

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

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2. THE REALITY OF CULTIC DICTATORSHIP
6. RECOLLECTIONS OF CHRISTADELPHIAN-ISM
9. THE NAMELESS CULT
11. THE GOD MAKERS
12. A LAYMAN LOOKS AT TWO CHOICES
14. BOOK NOTICES
15. ANOTHER "FAITH HEALER" DIES

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# The DISCERNER

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## THE REALITY OF CULTIC DICTATORSHIP

*Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor*

A fair study of present-day cultic groups will reveal clearly that a policy of dictatorship is being pursued by practically all the off-center groups in our time. In this article, I wish to establish this assertion beyond the possibility of refutation by cultic sympathizers. By using examples and illustrations I believe that the statements made on the cults in this article will be adequately verified. I will proceed with the discussion of the subject.

### **All the Leading Cults Follow a Dictatorial Policy**

The Mormon group, which perhaps is the largest one, with more than four million followers, provides a clear illustration of cultic authoritarianism. Joseph Smith, who launched the Mormon Movement about 150 years ago, maintained complete dominance over this group up until his assassination in the year 1844. The organization of the Mormon Church constitutes a hierarchy. At the top is the President of the organization, and below him are the 12 apostles, and next is the company of 70. In the Mormon administration you have an integrated authority. It may be classified as a rigid pattern of

authoritarianism. For many years during the early period, several relatives directed the work as successors of Smith. The official name is The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints. The cult adheres to the doctrine of ongoing revelation. When the president of the body makes a proclamation, it becomes binding on all members of the Mormon Church.

For a long period, Negro males were not allowed to attain priesthood status within the system. This led to considerable criticism of the Mormon Church during the time when the integration of races was being emphasized, and when equality was promoted as a necessary arrangement. About a decade ago, the President of the Mormon Church announced that God had revealed a change in this status of Negroes. It is clear that expedience explains the change that was arranged. Another example worth considering, which illustrates the complete authoritarian position of the Mormon Church, is that of Sonia Johnson, the dynamic feminist within the Mormon Church. She championed the E R A program. This was unacceptable with the Mormon leadership. When the woman refused

to yield to the order of the hierarchy, she was excommunicated. The deviation was really on a political matter, but it reveals the dictatorial position of the church. Later this woman forced the state of Utah to include her on the ballot as an independent candidate for President. Her name appeared on the ballot in November along with many other candidates for President on the so-called listing of splintered parties. All in all, any deviation from Mormon dictatorship is not allowable in their system.

The Jehovah's Witnesses do not take a back seat in following a policy of dictatorship which directs their system. Blind loyalty is required of the members. No challenging of the leadership is tolerated. During its hundred years of activity the Jehovah's Witnesses have followed authoritarianism in their cultic activity. Only four powerful leaders have directed the movement until recently when a fifth one was installed. The rank and file of the witnesses are instructed what to do, and there are no options on compliance to the orders given by the leaders.

Mary Baker Eddy appeared in the middle of the past century. In 1866 she founded Christian Science. The official name is, The Church of Christ, Scientist. The founders' textbook, *Key to the Scriptures*, is the guide book for all the followers of Mary Baker Eddy. Actually, it is the Bible of Christian Science. Authoritarianism has characterized the movement in its 120 years of history. No modification of the cult has been initiated. A policy of dictatorship prevails.

Herbert W. Armstrong has followed the same authoritarian line

since he launched The World Wide Church of God. The history of his system is dated back to the year 1934 when Armstrong launched his public ministry. The system is legalistic and a centralized control has characterized the movement during the 50 years that it has maintained its vigorous activity. When Garner Ted Armstrong, the son, was expelled about a decade ago, he was disassociated from the system because of sinful practices. Prior to this crisis, he was the key person in the movement. Since this situation developed, Herbert W. Armstrong has resumed the full control at the age of 92 years. His TV and radio programs manifest the old-line dictatorial policy. By the brainwashing of his followers, and through the rigid demands on them, he has gathered up approximately 55 million dollars a year. His claims are well known. He insists that his ministry is the only one that provides the true Gospel in today's world. In other words, the Armstrong message is the only voice that proclaims the whole truth of God. No dictatorship is more demanding on the followers than that of Herbert W. Armstrong.

To many people, The Seventh Day Adventists are not considered as a cult. Even the late Donald G. Barnhouse extended his hand of fellowship with them. He felt that they had enough in common with Bible-believing Christians to merit recognition. Most evangelicals do not share Barnhouse's position. Within the movement, Ellen White has been given the status bordering on infallibility. Officially she has been considered as one being divinely guided and inspired in her writings. The

writings are considered to bear the marks of special inspiration. This concept has been maintained during the past century by the Adventists.

In recent years, a group of Adventist scholars decided to investigate the writings of Ellen White. They discovered that large areas of her writings were not her own, as was being claimed by Adventist leaders. It was found that much of the writings consisted of material from other authors, and it was incorporated in the writings of Ellen White without giving any recognition or credit for this borrowed material. This is known as plagiarism. The revelation, regarding Ellen White, came like a bombshell to the Adventist leaders, and these honorable scholars were dismissed from the Adventist organization without being given a hearing. They were simply disfellowshipped. It was a ruthless action, but the leaders, who had given such high recognition to Ellen White, were seemingly forced to take some drastic steps. This action reveals the dictatorship that governs the Seventh Day Adventist organization.

Another example of dictatorship is exemplified in the wealthy Korean known as Sun Myung Moon. He came to America some years ago in order to expand his work. It had been launched in Korea, and has borne the name, The Unification Church. Since Moon was very strongly anti-Communist, it made him acceptable with many Koreans, and by a considerable number of people in our country. Theologically he has made fantastic claims of his messianic mission. Through skillful leadership he has accumulated much wealth. He has purchased many business estab-

lishments in the East. Somehow, Moon has appealed especially to the youth. Thousands have been brainwashed, and directed to sell articles, such as pencils and flowers, in public places. These misguided young people have received practically no compensation. Often they have slept on the floors in buildings not having adequate clothing. Usually they are underfed. All this while the leader Moon has lived in a palace with his enormous riches. The followers have not been able to afford rooms in motels. Recently Moon was indicted, and later sent to the Federal Penitentiary for 18 months on income tax evasion, and violation of Federal laws. His top leaders continue to carry on the regular program and the dictatorship.

The mild group known as the Two by Twos have been widely spread across the land and in regions beyond. It is difficult to piece together their writings. Often they are referred to as Cooneyites. Utter simplicity marks their activities. They do not believe in an organized church or the service of a regular pastor. They seek to minister to people in the communities where they live. But one needs to mention, that even among these simple people dictatorship and discipline are applied to those who fail to follow the methods of the cult in its operation.

### **Why Cultic Groups Resort to Dictatorial Methods**

First of all, such a position simplifies the work of the organization. Any form of factionalism or dissension mars the work, whether it be religious, political, or economic. Within a democratic society such a

dictatorial policy is rejected despite the logic and simplicity in adhering to a stronger method of control and discipline. Many of us remember how Germany was plagued by at least a dozen political parties in the early thirties. None was strong enough to lead Germany in those years. Coalitions were tried, but often they fell apart when one or more segments pulled away from the coalition. Germany was on the road to anarchy. It was then that Adolph Hitler came to the fore. He made phenomenal gains, and his National Socialists became the strongest party in the Reichstag. Many German industrialists supported Hitler as it was believed he stood for law and order, and he would bring Germany back into the sun, as it were. Germany made phenomenal progress until Hitler chose to engage in military action in Europe and by invading neighboring states. This led to World War II and its horrible consequences. Simplified leadership can be dangerous when selfish leaders direct a nation's policy. Cultic dictatorship may be successful for a while, but it has led to the tragedy of Jonestown in Latin America, with the ignominious end to that cult.

In addition, dictatorship makes it possible to carry on effective propaganda. No single area of concentration is as strong as that of using propaganda in the expansionist program of a cult. Through literature and skillful work of qualified agents the cultic groups with the monolithic leadership have been effective in expanding many of the well-known cults in the United States. In a democratic society, propaganda cannot be as effective because uniformity is not achieved where freedom exists.

Dictatorship fits the scheme of those whose ego and ambition are motivating them in maintaining dominance over people. Practically all the leaders of the various cults which we have discussed have been resourceful persons. In other words, they have been unusually aggressive in directing others. In a democratic society, however, it is much more difficult for one person, or a small group, to achieve such dominance. In this article I have mentioned many of the leaders of the major cults. In our discussion we did not mention Paul Wierwille. While his organization is not nearly as large as some of the others to which we made reference, we find that he has had an extraordinary success in achieving the objectives which he set out to reach. His program in recent decades have made an important impact through the cultic organization known as **The Way**. He depicts the abundant life by means of his systematic training program. In a monetary way he has been particularly successful in enriching himself with the costly materials which are used in his classes. It takes shrewd leadership to initiate the programs used by the present-day dictators in the cultic area. Wierwille has been a successful cultic leader.

What are some distinct lessons which might be gained in a study of cultic dictatorship?

First of all, we need to beware of those who come forth claiming special revelation from God with regard to the teachings which they propose. Thousands of people are ready to latch onto someone who provides a program which sounds appealing.

In addition, we should question the

reliability of those who speak disparagingly about other Christian groups. No cult has lambasted Christian ministers so much as the Jehovah's Witnesses. Somehow, this kind of propaganda is welcome to those who are disappointed and frustrated within their own religious group. The propagandists of the Christian Science cult have discredited doctors and medical treatments. Those who have been unable to get help from the medical group often have listened to the smooth arguments of those who advocate the teaching of Christian Science. Others who seem frustrated within their denominations listen respectfully to Herbert W. Armstrong when he states boldly that he is the only one who sets forth the unadulterated truth of God in this

generation. He declares the real truth was restored through special divine revelation given to him in the year 1934. We need to be suspicious of those who claim that they possess extraordinary credentials in providing the right interpretation of the Scriptures. Actually these spurious leaders claim that they possess a kind of monopoly of certain special gifts from God in explaining the Scriptures. The Apostle John has good advice for people who are confronted with deceivers: "I have written unto you concerning them that deceive you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (I Jn. 2:26-27).

## RECOLLECTIONS OF CHRISTADELPHIANISM

*by Lloyd Button*

I cannot remember a time when I did not go to church. My earliest recollections of a church service are sitting between my father and mother and trying to keep still! It was a good discipline which unfortunately few families today are willing to develop in themselves or their children. It was a small building seating perhaps one hundred, and my folks usually sat towards the front. Sometimes my father would be in the pulpit, taking his turn preaching the morning sermon, because the church did not believe in paid preachers. There was no regular evening service. Every year or so, however, a traveling preacher would visit the churches and when he came to our town he was

received with joy. In addition to his itinerant preaching, he edited a small magazine with Bible study articles which he had written. He was one of the few preachers in the Christadelphian movement who was paid, probably because he traveled and edited the paper. Brother Zilmer was regarded with affection and respect. I can remember looking at his erect figure and solemn composure as he spoke with dignity and with great authority. People in our family and church quoted his articles and sermons as the definitive expression of what the Bible taught. I learned to respect the figure of a man reading from and preaching from the Bible. That little gathering impressed me,

as my parents did, with the seriousness and importance of what was being said.

There were times of joy mingled occasionally with this serious church going. Sunday school classes were informally taught with the Bible stories. Christmas programs linger in my memory with the excitement of a tree, and the candy-filled boxes for everyone, and once a year there was a special event called the "Gathering." It was a combination Bible Conference and "family picnic." People came from other Christadelphian "ecclesias" (they weren't called churches, since they wanted to distinguish themselves from the rest of professing Christianity which they regarded as heretical). There were just a few from each place and, except for Sunday morning, the meetings were held in the very large home and grounds of a well-to-do contractor who was one of the lay leaders. There was a spirit of friendliness and "belonging" that appealed to me as a boy. All the men were called "Brother" and the women "Sister" in private conversations, as well as public statements. I felt part of the family.

After the age of ten there were no Sunday school classes for me, so I got permission from my parents to go to a Congregational Church for Sunday school and church with a friend of mine. They had a program for boys my age and I enjoyed that very much. I don't remember any doctrine being taught, but the influence of my Christadelphian background came through one Sunday morning in the worship service when the hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy" was sung and I would not sing the phrase "blessed

Trinity." Christadelphians didn't believe in the Trinity and I hadn't realized the strength of my past teaching until that morning. Later, just before Easter, the Sunday School teacher informed us that since most of us were approaching the age of 12, it was time to be baptized and to join the church. Once again my Christadelphian background rose up and reminded me that baptism was my immersion, not sprinkling, and you were supposed to believe something before being baptized and joining the church, and the Congregational preacher and teacher assumed that I did believe something, but never asked me what it was.

We moved across town after that and my church attendance became more irregular as I visited different churches occasionally and read my Bible infrequently. In high school, I met some Baptists who began witnessing to me and then I began to see some conflict as my Christadelphian background began to be assaulted by these Baptists who knew their Bibles.

Without going into detail about the Christadelphian movement, I might say that the Christadelphians were much like the Jehovah's Witnesses who began several years later than the Christadelphians. I remember my father reading the Watchtower publications with approval. Although they believed that the Bible was the Word of God, they interpreted it to mean that God was one, that Jesus Christ as Son of God was a created being, and the Holy Spirit was not a person, but a force or power of God. The devil was not a person but a force for evil. They believed strongly in the return of the Lord to establish His

kingdom, but did not believe in a "heaven" to which people go when they died. They believed in "soul sleep" until the resurrection and the entry into the kingdom. No one could say if he would be permitted to enter into the kingdom, since that depended upon our faith and our faithfulness. My father regularly ended his prayers at mealtime with the phrase, "and finally save us." Those who did not pass the test at the final judgment were not allowed to enter the kingdom. They spiritualized the "lake of fire" as the symbol of destruction and did not believe in a literal hell.

I debated these issues with my Baptist friends as my subconscious doctrines emerged in these Bible-centered discussions. They answered me always with Biblical passages, but kept returning me to the central issue, my salvation through the finished work of Christ. A year after finishing high school, in my first year at college, the fruit of the influence of these young people was seen in my conversion, baptism, and uniting with the Baptist church.

As I look back upon this spiritual pilgrimage, I recognize the false teaching of the Christadelphian movement, but also recognize how God used what was good in it to prepare me for what was the essential best. If it had not been for the faithful witness of the young people from the Baptist church and their insistence that I attend, I might never have been saved. The clear Biblical answers to my doctrinal difficulties turned me from the false movement to trust in Christ and study His Word.

I can see how people are drawn into

cult movements and into churches with doctrinal confusion. The Christadelphians gave me a sense of the importance of the Bible as the Word of God. I was encouraged to read it and completed the reading of the entire Bible when I was 8 years old because of a contest for Bible reading. I still have the Bible that was given me as a prize. They took their doctrine seriously and taught it publicly in their services. Though I did not consciously embrace these doctrines, they formed their structure in my mind on what the Bible taught and it took strong teaching to straighten me out. It is the cultic practice to use part of Scripture and hammer it home that confuses and distorts the mind of earnest people who need to know what the Bible really teaches.

The central doctrine of the Deity of Christ and the finished work of Christ are distorted in this cult as it is in all others and becomes a "hallmark" to quickly identify an unscriptural movement.

I am persuaded that strong doctrinal preaching of the whole counsel of God is needed in our churches, not only to establish our boys and girls, young people, and adults in the Biblical doctrines for their own stability, but also to be able to "answer every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you" (I Peter 3:15).

*Editor:*

*The above article is an excellent testimony of one who was led out of a cultic group in a providential way. Dr. Button is semi-retired, but does considerable speaking. For a number of years he was Professor and Academic Dean of the Los Angeles Baptist College. Earlier he pastored a number of churches. You will appreciate the article.*



## THE NAMELESS CULT

*Rev. Ewald Eisele*

Traveling about in the countryside or small towns of America, Great Britain, Australia, South and Central America and many other nations in Europe, Asia and the islands of the sea, are men and women, always two together, propagating their "gospel." They disclaim any connection with the various sects of Christendom and say only that they are of "the Truth" or that they attend "The Church in the Home" or that they are followers of "The Way." (Not to be confused with "The Way International" sired by Victor Paul Wierwille).

The cult is really a nameless house sect which has been nicknamed over the years, Two by Twos, Cooneyites, Tramp Preachers, Preachers Without a Home, Church in The Home, The Family of God, Walking Disciples, Carrollites, Black Stockings, Friends, Dippers, The Truth, Christian Missionaries, The Perfect Way, and The Reidites. Their official and registered legal name is The Christian Conventions.

It is difficult for anyone not "initiated" to get to know anything of their origin, or the doctrines which they bring. They purposely have refrained from publishing books or tracts, with the exception of a hymnal, claiming that a person can derive no benefit from reading these or even the Scriptures. The Bible, according to the leaders, is a dead book unless it is made to live through the mouth of one of their workers/preachers. Likewise, they condemn all tracts and books written by others for the encouragement of believers, or the awakening of the unsaved to their

lost condition. It is forbidden reading for all members of this cult.

The originator of the movement was William Irvine. However, the Two by Twos (the name that I will use in this article) claim apostolic succession, that is, that their movement has come directly from the early church in Acts without interruption. Mr. Irvine was born in Scotland in 1863. After his "conversion" at age 30, he worked as a missionary or lay evangelist with The Faith Mission. Sometime around 1897 he read in Matthew 10:8-10 where the Lord sent forth His disciples two by two without money, without pay, and without a change of clothing. Totally disregarding the context Irvine decided that this was the only right way to preach the Gospel. In 1900 he broke away completely from Faith Mission and with a small group of followers began to put his Matthew 10 principle into practice. At the first they were known as Tramp Preachers. They denounced the paid clergy, the church buildings in which Christians met and any kind of denominationalism. They insisted that all others were going to hell and the only way to escape that end was to join their movement. Basically this belief has not changed and that is still what the "workers," those who have dedicated their lives to be preachers, proclaim in one way or another.

The Two by Twos claim that they do not have any kind of organizational structure. However, anyone looking at the movement from the outside finds that they have a highly organized oligarchy with workers or

ministers, who control the friends or saints (the followers of the movement). The friends are subject to the workers in all things.

The workers are subject to overseers in the various states or areas of supervision. Before being accepted as workers by the overseer the prospect must sell all of his possessions. He then will go out with another of the same sex, except in the case of married couples, and act as pastors to the flock and missionaries to the outsiders. Workers are revered by the friends as direct descendants of the early apostles and are provided all they need by the families in the organization. They feel that whatever the workers say is from God because they alone possess the Spirit of God. Because of this the workers exert a strong, however subtle, control over all the friends in their jurisdiction. Actually, the people in the organization, the friends, have given up their own wills and submitted themselves totally to the workers, believing that this is the only true and perfect church and their only hope of salvation.

Salvation, incidentally, is not based on the finished work of Christ on the cross but by professing acceptance to the worker, the message proclaimed by him, and then walking in the "Jesus Way." The "convert" must break all ties with any religion or faith of the past and must conform to "the Way" and the expectation of the worker. If one endures this to the end, then the blood of Christ will have its effect. The Lord Jesus Christ is seen as their Example of Submission rather than the Substitutionary Sacrifice for their sin.

Though they want to project

universal unity between the workers and the overseers, there seems to have always been a certain amount of personal and political friction. The overseers expect from the workers exactly what the workers expect from the friends—total submission to their authority. As in any organization this leads to power plays and some measure of rebellion and, sometimes the expulsion of a worker or his voluntary departure. Whichever takes place, it results in the departed one being declared to be "losing out."

A worker may become an overseer by strictly conforming to the demands of his overseer and being accepted into this "hierarchy" by the approval of others who hold this position. The overseers, acting together in fellowship, exercise general supervision of the movement as a whole. Overseers receive funds from the workers when more is received than actually needed for their livelihood and/or ministry. In turn, whatever is left after the overseer's needs are met, is held to pay for the expenses of "conventions" or the purchase of Bibles and hymnals for new converts. The Bibles used are the King James Version and the hymnals are called *Hymns Old and New*.

Conventions are held in key locations several times a year in each area of supervision. They are generally held on a large farm with the friends, workers, and overseers either living in buildings on the farm or camping out. Here in Minnesota, at least three are held in the month of October. The one held just outside of Hector, Minnesota in October of 1984 drew over 100 cars, recreational vehicles, and motor homes with about 800 average daily attendance over four days. At

these meetings, (which all denominations hold once a year calling them conferences or annual meetings), the Two by Twos are exhorted by their leaders, both workers and overseers, regarding their proper conduct. Seldom is doctrine mentioned. Those speaking do so without notes, because in Matthew 10 the disciples were told not to take any "script," which the workers misapply as meaning script or notes. Conventions are also used to convert and indoctrinate any new converts as well as to present any new decisions reached by the corporate body of overseers. Generally any disciplinary action deemed necessary is also taken at these meetings.

While there are no published membership figures knowledgeable, estimates have ranged from 50,000 to 450,000 nationwide. The membership is more or less self-perpetuating for almost without exception the children follow on in the movement.

There are several reasons for classifying this group as a cult. They do not preach that one is saved by faith alone in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Their concept is that assurance of salvation is dependent on personal merit and following explicitly the dictates of the overseers and workers. They do not believe that anyone can be "saved" unless he hears the "gospel" from the lips of a worker.

They believe that one must "keep faithful" and that involves personal sacrifice. Each individual will be rewarded eventually according to how much has been sacrificed. Anyone who disagrees with their concepts is excommunicated. From all indication, they do not believe that Christ was either perfect man or perfect God but rather an example for the worker/preacher to follow. They do not accept the doctrine of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ as taught in the Bible and believed by true Christians everywhere. Their primary emphasis doctrinally, if it can be called that, is that their worker/preachers are the "true way" preachers and that they meet in the true biblical way, that is, they have meetings only in homes.

Two by Twos can be reached for the Lord Jesus Christ. It takes patience, not belligerence; love, not condemnation. Most of the friends are in the organization because they have not been taught the Word of God properly. Do not "preach" to them or find fault with their organization. Witness to the blood of Christ and the real meaning of His death, burial and resurrection. If you are able to shake their confidence in their worker and his interpretation of the Word, and get them to think on spiritual matters apart from the worker's influence, half of the battle will be won.

## THE GOD MAKERS

*By John L. Smith,*

*Editor of THE UTAH EVANGEL, and director of Utah Missions, Inc.*

Mormons say those who made and show THE GOD MAKERS are 'bigots,' according to the EAST

OREGONIAN, Pendleton, Ore., Oct. 5, 1984.

The half-page article accuses THE

GOD MAKERS of "leaving a stream of anti-Mormons in its wake."

The film, distributed by Utah Missions, Inc., Box 348, Marlow, OK 73055, is a 56-minute docu-drama which has been shown for almost two years now.

Since the turn of the century, the Mormon Church has enjoyed an increasing acceptance, a growing missionary force, an expanding membership, a spreading political influence and a rapidly growing financial base.

Until recently, there have been only sporadic efforts to counter Mormon claims. The past five or six years have seen a rapidly increasing effort by a myriad of individuals and ministries, many of whom had come out of Mormonism.

We have shown THE GOD MAKERS several hundred times all over the country and, without exception, reports have been from 'good' to 'great.'

Almost the only negative comments we have heard were from Mormons and second-hand reports from the Phoenix area which seemed to have been the result of the Mormon-Presbyterian Roger Keller who seems to be behind almost every report of those who object to the film.

Keller admits to having been a Mormon and has been unable to find any concrete evidence of an excommunication. He has recently admittedly helped train Mormon missionaries in his area.

Criticism of the film seems to be limited to Washington, Oregon and Phoenix where LDS influence is strong.

We keep the film booked up two-and-a-half to three months in ad-

## A LAYMAN LOOKS AT TWO CHOICES

There are two main choices that govern the thinking of the people of our nation at the present time.

### I. Secular Humanism

This thinking actually boils down to the belief that all of our universe, the sun, moon, stars, our earth, plant life, animals, and even mankind, is only an accident of the ages. Life has no real meaning or purpose and ends in the grave.

### II. Creationism

Creationism believes that there is an eternal, all powerful God that has made all things, with man as the crown of His handiwork and the object of His love.

Most of our citizens subscribe, at least in a nominal way, to this latter belief. The very foundations of our nation, i.e. our legal system, our laws and constitution, are based upon the motto which is found on our coins, In God We Trust. We grew strong with this belief as the basis of our moral and ethical thinking. However, in recent years there has been a definite drift toward a more secular society. Now, for the most part, our educational system and our news media assent to a belief in Secular Humanism.

Since there is no real proof back of this system of thought, those who support it have invented the theory of a very old earth that is millions and

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millions, yes even billions, of years old. "Given enough time anything is possible" is their reasoning. So an endeavor is made to fit everything into this way of thinking. All of the minute precision of the solar system is seen as only an accident. The balance of nature which is so wonderfully coordinated, all just evolved. Man's marvelous intellect and all of the parts of the human body and its almost unbelievable functions, are only formed by chance. Life all began by accident back in a primeval swamp with a single cell and hence now man.

This thinking is supposed to be scientific and intellectual. Perhaps I am extra dense, but I can't see anything very scientific about it. Can you? It doesn't even make sense. I have a marvelous battery-operated wheelchair that is a real treasure to me as age and infirmity render me totally unable to walk. People ask me where I obtained it. Suppose I said, "It just formed itself by accident." Folks would rightly think I was a bit off in the upper story! How on earth could one have design without a designer? How could a thing be made without a maker? Even if you had all of the parts of a fine jeweled watch, could it ever assemble itself? Everywhere about us is beauty, design, and pattern. Can you believe that it all just happened? Christians are considered naive by some to believe in a God whom they have never seen. Who do you think is really gullible?

The humanists have no absolutes to guide their moral behavior. After all, where could their authority for such come from? An act that is "wrong" in one context may be "right" in another, according to

them. Their motto is "if it feels good, do it." Humanist thinking has led to the legal murder (by abortion) of fifteen million unborn babies the last ten years in the United States. The word murder is not used, but the truth is there. Pornography has become a six-billion dollar a year business (yes, even child porn). Instead of being regarded as shameful pervers, homosexuals are now out in the open and very militant for their "rights." Marriage is not necessary anymore. Just "shack up" and move in together if you wish to do so. The slide downward goes on and on in many areas of morals. "No use being old fashioned these modern days" say the humanists. Their main problem is that they do not want to be accountable to a holy God!

Bible-oriented people stand on the truth of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as being one of the best established facts of history. How else do you explain the change in Christ's apostles from a defeated group of followers after His death to men of such conviction that, after His resurrection, they were willing to suffer and die for their beliefs? (All but one were martyred). How else do you explain the conversion of the scholar, Saul of Tarsus? He hated Christians and their Christ so bitterly that he dedicated himself to stamping out this supposed heresy. With the Jewish High Priests' backing, he busied himself in the task of trying to eliminate all believers. But after his dramatic conversion he was so persuaded that he became Paul, the Apostle, the greatest proponent of Christianity that the world has ever known. Of all of the thousands of archaeological finds in Palestine, why is

nothing ever found that contradicts the Bible, but rather supports it?

Believers have absolutes of right and wrong. Our sovereign God is our source of authority and all are accountable to Him. He has given us a guide for life (the Bible) that reveals Him in His majesty as Creator. God's Book reveals the awful reality of sin and its consequences. It stresses the truth that man is a free moral agent with his own power of choice to obey or to disobey. The Bible brings us the precious message of the Savior who will deliver all who will come to Him from the dreadful rule of sin in his life and its terrible penalty, i.e. eternal separation from God and His redeemed ones.

The Bible reveals God's desire for us "that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7).

This life is actually only a preparation for untold joy through the endless ages of eternity for those who choose to accept God's provision for them of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am exceedingly glad that now in my sunset years, I can continue to rejoice in my Savior whom I have had the privilege of loving and serving for over half a century. The years have

only deepened my conviction of the truth and reality of the Christian faith. O what a joy and blessing it has been to love and serve Christ! Truly, "Had I ten thousand lives to live, Lord, they should all be Thine." I look forward to the joy of soon being with the Savior whom I love dearly.

The battle lines are being drawn. There is no middle ground. Do you accept Creationism (and the Christian's Christ) or do you accept Secular Humanism? You must make your choice. You perhaps can shut God out of your life now. But would you want to die without Him? "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). You are offered a gift; but a gift is yours only if you receive it.

A mental assent to these truths has no merit. There must be a firm life commitment. Surely there are no sadder words than to be "without Christ and without hope."

One who cares about you.  
In Christ's love,  
Evert D. Waleen  
Holdrege, NE 68949

*Editor:*

*More than 50 years ago this gifted layman became an active Christian during our ministry at the Holcomb Church, near Holdrege, Nebraska and his service was appreciated by everyone.*

## BOOK NOTICES

*All available from our office*

THE CHILDREN OF GOD, The Inside Story/Deborah (Linda Berg) Davis. This is more than an autobiography. The author, a child of the founder and leader of the cult, takes us beneath the surface of the headline-making phenomena to probe the reasons why cults happen. 244

pp, hard cover, 9.95

SECULAR HUMANISM, Threat & Challenge/Robert E. Webber. Here is clarity and careful reasoning, as the author explains the problems, describes the battleground on which the conflict rages, and issues a

challenge for meaningful, effective Christian action. 138 pp, hard cover, \$7.95

**BAD NEWS FOR MODERN MAN, An Agenda For Christian Activism/Franky Schaeffer.** Once again available. This is a book for all concerned Christians to read. Not exactly devotional reading but rather that which ought to stir to action. 184 pp, paper, \$7.95

**DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN FREEDOM/Samuel Fisk.** This is not an attempt to end the debate or to reconcile two truths: The Sovereignty of God and The Free Will of Man. Rather it is an easy-to-read treatise bringing together the thoughts of many biblical scholars to show that the Word teaches these two truths. There is a bibliography worth the price of the book, an index for Scripture used and one for individuals mentioned in the text. 175 pp, paper, \$3.75

**DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS — ONLY A GAME? An 8½" x 17" fold-out presentation by The Pro-Family Forum of Fort Worth, Texas.** A very good and practical presentation in a form which may be used as a hand-out. Five (5) copies postpaid for \$1.00. Fifty (50) for \$5.00 plus postage, and 100 for \$9.00 plus postage.

**THE EMERGING 666 PEACE AND THE ABOLITION OF NUCLEAR WAR/Wilson Ewin.** A booklet which discusses the individuals and organizations which will have a part in the final days of this dispensation. 24 pp \$1.00 — 2 for \$1.50 plus postage.

**THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT — Age of Aquarius — Age of anti-Christ/The Southwest Radio Church.** This is a transcript of a radio inter-

view by Dr. Emil Gaverluk with Constance Cumbey, the author of "*The Hidden Dangers Of The Rainbow.*" 32 pp bkit. \$1.50

**CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE/Raymond Franz.** This book is now available in paperback. It is written by a former member of the Governing Body of Jehovah Witnesses. This is a well-documented work of the experience of a man in the highest part of the Watchtower hierarchy. It is more than a personal testimony — it is a revelation of the deception, error and bureaucratic authoritarianism of an organization that claims to be the only spokesman and prophet for God. 375 pp, paper, \$7.95

**CHRISTIAN FAITH AND OTHER FAITHS/Stephen Neill.** The author, who spent much of his life in India, offers an analysis of all the great religions, taking into full account the multifaceted distinctiveness of each. 304 pp, paper, \$7.95

## **ANOTHER "FAITH HEALER" DIES**

The Rev. Hobart Freeman, 64, a tongues speaker and the reclusive leader of a faith-healing sect, died on December 8.

Mr. Freeman was the founder of the Faith Assembly. He had been ill for a month and had been confined to his bed at his home in Shoe Lake, Indiana.

Freeman taught that if healing does not occur even when prayers are offered, "these results can be considered the evidence of divine judgement." (Report on Freeman's ministry in December 12, 1983 *Christian News*). Excerpted from *Christian News*, Dec. 17, 1984.

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### PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*John E. Dahlin, Editor*

**QUESTION . . .** What compels the Cultic leaders in giving such a total committal to these outside forces in promoting their unscriptural activities?

**ANSWER . . .** Without a doubt, these leaders are energized by demonic power. What they do is beyond human wisdom and ingenuity. They strive in gaining complete dominance over their followers. Paul refers to the supernatural forces which enter the arena in this statement: "In times past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). We understand that the fallen spirits are in the atmosphere surrounding the earth, and have access to human beings; only such a power is strong enough to compel men in carrying on these unscriptural activities.

**QUESTION . . .** Should anti-Cultic literature be directed to the leaders of these many spurious organizations, known as cults, or mainly to the rank and file of misguided people who have been led astray?

**ANSWER . . .** It appears both clear and logical that publications and helpful literature and pamphlets should be directed to the people rather than the leaders. It is easier to reach the common people by providing helpful literature exposing the unscriptural propaganda given the people by their leaders. Leaders should not be excluded, of course, but priority ought to be given the people who constitute the followers of these false leaders.