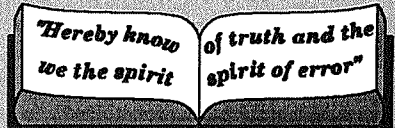


The Discerner



Volume XIV, Number 12

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EDITORIAL

By William A. BeVier

This issue of The Discerner is one of those occasions in which we have more copy than we can include. We have had to limit ourselves to stay within our allotted pages.

We are featuring another article by Sharon Lindbloom pertaining to the Latter Day Saints ("Mormons"). This article deals with Joseph Smith, Jr.'s supposed retranslation of the Bible.

Steve Lagoon's concluding article on the "Oneness Pentecostal" group appears in this issue. His primary ministry in recent years has been witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses about the Christ of Scripture. He also has a radio ministry on a local station in the Twin Cities and is currently serving as pulpit supply for a church in Wisconsin which is without a pastor.

Our third major article in this issue may introduce a new group to many of you, the Boston Church of Christ. If you do not live in a major metropolitan area, you may not have had direct contact with them. However, they claim they will reach the entire world, beginning with the metropolitan areas, by the end of this century.

This issue of The Discerner also has a list of new books in stock which are not in our current catalog. Two book reviews are included, as well as some price updates.

For those who may not know, Prof. John Dahlin, long time President of R.A.S., has written another book. He is a tribute to

the grace of God, in his nineties and still active for Christ. His latest book (55 pages) is titled: An Overview Of My 70 Years In The Ministry. One chapter presents his ministry with the Religion Analysis Service. Should you desire a copy of this book it can be obtained from Prof. Dahlin while the supply lasts. I do not have a price for this book. His address is:

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THE BIBLE: RESTORED AND REVISED

By Sharon Lindbloom

Bruce McConkie, an Apostle in the LDS Church, wrote: "Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints...believe the Bible. Indeed, so literally and completely do their beliefs and practices conform to the teachings of the Bible that it is not uncommon to hear informed persons say: 'If all men believed the Bible, all would be Mormons.' Bible doctrine is Mormon doctrine, and Mormon doctrine is Bible doctrine. They are one and the same."¹

This Church's 8th Article of Faith states, "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God."

These statements are meant for the world to see in order to present an orthodox Christian front to investigators of the LDS Church. The *true* LDS view of the Bible can be found in authoritative writings intended specifically for Church members.

Joseph Smith taught that while preserving the Bible, "Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors."²

In 1850, LDS Apostle Orson Pratt taught:

If it be admitted that the apostles and evangelists did write the books of the New Testament, that does not prove of itself that they were divinely inspired at the time they wrote.... Add all this imperfection to the uncertainty of the translation, and who, in his right mind could for one moment suppose the Bible in its present form to be a perfect guide? Who knows that even one verse of the Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original?³

This official opinion of the Bible is not confined to century-old teachings. In 1966

an Authority in the LDS Church wrote concerning this Book: "Many insertions were made, some of them 'slanted' for selfish purposes, while at times deliberate falsifications and fabrications were perpetrated."⁴

The tenth Prophet of the Mormon Church explained how faithful members can, in spite of all the supposed problems with our present Bible, still use it in an edifying way: "Guided by the *Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants*, and the Spirit of the Lord, it is not difficult for one to discern the errors in the *Bible*."⁵

The LDS Church recognizes the King James Version above all other translations and uses it exclusively. However, because of the purported unreliability of the KJV, Joseph Smith rewrote the Bible in the early 1830's. He accomplished this feat without benefit of Hebrew or Greek manuscripts, claiming that he was "restoring" precious truths which had formerly been lost; and this by the gift and power of God. This "restoration" is known today as the *Joseph Smith Translation (JST)*.

For over 100 years the existence of the JST was little known among Mormons, and the use of it was severely discouraged. The Church maintained that Joseph never completed the translation (despite evidence to the contrary), therefore rendering the JST just as dubious as the KJV.

In recent years the leadership of the Church has changed its tune. In 1979 the LDS Church published a new edition of the King James Bible which includes extensive footnotes as well as a seventeen-page section of excerpts from the JST. All told, this LDS Bible contains nearly seven hundred noted alterations of the King James text. The complete manuscripts of the JST embodies around

1,150 passages or verses added or changed by Joseph Smith.

Not only are the Mormon people now encouraged to be aware of and use the changes Joseph Smith made to the Bible, but they are taught, "There is so much beauty and depth of doctrine and insight to be had within the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible that it is foolish to study and teach without it.... Those who love and revere the name and labors of Joseph Smith should be pleased and enthusiastic to receive whatever God has chosen to reveal through his modern seer and lawgiver."⁶

There is not enough space here to outline many of the important changes made to the KJV, but to give an idea of what the JST includes, the book of Genesis (JST) contains among its 200 alterations: a prophecy regarding the coming of Joseph Smith; God telling Adam and Eve they could choose for themselves whether or not to eat the "forbidden" fruit; the fact that instead of being ashamed, "...when they comprehended the implications of the Fall, Adam and Eve sort of jumped up and clicked their heels"⁷; and that it was Noah, not the Lord, who was sorry that God made man.

Throughout the Bible, scripture that did not fit Joseph Smith's doctrine was changed so that it now conforms easily with Mormonism. For example, Joseph Smith claimed to have seen and spoken with God when he had his First Vision in 1820. This vision is the bedrock of the Mormon Church. However, the Bible makes it clear that men cannot see God in the manner in which Joseph claims to have done. This problem is erased in the JST as we see the words Joseph added (italicized) to the KJV text: Exodus 33:20 says, "Thou canst not see my face *at this time.*" John 1:19 in the JST says, "...and no man hath seen God at any time, *except*

he hath borne record of the Son." 1 John 4:12 says, "No man hath seen God at any time *except them who believe.*"

The reader might ask if the JST "corrections" can in any way be supported by the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. An LDS scholar answers: "...if the JST offered no more than the biblical manuscripts or if it were completely supported by them, there would have been no need for a JST. Of course it is *not* supported by the manuscripts...The JST is a witness for Jesus Christ. It is a witness for the divine calling of Joseph Smith as a prophet and apostle of Jesus Christ. Many people seem to go about it backwards. They want to test Joseph Smith by the content of the inadequate [biblical] manuscripts.... The *Book of Mormon* and the JST are the proper standards by which to measure the accuracy of the ancient Bible."⁸

An associate professor at LDS Church owned Brigham Young University summed it up nicely: "When it came to the Bible, Joseph Smith spoke as one having authority, and rightly so, for save Jesus only, no man ever walked the face of the earth that had greater knowledge of the Bible than he had...Joseph Smith was a living Bible, and he has done more to enhance the world's understanding of that great book than any other man who lived in it."⁹

Tragically, the LDS people are left with a Holy Bible which promises: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" while their spiritual leaders insist that it cannot be trusted. Instead of having confidence in God's Word, they must put their faith in the words of a man who, after giving a prophecy which failed, explained: "Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil."¹⁰

"...I did hearken to the words of Joseph and treasured them up in my heart..."¹¹

¹ Bruce R. McConkie, *What the Mormons Think of Christ*, p. 2

² Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 327

³ Orson Pratt, *Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon*, pp. 45, 47

⁴ Mark E. Petersen, *As Translated Correctly*, p. 4

⁵ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, p. 191

⁶ Robert L. Millet, *The Joseph Smith Translation*, p. 46

⁷ George A. Horton, Jr., *Ibid.*, p. 58

⁸ Robert J. Matthews, *Ibid.*, pp. 286, 289

⁹ Joseph F. McConkie, *Ibid.*, pp. 118, 119

¹⁰ David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, p. 31

¹¹ Brigham Young, quoted in *The Joseph Smith Translation*, p. 272

WHAT ABOUT THE ONENESS PENTECOSTALS? (PART 3)

By Steve Lagoon

The New Issue: Acts 2:38 and Salvation

The "new issue" that originally caused the controversy within the infant Assemblies of God organization was the understanding that the only correct baptismal "Formula" was, "in the name of Jesus Christ..." (Acts 2:38), rather than in the traditional Trinitarian Formula of Matthew 28:29...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." This view centered around Acts 2:38 in the King James Version. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." It also points to other references in the book of Acts where baptism (water) was administered in Jesus' name. Oneness also reference the fact that in the book of Acts, whenever someone received the Holy Spirit, in most cases they spoke in tongues.

Putting this all together we find the Oneness Pentecostals require three essential elements in order to be born again. An individual must (1) repent, (2) be baptized in Jesus' name only (any other baptism is invalid), and (3) be baptized in or receive the Holy Ghost. I should add that there is an underlying assumption among Oneness that you must also obey or work to be saved. All of these elements

must be present in order to be saved. The only way to know if you've received the Holy Ghost, and are saved, is if you speak in tongues. No tongues, no salvation. This group of both inward and outward requirements involved in the process of salvation stands in stark contrast to the simple Gospel, "...believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" Acts 16:31.

With this overview in mind, let us look at each of these a bit closer. Repent. I think we all agree that to be saved we must repent, if we understand "repent" to be virtuously synonymous with belief. That is as the Bible Knowledge Commentary New Testament, pg 359 says: "First they were to repent." This verb (Metanoesate) means "change your outlook," or have a change of mind, reverse the direction of your life. "This obviously results in a change of conduct, but the emphasis is on the mind or outlook." So, we need to have a change of mind about ourselves and God. We must be careful to understand this repentance doesn't require us to become acceptable to God through our own efforts or works, but simply the desire to know God.

"And be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Oneness Pentecostals emphasize two points from this statement. (1) It is

an absolute requirement to be water baptized in order to be saved, and (2) this water baptism must be administered "in the name of Jesus Christ" only to be valid.

So let us look at each of these in turn. Oneness Pentecostals have always been in agreement that water baptism must be in "Jesus' name" only, but they have disagreed on whether water baptism is required for salvation. The UPCI was created in 1945 by 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 believe water baptism was necessary for salvation. The former's view eventually prevailed so that this largest Oneness Pentecostal (the UPCI) organization believes in a form of "baptismal regeneration" though they generally reject this label in identifying their position because they reject infant baptism.

The chief text to be dealt with by any who claim that baptism in water is a necessary prerequisite for salvation is Acts 10:43-48. If you would take your Bible and read this passage you will find that the Gentile believers have received the Holy Spirit and salvation, before they are water baptized. What's more, these Gentiles even spoke in tongues, which according to Oneness theology is proof positive that you are saved. How can the Oneness theologians answer such strong evidence against their theology? How do you defend an indefensible position? It's hard, but they've come up with a clever argument in support of their view, but as we shall see, their "solution" to the problem of Acts 10:43-48 creates more problems than it solves! What is the supposed solution?

It is this, that in the three step scheme of salvation (repentance, water baptism, spirit baptism), while repentance must always come first, the order of baptism (water or spirit) is not important. In other

words, while in most cases spirit baptism follows water baptism, in some cases it can proceed it. This approach says it doesn't matter which baptism comes first because you are not saved or born again until you have experienced both. This view is defended in the UPCI book Symposium 314-316. But as I said before, this "solution" has a number of insurmountable problems and ridiculous implications.

The first problem is it doesn't deal with the fact that in Acts 10:43-48 the Gentiles had spoken in tongues. So amazingly the Oneness writers argue that in Acts 10:43-48 and similar cases, people can receive the Holy Spirit and yet not be saved because they have not been water baptized in Jesus' name. Would God really give his Spirit to an unsaved person?

Another interesting angle on this is that Oneness Pentecostals generally accept that God will give his Spirit to other Pentecostal and charismatic groups, even though they both believe and baptize in the Trinitarian Formula. Again, just as in Acts 10, people in these groups can be totally lost and yet be filled with the Holy Spirit, even speaking in tongues. Oneness scholar Bernard (New Birth 215) says: "...God will give his Spirit, even though that person may have some false concepts in other areas, such as water baptism. In such cases, God grants his Spirit to lead the sincere person into further truth." Bernard continues a little later (240) "someone can have the ability to speak in tongues and not be ready to meet God, because God will always honor faith in a certain portion of his word despite a lack of submission in other areas."

Boyd (211) points out "Oneness exponents have a great deal of trouble making sense out of the multitude of Pentecostal and charismatic believers who have spoken in tongues, but have not been correctly baptized." This "suggests that there are some who are acceptable to God to the point where God will come and dwell

within them while their sins are not yet forgiven."

Isn't this incredible? Bernard says God gives his Spirit to Trinitarians who are not even willing to fully submit to him and yet Bernard says that God will withhold his Spirit from some Oneness Pentecostals, even though they believe in the "Oneness of God," have repented, been baptized in Jesus' name and have even begged and pleaded with God. What a strange proposition and yet this was just the experience of Oneness writer Keith G. Morehead (Mystery-epilogue and Oneness News and Journal, Winter-Spring 94, p. 6) by his own testimony.

Bernard (New Birth 216) "Receiving the Spirit is only as difficult as the seeker makes it. It takes only as much time as he needs to repent and surrender completely to God." I'm sure those Oneness Pentecostals who feel they are not saved or filled with the Spirit, despite doing all they know to do, find Bernard's words very comforting. Basically, it's your fault. You and everyone in the church know you're not saved and haven't spoken in tongues because you just won't fully submit to God! I'm sure these poor Oneness people can't see why God won't give them the Spirit and yet he gives it to all those pagan Trinitarians.

I suspect the real reason why it takes a while for new converts to get saved, despite repenting and being water baptized, is they just haven't learned or are still unwilling to "fake it," that is, to either pretend to speak in tongues, or to take this time to psychologically deceive themselves.

Now let me take you back to our second problem pertaining to the three-fold multiple order of the Oneness view of salvation, which is that it leads to the idea a person can have their sins "forgiven" or "remitted" because of repentance and proper water baptism, and yet not be saved. We have already explored this, but

let's hear Bernard (New Birth 96) again: "We must stress that the new birth is a single whole. One is either born again or not; there is no such thing as being half-born." After all that we have just discussed, this statement has a hollow ring to it. One is led to agree with Bernard, "there is no such thing as being half-born" but apparently you can be one-third or two-thirds born.

Quoting from the Bible Knowledge Commentary New Testament Victor Books, 1986, pg. 359:

A problem revolves around the command "be baptized" and its connection with the remainder of [Acts] 2:38. There are several views: (1) One is that both repentance and baptism result in remission of sins. In this view, baptism is essential for salvation. The problem with this interpretation is that elsewhere in Scripture forgiveness of sins is based on faith alone.... Peter, the same speaker, later promised forgiveness of sins on the basis of faith alone (Acts 5:31; 10:43).... (3) A third view takes the clause **and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ** as parenthetical. Several factors support this interpretation: (a) The verb makes a distinction between singular and plural verbs and nouns. The verb "repent" is plural and so is the pronoun "your" in the clause **so that you sins may be forgiven**.... Therefore the verb "repent" must go with the purpose of forgiveness of sins. On the other hand the imperative "be baptized" is singular, setting it off from the rest of the sentence. (b) This concept fits with Peter's proclamation in Acts 10:43 in which the same expression "sins may be forgiven"... occurs. There it is granted on the basis of faith alone.

So much for baptismal regeneration.

Now we return to the second part of our statement in Acts 2:38, "in the name of

Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” The Oneness argument is that in Matthew 28:19 “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” points to a singular name and that name is Jesus. This is how the Apostles understood it and hence the many baptisms in Jesus’ name in the book of Acts. Therefore, any other formula is invalid.

The first thing to point out in response to this is that there is nothing inconsistent with Jesus’ name baptism and Trinitarian beliefs. Jesus’ name baptism does not in any way imply a Modalistic view of God. The *Didache* used both the Jesus’ name and the Trinitarian baptismal formulas, not seeing any contradiction in this.

The second thing to remember is that a name stands for the person behind the name, and even the authority of that person. Acts 4:10 says “...it is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...that this man stands before you completely healed.” This verse is not meant to imply that the name of Jesus is some kind of magical formula, incantation or “abra-cadabra,” the very mention of which brings healing. Rather, the name “Jesus” stands for the person “Jesus” who heals.

So also in both Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38 the names stand for the persons mentioned and the authority of those persons. Since the authority of all three persons is the same, i.e., the authority of the one almighty triune God, there is no inconsistency in being baptized with either formula. For a fuller treatment of this, see the *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Frank E. Gaebelin, ed. 1984, Zondervan, volume 8, pp. 597-598.

The last part of Acts 2:38 reads “and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” The Oneness Pentecostals tie in with this the idea that whereas one is truly baptized in the Holy Spirit, they will, they must, speak in tongues, because this is found in the book of Acts.

You can consult Boyd’s book, appendix A, for excellent arguments against this Oneness view, though from a charismatic perspective. But I believe that the manifestation of the spiritual gifts during the apostolic age had specific purposes. (1) Because the church did not yet have the New Testament as the authoritative guide, God guided the church in its infancy through the miraculous, such as prophecies, words of knowledge, tongues and interpretations, etc. Of course, once the New Testament was written, distributed and compiled, there was no longer a need to guide through the imperfect (I Corinthians 13:8-10). (2) I believe miraculous gifts such as healings, tongues, etc. served as a sign to the Jewish nation and to the world that these men and this religion (Christianity) is from God (I Cor. 14:22; Acts 2:5-41), just as Jesus’ miracles authenticated (to the world) his person and message (John 10:38; John 20:30, 31). Once this church was established on its own and had God’s complete word, the miraculous gifts were no longer needed.

All this means that we can’t possibly say that only those who speak in tongues have the Holy Spirit and are saved because “tongues” are not for today. Also see I Cor. 12:28-31.

The final point of discussion in this section is the heavy emphasis on works among Oneness Pentecostals. Most cults have at least enough sense to deny that they teach salvation by faith and works, but not this one. Instead, they seem to wear it as a red badge of courage. Boyd (199) says “This doctrine, I firmly believe, gives the UPCI and similar Oneness groups the distinction of being the most legalistic ‘Christian’ movement in church history....” Bernard (*New Birth* 18) says “However, a one time past experience does not automatically guarantee future salvation. We are responsible for keeping our salvation until the end.” Boyd (215) quotes the UPCI tract “Why”, p. 15, “If the sinner has to forsake sin in order to be

saved, the Christian must live free from sin in order to stay saved...." Boyd (216-217) continues:

It is maintained...that the grace of God through the work of Christ is not alone sufficient for our salvation. Indeed one entire tract of the UPCI is devoted to just this point. It is entitled Grace + 0 = salvation? and in it the UPCI explicitly argues against the view...Hence...the UPCI and other Oneness groups maintain that it is Grace + Faith + Obedience that equals Salvation.

In contrast to the Oneness view of salvation, four verses which are self explanatory come to mind: Romans 1:17, "The Just shall live by Faith"; Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved"; Romans 8:1, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation (emphasis mine) for those who are in Christ Jesus"; and Jude 24-25, "To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages, now and forever more! Amen!"

The Final Verdict—It's "Another Gospel"

In this closing section I would like to examine the proper relationship between Oneness Pentecostals and the Christian church. The main question to be asked at this point: Is the UPCI (and other Oneness Pentecostal groups) a cult or just another distinctive, but valid Christian denomination?

In order to answer this question, we must define what a cult is. There have been many definitions advanced. Most seem to fall into two main categories. The first category is the theological type, a group which claims affinity to a specific group, and yet breaks away with its own distinct theology.

The second category would be the sociological type. This would involve pointing to certain structures and

practices that are considered by society to involve improper and unethical control over its membership, even to the point of being psychologically, socially and physically damaging to the members. This is becoming increasingly known as mind control, and for good reason.

As far as cults of Christianity go, other signs are often pointed out, such as a group that has extra-biblical revelation of authorities whose interpretation supercedes that of the Bible.

Now let's get a closer look at the two main definitions just given and apply these to the UPCI and like Oneness bodies. As a good example of a theological definition of a Christian cult, I quote the editor of The Discerner, Dr. William BeVier (The Discerner, April-May-June 1993, p. 3) "I have long used the working definition that a cult is an aberration (deviation from the norm) of Christianity which is not biblical on the work or the person of Jesus Christ, or both. The primary texts of Scripture I use for this are Galatians 1:6-9 with I Corinthians 15:1-8 and I John 4:1-3."

I note that Dr. BeVier's definition is based on Scripture itself. Oneness writer J. L. Hall in the book Symposium (40) accuses evangelicals of basing their definitions on tests of orthodoxy on the creeds and councils of the fourth and fifth centuries, rather than on Scripture.

I would like to point out, as I did earlier in this article, that the doctrine of the Trinity preceded the Council of Nicea, even in a more explicit form, by at least century. So then the councils did not "establish new doctrine" but simply endorsed the same doctrine Christians had always held (which were based on the Bible) but did so in a more careful and precise way. Christians should reject a statement in any creed or confession that is not supported by the Bible itself.

In the Bible, Jesus and his Apostles use the normal, grammatical, historical and literal approach when they interpret

the Bible, and thus endorsed this method for all of us. In using this method of scriptural interpretation consistently, Christians of all times will have a unified theology on the fundamentals of God's Word. Because God's Word doesn't change, neither does our theology need to. So in reality, it has been Scripture all along and not tradition that has kept the church orthodox.

When we apply Dr. BeVier's definition, we find Oneness Pentecostals guilty on both accounts. First, because they deny the distinction of the persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and second, they add to Christ's work baptism and their own works (the standards).

Now we come to the second type of cult definition, the sociological approach. A very thought provoking article appeared in the November-December 1992 issue of the Free Minds Journal (back cover) written by David Vivas, Jr. entitled "Eight Marks of a Mind Control Cult as Applied to the United Pentecostal Church." He starts the article by noting that there are variations of practices among the UPCI churches, so what is said may not be the case in every UPCI church. I will highlight some of these marks of a mind control cult.

"When one converts to the United Pentecostal Church, he or she is told that they must stay away from people who are not 'in the truth.'" Notice the phrase "the truth." Almost all the cults emphasize this same phrase, as though their group is the only true Christian church on earth. More importantly, they are told to stay away from outsiders. Cults usually like to isolate members to make them more dependent on the group and to keep them away from people who may have information damaging to the group. Thus, fear is used to motivate compliance.

Vivas continues: "They are told not to question their pastor...even if the pastor had no justification from scripture on his

teaching, they were to obey him and not question him." A more dangerous arrangement could not be imagined. Almost all the cults have some person or persons who stand as the interpreters of Scripture for everyone else in the group, putting such leaders on pedestals of ultimate authority and power in the life of their "followers," even above God's Word!

More of Vivas: "in some UPC groups the members were told that if they leave the church, Satan will strip them of everything they have...and they will pay dearly for their rebellion and disobedience to their pastor." This highlights the warped mentality of the cultist, who incorrectly believes that to leave a particular church or group is to leave God himself. Preposterous! Biblically speaking, no group or individual on earth can stand between God and a lost and needy sinner. Only Christ has that right (1 Timothy 2:5). This scare tactic approach is known as phobia indoctrination.

I don't know, but the last time I checked, Greg Boyd was doing okay even though he left Oneness Pentecostalism.

Back to Vivas: "Those who would violate any of the 'Standards of holiness' would have to confess them before the church." Cults use this approach to shame their members and to bring about outward compliance. This shame-based identity imposed on them constantly attacks and lowers the member's self-worth or identity, which makes them increasingly more dependent on the group to feel okay. The way, of course, to feel okay is to do more and more for the group. Cults create this vicious cycle, and it's hard to get free.

Thankfully, Christians live by faith and have God's grace and forgiveness. Vivas gives more examples but space does not allow further discussion.

I believe I have shown that whether from a theological or sociological definition, the

UPCI and other Oneness groups deserve the label "cult."

Allow me to quote from R.A.S. President Dr. William. BeVier again (The Discerner July-August-September 1993, pg 2): "Like the Seventh-day Adventists, the Mormons also are making a concerted effort to be recognized and accepted as 'Evangelical Christians.'" I would add to that short list the Oneness Pentecostals (at least some of them). They are trying to join ministerial associations and evangelical associations. They attend evangelical colleges, though Falwell was smart enough to dismiss them at Liberty (Christian Century, October 9, 1991, p. 903).

A few years back at the Minnesota State Fair, the local Evangelical Association was sponsoring a Gospel choir concert in their ministry facility. I happened to stop in, and upon investigation found my fears confirmed. Right there in our evangelical chapel was a choir of cult members singing away, otherwise known as Oneness Pentecostals. Believe me, that was the last time they'll be singing there, at least I hope so.

Christians, we need to be aware of this threat. Just because they talk a lot about Jesus is no reason to be fooled. It is just as wrong to be associated on a spiritual level with Oneness Pentecostals (except to evangelize them) as it would be to be involved with Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc. But when you stand up to them for truth, get ready for the avalanche of whinnying. Many Oneness Pentecostals have a persecution syndrome. "Boo-hoo, you can't call us a cult, that's not fair." But a cult they are. Isaiah 5:20 says "Woe to them that call evil good and good evil." I acknowledge that most Oneness people are sincere and good people, but we can't be seduced; sincerity is not enough (Romans 10:1-3).

In a recent radio broadcast Ed Hindson, an evangelical who wrote a book on cults called Angels of Deceit, was not very well

informed and left the listener believing, in response to a question, that Oneness Pentecostals are okay. It is time for him to do his homework.

In a small town near the Twin Cities, an entire congregation of Pentecostals and their pastor converted to the Oneness Pentecostal movement.

That there is a lack of discernment among some should be made manifest by a quotation from a Harvest Audio-book entitled Christianity in Crisis by Hank Hanegraff, who has succeeded the late Walter Martin as head of the Christian Research Institute. All the quotations are from side 2. Keep in mind that William Branham (1909-1965) was a faith healer and a Oneness Pentecostal (on Branham see Dictionary of Pentecostal Movements pp. 95-96).

The first quotation is from William Branham himself. "Now my precious brethren, I know this is a tape also, now don't get excited, let me say this with Godly love. The hour is approaching where I can't hold still these things no more [sic]...Trinitarianism is of the devil, I'll say that--thus saith the Lord." The second quotation is the host Hanegraff: "...unfortunately Hagin [Kenneth] and Copeland [Ken] are not alone in affirming Braham." The next quotation is best selling author Benny Hinn: "God uses normal individuals, whether it's Smith Wigglesworth or Kathryn Kuhlman or Aimee or A. Allen or William Branham (emphasis mine), great men of God." Next quotation is back to host Hanegraff:

It's ironic, that a broadcasting network called Trinity would blatantly promote anti-Trinitarian doctrine, that is unfortunately precisely what [Paul] Crouch is now doing in his staunch support of the U.P.C. cult. Listen to this clip from TBN's "Praise the Lord" program. There are so many, Paul, there are so many gracious Godly, I mean the United Pentecostal Church

has great ministry, they have great singing, of course, a lot of the singing you use right here at Trinity, came from a United Pentecostal Church. It's amazing, the walls are coming down. Glory! The body's coming together and God is getting ready to do something mighty in the earth and Trinity Broadcasting Network has helped break the walls down.

This was all said on a supposed Christian television network. However Couch and his followers are "health and wealth" faith teachers and so false teachers themselves, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised at their lack of discernment.

The book The Faith Healers by Eve Simpson, Pyramid Books, 1977, p. 40 adds: "Many started to come to Branham's revivals to emulate his techniques...A few of those who were influenced by this man were Oral Roberts, T. L. Osborn, O. L. Jagers, Gayle Jackson and Gordon Lindsay." A who's who of "supposed" faith healers.

What I find most puzzling about Oneness Pentecostals is why do they even want to become accepted by evangelicals? Bernard (New Birth 313) says "sincere profession based on a faulty concept of Christ is not enough. One must believe and obey the gospel. False prophets and cultists profess Christ, but they are not saved." Many other statements could be quoted to this effect. Oneness consider Trinitarians as evil dupes of philosophy, who subverted the purity of true doctrine. Their view actually leads to the suggestion that there were virtually no true Christians on this earth from about AD 150 until they came on the scene around 1910. And of course they are the only true Christians (in their mind), so why do you want to hang out with us heretics? Don't you know God forbids associating with false teachers?

So give those of us in the evangelical community who recognize Oneness

Pentecostalism for what it is credit for at least trying to obey the Apostle Paul's word to have nothing to do with false teachers and a false gospel.

We who are of the real faith need to view Oneness Pentecostals for what they really are: lost individuals tragically deceived into a false sense of security by "another gospel." I pray that this series of articles has helped some to begin to take up the challenge of reaching the Oneness Pentecostals for Christ. If anyone wishes to contact me for any further information, please address a letter in my name to Religion Analysis Service. Thank you.

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BOSTON CHURCH OF CHRIST

By William A. BeVier

In recent months we have been receiving many requests about an organization generally called the "Boston Church of Christ." Not much was available to us on the group until we began to research it. Much has been learned about its group (too much to put in one article) and we would like to share some of this information with you.

We learned this organization goes under a variety of names, which has caused some confusion e.g., The Boston Church of Christ, The Boston Movement, International Churches of Christ, Shepherding Movement, Discipling Movement, or also known by the local church name, such as Toronto Church of Christ, New York Church of Christ, etc.

The movement can be traced back to Gainesville, Florida in the 1960s. The church in Gainesville was then a part of the mainstream Church of Christ denomination which traces itself back to Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone of the 1830s.

The church in Gainesville called Chuck Lucas to be their senior pastor in 1970. He previously has been their Campus Pastor focusing on the students at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The church prospered under Lucas, built a new larger building, and was renamed Crossroads Church of Christ (which today has no part in the Boston Movement).

Lucas stressed attendance at all church functions and that everybody should be closely related to another person who would be that person's "shepherd" or "discipler." The Discipleship Partners became mandatory in Crossroads.

A student at the University, with a Methodist background, became involved with the campus ministry of Crossroads and totally accepted Lucas' ideas (in a few years he was out "Lucasing" Lucas). This student was Kip McKean, now the undisputed leader of the Boston Movement.

McKean was "discipled" by Lucas and after graduation from the University of

Florida was sent out as a "church planter" by Crossroads. He went first to Illinois, then was sent to a small traditional Church of Christ in the Boston area.

He had outstanding success in attracting people to the Boston church. Attendance went from 30 to over 4,000 in about three years.

It became apparent that McKean, son of a Navy admiral, had a much stronger view of authority than the traditional Church of Christ. It wasn't difficult for McKean to find proof texts in Scripture to support him. He began to advocate that evangelists, not the elders, were vested by Christ with final authority (under God) in the church. Also, every Christian was to be subordinate to another Christian ("one-over-one"). This was an outgrowth of Lucas' discipleship concept.

McKean was dismissed officially by the church in Gainesville, so he started his own ministry which is now the Boston Church of Christ movement. In 1985 Lucas was dismissed from the Gainesville church by the elders there. But the new pastor in Gainesville went to Boston to be "discipled" by Kip McKean. In 1988 Crossroads ended affiliation with the Boston church, which caused a split in the Gainesville church, some choosing to follow McKean.

McKean began sending out "reconstruction teams" to traditional churches of Christ. Generally a split would occur when the Boston people were successful in making inroads. The Boston group came to regard themselves as the "remnant" church, and all others are lost.

Colleges and universities began to take action to deny the Boston Movement access to their campuses (see Jerry Jones, What Does The Boston Movement Teach, vol. III; Freedom in Christ Newsletter, Nov. 93). The Boston response was this is expected "persecution" all true Christians will experience.

By the mid-1980's several cult-watching groups and the secular media were giving attention to the Boston Church of Christ. By 1992 Christianity Today, Christian Research Journal, and Time magazine were featuring articles on the Boston Church of Christ. Information frequently was being provided by those who had left the movement. In 1993 and 1994 ABC's "20/20" and "Inside Edition" both had programs on the movement.

A number of former members, including former leaders, are quoted by Jerry Jones in his books as terming the Boston Movement a cult. In brief, a legalistic, mind-control organization dominated by one man, Kip McKean, which is not Biblical in its view of salvation.

Former members term McKean a forceful, charismatic individual, a natural leader. I have read some of his writings, listened to some of his tapes, and watched him on video. I agree with the former members' evaluations.

McKean is now 40 years of age, married, with three children (ages 13, 11, 9). A few years ago he moved from Boston (leaving the church there under the leadership of his brother Randy), to become the "lead evangelist" in Los Angeles.

He is the leader of over 150 churches located in 60 countries reporting an attendance of about 90,000 per week. Having started with 30 attendees in Boston in 1979, McKean says this increase is evidence of God working through the Movement today. "The parallels to the book of Acts unmistakably mark this movement to be of God" (McKean, Upside/Down, Aug. 1994, p. 13).

Although their teaching has changed on this, the Boston Movement now states that water baptism of believers is not to take place until after a person has been "discipled." This is based on their interpretation of Mt. 28:18-20. This obviously ignores such New Testament

Scripture as Acts 2:38-41; 8:34-39; 10:44-48; 16:30-34, where individuals were baptized with water immediately after professing faith in Christ. Needless to say, McKean and the Boston Movement, as the traditional Church of Christ denomination, claim that water baptism is necessary for salvation (The Apostle Paul didn't know this. See I Cor. 1:14-18.). In the New Testament "discipling" (teaching) comes after conversion and distinct from it.

McKean also mixes Old Testament and New Testament "proof texts" to establish his theology (and it keeps changing, as McKean claims he gains "new insight," e.g., Revolution Through Restoration, Kip McKean, para. 51, cited by Jerry Jones' What Does The Boston Movement Teach?, p. 113. Jones, ThD, a former leader, "evangelist," in the Boston Movement, has written three volumes about the group, and has a fourth volume in preparation.).

McKean has also adopted the "remnant" church idea -- they are the only true church. "I believe with all my heart that the Boston movement is God's modern-day movement" (McKean, Upside/Down, p. 14, Aug. 1994). "...I know of no church, no fellowship, no movement that teaches and practices these biblical requirements of obedience to the truth." He states: "...to become a true Christian he must respond to the cross, repent of sins, make a decision to be a disciple and be baptized for the remission of sins" (Upside/Down, p. 14, Aug. 1994). The "remnant" church concept, i.e., we are the only ones with the complete truth, is typical of many cults.

The current organization of the Boston Movement is to be noted. At the top are the "Evangelists," of which Kip McKean is the leader. Next are nine World Sector Leaders directly under McKean, though he claims they serve as his "advisors." Then there are "Lead Evangelists," men moved about by orders of Kip McKean. Elders are leaders in the local church

under the assigned evangelist. There are also "administrators," individuals appointed to assist the nine Sector Leaders. Other local leaders, such as deacons, are included.

The discipling of women is done only by other women (though Kip McKean has "discipled" some women). The leaders of the women's ministries are called "Women Counselors." Elenna McKean (Kip's wife) and Pat Gempel (wife of a World Sector Leader) are the most prominent Women Counselors.

Most of this structure cannot be found in the New Testament. Neither can the idea that everyone is to be discipled ("responsible to") one other person.

McKean's theology is based on the stated concept "What is not forbidden in Scripture is permitted." (See Jerry Jones, What Does The Boston Movement Teach?, et. al.). This gives a great deal of latitude in many areas. But then, McKean will attempt to be very literal at other points. This makes for inconsistencies, which former members, including former leaders, have pointed out.

McKean asserts that because Jesus turned water to wine, "...drinking wine is not a sin" (Upside/Down, Aug. 1994, p. 19). Apparently McKean does not know the difference in alcohol content between naturally fermented grape juice of ancient times (about 3-4% alcohol) and commercially distilled wine of modern times (about 12-25%). Also, he apparently does not know the Greek word oinos (wine) is used in the New Testament for both fermented and unfermented grape juice, e.g., Mt. 9:17. Wine with an alcohol content of 12-25% would be termed "strong drink" in the Bible, and was always forbidden to God's people.

McKean's theology can lead to a relativism and every person doing what's right in their own eyes (very typical of current American society).

McKean's "remnant" church ideas have been expressed in a number of ways. A recent statement by him is:

As for those who continue to oppose us, they are lost—not because their baptism became invalid, but the Scriptures are clear that those who oppose and grumble against God's leaders and divide God's church are, in fact, opposing God (Exodus 16:8; Numbers 16). Thus the rebellious become lost because they do not have a true faith. (Upside/Down, Aug. 1994, p. 20)

I understand this to mean to disagree with Kip McKean is to lose one's salvation. In the incident cited above, McKean refers to Korah in Numbers 16. The implication is that McKean views himself as a modern-day Moses.

Also in August 1994 in the issue of Upside/Down (name taken from Acts 17:6, KJV), it was announced the Upside/Down magazine would be replaced by a video "magazine" called KNN--Kingdom News Network (p. 21). The L.A. Bulletin (replacing the Boston Bulletin) would be the official history of the Boston Movement (p. 21). A new publication ministry called Discipleship Publications International, or DPI, would begin operating out of Boston. We need to be alert to these new titles.

McKean claims he is restoring the true first century church (same claim made by Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, Joseph Smith, Jr., Herbert W. Armstrong, Ellen White, Charles Taze Russell, and others -- all cult leaders).

I recently heard of a specific example in this area of the mind-control feature of the Boston Movement. A third-year student in a Christian college became involved, first through a friendship, with a Boston

Church of Christ member. He was persuaded to drop out of college, leave his job and family, and move in to live with his "discipler."

There is much more that could be presented about the Boston Movement, but I trust this article will serve as an introduction. The Boston Movement led by Kip McKean has many of the same aspects found in many of the older cults. Former members clearly term it a cult, e.g., Susan Condon, cited by Jerry Jones, vol. III, pp. 79-99.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Joanne Ruhland and others in preparing this article. These are individuals who have had direct contact or involvement with the Boston Church of Christ.

Selected Resources

Rick and Sarah Bauer. The Boston Movement: Analysis, Commentary, and Media Reports.

Sarah Bauers. A Time to Speak, A Personal Journal of My Years in the Boston Movement.

Jerry Jones. What Does the Boston Movement Teach?, vols. 1-3.

William Watson. A Concise Dictionary of Cults and Religions (stocked by R.A.S.).

Christianity Today, (Nov. 1992).

Spiritual Counterfeit Project Newsletter 15, no. 2:11-13.

Time (May 18, 1992).

ABC video, "Inside Edition" (May 19, 1994).

ABC video, "20/20" (Oct. 15, 1993).

NEW BOOKS

The following books have been added to our inventory since the last published list in our April-June issue of The Discerner.

Armstrongism

Armstrongism, by Robert L. Sumner, 424 pp., \$12.95.

Bible

Attack on the Bible (Answer to Life Magazine), by John R. Rice, 30 pp., .50 each.

General

Cults and the Occult, Third Edition, Revised and Expanded, by Edmund Gruss, 150 pp., \$8.99.

Cults, World Religions and the Occult, by Kenneth Boa, 280 pp., A Revised and Expanded version of Cults, World Religions and You, \$10.00.

The Truth Twisters, by Harold Berry, 325 pp., \$10.50.

Homosexuality

The Pestilence of AIDS, Is it the Judgement of God?, by Hugh Pyle, 22 pp., .50 each.

Jehovah's Witnesses

Jehovah's Witness Literature, by David A. Reed, 207 pp., \$ 9.95.

"Leading Jehovah's Witnesses to Christ." By David A. Reed (ex-Jehovah's Witness), pamphlet, .25 each.

Redi Answers to Jehovah's Witnesses, by Eric and Jean Greishaber, 44 pp., \$6.00.

"That's Not in My Bible," by David A. Reed, pamphlet, .25 each.

The Truth About Jesus and the Trinity, new revision--reprinted, by Peter Barnes, 66 pp., \$4.00.

Miscellaneous

Abortion (The Murder of the Helpless Unborn), by John R. Rice, 39 pp., \$1.00.

Amusements for Christians, Right or Wrong, by John R. Rice, 48 pp., \$1.00.

What is Wrong With Movies?, by John R. Rice, 112 pp., \$2.50.

Mormonism

Answering Mormons' Questions, by Bill McKeever, 127 pp., \$7.00.

Questions to Ask Your Mormon Friend, by Bill McKeever, 192 pp., \$7.99.

New Age

Homeopathy, by H. J. Bopp, M.D., 15 pp., .75 each.

Eastern Religions

Beyond Buddhism, by J. Isamu Yamamoto, 141 pp., \$9.00.

BOOK REVIEWS

Cults and the Occult (Third Edition) by
Edmund C. Gruss, 150 pp.

This book gives an overall view of over a dozen cults. It is a good volume to read and get a grasp of the many ways in which Satan is trying to get people away from the truth of the Bible. There is one way to be saved but countless ways to be led astray. I was disappointed that Dr. Walter Martin, "one of the most productive evangelical writers in the cult field," would say that the Seventh Day Adventists should not be viewed as a cult, pp. 3-5. [Although Gruss considers them a cult. Ed.]

With the limited knowledge I have of the cults, it was a good "refresher course." The bibliography list appears to give a wealth of information for further in-depth study of each of the cults listed.

A. W. Chryst, Jr.
RAS Board Member

(RAS has available 4 copies of Cults and the Occult, Revised Edition, at the SALE price of \$3.00 each. The new Third Edition is available at \$8.99).

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The NCC/WCC--and Other Atrocities, by
June Fowler, 1994, 152pp, mimeographed, paperbound.

This is a personal publication by a woman well-informed about recent developments in the political and religious scenes. Her writing style is informal at times, but is understandable.

Recent developments in the National Council of Churches and the World

Council of Churches no longer are upper most in the minds of many people. However, these organizations are still active and continue to seek to destroy Biblical, historic Christianity.

Mrs. Fowler reminds us of the other groups and movements with which the NCC/WCC has and does cooperate, e.g., the Roman Catholic Church, Russian Communism, and more recently, the New Age Movement. The current book is an expansion and update of a similar work Mrs. Fowler wrote in 1986. This edition contains 78 documentation endnotes.

The author is a staunch supporter of using only the King James Bible. Her theological position is that of Dr. Carl McIntire, M. H. Reynolds, Jr., Wm. E. Ashbrook, Dr. Donald Waite and David Hunt. She is a Fundamental Baptist by denomination.

Mrs. Fowler has written from her heart of her concerns as a Christian and an American. The several factual errors and other minor deficiencies have been called to her attention in a personal letter to her.

I recommend Bible-believing Christians to purchase this book in order to have the information in it at hand. The book is available at cost (printing, plus handling and postage) for a donation of \$10 to: Pioneer Baptist Church, Rt. 2, Box 41, Asotin, WA 99402.

In order to make this available at cost, RAS does not stock the book.

Wm. A. BeVier
President, RAS

PRICE REDUCTIONS

Due to some price overstocking, we offer you some of these books at a reduced price.

Book	Author	# Available	Price
Cults and the Occult	E. Gruss	4	\$3.00
Cults, World Religions and You	K. Boa	1	\$6.00
The Challenge of Cults	M. Burrell	17	\$2.75
Youth, Brainwashing and the Extremist Cults	R. Enroth	20	\$4.00
A Spirit-Controlled Life	N. Horn	25	\$1.00
The Devil's Alphabet	K. Koch	17	\$4.75
The Occult Explosion	C. Wilson	17	\$1.00
Out of the Devil's Parlour	W. J. McK. McCormick	20	\$0.75
Satan's Devices	R. Morey	7	\$8.00
Sodom's Second Coming	F. L. Smith	7	\$8.00
Islam Revealed	A. Shorrash	7	\$9.00
Jehovah's Witnesses and the Hour of Darkness	D. Barefoot	10	\$8.95
Why I Left Jehovah's Witnesses	C. Cutting	25	2 / \$0.35
Beyond Seduction	D. Hunt	10	\$9.00
The Criterion: Religious Discrimination in America	J. Bergman	12	\$3.50
Christ, the Christian and Freemasonry	W. J. McK. McCormick	30	\$3.00
The Snare of the Fowler	F. Brogan	7	\$6.00