

The DISCERNER

“HEREBY KNOW WE THE SPIRIT OF
TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR”

AN
INTERDENOMINATIONAL
HERESY-EXPOSING
QUARTERLY

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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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EDITORIAL

by *William A. BeVier*

It is with regret that we report the loss of another Board member of Religion Analysis Service. Rev. Fred McCormick went to be with the Lord March 17 following surgery and a stroke. At the time of his homegoing he was Vice President of the Board, having served as a Board member for twenty years. Rev. McCormick pastored several Baptist churches in Minnesota, served as director of the TriState District of Conservative Baptist Churches, and more recently as chaplain at the Maranatha Care Center in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. He was 78 years of age. R.A.S. has received several memorial gifts given in honor of Pastor McCormick. We will miss his wise counsel and keen sense of humor from our Board meetings.

I invite your attention to the articles in this issue of The Discerner. One is by Rev. Herbert Caneday, a reprint of an article appearing in The Discerner in 1982. Rev. Caneday is one of the original Board members of R.A.S., elected in 1946. He was the first Secretary of the Board, a position to which he was recently elected after again agreeing to serve in this capacity. His writings have appeared in other Christian publications through the years and he is currently working

on an exposition of the book of Revelation.

We are pleased to present the article on the Two-by-Two sect by Bob Daniel, Director of Research and Information Services. This group currently is a major concern for a number of people and we are fortunate to have such an informed person write on this subject for us.

Our third major article in this issue is by Steve Lagoon on the Oneness Pentecostal movement. Steve wrote an article on the Jehovah's Witnesses which appeared in the October-December 1993 issue of The Discerner. His article on the Oneness Pentecostals will be continued in future issues of The Discerner with a bibliography on this group.

I call your attention to the section of book reviews in this issue. These are publications we have in stock, but are not listed in our current catalog. Look over the reviews and if any of these items would be of help to you, write us or give us a telephone call. You may want to extract this list from The Discerner and add it to your R.A.S. catalog pending the publication of a new catalog.

We also would like to inform you of the names of our Board officers for the

coming year elected at our annual meeting. They are:

President

Dr. William BeVier

Vice President

Rev. Ervin Ingebretson

Secretary

Rev. Herbert Caneday

Treasurer

Mr. Anton Chryst

We have scheduled an open house at our new office for Saturday, June 11 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. All the friends of R.A.S. are invited. It will be an opportunity to see our new

location, browse through the literature available; and personally meet the Board and their wives. Refreshments will be served. Our new location is 4724 42nd Avenue North in Robbinsdale, Minnesota. Parking is available behind the building off of Broadway, entering the alley between the Amoco Station and the funeral home. We trust we will see many of you that day.

P.S. As we were preparing the copy for this issue of The Discerner, word came that the Lord has called another Board member to Himself. Mr. Chester Gunderson went to be with the Lord on May 3 at age 86. Our prayers are with his family in these days.

ESCAPE FROM THE TRUTH

by Rev. H. V. Caneday

Consideration of the factors that draw people into the false cults will show that they fall into four major groups. Some unfortunate persons have been born into cultic families. Some are duped into embracing error. Others may have chosen to turn from revealed truth to accept falsehood. A fourth group is comprised of those who rejecting the truth in favor of the lie, have willfully conceived, given birth to, and organized systems of religious falsehood and they propagated their heresies to others. Excluding the first group, there is a common bond between the latter three that finds its full expression in the fourth class.

On peripheral teachings there is a wide variation of thought across the cultic spectrum; but there is one lowest common denominator on which they all agree, namely: the denial of a

literal hell of conscious, eternal bodily torment for the wicked. This unpleasant thought and all Biblical doctrines supportive of it must be denied or reinterpreted by them so as to eviscerate it of any credulity.

Like alcoholics or drug addicts, these seek escape from the stern realities of Divine truth by repeated infusions of the lie. The French infidel, Mirabeau, when dying is said to have begged his nurse, "Give me more laudanum (tincture of opium) that I may not think of eternity." For those who "...received not the love of the truth..." Satan has developed a vast assortment of spiritual opiates to deaden the souls of willful unbelievers to the Bible's clear warnings of eternal judgment. If his current stock of cult-lies is unattractive to some persons, he is quick to create new ones, "tailor-made" to suit discriminating tastes.

I. The Wish is Father to the Thought

This no-hell wish is the hard-core around which a vast range of false doctrines have been developed by the various cults for the purpose of making that wish an easy thought to believe. It then becomes an escape mechanism for those whose pleasure in unrighteousness makes God's Word an offensive Book to them.

One such person was Charles Taze Russell whose exposure to the Gospel did now draw him to the truth. After turning briefly to oriental religions, he came back to the Bible, professing to have found that it teaches that hell is the grave--not a place of torment. With that wishful thought as his basic premise, he went on to build the supportive superstructure of his heretical theology. Beginning with a no-hell wish, it became an escape mechanism for the millions who now call themselves Jehovah's Witnesses. This pattern is repeated with variations in the origin and growth of all false cults.

The writer remembers going with a pastor to call on a member of his church, who was close to embracing the error of Universal Reconciliationism. When the fundamental doctrines pertinent to salvation were rehearsed to her, she declared, "I do believe each of them." She was then told that this system denies every one of those salvation truths. We were shocked to hear her say, "But I've always wanted to believe that God had some other way to save the lost." Her wish had almost led her to embrace the lie. Her wish became father to the thought because she knew her husband died in his sin, and her son was far from God. Her love and concern for them nearly overcame her love for the truth.

Sadly, many do not turn back at that point, but proceed in unbelief.

II. The Thought Leads to the Delusion

Tracing the steps of a person offended by the Word, we can see how his wish to escape from the truth leads him to accept the lie. As he explores the perimeter of a heretical teaching, he tries to compare it with what he once believed, and shortly discovers that he must "unlearn" the latter. Whereas he first wished, then thought, he now rapidly slides into the quagmires of delusion because this "new wine" of error is too heady and alluring to resist. Still holding to his no-hell wish, he flounders in a succession of pitfalls.

The first of those pitfalls is a denial of the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. Some cults make a bold frontal attack upon the Word of God. Others in a subtle manner add to the Bible the words and books of men by which they vitiate the Sacred Word. Still others take away from the Scriptures by attacks upon its authenticity or validity for our time, or by quoting abridged portions suited to their purpose without regard for contextual truth. Most subtle of all, and more deadly, is the use of special translations that supposedly validate the error being propagated. This clever method has a special appeal to studious, inquiring persons who would be uncomfortable without the facade of a "Bible" that seems to substantiate their views. Cases in point are: "The New World Translation" by the Jehovah's Witnesses; the "Concordant Version" of the Universal Reconciliationists; and the "Inspired Bible" of the Mormons.

By the above means the authority of the Bible is canceled, adulterated, or

shifted to the hands of men so that the one in pursuit of his no-hell wish is liberated to proceed to the other denials which he must embrace to be consistent with his original desire to escape from the truth. More than being liberated to embrace error, he will now find "Biblical" support for his necessary rejection of truth.

Pitfall number two is the denial of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, which all the false cult systems do without exception. This unanimous agreement is not accidental, but a necessary step in the pursuit of their no-hell wish. The logic of it is: that the death of God the Son is a price far too high to pay for the salvation of sinners from a hell that does not exist. Conversely, if Jesus Christ is Infinite Deity, then His death is eloquent testimony that He has purchased salvation from an infinite, eternal, real punishment. Logic demands these values be kept in balance. Those who accept the no-hell wish must deny Christ's deity; while conversely, belief in His Deity is wholly compatible with the fact of a literal hell.

Other pitfalls involve the cult adherents in weak, wrong, and inadequate views of man's sin and a corresponding adulteration of one's views of the holiness of God. This tactic elevates man above his depraved, sinful state, and lowers God from the high and lofty perfection of His holy nature. With the gap between God and man thus narrowed, there is no necessity for an infinite, divine Savior. With a little effort man can save himself.

One more pitfall demands our specific attention. Again the agreement within the cults is not accidental, but of sheer necessity they must all deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The key word is "bodily." They know their professed

belief in a "spiritual resurrection" is meaningless. They dare not believe in His physical resurrection because that is an admission that God can, and probably will, bring all men before Himself in judgment by the same route. Paul bore testimony to this fact saying, "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Since Christ's resurrection guarantees the same for all, and the judging of all men, it must be denied as incompatible with the no-hell wish. If the Judge remains dead, it would eliminate the day of judgment.

III. The Delusion Becomes the Deception

Somewhere in the process of being infused with the lie, the cultist will pass beyond the point of no return. Up to that critical point he has tried to embrace the error; but now the error embraces him! He is "hooked," and a willing captive of the lie. He has experienced a spiritual inversion, that is, the Satanic counterfeit of Biblical conversion. Even the cultic defenders know this, as Marley Cole admits in his book, *Jehovah's Witnesses*, page 15: "... It is as if the Witnesses had hit upon the formula that religion as we know it has everything in reverse. To get true worship straightened out (you could almost accuse them of reasoning), you adopt the opposite of what you hear in church."

When a sinner is regenerated by the Holy Spirit, he passes from darkness to light and from blindness to spiritual sight. In the cultic counterfeit, one departs from light to pass into darkness, and from intellectual sight into total spiritual blindness. More-

over, the damning subtlety of this inversion is that the deluded person now believes he sees for the first time. This is an insidious counterfeit of Biblical conversion. Since from the beginning, "They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved" (II Thess. 2:10b), the topsy-turvy world of the cultist has inverted truth to make it become the "believable" lie. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isa. 5:20).

The writer had a long counseling session with one who had passed this spiritual point of no return. The subject of discussion was the absolute deity of Christ. After consideration of a series of Scriptures, he was asked to state his conclusions, to which he replied, "It looks as though the Bible teaches it; but I don't believe it anyway." He was not just deluded, he was deceived, and had gone through this inversion process. To him truth was error, and error was truth.

Lest we leave the impression that such persons are beyond hope and unreachable even by our Savior, listen to the experience of one known to the writer. This young woman went headlong into the Jehovah's Witnesses system to become one of their prize converts and a staunch worker, going from house to house spreading the lie. Over an extended time, the testimonies of relatives got through to her so she became miserably convicted. In that state she worked even harder to convince herself; but with increasing apprehension. Once she prayed that she should find peace even if it meant going back to her former Catholicism. Still no rest! Then, one day in utter desperation she fell to her knees in her kitchen and cried to God that if

necessary He should blot out of her mind all she had learned in her cult so that she might be able to embrace the truth and find peace and salvation. God heard that prayer. Her deep and desperate desire for truth, at all costs, was the human factor in her transformed life. Her apprehensions were gone. Peace filled her soul. The next morning she tried to recall what books had taught about certain Bible statements. Her mind was a blank. She couldn't remember. God had done for her what she had asked! Looking into the books again, she was repulsed at what she had once believed. Her books went at once into the furnace. The soul that will honestly, earnestly ask God to give him "the love for the truth that they might be saved" can be assured of God's merciful response.

Those who persist in the pursuit of that no-hell wish do not now find themselves deceived because of ignorance, nor because truth is not available. They flee from the truth! They prefer the lie because it satisfies their need for a spiritual opiate so they can both live in sin, and in spiritual euphoria unto the day they discover that:

IV. The Deception Leads to Damnation

As Satan's slaves, "...taken captive by him at his will" (II Tim. 2:26), these persons may be morally upright, respectable, kind, loving, even church members, and of the socially elite. But persistence in seeking to escape from the truth will bring them to the terrifying reality that the hell they feared and denied, is a place of conscious, eternal torment. There they "...shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation...and they have no rest day nor

night..." (Rev. 14:10, 11). In tender tones of pleading love, the Savior calls, "As I live, said the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn away from his way and live: Turn ye, Turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" (Ezek. 33:11). Of those who will neither heed nor hear God's warnings, He says, "...yea, they have chosen their own ways and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer: when I spake, they did not hear" (Isa. 66:3, 4).

Created in the image of God to worship and fellowship with His Creator, man is by nature, incurably religious. The God-shaped vacuum within man's soul is meant to be occupied by the One who died to redeem sinners. When that Savior is denied admittance to one's life, something or someone else will occupy the throne in one's soul. Either Jesus Christ, who is "Truth," must be Lord, or the lie will reign supreme, and ultimately Satan will be seen to be one's master. Life or death hangs in the balance of choice.

Many years ago a man advertised himself as "the human fly" in

California papers. He boasted that on a given day and hour he would be at a given point in a certain city to prove his ability to scale the side of a certain building without the aid of equipment. The day and hour arrived, and he was there together with a throng of spectators. He began to climb on the slight protrusions of the building's masonry. Up and up he went, and was approaching the top when he was seen to hesitate, looking to the right then left for his next hold. Then he saw it! It was just above him, and nearly at his finger tips. With a slight spring he grasped it; but fell to his death. A blanket was thrown over his crushed body; and the hand that had reached up lay exposed. In his finger's grasp was a spider's web that he had mistaken for firm masonry. He had staked his life upon a spider's web and lost!

He was no more a fool than the one who spurns the rock-ribbed truth of God's Holy Word to trust in the lies of men. God says, "they hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider's web...their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works" (Isa. 59:5, 6). "They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved" (II Thess. 2:10).

THE TWO BY TWO'S: THE WORKERS' NAMELESS HOUSE SECT

by Bob N. Daniel

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One of North America's largest, and in many ways most destructive, religious cults has managed to thrive, while successfully avoiding public ex-

posure for the past ninety-one years. Arriving from Ireland early in this century (1903), this group erroneously claims to have no name, no organiza-

tion or hierarchy, and no human founder. The leaders refuse to publish a statement of doctrine, which, on the surface would seem absurd, but in actuality is brilliant, even if very diabolical. It is extremely difficult to prove how heretical their teachings when nothing is published or voluntarily tape recorded. The only printed material consists of a hymnal, a prepared list of Bible study verses, and lists of members and ministers names.

This group is most popularly known as "the Two by Two's," after their method of ministry, even though among themselves they call their sect "The Truth," "The Way," "The Friends," "The New Testament Church," etc. They are sometimes confused with the "Cooneyites," a separate though similar group with whom they share a common origin. Despite their claim to having no name, the ministers of this fellowship have in fact registered under various official names with governments around the world.

On the relatively rare occasions in the past when the "Two by Two's" have been mentioned in print (usually due to local newspaper reporters interviewing them during one of their annual conventions), the information volunteered, more often than not, has proven to be false or misleading, being based on orthodox-sounding statements made by the "workers" (ministers/clergy).

It is to their benefit that until very recently, most major reference works of religious groups ignore this "Two by Two" sect completely. They are indeed a secret sect, as attested by their being almost completely unknown by the general population. The writer, a member of various church denominations for all of his 43 years, at the

time of being introduced to the group some 17 years ago, is an example of this odd fact. What they believed was hidden and/or misrepresented for 13 years of our being members of this cult! For several years, Religion Analysis Service has been one of the few organizations to carry information about this mild mannered yet very heretical fellowship.

A low profile, the lack of an identifiable name, and the absence of accurate and widely available information poses a major hazard to those coming into contact with the "Two by Two's." They provide very little information about themselves to newcomers, nor do they openly discuss or clearly preach their doctrine. Questions, rather than being answered with Scripture, are met with an invitation to attend more of their meetings, where, eventually, one is supposed to come to a point of "willingness" in which the questions will either be spiritually answered or cease to matter. To illustrate their paranoia related to their workers (ministers) unwillingness to be forthright about their beliefs, one senior worker was recently quoted as saying in a meeting: "We would rather that you not take notes about what is preached here today. The Holy Spirit will bring to your remembrance anything that you might need. There are people out in the world who are trying to find out what we believe." **Now, isn't that the whole point of the gospel being preached? What would have happened if Paul and other writers of our Bible had taken this attitude, had decided that no one, outside of the group of apostles, should ever see the written Gospel? We wouldn't have God's Word, RIGHT? WHAT NON-SENSE!!! WHAT HERESY!!!**

The members are warm and supportive, and little of the group's underlying legalism or seriously aberrant doctrines will be apparent to most outsiders, even to many who are students of the Bible. The close fellowship, the seemingly orthodox statements, the apparent virtues of a simpler form of religious expression, the seeming unity among members, and no ready access to the alarming truth about this group, has led countless others to fall under its influence.

As was the case with me and my family, most newcomers have expressed some dissatisfaction with, and are recruited from, other churches. "Two by Two" ministers, known as "workers," preach their "gospel," usually in halls or schools rented for this purpose. Other than extending invitations to come to these "Gospel Meetings," the members do not consider it to be their place to discuss or bear witness of their faith to outsiders.

APPEARANCES

The workers speak of their gatherings as "non-denominational gospel meetings," and will at times use leaflets, occasional newspaper advertisements, as well as some personal contacts. Though outsiders are invited only to their "Gospel" Meetings, where attendance is **required** of their "members," gatherings are also held twice each week in private homes for these "members" (only). The group denounces church buildings, and claims to own no church property. In most areas, women's hair is left uncut and is worn up in a severe bun. Women's dress is very conservative; most jewelry, and all make-up, slacks, shorts, and bright colors are traditionally forbidden. Men's dress is also conservative, with close cropped hair and clean shaven chins the rule. Dur-

ing the first 50 years or so of the sect's existence, women were required, among other things, to wear black stockings, leading to one of their earlier nicknames, "The Black Stockings."

The ministers are supposed to be homeless, penniless, unsalaried, possessionless itinerants. These workers are also supposed to be celibate, and today are all unmarried, though they deny that this is a rule and will point to a handful of early married workers who were allowed to remain in their ministry during the early years of the group's existence. Both men and women are allowed to become preachers, though the sister workers never rise to positions of authority over male workers, even if they most certainly do hold authority over the male "elders" and lay members. Workers travel and preach in same-sex pairs, usually being assigned a new companion each year. Though they claim no organization, the sect is run by a group of senior "Overseers." Each state or province is controlled by a male "Head Worker" who assigns "fields" to the workers under his authority. "Elders," who hold "meetings" in their homes are the lowest rung in the chain of command. There are more than 1100 ministers in the US and Canada, each having responsibility for the several house churches within their field. Workers are active in most countries around the world, and claim to have preached in all of them. The lay members provide their shelter, food, transportation, clothing, money, and all other physical needs. The ministry also receives support in the form of cash donations and legacies for which they are not accountable to the church. Workers do not file tax returns, claiming all of their sometimes substantial income as gifts. The workers are re-

vered as Apostles and "true shepherds," and hold absolute authority over the membership.

In English speaking areas, the Cambridge edition of the Authorized King James version of the Bible is used exclusively in their meetings. A hymnal of their own compilation is used, titled "Hymns Old And New," and is published by R. L. Allan & Son, England.

Services consist of the Gospel meetings, most often on Sunday; Sunday and midweek home meetings; Union meetings of several house churches on the first Sunday of each month; Special meetings, consisting of all of the house churches in an area; and annual Conventions, which are large, four day regional meetings usually held on farms in rural areas using structures (dormitories, kitchens, meeting halls, etc.) built specifically for this purpose. Communion/Eucharist is served weekly at Sunday morning meetings, and it is usually reserved for those baptized into the group. Baptism is by total immersion, and must be allowed and performed only by a worker.

DOCTRINE

Although not a subject often spoken about, the workers claim, when pressed, that salvation can only be obtained by hearing their "gospel" through the mouth of a worker, and by "seeing the gospel being lived" in the sacrificial lives of their ministry. This "living witness doctrine" was first espoused by William Irvine, the man who began recruiting his "workers." Although present day workers will deny that a man started their fellowship, claiming that it was begun by Christ "in the beginning," irrefutable proof is now abundantly

available. If interested please contact me at the address noted below.

They do not believe that Jesus and the Father are one and the same God. Jesus is held to have been a god-like human on whom the "Christ Spirit" settled, and who gave the world a pattern of perfect ministry. Some will occasionally refer to Jesus as "divine," "son of god," or "a god," though they do not mean by this that Jesus is in any sense God in the way the Father is called God. "The Word made flesh" of John 1:1,14 is claimed to refer to their ministry.

They do not ascribe Godhood to the Holy Spirit, believing the Spirit to be an attitude, an emotional feeling, or a force originating from God. They do not believe that the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is sufficient to attain salvation, instead holding that one must continue faithfully in their belief system through self-effort, self-denial, and unquestioning submission and obedience to their "shepherds" until death. They believe that Jesus died to save those who follow their ministers, and that His "pattern life" and "pattern ministry" were the primary goals of His earthly sojourn.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The continuing exposure of the true history and late nineteenth century origin of the group has put the workers on the defensive. There have been more high level workers meetings in the past two years than ever before, as they struggle to agree on a rationalization which explains both their scandalous early history and the deceit used over the past 70 years to cover up their history. Some of the legalistic rules appear to be loosening, such as appearance codes, allowing radio and televisions in members

homes and cars, etc., probably as concessions to the workers in the face of mounting turmoil. Former members have been organizing to expose the doctrinal heresies and other lies, such as the claim to have no name, the considerable sexual misconduct, etc. In the last few years, more members and even former workers have been leaving the group and seeking help. It is hoped that the group will be exposed to public scrutiny more than has been the case in the past, in order to force members to re-examine their beliefs, and to prevent those outside the group from being unwittingly drawn into this destructive cult.

While recent trends give reason for hope, the Two by Two's have endured similar crises in their short history. Many of the members are fanatical in their refusal to question their "Way." Most people, even neighbors, relatives, and close acquaintances of Two by Two's, know very little about this group, in those rare instances when anything is known at all. Often former members have not been reached with information regarding this group, and live out their lives convinced that, being cut off from the "Two by Two way," they cannot have salvation.

This is no time for complacency. They are still making converts. While the membership is estimated to number between 500,000 and 700,000, their influence extends to many times the number of "professing" members. It is likely that you or someone you know will be involved with the Two by Two's. We hope that you will arm yourself with God's Word and the facts needed to expose "the unfruitful deeds of darkness."

The following books are available from Religion Analysis Service:

Reflections, 720 pages of testimonies and stories of a broad sampling of former members.

Reinventing The Truth, 300+ pages which expose the false histories used to disguise the true origins of the sect and to legitimize it's doctrines.

A Search For The Truth, 300+ pages which deal with deceptive yet orthodox sounding terminology.

Considerable additional material is available.

SOLI DEO GLORIA

WHAT ABOUT THE ONENESS PENTECOSTALS?

by Steve Lagoon

Who are the Oneness Pentecostals?

Many who read this article may not know very much about Oneness Pentecostals. This is not surprising when one considers how little has been written about them in the evangelical community. Most evangelical books on cults simply ignore them, though this is beginning to change. This dearth of material on Oneness

Pentecostalism is surprising, given the fact that Boyd (Oneness 227-228) lists them as "the third largest anti-Trinitarian professing Christian group behind the Mormons... and Jehovah's Witnesses... with world-wide estimates of four to five million." Boyd (Oneness 227) also estimates that about one out of every four Pentecostals in the United States, or about one million, are Oneness Pentecostals.

The United Pentecostal Church International (hereafter UPCI) is the largest Oneness group, estimated to have a total worldwide membership of about one million, half of whom reside in the USA or Canada. The UPCI's headquarters and publishing house are located in St. Louis, Missouri. It's publishing house, the "Word Aflame Press," has published over 90 books as of 1987, as well as the denomination's magazine, the "Pentecostal Herald." The UPCI is active in foreign missions, operates nine Bible colleges and an orphanage, and supports chaplaincy ministries for hospitals, prisons and the military, though UPCI and other Oneness groups are against bearing arms and taking human life (Gray Questions 98-101).

Because the UPCI reflects its holiness origins, it has a strong emphasis on what it calls "The Standards." These standards include refraining from attending movies, worldly sports and amusements, dancing, public swimming, immodest dress and wearing makeup and jewelry. In addition, women are not to cut their hair at all, while men are expected to have short hair. Television and "worldly music" are also frowned on, as well as a number of other things (Gray 166-170, 190-191 and J. L. Hall 864).

Aside from the UPCI, Jones (in his table of contents) lists over 75 other Oneness Pentecostal groups. The distinctive doctrine that unites all these groups is their rejection of the orthodox and biblical doctrine of the Trinity, opting instead for Modalism (one God in one person), and also their insistence that water baptism should be administered in Jesus' name only, rather than in the Trinitarian formula. Hence, they are variously called "Jesus Only," "Oneness," "Apostolic Oneness," etc.

But where did they come from? During the second through fourth centuries of our era there was a heretical movement known as Modalistic Monarchianism or Patripassianism or even Sabellianism. This view was vigorously refuted and rejected as heresy by the church fathers from its inception to its demise as an historical movement late in the third century. From then until the 20th century, there is very little mention of this idea in church history. But Satan, needing another disguise to add to his collection back at the turn of our century, went up into his attic and dug up an old relic called ancient Modalism. He repackaged it with Jesus' name baptism and began deceiving millions with this false gospel.

The beginnings of the Pentecostal movement at the turn of the century are well known. Out of that early Pentecostal movement arose the "Assembly of God" organization in 1914. From the inception of the Assemblies of God there was a smaller movement within known as the "New Issue." This movement believed in water baptism in Jesus' name only and quickly identified itself with Modalistic anti-Trinitarian theology. A hard fought battle for control of the infant Assemblies of God organization ended at a conference in St. Louis in October of 1916. During that conference, a "Statement of Fundamental Truths" was drawn up, strongly affirming the doctrine of the Trinity and the traditional threefold formula in water baptism. This purge caused the new Assemblies of God organization to lose 156 of its 585 ordained ministers (Reed 646, Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 1988).

Those Oneness "believers" who had been forced out went on to form a

multitude of Oneness organizations in America and around the world. The largest of these was the UPCI which began in 1945 as a result of a merger between the "Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ," who believed water baptism was necessary for salvation, and the "Pentecostal Church Incorporated," who did not. The "Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ" eventually gained dominance as the current UPCI theology reflects.

Let us now examine the fundamental error of Oneness Pentecostalism, their rejection of the Trinity.

The Trinity, Modalism and the Bible

The Bible reveals that there is one and only one God (against Polytheism), and that within the nature of that one God there are three eternal distinctions we call Persons (against Modalism). The Trinity is true because it is the teaching of God's Word and therefore has always been affirmed by the creeds and confessions of the historic Christian church.

It would be impossible to give an exhaustive discussion and biblical refutation of Modalism in this section of my article. You can find that sort of discussion in Gregory A. Boyd's recent book Oneness Pentecostals and the Trinity. I can scarcely begin to tell the important void his book fills. Boyd's book is "must reading" that will thoroughly equip Christians for encounters with Oneness Pentecostals. I can only give a representative discussion here, but encourage interested parties to mine the vast resources of Boyd's book on the discussion of the Trinity. This book is listed in the Religion Analysis Service 1993-1994 catalog.

Since I've already given a definition of the Trinity (one God existing eternally

as three distinct persons), let me now define the Oneness Pentecostal view of God. Trinitarians strongly affirm belief in only one God. The difference then lies in the fact that whereas Trinitarians believe God exists eternally as three persons, Oneness believes God exists as only one person. The Father and Holy Spirit are just different names or titles of that one person of God. Then what do they believe about the Son of God? They believe that the Son refers primarily to the humanity of Jesus, or to God after he has taken upon himself humanity. Thus they deny that the Son has any real existence before the incarnation (Bernard, Oneness 121).

Whereas Biblical Christology believes the eternal Word (the Son) became incarnate, Oneness believes it was the Father (Holy Spirit) who became incarnate, and thus Jesus Christ is God and Father and the human Son in one person. Remember, in Oneness theology the Word, or Son, did not actually pre-exist the incarnation.

Since Oneness affirms the deity of Christ, the argument will center on two other important questions. Question #1: Are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit real and distinct persons? Question #2: Did the Logos or Word, pre-exist the incarnation as a person distinct from the Father? If one can demonstrate from the Bible that these questions are to be answered in the affirmative, you have effectively destroyed the very basis of Oneness theology.

Let us examine the first of these two questions. Does the Bible teach that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons in relation to each other? The Oneness view acknowledges that there are many passages that "appear" to show this, such

as John 14:16,23; John 10:13; John 17:5 and Romans 8:26; etc. How do Oneness adherents explain such passages? In two ways, the first of which says that the distinction between the Father and the Son is the same as the distinction between the humanity and deity in the person of Christ. This is known, says Boyd (32-33), as the "Oneness key." Boyd continues (35) "Therefore, as paradoxical as it sounds, for Oneness theology, Jesus was and is both the Father who loved and sent his Son, and the Son who loved and obeyed the Father." As an example of this sort of Oneness exegesis, take Luke 23:46 which says "...Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit..." For Oneness, this only means that the humanity of Christ entrusts his spirit to the deity of Christ. As Boyd (35-36) points out, this understanding leads to the impossible idea that the two natures in Christ relate, and Boyd properly asks "How can two natures relate?" There is simply no logic to that logic. Of course, as Trinitarians believe, the Father and the Son are two Persons and naturally relate.

The second Oneness approach to explain the apparent distinctions of the Persons in the Bible is what Oneness writer Robert A. Sabin calls "apparent separation" of the "Illusion of Plurality." Start with a passage like John 14:8-10, 18, which Oneness writers mistakenly see as proof positive of their uni-personal view of God. The extrapolation is made that any other passage which seems to show a distinction must be an illusion. But why, I ask, would God create an illusion concerning himself, which Boyd (119) says is "all too convincing," if in fact it is not true? Sabin answers:

Why was it necessary for Jesus to speak enigmatically in a veiled

manner? Jesus was a man. As a man he spoke of God as all men must speak of God, with deference, reverence. Had he not done so, he would have as a man been usurping the prerogatives of God... Therefore Jesus spoke in proverbs, similes and metaphors regarding his divinity... Jesus could not and would not claim divine prerogatives as his own during the time of man's probation, That is this present time, without "grasping after equality with God." Any such willful ostentatious display would mar his perfection as a human being, as a sacrifice. (Sabin Oneness Ministries Seminar 1992-- "Jesus speak summary sheet XI")

Sabin continued, "It is necessary for Christ to present himself as though he were separate from God." At this same seminar (which I attended), Oneness minister Timothy Peterson taught that "God likes to play hide-and-seek." This Oneness picture of Christ is not pretty. It presents a Christ who must go around deceiving people as to his true identity in order to show that he is truly humble, to act only as a man and not let the secret out that he's also God Almighty, because that would be grasping at the prerogatives of God. I wonder how you could grasp at something that you already are. This sort of reasoning manifests that Oneness writers really do unintentionally conceive of Christ as two persons. Because Jesus likes to "play hide-and-seek," humble as he was, he just couldn't stand keeping the secret to himself, and so every once in a while he let his disciples in on the secret. But this Oneness-Jesus erred, for he didn't realize that his talkative disciples would share the secret that he was God with others, even writing it down in the Bible. Did this Oneness-Jesus "grasp at the prerogatives of God and mar his sacri-

fic"? Sarcasm aside, let me say that Oneness writers often ridicule the Trinitarian understanding that the Holy Spirit is less in view in the New Testament due to his humility and desire to glorify the Father and the Son as he inspired the Word of God. And yet I find this "humble Oneness Jesus" who can't keep his identity as God a secret far less plausible, even preposterous. This "illusion of separation" argument is senseless. There is no logic to that logic and therefore the "illusion of separation" is itself an illusion, and the separation of the persons is real indeed!

I should also mention that Oneness writer Robert A. Sabin advocates a third way to explain passages of Scripture which seem to indicate plurality of persons. He sees that even after Christ's ascension to heaven, when the Holy spirit is referred to, it can still refer to the humanity of Christ speaking thus in John 16:13: "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." (All Biblical quotations NIV unless otherwise noted.) So while it appears to us that the Holy Spirit takes orders from someone else who is also God, Sabin says that it is the humanity of Christ who is speaking and obeying the deity of Christ (Sabin, A Oneness perspective on John 16:13, 1992). While novel, even clever, and, I'm sure, sincerely developed, no amount of exegesis can change the fact that it is the Holy Spirit and not the humanity of Christ being referred to in John 16:13! Sabin's view requires that it is the "Father part" of Jesus speaking in verses 13 and 14, and that this "Father part" is referring to the "humanity part" as the coming spirit. However, this understanding col-

lapses in verse 15 where the one continuing to speak identifies himself as someone other than the Father. This totally destroys Sabin's argument and shows the real distinction of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which brings us right back to the Trinity.

Now to the second important question: Does the Bible teach that the Logos or Word pre-existed the incarnation as a distinct person from God the Father? Again Oneness theologians acknowledge that there are verses that seem to teach the distinct pre-existence of the Logos or Word, such as John 1:1-18; 17:5; Col. 1:13-18; and Hebrews 1:1-12. How do Oneness Pentecostals respond to these kinds of passages? There are two main ways (though Boyd mentions other variations). The first says that Christ pre-existed, but not as the Word or Son, but as God the Father. So when John 1:30 says "A man who comes after me has surpassed me, because he was before me," this only means he pre-existed as God. So it is not enough to show Oneness people Christ pre-existed. We must show that He pre-existed in distinction from the Father.

The second argument is that while some verses do talk about the Word or Son as pre-existing, this only means that the Son existed before the incarnation in the mind of God. Just as God knew of us in His foreknowledge before we actually existed, so in the same way this is the only way Christ pre-existed. Boyd (38) quotes Oneness writer Springfield as saying "The Son pre-existed in the mind of God only." But John 1:1 says "... And the Word was with God." The word "with" implies two persons in side-by-side relationship, not just something in God's mind. John 1:3 also says "Through him all things were created," but how can that be if he didn't

exist yet? Oneness just says that God created everything with the non-existing Son in mind.

That interpretation, of course, is totally opposite of what John was affirming, that a pre-existing Word, who was with God the Father and who was God himself, created all things. When we come to Colossians 1:13-18 we see the same thing. We are hard pressed from a Oneness perspective to see what is so significant about Paul's point that Christ pre-existed if he means nothing more than that the Son only pre-existed in the foreknowledge of God the Father, because in that sense, we all pre-existed. But Paul's real point is that the Son is preeminent over all created things because he existed before them and actually created them Himself.

In closing this section on the Trinity and the Bible, let me add that when

you discuss the Trinity with Oneness Pentecostals, you may find as I have that they have some misunderstandings on the Trinity. They are sincerely convinced that we are tritheists, and so you need to emphasize that Trinitarians believe in only one God. They will tell you about the hundreds of passages in the Old Testament that show there is only one God as if they need to prove this to you. They simply don't understand. Even their leaders make this mistake at times. Robert A. Sabin has frequently quoted Isaiah 44:24 in order to prove God was alone in creation. Trinitarianism maintains that within that one God are three (count them--three) Persons. And so as the late Walter Martin used to say, "We'll have to scale the language barrier."

(To be Continued...)

BOOK REVIEWS

Books Not Currently in the Catalog

GENERAL

Confronting Today's World by L. Duane Brown, 205pp. \$6.95.

A Fundamentalist Looks at Social Issues.

This book covers the social issues of today: abortion, alcoholism, crime, divorce and remarriage, drugs, etc. It gives research from Scripture, repudiation of false views, responsibility of the Church and restatement of the Biblical position.

Disarming the Secular Gods: How To Talk So Skeptics Will Listen by Peter C. Moore, 228pp. \$10.00.

Peter Moore shows how to counteract the fashionable arsenal of alternatives

to the Christian faith in an effective way: New Age philosophy, humanism, relativism, narcissism, agnosticism, pragmatism and hedonism. A book to call us back to the basics in a "thinking" manner.

The Five Leading Cults in the U.S. by John E. Dahlin, 31pp. \$1.90.

An abridged summary of five leading cults in America today: Mormonism--the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints; Christian Science; Jehovah's Witnesses; The Seventh-Day Adventists; The Cult of Herbert W. Armstrong (known as Armstrongism). Dr. Dahlin has been active in R.A.S. for over 40 years.

BIBLE

A Brief History of English Bible Translations by Laurence M. Vance, 114pp. \$5.95.

A new book, published in 1993. It is a concise and brief history of English Bible translations. It also has a brief synopsis of all modern translations, as well as a listing of each translation by year and translators.

Final Authority by Wm. Grady, 392pp. \$14.95.

A Christian's Guide to the King James Bible.

A defense of the King James Bible which answers many questions being asked by Christians today. It is readable for the lay-person, yet scholarly for those needing documentation.

CHARISMATIC DISORDERS

Christianity in Crisis by Hank Hanegraff, 447pp. \$16.99.

The author is President of the Christian Research Institute, the successor to Dr. Walter Martin. The

book is well-documented, with an extensive bibliography and subject index. It covers what is termed the "Faith Movement," which includes Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn and a number of others. A very useful book.

DEMONISM AND SPIRITISM

Psychic Healing by Weldon and Levitt, 255pp.

An Expose of an Occult Phenomenon.

The authors verify that psychic healing is very real, and the ramifications are horrifying. This is a carefully researched and documented expose of an alarming otherworld practice.

Satan is No Myth by J. Oswald Sanders, 140pp. \$8.00.

Christians are in a battle between good and evil, between God and Satan. This book tells who our enemy, Satan, is, what his goals are and his strategies.

EVOLUTION

Why We Believe in Creation Not in Evolution by Fred J. Meldau, 349pp. \$3.50.

Thinkers who would like to locate ammunition against what they feel is

a totally unacceptable theory (evolution), will find this book a comprehensive, well-stocked arsenal, free from errors found in so many writings on the subject.

ISLAM

Reaching Muslims for Christ by Wm. J. Saal, 223pp. \$10.00.

Muslims CAN be reached, contrary to what most Christians think. This

book uses a lot of Scripture which is compared with quotations from the Koran. Whether you are a novice in Muslim outreach or experienced this book will be most helpful.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses by Ron Rhodes, 437pp. \$9.00.

Here is an author who shows Christians how to turn the tables on the Jehovah's Witnesses who spread their errors. An excellent hands-on reference guide with Scripture comparisons and tactics and arguments.

In Search of Christian Freedom by Raymond Franz, 732pp. \$13.95.

This book is the sequel to Crisis of Conscience and provides an even more comprehensive study. Franz served for over 40 years at every level of the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses, nine of those years were as a member of the Governing Body. The author has unparalleled sources of information on the organization hence a very thorough examination is presented. A challenge to value our Christian freedom.

MORMONISM

Ashamed of Joseph: Mormon Foundations Crumble by Charles and Steven Crane, 271pp. \$10.00.

Charles Crane is currently President of Boise Bible College; his son and collaborator is Steven Crane. The Mormon system stands or falls on the testimony of Joseph Smith. The pur-

pose of the book is to show that Joseph Smith was not a prophet of God, and the Mormon church has every right to be ashamed of Joseph Smith's life and teachings. This book was published in 1993 and provides an update on current happenings in Mormonism.

NEW AGE

New Age Bible Versions by G. A. Riplinger, 689pp. \$15.00.

This book is an exhaustive documentation of our many versions and translations of Scripture and the case against them. The author relates them to the antichrist's one world religion. It has an amazing amount of research done with footnotes. Gail Riplinger teaches in a state university.

New World Order: The Ancient Plan of Secret Societies by Wm. R. Still, 208pp. \$10.00.

For thousands of years secret societies have cultivated an ancient plan to bring all nations under "one-world government" and the rule of the antichrist. This is called today "New World Order." The author has a background of editor and publisher

and is a descendant of Patrick Henry and Woodrow Wilson.

Rest From the Quest by Elissa L. McClain, 177pp. \$5.95.

This is a candid account of a former New Ager who spent her first 29 years in the New Age Movement, the occult and Eastern Mysticism. An inside look at what really goes on in the New Age Movement. The author's story contains important lessons for those dealing with New Agers.

The False Prophet: Evil Architect of the New World Order by Ken Klein, 224pp. \$10.25.

The author's first book, A Strong Delusion, was about his involvement in the New Age Movement. This book is a result of seven years of study of the prophetic portions of the Bible.

He connects it all to the coming New World Order and the False Prophet. He also sheds light on the involve-

ment of top government officials in a secret organization dedicated to building a New World Order.

PROPHECY

The Revived Roman Empire and the Beast of the Apocalypse by N. W. Hutchings, 149pp. \$7.95.

The author states that the Revived Roman Empire was revived in December 1992; controls 40% of world commerce; plans to unite all nations under its system. It has been revived

through the Common Market Alliance of Europe. Jeanne Kirkpatrick (former U.S. ambassador to the U.N.) stated "a New World Order" is "emerging on the continent of Europe today." Author Hutchings has written many books and booklets on prophecy and other Bible themes.

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION (TM)

Transcendental Meditation by Lit-sen Chang, 92pp. \$2.95.

The subtitle: "A Mystic Cult of Self-Intoxication" defines what TM is about. The author was involved in a number of false religions, in fact he states he wandered for 50 years "in the wilderness" before coming to Christ! He has written many books, both before and after he accepted Christ. It is a well written book with firsthand experience.

Transcendental Meditation--Is it Only Meditation? by Harold Berry, 16pp. \$0.35.

This booklet describes TM and relates it's similarities to Hinduism. Christianity and TM are directly opposite in almost every way. TM is quite similar to the New Age. In our day of tension in business, TM's concept of relaxation and meditation appeals to many. Christians need to be aware of the subtleties of TM.

TWO BY TWO'S (COONEYTES, ETC.)

Reflections by Daurelle Chapman, 704pp. \$10.45.

A brand new book which is a compilation of the varied experiences of those who have come out of this supposedly nameless world-wide religion. The accounts are written by former members, worker/ministers and relatives. Religion Analysis Service is listed as one of the resources for material on this group. Very compelling reading.

Reinventing the Truth by Kevin N. Daniel, 304pp. \$9.45.

Another new book written about the historical claims of the "Two-By-Two's," "The Truth," "The Workers," "The No-Name Church," etc. It is often difficult for the outsider to gain any knowledge of this group's doctrine, structure or history. They deny having any organizational structure and meet in homes and rented halls, whose preachers are known as "Workers."

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UNIFICATION CHURCH—SUN MYUNG MOON

The Moon Is Not The Son by James Bjornstad, 125pp.

Since Rev. Sun Myung Moon was incarcerated, the "Moonies" have lost their popularity. However, his follow-

ers are still active. This religious movement (cult) swept many, especially young people, into this blasphemous group. At one time they claimed over 3 million followers.

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