

The Discerner

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

Volume 24, Number 1

January • February • March 2004

AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL HERESY-EXPOSING QUARTERLY

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Editorial Committee

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EDITORIAL

By William A. BeVier

This is the last issue of THE DISCERNER with me as editor. My Wife and I plan to move in May to Southwest Missouri to a retirement community (DV).

I have been editor since 1989 when Dr. John Dahlin left RAS. I have been a member of the RAS Board since 1979. My Wife and I have been volunteers in the RAS office for over ten years. RAS has been a part of our lives for the past twenty-five years and it is difficult to express what the ministry has meant to us.

It is a pleasure to present another article in THE DISCERNER by Dr. Roy E. Knuteson. He began writing for this publication in 1959, the year after he graduated from seminary. Dr. Dahlin first invited him to write for THE DISCERNER. The current one is the 30th article from this faithful contributor.

Our second article in this issue is by Michael J. Meiring. Bro. Meiring is a South African with whom I have been in contact by e-mail for some time. Because of an inquiry that came to him, he took the time and made the effort to research a rather new cultic group in this country led by Bernice R. Hicks. She has a local church group in Indiana, but because of

the Internet she has a wider range of contacts. In our day because of radio, television, e-mail, Internet, and the availability of the written page all sorts of ideas are being propagated. Just because ideas are heard, seen, or read doesn't mean they are true. God has given the human race His written revelation in the Bible and we need, should, and must evaluate all ideas and concepts by His written Word. As both of our writers have expressed, Roy Knutson and Michael Meiring, and RAS has advocated throughout it's ministry, we need a spirit of discernment to recognize truth from error.

A ministry that has existed in California for over two generations is the Fundamental Evangelistic Association. They have granted us permission to reprint an article by Matt Costella that appeared in the September-October 2003 issue of their publication, FOUNDATION. The article presents a series of terms with which all Christians today should be familiar.

Our fourth article is by a member of our Board, Laurence J. Sutherland. After serving for years in Germany as a missionary, he has returned to this country where he now heads up a mission named Emmanuel Ministries International. Several times a year he travels to Eastern Europe to minister in Bible schools and churches. His article reports what he has experienced in Eastern Europe in recent years.

THINGS TAUGHT BY DEMONS

By Roy E. Knuteson, Ph.D.

One of the easily recognized signs of the times and the end of this age is the tremendous increase of false prophets and teachers. Jesus predicted that “many will come in my name and deceive many” (Mark 13:5). Peter prophesied, “There will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies” (2 Peter 2:1). John declared, “Many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour” (1 John 2:18).

Never before in human history has there been so many false religions and cults as there are today. I have been researching and writing exposes for this publication for the past 45 years and in that time we have witnessed an astonishing increase in false cults worldwide. New ones are springing up almost weekly. Satanic and demonic activity will increase, not necessarily in the realm of demon possession as much as in the realm of demonic promulgation of false teaching.

Demons are apostate angels who defected with Satan in eternity past when the Devil rebelled against God (Ezekiel 28:11-16). There are, no doubt, billions of these evil spirit beings in the world today, which makes Satan seem almost omnipresent. However, Satan cannot be everywhere at once, but by means of his wicked associates, he affects every person on this planet through his false doctrinal system, which emphasizes human effort as opposed to the grace of God in salvation.

THE SOURCE

Paul draws back the curtain and takes us behind the scenes to the world of the demonic. He writes: “The Spirit clearly says that in the later times, some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (1 Timothy 4:1). Jesus confronted the religious leaders of His day and denounced their false works-system for salvation by declaring that their teachings were nothing but lies, inspired by Satan “the liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). They are following “the ways of this world, and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient” (Ephesians 2:2). From 1 Corinthians 10:20, it appears that the Apostle considered demons as personal powers ruling in paganism in his day, and through prophecy to our day as well.

We must remember that, in reality, our battle with these false cults and religions is “not against flesh and blood [the actual teachers themselves], but against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). We are engaged in a titanic struggle with the unseen world of fallen spirit-beings whenever we engage and refute false prophets and teachers. Victory

is, however, ensured. To believers, John wrote: “Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

THE LEADERS

Paul informs us “such teachings come through hypocritical liars” (1 Timothy 4:2). Demons do not work independent of people. Jesus’ many encounters with demon-possessed people illustrate this truth. John cautions us to be very alert and “not believe every spirit but to test the spirits to see whether they come from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Paul explains:

Such men are false prophets, deceitful workmen, masquerading as Apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

The Apostle Paul names two of his contemporaries, Hymenaeus and Alexander, as apostate leaders (1 Timothy 1:20). In his second letter to his protégé, Timothy, he adds the name of Philetus (2 Timothy 2:17-18) whose false teachings were like “gangrene” spreading throughout the area. Alexander is named again in this Second Epistle, and is said to have made “shipwreck” of the faith (2 Timothy 4:14).

Using these biblical examples, we ought never to hesitate to identify these false religions and name their founders and leaders. New and unlearned believers need to be warned of the dangers of these teachings. People everywhere need to know that Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism was a false prophet; that Charles Russell, the actual founder of the Jehovah’s Witnesses was an absolute heretic. The list goes on – there is Mary Baker Eddy of Christian Science fame and Ellen G. White, the founder of Seventh-day Adventism.

More recent false teachers with large followings include Robert Schuller, Jim Bakker, Rodney Howard-Browne, Sun Myung Moon, Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, Paul Crouch, Oral Roberts, Fred Price, Earl Paulk, and dozens more. Each of these have done, and are doing, great harm to the cause of Jesus Christ by their unscriptural practices and teachings. As we have noted before, they are actually the emissaries of Satan and his minions.

THE TEACHINGS

What are some of the things taught by demons that we must be alerted to? First and foremost is their heretical doctrine regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ. John tells us “every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God” (1 John 4:3). The key concern here is their refusal to recognize Jesus as fully divine – equal with God, the Father, and God the Holy Spirit. All of the cults of Christendom are guilty of this error, and are therefore unknowingly the voice for demons. They are merely the tools of

Satan and his angels.

In the context of Paul's declaration that false teachers are demonically inspired, (1 Timothy 4:1), he lists two additional doctrinal issues that illustrate this claim. The first is celibacy – "they forbid people to marry." One of the early cults of Christendom, called "Gnosticism," considered marriage and the begetting of children as evil because, they said, unclean souls are imprisoned in unclean bodies. Paul refutes this error in the Book of Colossians. This command to not marry certainly describes the monkish practices of many non-Christian religions of the world, and Roman Catholicism. Jesus refuted this idea in Matthew 19:11. This practice is an impeachment of God's institution of marriage – the basic unit of society.

Another doctrine of demons is vegetarianism – "they order them to abstain from certain foods," especially meat. This is a practice of Seventh-day Adventism, and other cults. Until a few years ago, Roman Catholics in the U.S. were ordered to refrain from eating meat on Friday. This kind of asceticism was prevalent in the First Century and continues today. Paul refutes this kind of teaching by declaring that "nothing is to be rejected," since it is "created by God" (1 Timothy 4:4). Colossians 2:20-23 also warns against this kind of thinking:

Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These things are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

What appears to be an outward manifestation of extra-ordinary piety has the wiles of the Devil all over it. Paul goes on to say that "if you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching you have followed" (1 Timothy 4:6). What an encouragement for writing this very article!

Paul's denunciation of early Jewish errors in the church included: the teachers of the law (1 Timothy 1:7); the deceivers of the circumcision (Titus 1:10); Jewish myths (Titus 1:14); endless genealogies (Titus 3:9); godless myths and old wives fables (1 Timothy 4:7). All of these strange mixtures may have found their origins in Eastern and Greek theosophy, but ultimately, according to the Word of God, Satan is the originator of these and all other errors.

In a broad sense, every religious group or individual that teaches "false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, is conceited and understands nothing" (1 Timothy 6:3). Apart from the practices and teachings of the occult, this kind

of a person does not realize that his teachings are actually generated by these “lying spirits.” They must be renounced and rejected, regardless of the moral uprightness or sincerity of the individuals involved. Second John 7-11 provides specific directions for personally dealing with these demon-inspired teachers of false doctrine:

Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teachings of Jesus Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching, has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

What is needed today are biblically literate Christians who will “test the spirits whether they are from God” (1 John 4:1), and are able to “distinguish between spirits” (1 Corinthians 12:10). If we are going to effectively combat the host of darkness, we must be able and willing to discern “the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood” (1 John 4:6). Then, and only then, will we recognize the “things taught by demons.”

All Scripture quotations are from The New International Version

CHRIST GOSPEL CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

EXACTLY WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE?

By Michael J. Meiring

On May 31st, 2003, I received a message from a distraught lady who was concerned for a friend who belonged to the “Christ Gospel Church Int.” I had never heard of this church before, and after enquiring with a few Christians who were familiar with it, I also became concerned that this church may be teaching heresy. Still, I needed to verify such claims, so I purchased numerous books from their headquarters in Jeffersonville, Indiana in the USA. Most (if not all) of their materials are written by the church’s founder, Rev. Bernice R. Hicks. Herewith were my findings:

THE CGC DOCTRINE OF GOD

1. The nature of God

The publication, *Confirming our Faith in God*, says that God’s Being is made up of a “body realm” (as well as spirit and soul realms). Hicks refers to “God’s body of Light and Glory,” and from Exodus 33:20-23 she implies that God (the Father) has physical “back parts” and a “face” (1978:23). Although she believes that God has a body, she never refers to it as a “body of flesh” as Mormons do. Instead, “God came into the world in a body of flesh in the person of Jesus Christ” (Ibid).

Hicks goes astray, however, when she interprets the likeness of God in man to mean that we bear the visible resemblance of God. According to her analogy, just as the being man consists of body, soul and spirit, so God has a body, soul and spirit (1978:21). As we study Hick’s teachings regarding the origin of the Son of God and Man, we will later understand why she insists that God the Father has a body.

2. Trinitarian Affirmations with Hints of Modalism

It seems that Christ Gospel Church (hereafter abbreviated CGC) holds to the biblical doctrine that God is a Trinity: One LORD who exists in three distinct Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – who are one in essence/nature.

“The one Godhead is a compound unity comprised of Father, Word, and Holy Ghost.... The word trinity is not found in the Bible, but the truth of this doctrine is evident. Scriptures supporting the truth of the trinity of God’s outflow to man are many... (*Confirming our Faith in God*, pp. 52, 55).

However, in her attempt to explain the Trinity, Hicks begins to run into modalism. Modalism is a heresy taught by the Oneness Pentecostals and Branhamites. It says that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not distinct

Persons, but modes or *manifestations*, of one Person, namely, Jesus Christ. Thus, modalism teaches that Jesus is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is why the Oneness Pentecostal cult baptizes in the Name of Jesus only. From their distortion of Matthew 28:19, they believe that the “name” (singular) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ.

CGC’s second article of faith reads: “The One And Only True God Reveals Himself In Three Manifestations: The Father, The Word (Son), and The Holy Ghost” (1999:3). This article hints of modalism since the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not mere manifestations of the one true God, but rather, exist as three distinct Persons. However, in her book, *Confirming our Faith in God*, Hicks does affirm, “the one God operates through three separate and distinct personalities” (1978:52). But she also says:

The one God makes Himself known to mankind through three streams of revelation. The outflow of the invisible Godhead is manifested as Father, Word (Son), and Holy Ghost. God is THREE, and all three are wonderfully manifested in the person of Jesus Christ (Ibid).

Again, this statement seems to express modalism as readers may be led to believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit appear as one Person, namely, Jesus Christ. She may be thinking here of Colossians 2:9 which says, “For in Him [Jesus] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (KJV). Later, however, Hicks does affirm the fact that Jesus is neither the Father nor the Spirit: “He, Jesus Christ, was neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost” (1978:56).

Conclusion

Is God (specifically the Father) corporeal/physical or incorporeal/immaterial? Mormons have argued that God the Father is an exalted man with a body of flesh and bones (Doctrines and Covenants 130:22). Evangelical Christians, on the other hand, have affirmed that God the Father does not have a body of flesh (Matt. 16:17, NASB), but is a spirit (Jn. 4:24). After reading CGC’s publications regarding the nature of God, I am left to believe that Hicks’ teaching on this matter is more in line with Mormonism than with Orthodox Christianity.

Hicks’ teaching on the Godhead makes for confusing reading. Although she affirms the Trinity, her theological dissertations runs into one aberrant teaching after the other, as we shall see in the doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ.

THE CGC DOCTRINE OF JESUS CHRIST

1. A Restoration of Nestorianism

Initially I was shocked to read Rev. Hicks’ teachings regarding the Person of Jesus Christ. I must admit I had a sickening feeling in my stomach when I saw a diagram of two human-like figures – one named “Jesus,” the other named “Christ” (1979:60)! But then I remembered, from my

study of the erroneous views regarding the person of Jesus Christ, a 5th century heresy known as Nestorianism. Nestorius was so concerned to defend the complete deity and humanity that he ended up separating Jesus' two natures, and in effect, spoke of Jesus as being two separate persons (although he would later deny this). But notice, from the following *Catholic Encyclopedia* snippet, how he separates the Word from Jesus:

The Incarnate God did not suffer nor die, but raised up from the dead him in whom He was incarnate. The Word and the Man are to be worshipped together; and he adds: *dia ton phorounta ton phoroumenon sebo* (Through Him that bears I worship Him Who is borne). If St. Paul speaks of the Lord of Glory being crucified, he means the man by "the Lord of Glory." There are two natures, he [Nestorius] says, and one person, but the two natures are regularly spoken of as though they were two persons, and the sayings of Scripture about Christ are to be appropriated some of the Man, some to the Word [<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10755a.htm>].

There are striking similarities between the teachings of Nestorius and Hicks. For example, in the above quotation Nestorius speaks of the "Lord of Glory" as being separate from Jesus. Likewise, Hicks says, "The Lord of Glory laid aside His exalted glory and retaining only His humility glory, accompanied the Son [i.e. Jesus] in His earthly journey (1979:14).

2. The Word (Christ) Eternal; the Son (Jesus) Created; Jesus Deified

Herewith is a brief point-by-point summary of Hicks' teaching on the Person of Jesus Christ:

- God exists as Father, Word (or the Christ) and Holy Ghost (1979:5).
- God, in his being consists of a plurality, a combination of a "male side and a female side." This God is able to procreate, and the Son was begotten as a spirit and soul being in the loins of God before God created anything (Ibid. p. 7).
- So, "whereas the Christ [or Word] had no beginning, the scriptures plainly declare the beginning of the Son in eternity past... [Ps. 2:7; Pro. 8:22-30; Acts 13:33; Col. 1:15-19]" (p. 6).
- "When God began His creative works, He worked through His only procreated Son to bring all other creation into visibility." (p. 11)
- "The eternal Word of God [i.e. the Christ] was present in eternity past to beget the Son and start Him riding the wheel of God's truth. The Christ went forth along with the begotten Son to lead Him into new realms of glory light and knowledge..." (p. 79).
- "When God sent His only begotten Son into the world to redeem mankind, He sent Him with Christ the Word and with the Lord of glory. [The Son] enjoyed a personal, holy union with His heavenly Father, the Lord of glory, and with Christ, the divine Word." (Pp. 14, 92)

- The human limitations attributed to the Son were removed when he rose from the dead and was “joined eternally to the divine names of *Lord* and *Christ*” (p. 92). “On resurrection morning, God the Father deified the man Jesus by giving Him an eternal union with the Lord and Christ [Acts 2:36]” (1978:100).

Conclusion

Hicks’ teachings regarding Jesus Christ are a restoration of Nestorianism, which is easily refuted by the Scriptures. Philippians 2:6-7 speaks of “Christ Jesus,” in His pre-existent state with God the Father, as “being in very nature God” who came to earth “taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.” Jesus Christ (the Word/the Son) is one person with two natures (divine and human) not two persons.

Moreover, there is no exegetical warrant for making a personal distinction between “the Word,” who existed with God the Father in the beginning (Jn. 1:1), and “the Son,” who, we also read, existed with God the Father in the beginning (Heb. 1:8, 10). In John 8 the Lord Jesus says that when He, the Son of Man, is *lifted up* on the cross, His disciples will realize that “*I am he*” (v. 28 KJV). Here, the Son is making a clear reference to Himself as being YHWH, the eternal God who had said through the prophet Isaiah, “Now will I be exalted; now will I be *lifted up*” (Isa. 33:10), and “from ancient days [i.e. eternity] *I am he*” (Isa. 43:13). In short, it is plain in the Scriptures that the Son never had a beginning; He is the great I AM (cf. Jn. 8:58).

The term “only begotten” (Gk. *monogenes*), when applied to Jesus Christ, does not mean “procreated,” but instead, “one of a kind, only, unique” (Martin 1997:167). The early Church Fathers taught that the Son was “begotten” in the sense that He was “eternally generated” from the Father (Jn. 1:18). Today, some theologians believe that Jesus became “begotten” at His miraculous conception (1 Jn. 4:9). None of these views, however, assume that “only begotten” means “first created” or “procreated.”

And finally, Jesus was not deified by God the Father at His resurrection. He entered into a state of exaltation. The Bible clearly teaches us that Jesus Christ, during His incarnation, was “God with us” (Matt. 1:23). And at His death, it was God [the Son] who died on the cross (Acts 20:28). It is interesting to note that Rev. Hicks is in good company with well-known prosperity teacher, Paul Crouch, who, when commenting on the resurrection of Christ during one of his broadcasts, said, “That’s when His [Jesus] divinity returned” (Hanegraaff 1195:175).

THE CGC DOCTRINE OF MAN

1. Nature and Origin of Man

Hicks teaches a pre-existence of humankind. Just as the spirit and soul of the Son of God was begotten “in the loins of God” (see above), so “man originated in God’s own creative Loins, where he began the existence of his

spiritual and celestial being as a spirit and soul” (2003:17). Based on Hebrews 7:9-10, where Levi “was yet in the loins of his father [Abraham],” Hicks reason:

Since it is possible for a human being to exist consciously within the spiritual loins of another, then certainly, it is possible for mankind to have existed consciously within the creative Loins of the infinite, eternal, invisible God. [2003-21]

The “stones of fire” in Ezekiel 28:14 are identified, by Hicks, as the spirit and souls of all men in Eternity-Past. And apparently, we were all tempted by the “anointed cherub” (Lucifer/Satan) in our pre-moral life. The decision we made then, has an influence on our present moral life on earth: “Scriptures clearly reveal that man did exist in Eternity-Past, that fallen Lucifer tempted him in his Seed form, and that man did make a choice for or against God when he was a Seed in God’s Loins” [2003-82].

Some of the seeds of humankind who chose to follow Lucifer in the pre-moral state will continue to choose for Lucifer in this present world, which will result in damnation. Others, however, may change their course of action and choose to follow Jesus in this world. Those seeds of humankind who chose to follow Jesus in Eternity-Past will continue to choose the truth in this present world (Ibid, pp. 112-4). “Because God willingly sacrificed His only Begotten Son... man can choose to follow Jesus in this life, and his wrong choices in Eternity-Past and in the Garden of Eden will be cancelled by Jesus Christ’s Blood [Ibid. p. 113].

2 Destination of Man

There are three heavens or “eternal abodes” awaiting believers in Christ. The mature believers will inherit the “New City/Jerusalem.” Believers who do not grow to full maturity will inherit the “New Earth.” And finally, believers who will be less mature than the previous class will inherit the “New Heavens.” Unbelievers will be cast into the eternal Lake of Fire (Ibid. pp. 151-4).

Conclusion

When studying CGC’s teachings concerning the origin and destiny of humankind, I identified many similarities to what the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints teaches about man. Mormons believe that every man and woman had a pre-moral existence in heaven, and that the pre-existent spirits of men were “begotten” by God the Father (who has a body of flesh and bones) and a Mother God (1992-11). Moreover, Mormonism also says that there are three heavens (Ibid. pp. 297-8).

The Bible does not teach a pre-moral existence of humanity. Adam became a living soul when he was created on the earth (Gen. 2:7). The psalmist says that his “inmost being” (spirit and soul) was formed in his mother’s womb (Psa. 139:13, 15). On the contrary, Jesus Christ, in His pre-incarnate state, pre-existed with God the Father in eternity past (Jn 1:1, 18). He is from “above”/heaven, whereas we are from “below”/the earth (Jn 8:23).

Regarding Ezekiel 28:14, Hicks has read something into the text that is simply not there. There is no exegetical warrant for saying that the “stones of fire” refer to the spirits of humans in eternity past. First, the context is dealing with a prophecy of the “king of Tyre” (v. 12). In this prophecy, the references to the Garden of Eden, the king’s perfection, fall and expulsion from paradise, should be referring to the fallen angel, Satan, because the king is identified as being the “guardian cherub” (v. 14). Whichever view is taken, it would seem that the “stones of fire” refer to the presence (or paradise) of God from which the king was expelled (v. 16). Second, we must note that this prophecy uses symbolic language and imagery, as does other apocalyptic books (e.g., Daniel and Revelation). And in Revelation 4:1ff, when John enters into the presence of God, he describes the Lord God as having the appearance of bright and fiery stones (jasper and sardius) which may represent His “holiness... and avenging judgments” (Wilson 1985:54). The “fiery stones,” then, could well be a reference to the holy presence of God in paradise from which, Satan, Adam, and all other fallen creatures were expelled.

Regarding Hebrews 7:9-10, again there is no exegetical warrant for saying that we originated in God’s “creative loins” in eternity past, or that we consciously exist in our parent’s loins. The writer to the Hebrews is simply showing how great a high priest Melchizedek was (v. 4) because of the fact that Abraham paid tithes to him before Levi, the ancestor of all the Jewish high priests, was ever born (v. 10). And in a sense, Levi himself was paying tithes *through* Abraham because he was a descendant of the latter (v. 9). I like the way that the *Today’s Living Bible* translates verse 10: “For although Levi wasn’t born yet, the seed [i.e., sperm] from which he came was in Abraham when Abraham paid the tithes to Melchizedek.”

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Christ Gospel Church’s official website admits that Hicks’ teachings are “unique,” especially since she has the gift of bringing out “hidden meanings of words in the Scripture” (www.christgospel.org). They may be “unique,” but are they biblical? As I’ve demonstrated in this article, I don’t believe they are. [In this article I have only dealt with the major theological teachings of the Christ Gospel Church. There have been reports of other strange teachings within the church. These are available from me on request: dim@kingsley.co.za]

The testimony of the concerned lady who contacted me about CGC reveals the many dangers of a church trusting solely on one individual’s “unique” interpretation of the Scriptures. One example would be “heavy shepherding” (i.e., authoritarian control of members). She wrote to me:

I started wondering if I would be able to feel comfortable in such a church, [where] the woman [sic] only wore dresses, no make-up or jewelry and had long hair. These were merely formalities.... He [CGC member] said that people who had left his church have often fallen into

deep addictions and/or depressions, started smoking, drinking, drugs, or even murder – because they knew so much and then fell so deep. [E-mail dated 31/05/2003]

I went through the articles I found on the Internet again – those written by Ronald Enroth on the characteristics of a spiritual abusive church. It just had CGC written all over – any person who knows a bit more about the church would immediately recognize the signs [E-mail dated 22/07/2003]

Another consequence of a church relying solely on the “unique” teachings of an individual pertains to discernment and accountability. If Hicks has the God-given gift of bringing out “hidden meanings of words in the Scriptures,” then who are we to question her teachings? And to whom is she accountable?

The Bible exhorts us to “test everything” because “many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 Thes. 5:21; 1 Jn. 4:1). Even the Bereans were commended for “examining the Scriptures” to see if the apostle Paul – yes, even the “great” apostle Paul – was teaching biblical truth (Acts 17:11). We urgently need this type of discernment in the Christian churches today.

C 2003 *Defending the Faith Ministries, SA*

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22 TERMS TO KNOW IN THE 21ST CENTURY

By Matt Costella

Words are ripe with meaning, even in the 21st century. Biblical fundamentalists need to know and understand certain terms in order to effectively contend for the Truth and battle against error.

Here are 22 terms you need to know!

Biblical Fundamentalism – A movement of men and women who, recognizing God’s Word as completely authoritative in every area of which it speaks, are dedicated to theological orthodoxy and an attitude of disdain for unbelief as well as theological, ecclesial or ministerial compromise. Such an attitude manifests itself by militant defense of the faith once delivered (as recorded in its completeness in God’s Word, the Bible) and subsequent separation from those who entertain unbelief or compromise. Biblical fundamentalism is always marked by 1) ecclesial separation from unbelievers or those who seek common ministerial cause with unbelievers or even brethren who propagate false doctrine and, 2) defense of absolute truth as revealed in God’s Word.

Religious Liberalism (Modernism) – A Religious movement that elevates human reason (as manifested in rationalism, science, humanism and empiricism) above revelation in an attempt to make the Christian faith compatible with modern culture. Religious liberalism originally stemmed from the theological and philosophical bases of the Age of Reason, or the Enlightenment Period. The two pillars on which religious liberalism rests are the higher criticism and the Darwinian theory of evolution. Religious liberalism, or modernism, denies the supernatural and emphasizes the supposed inherent goodness and progress of mankind.

New Evangelicalism – A theological position that attempts to bridge the gap between Biblical fundamentalism (or traditional evangelicalism) and religious liberalism and neo-orthodoxy in an effort to gain intellectual and cultural respectability. Harold Ockenga, who coined the term “New Evangelicalism” in 1948, said this new movement emphasizes infiltration rather than separation from error; the advancement of the social gospel and a willingness to re-examine certain Biblical teachings embraced by fundamentalists (such as, the nature of Scripture, the origin of man, the universality of the flood, etc.) The March 1956 issue of *Christian Life* elaborated upon the tenets of New Evangelicalism in the article “Is Evangelical Theology Changing?” The article noted the characteristics of the New Evangelicalism: 1) a friendly attitude toward science, 2) a willingness to re-examine beliefs concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, 3) a more tolerant attitude toward

varying views on eschatology, 4) a shift away from so-called extreme dispensationalism, 5) an increased emphasis on scholarship, 6) a more definite recognition of social responsibility, 7) a re-opening of the subject of Biblical inspiration and 8) a growing willingness to converse with liberal theologians. Today, New Evangelicalism is often manifested as a mood or attitude of disdain toward Biblical fundamentalism as well as a ministerial philosophy, which encourages ecumenical cooperation and emphasizes “love” at the expense of sound doctrine.

Neo-orthodoxy – A theological position that seeks to correct the excessive rationalism inherent in religious liberalism but which, in reality, reaches the same theological conclusions (i.e., no absolute, divine authority inherent in the Bible; man sits in judgment of God’s Word rather than God’s Word judging man). Neo-orthodoxy is theological existentialism, that is, the belief that spiritual answers to life’s questions lie in the areas of non-reason. The meaning to life, and the meaning of God’s Word, stems from personal experience. Neo-orthodoxy uses the same theological terms as orthodox Christianity, but such terms are void of orthodox content. Neo-orthodoxy has been described as “liberalism with a new dress and a somewhat softer voice.”

Postmodernism – The natural end of modernism (religious liberalism). Postmodernism is a recent philosophical and theological development that denies the reality of transcendent, objective truth by claiming that all notions of truth are socially constructed. Truth is not a transcendent reality but a social creation of human intellect and language. Therefore, all beliefs are equally true and valid, and any claim to absolute, objective truth is rejected since such a claim necessarily negates the “trueness” of any competing beliefs. As one writer stated, “Everything can mean anything, so everything means nothing.” Key tenets of postmodernism include moral, theological and linguistic relativism, religious pluralism and tolerance.

Religious Pluralism – A response to the religious diversity inherent in 21st century Western culture that entails a belief that one’s own beliefs about God are self-sufficient but not universally applicable. In other words, it is the belief that “God is greater than any one view of God.” Therefore, salvation, divine revelation, etc. are manifest and applicable to all people in diverse ways.

Inclusivism – A response to the religious diversity inherent in 21st century Western culture which entails a belief that, although one’s own doctrinal persuasions or beliefs about God are self-sufficient, all theological, denominational or religious beliefs are to be included under the same broad umbrella of spiritual or religious recognition. Agreement on doctrine is inconsequential for religious dialogue or endeavor.

Exclusivism – Also called “particularism”; a response to the religious diversity inherent in 21st century Western culture which entails a belief that truth is objective and exclusive to a particular claim. For example, the Biblical fundamentalist embraces exclusivism because he believes the Word of God is entirely true in all matters of which it speaks. Therefore, any other

truth claims that conflicts with the teaching of God's Word are, in fact, error (untruth).

Universalism – The heretical belief that all mankind will, ultimately, obtain final and complete salvation regardless of their acceptance or rejection of the Gospel. Universalism, therefore, is incompatible with evangelism, for the goal of evangelism is to present the Gospel to mankind in order to give men and women the opportunity to escape eternal punishment through faith alone in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Consequently, most deny the reality of a literal hell as it conflicts with a belief in universal redemption.

Dispensationalism – A system of theology characterized by 1) a literal (plain), historical-grammatical, consistent interpretation of Scripture which, thus understood, 2) recognizes a distinction between Israel and the Church in God's plan and 3) recognizes the reality that God purposes to glorify Himself in all His dealings with mankind, regardless of the age or dispensation in which man lives. In every dispensation, salvation is obtained by faith alone in God's revelation to man. The content of faith may vary from dispensation to dispensation depending on God's revelation to man at that point in time concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ, yet faith is always the means of salvation.

Charismatic Movement – An interdenominational and ecumenical movement of individuals and ministries dedicated to propagating the heresy that God manifests Himself and speaks to mankind today apart from His Word – specifically through visions, tongues (unintelligible gibberish), physical healings, dreams and prophecies. Because those who embrace Charismatic teachings and practices are prominent in all professing Christian denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church, the basis of Charismatic unity lies in 1) the experiences of individuals rather than Bible doctrine and 2) a belief that God still manifests Himself today to mankind through the aforementioned means. The Charismatic Movement is currently a major impetus to the worldwide ecumenical movement, including unity with the Roman Catholic Church.

Pragmatism – Within the context of Christian ministry, pragmatism entails the implementation of any practice or program into ministry that appears to produce the desired results, regardless of whether or not such practices or programs coincide with Biblical principles of ministry. Pragmatism embraces the philosophy that “the end justifies the means.” Therefore, those who espouse a pragmatic philosophy of ministry use methods and programs such as cooperative evangelism, worldly gimmicks, rock or “contemporary Christian” music and the like in their churches and ministries because such practices and programs appear to draw larger crowds to church, win people to Christ, etc.

Ecumenical Movement – A movement of men, churches, parachurch organizations and church councils that strives to unite all churches that claim to be “Christian,” whether Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal or Evangelical. While the ecumenical movement originally

sought to unite only professing Christian churches, today a strong emphasis is placed upon the unification of all religions – Christian and non-Christian. Initially, the ecumenical movement intended to forge a visible organizational or institutional unity of all churches. However, the emphasis of the ecumenical movement is now upon a “unity by consensus” or “unity in diversity” model, that is, a unity in which those of all religious persuasions are now urged to retain their own religious or denominational identities while uniting around a common cause or belief. In the United States, key proponents of the ecumenical movement include the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the Charismatic Movement and evangelical movements such as the Promise Keepers Movement, Evangelicals and Catholics Together and any other individuals, churches or parachurch organizations that seek to minimize Biblical doctrine (truth) in an effort to find common cause with those who preach a false gospel.

Ecumenical Evangelism (Cooperative Evangelism) – A pragmatic evangelistic philosophy that promotes the unification of all professing believers in ministerial and evangelistic endeavors, regardless of theological persuasion or doctrinal belief (even pertaining to the doctrine of salvation), in order to reach unbelievers for Christ. Those who embrace ecumenical evangelism reject the Scriptural injunction to separate from those who preach a false Gospel and who embrace false doctrine. Therefore, ecumenical evangelism entails unity with liberals, Roman Catholics, Charismatics and any who claim to “call Jesus Lord.” Leading evangelical proponents of ecumenical evangelism include Billy Graham, Franklin Graham and Luis Palau.

Accommodation (Theological Compromise) – The act of forfeiting doctrinal truth and unity in doctrine for the sake of a “higher” cause or purpose. Accommodation (theological compromise) is a hallmark of the New Evangelicalism. When a believer joins in ministry endeavor with an unbeliever or even another believer who stands in violation of obedience to God’s Word, he is guilty of accommodation.

Church Growth Movement – A movement of men and ministries dedicated to using secular marketing strategies and corporate business models to “market” the church to believers and unbelievers alike in an effort to grow churches. Prominent leaders of the church growth, or “megachurch,” movement include Rick Warren of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, and Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. Church growth proponents encourage pastors to survey the needs and desires of unbelievers in their local community and to model their churches according to the perceived needs and desires of the unchurched rather than according to the dictates of God’s Word, which provides a model for ministry consistent with the true needs of mankind.

Tolerance – Originally a term used to describe one’s right to possess or enunciate his own beliefs and opinions; the general acknowledgement and allowance of various beliefs or opinions within a community (social, religious, etc.). Today, however, the term denotes a *required acceptance and approval* of all belief systems rather than merely an *acknowledgment* of one’s right to

possess or enunciate one's own beliefs. As a result, the current insistence on tolerance within the religious community means truth is relative and, thus, non-existent since truth claims among religions and even Christian denominations conflict with one another.

Humanism (Secular Humanism) – A non-theistic religion that embraces a naturalistic worldview and emphasizes the importance and potential of the human individual. Secular humanists rely on human reason, experience and observation in order to formulate ethical and moral beliefs and to create meaning in life. They reject the notion of a God, Creator or Divine Being as having any part in the affairs of mankind or the creation of the world. Thus, they despise any religion that claims to possess objective, absolute truth. The goal of secular humanism entails a global agenda – the formation of a one-world economic, political and religious system founded upon the religious and philosophical principles of atheistic secular humanism.

Cultural Mandate (Cultural Commission) – The erroneous belief (distantly related to the social gospel) that God has commanded believers not only to evangelize unbelievers and disciple believers (the Great Commission – Matt. 29:19-20) but also to redeem society and culture by either building a new culture or renewing the present culture. Evangelicals of the Reformed or Reconstructionist persuasion usually embraces the Cultural Mandate. Prominent proponents of the Cultural Mandate include Charles Colson and D. James Kennedy (Protestants) and Peter Kreeft (Roman Catholic). According to those who embrace the belief of Cultural Mandate, the Cultural Commission is inseparable from the Great Commission.

Interfaith Relations – The attempt to forge a spirit of unity with those of non-Christian religious thought through dialogue and eventual consensus on certain issues. Today, those professing Christians involved in dialogue with pagan religions for the purpose of fostering interfaith relationships are expected to recognize a degree of truth in the pagan religion and to find common ground, despite the fact that such religions are totally opposed to the Truth as revealed in the Word of God and the Person of Jesus Christ.

Biblical Separation (Ecclesiastical Separation) – The Biblical doctrine rooted in the holiness (“set-apartness”) of God and His call for His children to be holy as well. Biblical separation entails refusal to be associated or identified with unbelief, false doctrine, compromise or worldliness in any aspect of life or ministry.

Militancy – A mental attitude of disdain for any teaching or unbelief that conflicts with God's Word, especially if such teaching or belief is disguised as Biblical “Christianity.” In this sense, militancy does not entail personal violence or animosity, physical force or mean-spiritedness. Militancy entails a lack of tolerance for false teaching and a love for that which honors and glorifies God. Therefore, a militant defender of the Truth will refuse to entertain any form of doctrinal deviation or compromise in church or ministry endeavor.

TEACHING ABOUT SATANISM/ OCCULTISM IN EASTERN EUROPE

By Laurence J. Sutherland

At first they couldn't believe it! That Satanism and occultism were already so rooted in their cultures! I refer to my students in several schools in Eastern Europe where I have been teaching on False Cults for nearly 10 years. My students in Riga, Latvia; Bucharest and Sibiu, Romania; and Zaporozhye, Ukraine simply did not comprehend the fact that these so-called Western aberrations had so quickly infiltrated into their Eastern European societies. They had already known about such groups as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Theosophy (founded by Madame Blavatsky in Ukraine in the 1800's), and the New Apostolic Church (a German cult). Also they had witnessed an array of cults such as the Mormons, Eastern Religions, and Scientology coming in like a flood from the West following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. But the presence and activity of adherents of Satanism and occultism seemed to be totally strange and overwhelming to them when I first began to teach there in 1994.

The quickest way to jolt someone into believing something is to demonstrate the face of its existence. After defining what Satanism and occultism are (For the purposes of this article I group these terms together. There are, however, fine differences), I show them Satanic/occultic symbols and ask them if they have seen such symbols in their villages and cities. It doesn't take long for them to realize that Satanism and occultism are present, alive, and active in their societies. The following are some of the symbols that verify Satanic/occultic presence:



Anarchy symbol – usually represents lawlessness, often used by heavy metal musicians. It can also represent animal or human sacrifices.



Pentagram – most popular symbol used by Satanists, is employed in both white and black magic. If upside down, it represents a goat's head, which, in turn represents Satan.



Upside Down Cross – this symbol mocks the cross of Christ, and is found at ritual sites where sacrifices have been made.

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AC/DC

OZZY – refers to Ozzy Osbourne, who was the former heavy metal music advocate and lead singer in “Black Sabbath.”

AC/DC – supposedly stands for Anti-Christ/Devil’s Children with lightning belt symbol.

For a very comprehensive documentation on these and similar symbols please consult Exposing and Confronting Satan & Associates, Wendell Amstutz and Steve Lansing, National Community Resource Center, Rochester, MN, 1996.

In exposing Satanists and occultists I also give a brief historical account of demonic activity, zeroing in on the modern scene, i.e., 1800s to the present. Three advocates, all with European roots, dominate during this era. I deliberately refer to their European backgrounds because there is the prevalent notion that all of this modern Satanic activity stems somehow from the United States.

- 1. Aleister Crowley** – is considered to be the “Father of Modern Day Satanism.” He was born in Warwickshire, England in 1875. Although his father was a Plymouth Brethren preacher, Crowley took an early bent to sexual perversion and heroin addiction and was dubbed “the wickedest man on earth.” He authored an enormous amount of literature on the theory and practices of Satanism. He spent much of his later life in an insane asylum and died as a “babbling idiot” in 1947.
- 2. Anton La Vey** – was born in the USA in 1930 but had strong ancestral ties to Russia, Alsace-Lorraine (French), and Romania. (In fact, when I was teaching in Sibiu, Romania, a young man told me that he knew of the La Vey family that lived somewhere in north-western Romania). La Vey had a brilliant background as an animal trainer, musician (2nd oboist in the San Francisco Ballet Symphony Orchestra), and the official advisor in the Hollywood production: “Rosemary’s Baby” in 1967. He reportedly pursued contacts with Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield, both of whom experienced untimely and strange deaths. Le Vey established the Church of Satan on his birthday, April 30, 1966, and wrote the Satanic Bible. La Vey died on October 31 (Halloween), 1997.
- 3. Gerald Gardner** — born in England in 1884, popularized occultism and witchcraft with his “Witchcraft Today.” He acknowledged his indebtedness to Anne Besant’s daughter, who strongly promoted Theosophy in England. He died in 1964.

The teaching on Satanism/occultism becomes very practical when we describe those who are prone to accept such beliefs. We study how adherents are made; how they look; how they relate to friends, family and society

in general; their commitments to the coven and to Satan himself; and finally their practices. The limits of this article do not permit me to elucidate on all of these aspects, but I do want to mention some of their salient practices that are very current in Satanism worldwide.

Satanists/occultists observe special days such as birthdays of adherents, Friday the 13ths, April 30, full moon nights, days with successive numbers such as 3/3/03, Spring and Fall equinoxes, and numerous others (*ibid.* pp. 29, 30 for a complete list).

Initiation takes place through rites such as intimate contact with coven members of the opposite sex, sex with animals and corpses, blood-sealed contracts, recitation of the Lord's Prayer backwards (considered the highest form of blasphemy), denunciation of the cross of Christ, and personal dedication to Satan. Of course, these things are hard for teacher and students alike to stomach. One translator refused to translate some of my material because she thought it was too graphic and morally reprehensible.

Animals and even humans are sacrificed at certain feasts and celebrations. This is where the local police can enter the picture to arrest Satanists. A case in point happened recently in Riga, Latvia. The assistant director of the school, Vitally Schlembo, took me one day to the new residential site for the Riga International Bible Institute in the northwestern section of Riga. The property appeared quite rundown and the main building, although large and imposing, needs extensive renovation. Mr. Schlembo showed me graphic evidence that Satanists had used this property for their purposes over the years, in fact, even during the rule of Communism. The graffiti-like Satanic/occultic symbols were everywhere on wallboards, doors, posts, etc. He explained to me that dogs and cats had been recently killed decapitated, and skinned and thrown onto the autos of people helping to clean up the place. They called the police about the matter, and it remains to be seen if the perpetrators will be caught and prosecuted. The school authorities have claimed and dedicated the building for God's purposes, but they believe that the Satanists will not easily surrender their erstwhile stamping grounds. Schlembo reports: "We understand that there is a strong spiritual force against us."

In my teaching I also try to show the direct connection of Satanism/occultism with drug addition and music forms. It is a known fact that many Satanists/occultists use drugs. Perhaps it is less known that they are also caught up with and are strongly influenced by hard rock, heavy metal, and rap musical forms. Noteworthy here is the fact that the Beatles dedicated one of their albums to Aleister Crowley, mentioned above as the "Father of Modern Satanism." But numerous musical groups (*et. al.*, Alice Cooper, Judas Priest, Venom, Merciful Fate) use texts glorifying Satan and Lucifer, witches, violence, sex, and perversion (*Ibid.*, Appendix C). These groups exert, according to experts on youth behavior, oftentimes more power over youthful minds than even sports and TV.

The presence and increasing prevalence of Satanism/occultism in their

manifold forms challenge earnest Christian workers in all of Eastern Europe. We are not dealing with a harmless Halloween party with fanciful witches and goblins. Rather this is real spiritual warfare. As the Apostle Paul indicates: **“The weapons that we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4).**

Students have asked me how I can continue to teach on Satanism/occultism: “Doesn’t it wear and tear you down?” Of course, this subject matter is not easy to talk about, but Christians should/must join the battle against these demonic forces wherever they raise their heads. By God’s grace and with the prayers of God’s people I am willing to confront the Enemy of our souls. God’s Word continues to strengthen me, especially **1 John 4:4: “You dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” Amen!**

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