing one's belief structure is difficult and obviously very slow. This volume illustrates the difficulties, both emotional and otherwise, in altering one's beliefs.

Another reason which prompted both Debbie and Helen to leave the Watchtower Society is the callous, unfeeling and sometimes cruel manner which the Society treats one of their own once they begin to verbalize questions about Witness beliefs. Questions from a seasoned Witness are often not tolerated, especially unanswerable ones, and one soon faces the wrath of both the elders and the Watchtower Society if he persists in asking them. Questions are tolerated where they are occasional and minor, and are from a new Witness. But if a question indicates lack of full acceptance of the Watchtower Society, and

evidences deep study and thought, the toleration stops. What typically happens is described on page 16:

I wrote Florence (an active Witness) a frank letter stating my question and confusion. She immediately showed it to her son, a servant in his congregation. She also showed it to another strong Jehovah's Witness who had studied with her. Both these people felt I was committing blasphemy, questioning the Society this way. The sister persuaded Florence to mail a copy of this letter to the Society's headquarters after showing it to the circuit servant . . . This was the time to clear out all of us who did not agree completely with the Society's teachings . . . the first to go were the Reyes family. Charkey, her husband and children were all disfellowshipped. None were spared . . . About this same time . . . those dear, born-again Christians both in Ridgecrest and Bakerfield were visited too. The spiritual axe fell hard and clear.

An important issue discussed in depth by both Oakley and Ortega is the trauma of being disfellowshipped from the Watchtower Society. Until recently, no one was even to speak to a disfellowshipped person, including one's immediate family. The trauma of this is difficult for many to endure. Disfellowshipping has not uncommonly caused a number of serious emotional problems. At the minimum, disfellowshipping causes a person to become, at the very least, depressed (and often severely depressed). As Helen stated,

"The complete isolation (of being disfellowshipped by) one . . . who has been in this cult for so many years, is past description."

Also included is some excellent material which shows the tendency for the Watchtower Society to oscillate between various doctrinal teachings. For example, Russell taught that those destroyed in Sodom and Gomorrah would be resurrected. This belief was repudiated by Rutherford, but now the Society *again* teaches what Russell originally taught! This "back and forth theology" has been true in a number of cases, as *Mom and Me* documents. Also discussed is the importance of the year 1975 by one who was active and involved in the congregation at the time.

One of the main criticisms of the book is that both writers should have discussed more of their own experiences, feelings and attitudes,

and especially such things as their experiences relative to doctrinal changes, failure of various predictions, etc., while they were JW's. The book seems to quickly pass by most of the 20 years of their involvement with the JW's, and begins with the problems which led to their disfellowshipping in the first few pages. In addition, there does not seem to be a conclusion, i.e., the story begins abruptly and ends abruptly. The story is primarily a short chapter out of the lives of two people, not a flowing story which begins and ends as the title suggests.

In conclusion, *Mom and Me* is a lively, readable chapter out of the lives of two 20 year veteran Jehovah's Witnesses. It helps the Christian understand this "made in America" religion and is a useful work for all students of religious cults.

ECUMENISTS USE OF SCRIPTURE

Dr. Robert P. Lightner, Th.D.
Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas

Strange indeed that the ecumenists, who reject the authority of Scripture and call evangelicals who believe it obscurantists and extreme literalists, are the very ones who repeatedly seek to bolster their attempts by an appeal to a few "proof texts" of Scripture. There are two favorite and prominent passages in the vocabulary of those pushing for church union. One cannot help but believe they are used deceptively—only to satisfy evangelicals by pretending

to be doing the solemn will of God upon scriptural authority.

Torn from its setting completely a small phrase from John 17:21 is used most frequently: "That they all may be one." As used by the ecumenists and without considering the context in which the phrase is found, it sounds very impressive. Two glaring contradictions reveal the absurd fallacy of such a usage of the passage. The first is that the liberal establishment, which heads the ecumenical drive, does not accept the Bible as the very Word of

God. How then is it possible to suddenly draw upon a portion of that Word to give divine sanction to their claims and to use a text of Scripture as the all-embracing goal, purpose, and slogan of their movement? The second contradiction is that only by a process of tortured exegesis can John 17:20 through 23 be made to teach what the ecumenical leaders imply it teaches.

The passage says nothing about organizational union of all religious groups and denominations into one great monolithic structure. God the Son Who is engaged on prayer to God the Father in this passage has just completed instructing His disciples concerning their responsibilities and privileges in light of His imminent death. He has spoken to them concerning the need for humility (John 13), the promise and comfort of the coming Holy Spirit (John 14), fruitbearing and its requirements (John 15), and the new work of the Holy Spirit (John 16). In His prayer recorded in John 17 He prays these truths home to the Father. First, He prays for Himself (17:1-8). Second, He prays for the disciples, Judas being absent (17:9-19). Third, He prays for all those who will believe on Him because of the faithfulness of His disciples (17:20-26). The *flock* to be united is spoken of as "these," the ones given to Him by the Father. The *foundation* of the unity for which He prays is given in verse 11: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou has given me" Nowhere in this prayer does our Lord exhort men to produce unity.

His simple request is that the Father would keep the unity which was already in existence and which the Son had kept while He was in the world. Here the Savior spoke with certainty as though the baptizing-identifying work of the Holy Spirit were already a reality though that did not take place until the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Christ also presents in this high-priestly prayer the *formula* for the unity which He sustained and now the Father is beseeched to sustain. He clearly identifies the nature of the unity. It is to be "as we are," "as thou Father art in me" (17:11, 21). This relates to the unity within the Godhead. Who would deny that the Father and the Son were and are One in doctrine (i.e. John 7:16; 8:26, 28; 12:49), devotion (John 6:38, 40; 17:4), and in demonstratin of love (John 17:23)? Surely this prayer of Christ is not to be answered by Bible-rejecting, Christ-rejecting ecumenists who are seeking to build a superchurch. The prayer has already been answered by the Father to Whom it was addressed. Through the death of Christ, the One Who prayed, the middle wall of partition was broken down (Eph. 2:15-18). All who have accepted Him as their Sin-bearer are "one in Christ" (Gal. 3:28). All such have been "baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). They therefore all have "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all . . ." (Eph. 4:4-6).

Undeniably, it is necessary for God's children to manifest this oneness in Christ in a visible way if the world of lost men is to know that God sent His Son and that He

loves them (John 17:23). Believers have failed miserably at this task. This is not to say, however, that the manifestation of this oneness is to be seen by believer and nonbeliever joining hands in spiritual endeavors or by the building of a great superchurch with a highly organized unbelieving bureaucracy in control.

The second passage of Scripture used most frequently by ecumenists to buttress their efforts is Ephesians 4:1 through 16. Various phrases such as "the unity of the Spirit," "one body," "the whole body" appear often in the language of ecumenists. Again, they are torn from the context in which they are found. Professional ecumenists would have us believe the Apostle Paul was saying that church union is the all-important thing, taking precedence even over doctrine. Their philosophy is that it really does not matter what you believe so long as you express love for one another. Joining hands with those with whom you have serious doctrinal differences and disagreements will eventually produce the unity of the faith. These inspired words from the Apostle Paul teach no such thing. The fact is, they teach exactly the opposite—doctrine comes before fellowship. This is evident by noting carefully the opening words of verse 1: "I therefore." Immediately, this takes us back to what was said previously. The emphasis upon unity presented in chapter 4 is a natural consequence of what has been said before and is based squarely upon it. Chapters 1 through 3 of Ephesians are filled

with great doctrinal themes. The sovereign purposes and work of God in the salvation of sinners are discussed in chapter 1. The helplessness of man to save himself is clearly evident there (1:4-6). So is the substitutionary work of Christ made known (1:7), as is man's need to trust Him (1:12, 13). Chapter 2 is even more specific about the inability of man to do anything to merit favor with God (2:1, 5, 8-10). Throughout the first three chapters the uniqueness of Christ as God's Son and man's only Savior is stressed repeatedly. Some of those very doctrines which the ecumenists reject most are dealt with here by Paul. Exhortation is given then to those who had experienced the work of salvation to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (4:3). Not some fabricated organizational unity, but the unity of the Spirit is to be kept. Again, as in Christ's prayer, Paul relates this unity to that unity which characterizes the Trinity (4:4-6). The Ephesians are not told to create unity but to "keep" the unity which already exists. They were to live in keeping with their families relationship. Even though members of the family of God possess different gifts, they are not to major on minors but to find their strength and help from each other by remembering that they all have the things that matter most in common. The passage stresses the appeal to "keep" the unity of the spirit (4:1-3), the nature of the unity (4:4-6), variety in unity (4:7-12), and the future full realization of that unity (4:13-16).

Unity is one thing! Union is

another! These terms are mutilated and misused by ecumenists. By virtue of the gracious work of God through Christ every believing sinner is a member of the family of God. Those same believing sinners are also vitally related not only to all the members of the family but also to every member of the Godhead. What greater unity could there be than that? Such a unity cannot be earned, it is not deserved; but it is a real spiritual unity nonetheless. Organizational

union sought after by ecumenists has not a trifle of support in Scripture. The prayer of Christ recorded in John 17 was answered by the sovereign work of the Spirit. Children of God are now called upon to "keep" this spiritual unity because of the great doctrinal oneness which brought them and keeps them in the family of God. This is far removed from what the current cry for church union is proposing.

From Church Union

LACK OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

Anyone who makes a careful evaluation of our present generation will find that the incapability of discernment by most people is a correct observation. The Biblical record of the church of Laodicea is perhaps the best example to illustrate this assertion. The church of Laodicea had the ability to classify and enumerate all its achievements. It accounted for all its talents and works, and capped it by boasting that "I have need of nothing." The church possessed wealth, and knew all that it needed to know about church activities. But our Lord who possessed spiritual insight, stated the situation correctly: "Thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked." He also suggested how that church might remedy its spiritual poverty: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and annoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."

This is a classic example of the need for spiritual insight and discernment.

It is disappointing to read the World Council of Churches' report with the statistics regarding the immensity of the external church union. The leaders are openly advocating the admission into membership of the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical system. They believe that the expanding ecumenical movement will score a break-through in the days ahead. These leaders possess sight but not insight or discernment. They gloat over its expansion and the figures provided. But the leaders have no discernment, that is, they do not realize this immense concentration of external church union will pave the way for the appearance of Antichrist and the harlot church in the end-time, according to the book of Revelation. Discernment and spiritual insight are elements lacking in this ecclesiastical system. The apostle Paul explains the

reason for this spiritual blindness: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But he that is spiritual judgeth all things" (1 Cor. 2:14).

When I traveled through Israel some years ago, I sat next to my guide in his automobile as we traveled extensively through the land. He was elated over the progress his country had made in so short a time, and how wondrously the country had been rejuvenated. This brilliant Jew had comprehension and a full awareness of all that which had happened in Israel, but he did not have insight or the ability to discern that before the land will achieve its glorious future,

there will first be "The Great Tribulation" with its dreadful suffering among the descendents of Abraham. In other words, he lacked spiritual insight and discernment regarding God's program of the latter days. Despite his brilliance he did not know that Christ came to His own when the fulness of time had come, and that He was the true Messiah. I did my best to witness to him, but he was completely absorbed in the temporal progress of Israel, not its future in the light of Prophecy.

What we need above everything else is Divine illumination and spiritual discernment regarding the times in which we live, especially the certainty of the Lord's imminent return.

John E. Dahlin

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

John E. Dahlin, Editor

QUESTION . . . What likely will be the future of the Cultic Groups in America?

ANSWER . . . While certain cults have experienced a setback during the past year through their extremism or cleavages within, this does not necessarily curtail others which are formidable in their activities. It is certain that some of the mainline cults, with great resourcefulness and financial strength, will continue their world-wide program. Their organizational skill and techniques used by them will doubtlessly bring in numerous new followers.

QUESTION . . . Which among the cults constitute the greatest threat to the Christian Church?

ANSWER . . . It might be well to state first that the extremists will not have the biggest influence with people, or gain the most followers. Rather, it seems obvious that those who hold some truths in common with Bible believing Christians will mislead people more quickly than the far-out cults. It is more difficult for the uninformed to discriminate properly in these situations, that is, recognizing the error along with the truth. Without a doubt these are the cults which prey on people that will be the most successful in gaining new adherents in the years lying ahead.