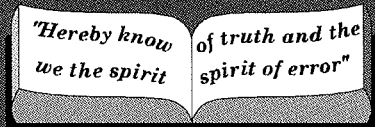


The Discerner



Volume 20, Number 1

January • February • March 2000

AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL HERESY-EXPOSING QUARTERLY

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Published Quarterly
Price \$4.00 for 4 issues
Foreign subscriptions extra

P.O. Box 22098
Robbinsdale, MN 55422-0098
Printed in the United States
1-763-535-8715 / 1-800-562-9153
FAX 763-537-5825

EDITORIAL

By William A. BeVier

This issue of The Discerner features three articles, two of which are to be continued.

The first article by Dave Hunt presents how far theological liberalism and the ecumenical movement have progressed. Larry King, of TV fame, interviewed three leading religious leaders last December. All three envision a worldwide single religion, a religion which in reality is without the Bible, without Jesus Christ, and without God as He reveals Himself to be in Scripture. Hunt quotes verbatim from this interview accompanied by his poignant comments. This article is reprinted with permission from the February 2000 issue of "The Berean Call." Dave Hunt is a member of R.A.S.'s Board of Reference.

Our second article by Caroline Alexander reveals the extent of the occult in today's society. It is amazing how our modern, intellectual, worldly wise society can accept something as wrong as the occult. But then 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 is still correct ("But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.").

In our third article we welcome back to the pages of The Discerner Robert C. Hill. His research has led him to write on the Christadelphian sect. Many people know little or nothing about this group. They seldom build church buildings, rather meeting in homes and rented space. They do not have pastors/ministers in the traditional sense, but have lay leaders. The group is small in num-

bers (possibly 16-20,000). Because they are pacifists they had to organize to be recognized by the U.S. Government. Their headquarters in the U.S. is in Elgin, Illinois, though they have other groups in most of the English-speaking world.

We would like to share two personal items with you relating to R.A.S.

The Lord has seen fit to call to Himself, unexpectedly for us, two of our Board members, Anton W. Chryst and Harold C. Anderson. Each served faithfully for several years as our Treasurer. Our sympathy is extended to Helen Chryst and Gen Anderson and their families (Psa. 116:15).

As many of you know, R.A.S. has for several years been seeking and praying for an office manager. The ministry has not been in the position to pay a salary to such a person. But because of directed gifts which came to R.A.S., the Board at its last meeting authorized the engagement of a self-employed individual to serve part-time as Office Manager. The remuneration would be \$500 per month for two years. "Part-time" means four days a week at six hours per day. R.A.S. would also pay for the relocation of an individual to the Twin Cities. We again ask for your prayers in behalf of meeting this need. If you are, or you know of someone, interested in this position, please contact us.

Again, we thank all of you who contribute financially and in your prayers for R.A.S. The ministry could not and would not continue without you.

A New Christianity

By Dave Hunt

How swiftly time passes! Already we're well into the year 2000. The alleged Y2K bug (including billions of embedded chips, which were going to cause havoc) turned out to be the myth of the millennium. The contrast between fearful Christians and a confident world was embarrassing. Inter-Varsity canceled its huge triennial Urbana conference scheduled for the end of 1999, and Promise Keepers broke its promise to hold the largest combined gathering of Christian men in history on the steps of state capitols January 1, 2000. The world, however, didn't cancel NFL, NBA, bowl games, or millennial festivities, etc.

Those who followed Year 2000 celebrations in succeeding time zones across the globe sensed an electrifying exuberance everywhere. None of the anticipated terrorism occurred and crowds were so well behaved that for most police it was quieter than the usual Friday. Worldwide there was an exhilarating camaraderie, the expectancy of great things to come and the feeling that a new age of peace and prosperity had dawned.

Far from breaking down, modern technology has created a new electronic world without borders. Antichrist's world government is not only believable but just around some nearby corner. Multinational corporations have united this world in a way that could not have been anticipated a few decades ago. There is now no turning back. The scenario we presented from the Bible 17 years ago in *Peace, Prosperity and The Coming Holocaust* continues to unfold before our eyes.

The billions spent on Y2K fixes have laid the foundation for a new technological explosion beyond imagination. It is not surprising that Christian leaders, too, would be caught up in the euphoria, considering the growing apostasy. With high tech, who needs the Holy Spirit? Who in these times fears God? Man is now in control.

We have long warned of the accelerating ecumenism, and few would believe in the Rapture if it did not occur by the year 2000. One can see the world church, Antichrist's bride, rising like a phoenix from the apostate ashes of professing Christianity.

One can almost trace this progression in “Larry King Live” interviews, some of which we have quoted in the past. King’s present wife is a Mormon. Probably because of the Mormon belief in eternal marriage, on Christmas night of 1998 King asked his guest, Billy Graham, whether there would be sex in heaven. The great evangelist said indeed there would be if that were important for our happiness.

In 1999, the Christmas Eve program was broadcast live from the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. Seated with King at a small table was Mormon President Gordon B. Hinckley, who, as King intended, came across as the leader of a mainline Christian denomination. Behind them was the famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir’s broad loft, gorgeously festooned in flowers, the massive organ towering above. Commercial breaks contained cuts of the choir singing Christmas songs with obvious sincerity.

King’s interview with Hinckley was interspersed with frequent live pick-ups of Nobel Peace Prize winner South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in front of the altar in the Episcopal National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. Appearing also was Robert Schuller, telecast from a field overlooking Bethlehem, Israel. To King’s delight, both men supported Hinckley and Mormonism as being soundly Christian, and all three expressed enthusiastic anticipation of an inevitable agreement among all religions.

For those readers who may not be aware or have forgotten, the Mormon “God” is a man with a physical body who was redeemed on another planet by another Jesus and achieved godhood. There are supposedly an infinite number of such gods ruling other planets, and every Mormon male aspires to become a god himself, which would add millions more. Central to Mormonism is the dogma, “As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become.” “God” is the literal father of every person on earth through one of his many wives. He had physical sex with Mary to bring forth the Mormon “Jesus,” who needed a physical body to become a god. His death for our sins made it possible for Mormons to earn their own salvation which is exaltation to godhood through good works, secret temple rituals, and further initiations after death. Thus exalted, each will make his own new earth and another Adam and Eve. Another Lucifer will cause another fall, and another Jesus will die on a cross to make possible exaltation for more gods.

**And many
false prophets
shall rise,
and shall
deceive many.**
Matthew 24:11

With that background, here are some excerpts from “Larry King Live,” Christmas Eve 1999, with my comments.

KING: Tell us, Reverend Schuller...where you are....

SCHULLER: Where I’m sitting right now is probably where the shepherds were when the angels appeared and proclaimed the purpose of the whole faith, and that is to bring peace on earth, good will to men...I’m very interested in...doing what I can to bring peace on earth....

[Schuller seems to be referring to the absence of war for which the secular world hopes. But such peace is not “the purpose of the whole faith.” Jesus provides “peace with God” (Rom. 5:1) “through the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20). Sadly, King and his vast audience were left without that truth.]

KING: And why are you here?

SCHULLER: I’ve had a wonderful few days,...several meetings—three in his home—with the leading Muslim thinker and leader in the world, the Grand Mufti of the great mosque in Damascus. [He] invited me....

KING: The idea of bringing religions together, right?

SCHULLER: Absolutely.

[Try to imagine Elijah or Christ or Paul “bringing religions together”!]

SCHULLER (continuing): I have seldom met with a man [with] whom I felt an immediate kinship of spirit and an agreement of faith and philosophy quite like I have with the Grand Mufti of the faith.

[*Agreement of faith...Grand Mufti of the faith?* Is Islam, then *the faith* “once (for all time) delivered to the saints” for which we are to earnestly contend (Jude 3)? Or has the world’s leading Muslim become the Grand Mufti of Christianity? Or are Islam and Christianity *the same faith*? Islam says Allah is not a father and has no son, denies that Jesus is God, denies His death, burial and resurrection for our sins, denies even that He died on the cross (another died in His place), claims He was taken to heaven without dying and must come back to die, etc. *The faith* taught in the Bible is vigorously opposed by Islam. Yet Schuller has said that if all of his descendants become Muslims, it wouldn’t bother him so long as they weren’t atheists!]

SCHULLER (continuing): I spent a great deal of time with the Chief Rabbi here in Israel...he wants to meet the Grand Mufti,...maybe I can get the two together....

KING: That'll be historic. Archbishop Tutu...[what is] the scene...in Washington?

TUTU: ...the National Cathedral of the Episcopal Church...is filling up for...the midnight Mass...to celebrate the coming of God into a world where God is saying, "I love you...I believe in you."
[God believes in mankind? Not according to the Bible—and why should He?]

KING: President Hinckley, do you think really, it's possible that Reverend Schuller's dream and what Archbishop Tutu just said can happen...all peoples, all religions...can come together?

HINCKLEY: I would hope so...things are better than they've ever been...there's a new...acceptance of other religions. We must recognize that all...are sons and daughters of God...brothers and sisters...all of one great family, the family of God.

[This is Mormonism: Before we came to earth to acquire bodies, we were all born to the same "Father God" by different goddess mothers, in a spirit world where Lucifer and Jesus were half-brothers to each other and to all of us.]

KING: Reverend Schuller...what gives you hope...?

SCHULLER: We're in a totally new era...television...the Internet...the age of being able to indoctrinate people is finished... [Schuller equates the gospel with "indoctrination," which he opposes. He has said, "That's what sets me apart from fundamentalists, who are trying to convert everybody to believe how they believe....We try to [avoid] offending those with different viewpoints...."]

KING: Bishop Tutu, would you agree?

TUTU: That's a very good assessment...just a week or so ago, there was a meeting of...the World Parliament of Religions in Capetown...all kinds of faiths represented...there is a greater measure of understanding...there are different ways of...discovering the transcendent, that God is a great deal larger than all of our faiths.

[This was a follow-up to the 1993 Parliament of World Religions held in Chicago with Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, snake worshippers, spiritists, animists, witches, shamans,

Protestants and Catholics honoring each others' religions. It was cosponsored by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago's Lutheran School of Theology, the Evangelical Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ, and with an official Vatican representative present.]

KING: President Hinckley...what gives you hope...?

HINCKLEY: We [Mormons] have come from [persecution] to respect all across...the world....

KING: Does Bethlehem, Robert Schuller, give you encouragement...?

But
Saul...con-
founded the
Jews...and
disputed
against the
Grecians...

Acts 9:22, 29

SCHULLER: Oh, absolutely...When the Chief Rabbi of Israel wants to meet with the top Christian and Muslim leaders...this is marvelous. When the Grand Mufti would invite me...to preach the sermon in his mosque on Holy Day...that he would sit and often hold my hand while I was talking, and here was the Roman Catholic patriarch, the patriarch of the Orthodox Church and the patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Protestant minister of the town—this is a remarkable thing that's happening. And...the Grand Mufti said...religion is like rain that falls...then the extremists...pollute the pure water....I'm very excited....I predict we're going to focus in the next millennium as religious leaders to clean up the pollution in religion....

[Obviously "extremist polluters" include Christians who stand firm for the gospel—and the cleanup will get rid of them and bring all religions together.]

TUTU: We have been given the opportunity of making a new beginning.

KING: Have you, Gordon Hinckley, forgiven those who, in the past, tormented your faith?

HINCKLEY: Yes, I think we have.

KING: Where do you get that from?

HINCKLEY: Well, it comes of the gospel. You put your faith in the Lord....

[No hint that the Mormon gospel is anti-Christian, that Joseph Smith was told by “God” and taught his followers that all Christian “creeds were an abomination in his sight”! King helped Hinckley to pawn off Mormonism as biblical Christianity, with Tutu’s and Schuller’s approval.]

KING: President Gordon B. Hinckley... [your] book *Standing for Something* [is] going to be released in March by Random House....What do you mean [by that title]?

HINCKLEY: This book [is] a plea to people...to be honest, to be upright, to be men and women...who have faith, who pray, who return to the virtues that made America great.... Most other problems will take care of themselves if that happens.

KING: You agree with that, Reverend Schuller?

SCHULLER: Oh, absolutely. I want to thank very much President Hinckley for pointing out that Christianity has been the greatest success possible...what we need to do is return to the faith, the values of this Christ who was born 2,000 years ago....

[Mormonism exemplifies successful Christianity—*the faith*?]

TUTU: Christianity has been responsible for some of the most horrendous atrocities that the world has seen, and we ought to be suitably modest and humble....I do believe...we need to stand up for what is good,...[but] not in an aggressive way...[as if] we are the ones who have got the truth....

KING: Yes...”I am the Way, and the Light, and the Truth—and you’re not.” We have to all get together....

[Atrocities have been committed by false “Christians,” not by true followers of Christ. As for having the truth, Jesus said, “If ye continue in my word...ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:31-32). King’s misquote of Christ and apparently faulting Him for being too dogmatic would be comical were it not so tragic.]

SCHULLER: ...we have lost humility...we religious leaders [must] begin to say, “I’m...not trying to convert other religious people to my viewpoint....”

[Schuller’s false humility apologizes for Christ being the only Savior. Didn’t Paul say, “I persuade men,” and aren’t we to “earnestly contend for the faith”? It’s the gospel by which alone men can be saved that we preach! (Rom. 1:16; Acts 4:12).]

KING: ...my little nine-month-old [son] Chance is here. What do you say for his future, Reverend Schuller?

SCHULLER: I think it's going to be beautiful because he's got a mother and a father that are going to communicate to him values of positive faith....

[A Mormon mother and atheist father are great because their false faith is "positive"?]

How can leaders who ought to know better blindly pervert "the gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1), promote the false hopes and lead astray the millions hanging on their very word? Do they fear the rejection of man more than they fear God? Where is the fear of God? God in heaven is being mocked!

Perversion of truth brings popularity. May God deliver us from desiring that and renew in us a holy reverence for Him and for His Word. The firm commitment to stand faithfully for His truth without compromise is for the eternal welfare of those we influence, and for God's eternal glory.

The World of the Occult and Its Infiltration into Modern Society

By Caroline Alexander

PART I

The occult, a strange, eerie, bizarre phenomenon, was once unknown to the average person, but is now becoming more commonplace in everyday society. Occultism used to be a “behind the scenes” operation until recently. Now it is infiltrating every aspect of modern society, even touching the very young with the Saturday morning cartoon line-up.

The occult is no respecter of persons, as it lures the rich and poor, the educated and the ignorant, the spiritually inclined as well as the theist or agnostic, and all those who fit into no category at all. Unexpectedly, the marginal or fringe-type personalities are the exception rather than the norm.

For some, the occult takes on a very serious nature; it becomes the only religion they practice. For others, it starts as an innocent curiosity, but often ends up leading to spiritual as well as other forms of destruction. Just what is this grotesque movement that lures and fascinates more and more people everyday? Let’s look at some definitions of the word “occult.”

- 1) Deals with things secret, hidden, or concealed; mysterious.
- 2) Deals with operations or events which seem to depend upon powers that go beyond the five senses.
- 3) Deals with the supernatural, the presence of angelic or demonic forces.
- 4) Esoteric: intended for or understood by only a chosen few; beyond the understanding or knowledge of most people.

More important, however, than a dictionary definition is how the Bible refers to the occult: the quest for forbidden knowledge. In other words, God strictly forbids a person to delve into the occult

realm in any degree. A strong warning is given in Deuteronomy 18:9-12 and Galatians 5:20-21 (as well as in many other references).

Unfortunately, the evils of Satanism have made their presence felt in very state in the country. Here are a few examples:

VERMONT—a 15-year-old girl dies after firing a bullet into her brain. She reportedly leaves a note confessing her devotion to Satan.

GEORGIA—a 15-year-old girl is strangled by three teenagers, allegedly as a sacrifice to Satan.

NEW JERSEY—a 14-year-old boy fatally stabs his mother, then kills himself. Police point to his fascination with Satan as the primary influence to kill.

NEW YORK—a 17-year-old boy is murdered by two teenagers. Later it's discovered that the two teens were involved in a Satanic cult.

MISSOURI—Three small-town kids confessed to beating a friend to death with baseball bats. The group's leader told police a "voice" commanded him to kill.

(Rick Lawrence. Evil and the Occult. Loveland, Colorado: Group Books, 1990.)

One of the most current expressions of occultism, especially among youth, is the movement known as "GOTH."

The word "Goth" is a shortened form of Gothic. It symbolizes death and darkness. Salient features usually include a corpse-like appearance which includes a whitened face, blood-red lips, black eyeliner, black clothes, and either red, purple or black hair. The vampire is the Goth mascot. The movement traces its beginning to England back in the 70's. It drew upon Gothic literature and tradition for inspiration. It is characterized by fantasy, other world views, an eerie atmosphere, a world separated from civilization, as well as the supernatural and the presence of evil. Dr. J. Gordon Melton cites Marilyn Manson and Anne Rice along with the Armageddon mind-set as contributing factors of the underground subculture. ("What is Goth?" tape; Phyllis Wallace, "Woman to Woman" radio program, Saint Louis, MO, 6/27/99)

The worship of Satan is as old as the Garden of Eden. When Eve chose to listen to Satan rather than to God, Satan was immediately enthroned. Humankind has been worshipping Satan in one form or another ever since.

Formal or organized Satan worship is most often traced back to the infamous Aleister Crowley (1875-1974). Crowley has been described as:

...an eccentric, a writer of books on magic who strove to assume the mantle of magician. Born of a father who preached the doctrine of the Plymouth Brethren, Crowley resisted faith in Christ and turned to Satan. He referred to himself as "The Beast," claimed the number 666 as his own, and lived by the motto, "Do What Thou Wilt." Crowley loathed Christianity to the point where he baptized a toad as Jesus Christ and solemnly crucified the toad. (Phil Phillips and Joan Robey. Halloween and Satanism. Lancaster, PA: Starburst Publishers, 1989)

The next individual to make his mark on society with regard to Satanism (and to do so openly) was Anton Szandor Lavey (1930-97). This self-styled high priest of San Francisco's First Church of Satan and author of The Satanic Bible, was quite a colorful figure.

(Lavey) dropped out of high school to join the circus when he was 16. After two years of feeding lions and playing the circus calliope, he became a magician's assistant in a carnival. Quitting that, he became a police photographer for three years and after that he played the organ in night clubs. All the while he was studying more about the occult, and eventually started classes in black ritual magic in his home. Finally, in April 1966, Lavey shaved his head, grew a Mephistophelian beard and announced the formation of his Church of Satan. (Wm. J. Petersen. Those Curious New Cults. New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, 1973)

There were and are others who are propagating the evils of occultism. Robert Moore, aka Robert deGrimston, along with his wife, Maryanne, founded the Process Church of the Final Judgement (Processians) in 1963. This vicious group with its headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is the group to which Charles Manson and his "Family" belonged. Then there's the Temple of Set in San Francisco founded by former US Army lieutenant colonel Michael Aquino. This organization began in 1975 as a break-off of Lavey's "church" over an authority dispute. This

group is based upon ancient Egyptian cults of evil. Not as well known, but not to be taken lightly, nevertheless, is the Worldwide Church of Satan Liberator with its headquarters in West Hartford, Connecticut. Its founder is Paul Valentine who sees his role as promoting Satan worship in order to annihilate Christianity.

Modern-day Satanists can be divided into seven identifiable basic subgroups.

CONVENTIONAL SATANISTS—might be called orthodox believers. They are secretive, dedicated, and structured. Much like the drug subculture, most covens network with each other. Complex hierarchies exist within groups, and often the satanic line dates back for generations in a family. Devotees closely follow rules and rituals. Although this group never goes public, it plants the seeds for and encourages all other more visible satanic groups. The core group avoids a name or label. These Satanists detest Christianity, and their ritual mocks it by perverting and debasing Christian doctrines and ceremonies.

CLANDESTINE SATANISTS—gather their beliefs from a variety of sources. Their eclectic precepts do not always simply pervert Christianity, and their beliefs are a convergence of a number of magico-religious beliefs. They believe in a series of reincarnations on earth, to allow them to fully satisfy their carnal instincts. Often cannibalistic, they believe that in eating the flesh or drinking the blood of a sacrifice, they receive from the victim an invisible force called manna. Some suppose they can gain immortality by eating the heart of the victim.

COMMUNITY SATANISTS—not underground. Society knows them best because they have public visibility. Although they do not give open endorsement to sacrifices, like conventional Satanists, their rituals reverse and pervert Christianity. Some of the major community Satanists in America include:

Church of All Worlds

Shrine of Sothis

Order of Thelema

Process Church

of the Final Judgement

The Four P Movement

Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO)

Temple of Truth

Nemeton

Order of the Circle

The Chingons

Brotherhood of the Ram

The Satan Senate

COVERT SATANISTS—fringe groups that use Satanism as a focal point for a variety of deviant behaviors. Satanism has a

more or less incidental role compared to their primary interest, such as pedophilia, sadomasochism, sex groups, or homosexuality. Their not very well defined beliefs regarding Satan vary from group to group.

CHARLATAN SATANISTS—primarily youth groups, which lack the sophistication of other elements in the satanic community. These “dabblers” tend to weave satanic overtones into their otherwise bizarre attitudes and actions. Despite their dabbler status, such groups are as dangerous to designated victims as orthodox Satanists. However, they seem to attract more public attention than the secretive orthodox Satanists.

Self-styled groups of charlatan Satanists often consist of young people looking for the optimum form of rebellion against society. They may first indicate an interest in the occult through a preoccupation with satanic heavy-metal music, fantasy role-playing games, and an interest in drugs and deviant subculture peer groups. More aggressive members become defiant about their beliefs, wearing clothes and jewelry with blatant death, anarchy, satanic, and self-destructive themes.

CLOSET SATANISTS—practice the art alone. They might not know of local groups or perhaps feel shy about group involvement. They often tailor their beliefs to their own needs and desires.

CRAZY SATANISTS—psychotic persons who have been attracted to the bizarre aspect of Satanism. Most are mentally deranged, though some are demon possessed. Often other groups exclude such individuals because they fear being exposed by or publicly linked to them.

(Nelson Price. New Age, the Occult, and Lion Country. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1989)

PART II

In Part II, we’ll focus on another aspect of the occult, witchcraft, which is spreading like a rapidly-growing cancer throughout American society. Like Satanism, it attracts all kinds of people, but unfortunately, its main target is the brightest among the younger set.

Basically, there are two types of witchcraft: black and white. Practitioners of black magic are more likely Satanists. They are

serious about what they are trying to accomplish and usually have the intention of harming someone or getting even. The other side of the coin is white magic. This mode is practiced by the adherents of Wicca or the "Old Religion."

Wicca – a contemporary Pagan religion with spiritual roots in the earliest expressions of reverence of nature. Some of its major identifying motifs are: reverence for the Goddess and the God; acceptance of reincarnation and magic; ritual observance of astronomical and agricultural phenomena; and the creation and use of spheroid temples for ritual purposes. (Scott Cunningham. The Truth About Witchcraft. Saint Paul, MN: Llewellyn New Times, 1988)

Practitioners of this form claim that its intentions are benevolent and unselfish. Most Wiccan practitioners adhere to the Wiccan rede: "An ye harm none, and do as ye wilt." ("An" is an archaic form of the word "if," not a variant of "and.")

In days past, it could literally be said that the practice of witchcraft was either black or white. However, with the infiltration of the New Age movement and "politically correct" mentality, the practice of witchcraft has broadened to include gray and green magic! Gray magic, so the practitioners insist, is neutral. One approaches a spell of ritual, hopes for the best, but is unsure of the outcome. The practitioners hopes for a change for the better, but knows the outcome will be nebulous. He/she doesn't have the control in this case as he/she would or thinks she has in a black or white spell.

With regard to Green magic, this practice primarily takes into account anything that would be beneficial to the environment. For some, it borders on Gaia hypothesis which sees the earth as a living being. Hence, the utmost respect must be accorded to the earth and all living beings which are a part of this mother figure. Goddess worship can also be strongly linked to this mindset. Green magic is especially popular among political activists who have a transformative vision encased in environmental awareness. Stemming from this philosophy is Green Witchcraft which relates to the Primal Father and Mother and the Earth Spirits called Fairies.

As more and more people are attracted to the occult, especially youth, let's look at some of the signs a concerned parent or other significant adult can look out for. (Please keep in mind that just because one or more of these factors may be present in a young person's life, it is not necessarily an indication that an adolescent is

into some form of the occult). However, it is wise for adults to be aware of what they should be looking for if they see a repetitive pattern of some of these indicators in the lives of their youngsters.

An excellent profile of a dabbler (early stage of interest) was compiled by the Milwaukee, Wisconsin Police Department. Twenty-two identifying factors are listed:

1. A preference for Punk or Heavy Metal music.
2. A compulsive interest in the occult:
 - a. Satanism and Witchcraft literature.
 - b. Notes and drawings depicting Satanism, torture and mutilation. School assignments dwelling on death, suicide and the occult.
 - c. Drawings of occult designs and symbols.
3. Chemical and alcohol abuse:
 - a. Marijuana, LSD and PCP (Angel Dust) being popular.
 - b. Alcohol consumed in large quantities.
4. A morbid interest in edged weapons, box openers, razors and knives.
5. Self-inflicted wounds and mutilation; usually the carving or cutting of occult symbols into their own flesh.
6. Compulsive note and letter writing to and from friends.
7. Violent and aggressive behavior, directed towards parents and siblings. Extremely violent in stress situations.
8. A reluctance to divulge information relating to devil worship, down-playing of their involvement.
9. Extremely low morality standards in regards to sex. Sex parties, prostitution and other sexual involvement including sadomasochism and necrophilia.
10. High truancy rate, repeated runaways.
11. Some have a history of sexual and physical abuse and neglect. A low self image dominates their personality.
12. Petty larceny and other forms of theft.
13. Radical hairstyles (Punk types) and clothing styles (studs and spikes on black leather).

14. Decline in scholastic achievement. Lower grades in those described as bright and previously good students.
15. They use aliases taken from the occult, Dungeons & Dragons and other non-Christian sources.
16. Definite aversion to anything Christian.
17. Speech using lots of slang and profanity.
18. A liking for blood.
19. Obnoxious anti-social behavior.
20. Bizarre cruelty:
 - a. Focus is on mutilation, knifings, tormenting and torture, especially against the elderly.
 - b. Animal mutilations.
21. Satanic altars built of flat boards and rocks, often have Satanic symbols drawn on them; usually founds in yards, abandoned houses, fields, desert areas, caves and under bridges.
22. Develop a compulsive interest in role-playing games.

The above profile was prepared by Officer James S. Skorcz of the Milwaukee Police Department.

The next major concern is how young people get involved in occult activity. Unfortunately, America's schools are fertile ground for recruiting innocent youth. Witchcraft, paganism and other forms of the occult are incorporated into classroom lessons. It is acceptable to celebrate Earth Day and Halloween, but if Christmas or Easter are alluded to (except in the secular aspects) the ACLU is ready to take the school district to court. So-called extra curricular activities not only include sports or a drama club, but the use of Ouija boards, Tarot cards, lessons in how to use herbs, and most common, fantasy role-playing games like Dungeons & Dragons.

Another common recruiting tool is the use of rock music, especially the genre known as Heavy Metal. The anapestic beat, used by primitive warriors to stir up the emotions just before going into battle, is the type of repetitive rhythm that is at the core of this type of "music." Psychologists claim that this type of noise and repetition was for the purpose of provoking anger to make the warriors more agitated and better fighters. Then there are the subliminal (just below the threshold of consciousness) messages that are

embedded by the constant exposure of the grotesque lyrics. For instance, examine these lyrics sung by the group known as the Dead Kennedys:

God told me to skin you alive,
I kill children and make their
mommas cry; Push them into my
car. I want to hear them scream.
Feed them poison candy and spoil
their Halloween.

(Other sinister groups include KISS, OZZY Osbourne, Venom, Slayer, AC/DC, Iron Maiden, Black Sabbath, and many more.) This is brainwashing of the colossal kind! This evil stored in the subconscious can emerge later in catastrophic ways.

A Rhode Island police officer suggests additional ways youth become involved in the occult: An unhealthy obsession with movies, books, and videos on Satanism and the black arts; involvement with Satanic rock concerts or drug parties; the promise of drugs and sex being a big incentive; some are born into Satanic cults (intra-family or generationals). (Compiled by Edmund F. Pierce. Warwick, Rhode Island Police Department).

Then there is also the Saturday morning line-up of cartoons with an occult theme as well as the more sophisticated prime time fare. Young people are snared twice by the popular Friday evening show, "Sabrina, The Teen-age Witch" in that this program now has an animated version on Saturday mornings. Following the cartoons are the more sophisticated programs like "Charmed" (its selling point being the three young and attractive actresses in the leading roles) and "Buffy, the Vampire Slayer" with its macabre characters and themes.

The movie industry certainly has not neglected to monopolize on the occult appeal. Some of the more popular films include, "The Blair Witch Project," "The Craft," "Practical Magic," "Witches of Eastwick," and the most popular among youth, "Sabrina, The Teen-age Witch."

Dr. Ted Baer, media mogul, film producer, writer and director appeared as a guest on the Lutheran Hour-sponsored radio program, "Woman To Woman." He believes the major attraction of the occult in the media is to capture an audience and make people want things they can't afford. He makes the point that film makers

don't necessarily believe that [the movies] will provide what a person wants, but will cause them to want to come see the film. ("Woman To Woman," hosted by Phyllis Wallace, 10/24/99).

Of course, there is the arcane "holiday" Halloween which still attracts myriads of children who "just want to have fun," but are totally unaware of the sinister origins of this pagan holiday. Just looking at one custom will expose Halloween's demonic roots. The carving of a Jack-O-Lantern, an activity joyfully anticipated by children world-wide, was an ancient Celtic custom. In the U.S. the pumpkin is the popular choice, but in Europe it was often a turnip, potato or even a skull with a glowing candle. This serves as two symbols:

1. The Lord of the Dead, a "god" just like Buddha—in short, an idol.
2. The fearsome face represented the god, Saman, who would drive off less powerful evil spirits abroad that night. The lights in the Jack-O-Lantern symbolize the "fairy fires" or "Will 'o the Wisps" which were the lost souls flitting through the night. They also hearken back to the huge Samhain "bale-fires" which were lit to help conjure back the god from the darkness.

(Taken from a pamphlet authored by William Schnoebelen, "Tis the Season to be Evil." Issaquah, WA: Saints Alive in Jesus, n.d.)

Needless to say, this is not an activity to be encouraged nor engaged in by Christians.

TO BE CONTINUED

The Devil in the Mirror and Other Christadelphian Theology

By Robert C. Hill, ThB

The Christadelphians ask: "Is there any religious body extant today which adheres to the true saving teachings of the Bible? They call themselves The Christadelphians." This same publication asks the reader to "seriously consider their credibility, their teachings.... Honestly examine the reasons for their inner conviction..." ("Introducing the Christadelphians," vol. 38, No. 4, July 1992, p. 2). Several of their main theological teachings will be examined as this challenge is accepted; but first, a brief historical sketch.

The Christadelphians (Brothers of Christ) have a history dating back to the middle of the nineteenth century when their founder, John Thomas (1805-1871), officially registered that name during the American Civil War. According to some members, "Bro. Thomas was an instrument in Yahweh's hands who uncovered the Truth and promulgated it everywhere" (J. B. S., "Speak Out the Truth," available from <http://www.antipas.org> accessed 1-16-2000). Other prominent figures in this sect's history were Robert Roberts and J. J. Andrew. These two men split the Christadelphians into two separate movements in the 1890s. The split has produced two named groups: the *Amended* and the *Unamended* both of which are operative today. The major issue for this schism came about over what is termed *resurrectional responsibility*. For the Amended, all who are responsible will be resurrected (both baptized and unbaptized who know the will of God). For the Unamended, only those in Christ will be resurrected, while those out of Christ will be annihilated [Cf., Rev. 20:11-15, which clearly indicates a resurrection of those not included in the book of life, contrary to these views.]

The doctrines they teach break down at some point to the Biblical truths ascertained through sound interpretative methods. This article will focus primarily on the Christadelphian teachings that reject the Holy Trinity, the sufficiency of Christ for salvation,

a personal devil, and the rejection of various intermediate and eschatological positions held by evangelicals.

HOW MANY GODS?

A list of all the doctrines to be rejected by Christadelphians is located in their document entitled *Statement of Faith*. The second entry on this list "That God is three persons" comes as no surprise (<http://www.christadelphia.net.au/Statement.html> accessed 1-15-2000). However, rejection of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, places faith, whether held by individuals or sects, outside historic Christianity and its rejection is deemed harshly though necessarily heretical. Many of the same arguments utilized for this dismissal exist in other aberrant teachings within such organizations as the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society, to name one. Nevertheless, the Christadelphians add their own unique twist, that is Jesus had no prior existence before His Incarnation.

In its strictest sense, the Christadelphians are unitarians. Taken from their *Statement of Faith* document:

That the only true God is He who was revealed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, by angelic visitation and vision, and to Moses at the flaming bush unconsumed and at Sinai, and Who manifested Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the supreme self-existent Deity, the ONE FATHER, dwelling in unapproachable light, yet everywhere present by His Spirit, which is a unity with His person in Heaven (Truth to be Received, 1, <http://www.widomaker.com/basf1.htm> accessed 1-16-2000).

Robert Roberts, in his lecture "God is One," emphasizes, "Christendom is astray in its conception of God... Knowledge of God is the basis of sonship to God. Without it, we cannot enter the divine family. How can we love and serve a being whom we do not know?" (*Christendom Astray from the Bible*, p. 1 <http://users.aol.com/bible2007/god.htm>). We can agree that we cannot love nor serve a God whom we know nothing about. The charge is that we do not know Him because of our Trinitarian belief. However, can God be correctly conceived as not triune based on Christadelphian teachings? Their arguments do not support their thesis and therefore their teaching must be rejected. Note the following evidence and interpretation.

Roberts insists that the early church fell into apostasy with its Trinitarian imposition on the faithful ("Truth to be Received"). He also writes:

Trinitarianism propounds, not a mystery, but a contradiction—a stultification—an impossibility.... It says there is one God, yet not one but three, and that the three are not three but one. It is a mere juggle of words, a bewilderment and confusion to the mind, all the more dangerous, because the theory for which it is an apology, employs in some measure the language of the Bible, which talks to us of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (*Christendom Astray from the Bible*).

He goes on to cite the Shema (Deut. 6:4) and several other passages, which address God as *One God* (Cf., 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:5).

God is one and Christians have always maintained this vital aspect of Biblical truth. Likewise, God is three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is not something based on Hellenistic thinking or on some misinformed council but the evidence for a triune God is heavily weighted in Scripture. Furthermore, Roberts cites there is no other God (Cf., Isa. 46:9; 45:5; 46:6, 8). Again there is agreement for Christians are monotheists; however, the question arises about the deity of Christ when Jesus is declared God in the New Testament. For example, taking two verses, John 1:1, “and the Word was God,” and John 20:28, “My Lord and my God” brought a dilemma for the early Christians as they began to formulate Biblical doctrine arising out of controversies. Either Christianity was polytheistic (more than one God), or somehow, Jesus Himself is God! In light of the Isaiah passages just cited, the conclusion weighs heavily in favor of Jesus being God the Son. When reading passages in the New Testament, there are three distinct persons: The Father (Cf., John 6:27; 1 Pet. 1:2), the Son (Cf., John 1:1), and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4), yet there is one God (Deut. 6:4). The Bible also reveals both oneness and threeness (Matt. 28:19, name is singular) with each person equally noted in the same passage (Cf., Matt. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14).

As for the charge that the Trinity contains a contradiction, “It says there is one God, yet not one but three, and the three are not three but one” (*op. cit.*) is a false conclusion on Robert’s part. Despite the fact that the correct expression is not one God and three Gods as Roberts asserts. Nevertheless, as Norman Geisler aptly states, “The philosophical law of non-contradiction informs us that something cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same sense... and the doctrine of the Trinity does not violate it.” He further demonstrates that the Trinity is not both one person and

three persons nor one nature and three natures at the same time and in the same sense. This would be contradictory. Geisler gives the correct understanding of this law when applied to the Trinity:

...to put it in terms of the law of non-contradiction, while God is one and many at the same time, He is not one and many in the *same sense*. He is one in the sense of His essence but many in the sense of His persons. So there is no violation of the law of non-contraction in the doctrine of the Trinity (Norman L. Geisler, *Trinity*, Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, p. 734).

Subsequent to the Christadelphian rejection of the Holy Trinity is their dismissal of the deity of Christ, as previously stated, but with a twist. Their teachings on this subject go beyond many other sects in that they assert Jesus did not pre-exist before His incarnation:

Although such a question, if asked of any other person, would be treated with the ridicule it deserves, it is seriously alleged of the Lord.... From his mother, he derived the nature common to all mankind, but from his Father he inherited latent spiritual proclivities that strengthened him to conquer the flesh, and manifest divine qualities.... Nowhere is it suggested that he existed before his birth (*Jesus Did Not Pre-Exist*, p. 2 available from <http://www.christadelphia.org>, accessed 1-16-2000).

Christadelphian literature on this subject goes to great measures in analyzing the Scriptures. However, their emphasis on the human nature of Jesus is such that the exclusion of His deity is the outcome of their doctrine. One example of this involves their interpretation of the genealogy of Christ as stated in Matthew and Luke where the emphasis is on Jesus being the *son of* numerous Old Testament people (Cf., Matt. 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38). According to the same article, "If Jesus lived in some form before Abraham and David, he was not their son, and the statement is false" (Roberts, *Ibid.*). Or, "If Christ pre-existed, how could he be described as the 'seed of the woman?'" (*Ibid.*). These examples and similar arguments are based on texts that support the humanity of Christ. However, in delineating the humanity of Christ one must not exclude those texts that support His deity.

What does Scripture contain concerning the pre-existence of Jesus? Jesus Himself states, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am" (John 8:58, NASB). This is a claim to eternality (Cf., Ex. 3:14). In fact, the very next verse records the Jews picking up stones to throw at Him because of this very claim (v. 59). Their understanding of Jesus' remark was that He blas-

phemed. Note John 3:13 as well, "And no one has ascended into heaven, who descended from heaven, *even* the Son of Man." More evidence of His pre-existence, "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was" (John 17:5). The support is in fact overwhelming for His pre-existence and eternity (also, Cf., John 1:1 {with God in the beginning}; John 1:3 and Col. 1:16 {involved in creation}; Micah 5:2 {goings from long ago}; etc.).

The Christadelphians must use an array of misdirection, Scripture twisting, and reading their own interpretation into the Biblical text in order to arrive at their conclusion that Jesus did not pre-exist. Let one more example suffice. In the creation passage (Cf., Col. 1:16) as previously stated, the Christadelphians remark:

...for it appears to teach that the Lord Jesus created even heaven. But a close examination of the passage will reveal that it teaches too much if this interpretation is pressed, for it claims that he created all things "in heaven." That would include God Himself, to say nothing of the angels!

This statement continues by explaining that the verse in question really means a heaven other than one above us is more about a realm, "The coming of the Lord Jesus will result in the formation of these political heavens. The rulers who will reign therein will be followers of the Lord Jesus...." Of course, this is quite an imposition on holy text. In fact, if they did not render this as the meaning, the reader would be hard pressed to derive it from the context. A closer reading of Colossians 1:16 demonstrates a creation in past time. Note the last clause, "all things have been created through Him and for Him." The English rendering of *have been created* is in Greek an aorist passive verb indicating that creation was done in the past by Him and in His creation He has preeminence. Furthermore, "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17). Certainly, this is not some future political heaven as the Christadelphians maintain.

A third denial involving the nature of God is a denial of the personhood of the Holy Spirit. One Christadelphian publication, *The Godhead Explained*, states it this way:

The Holy Spirit is the energy or power of God, by which all creation came originally into being, and by which it is sustained. Whilst God, Himself, is localized in heaven, His Spirit is dif-

fused throughout creation (Psalm 139:7-12). This God-derived energy is the substratum of all creation (Acts 17:25). In that connection, science today confirms Scripture by teaching that energy is the basis of all matter (Herald of the Coming Age, Vol. 35, Nr. 1, May 1989, p. 15).

This energy or power is given a pantheistic nuance, according to this statement, by underlying *all matter*. Furthermore, it should be noted that the Christadelphians believe in creation *ex deo* (out of God) with God at the center of creation. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is viewed as the emanating source from God. This source, according to the Christadelphians, is non-personal. They would deny the Biblical teaching concerning the deity of the Holy Spirit, that is, the Spirit having a distinctive subsistence within the one substance of the Godhead. All Scripture that demonstrates a unique person is passed off as personification. The Christadelphians claim this with the English renderings of *He* with reference to the Holy Spirit. However, there is ample proof the Holy Spirit is indeed the third person of the Holy Trinity (note that in "The Godhead Explained," the author erred in presenting the Holy Spirit as the *second person*, p. 16). There is also Scriptural support for the translation of *He*, especially when helper or comforter is used (Cf., John 14:26; 16:7 where the Greek word is masculine). The Holy Spirit was sent to convict us of sin, hardly a matter for an energy force (John 16:8). He also gives life (John 3:6) and intercedes on behalf of believers (Rom. 8:26); is called God (Acts 5:3-4), and so forth.

TO BE CONTINUED

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