

The Discerner

the voice of... Religion Analysis Service

A QUARTERLY EXPOSING
UNBIBLICAL TEACHING & MOVEMENTS

Volume 28, Number 1

January • February • March 2008

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Hare Krishna

Freemasons

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*"Hereby know we the spirit of truth
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MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS: STEVE DEVORE AND RICK DACK

Steve Devore is the co-author of *Blood, Medicine, and the Jehovah's Witnesses* (1995) and Co-director of Christian Apologetics Ministries. Steve has a Bachelor's Degree in Missions from Crown College, is married and lives with his family in Chaska, Minnesota. He works as a systems analyst.

Rick Dack is founder and director of A.D. Communications. He has a Bachelor of Science in History from Northwestern College. Rick serves on the boards of *The Institute for Biblical Archaeology* and *Christian Apologetics Ministries* and is a member of *The Near East Archaeological Society*. Rick is single and lives in Hopkins, Minnesota

Dave Beebe has left our RAS Board. We are thankful for his time on the board and his help with our website.

Editor's Note: We (The Sutherlands) are celebrating our 50th (Jubilee) year of missions/ministry. We praise God for His faithfulness and strength as we have served in the USA, Germany, Latvia, Romania, and Ukraine.

DEAR READER

It is an acknowledged axiom that water does not rise above its source. This is true of cultic movements as well. The deviant character traits in their founders are often manifest in their adherents as well. Just a few examples will substantiate that fact:

1. The founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses was Charles Russell. Russell was a prolific writer (He supposedly wrote more books and articles than Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli altogether) and often preached five or six times a day under difficult circumstances. But his "character witness" demonstrated great weaknesses. Under legal constraints he admitted that he defrauded people with his "wonder wheat", that he was not ordained and that he did not know the Greek language. Furthermore, he committed adultery. Russell's successor, Judge Rutherford, proved to be a false prophet when he avowed that Jehovah would establish his kingdom on earth in 1925. He even had a palatial house called Beth-Sarim built in California to accommodate Abraham and the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets. But Jehovah did not appear - and the paradox of it all - Judge Rutherford himself took up residence at Beth-Sarim. Other JW leaders have made erroneous prophecies as well. So much so, that JW's have become known as a "non-prophet" organization.

2. Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, had a troubled relationship with the churches of his day (early 1800's). Mystical appearances from God, Jesus, and John the Baptist brought him to the conclusion that the existent churches were abominable. A new church should be established upon the basis of some golden plates with cryptic writing that he unearthed (guided by an angel!) at Cumorah Hill in the state of New York. But the plates had to be translated. No problem! It happened with a seer stone in a hat and the translation was supposedly verified by Smith's own relatives. A Columbia University professor examined the golden plates and denied that they were written in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics and dismissed the letters as "hen-scratchings". And the story goes on with webs of further deception, polygamy, blood vengeance

and violence, and finally the death of Joseph Smith by the hand of legal authorities in Carthage, Illinois in 1844.

Some cults seem to thrive despite their pernicious teachings and practices. This does not mean that God is blessing them. It is also a truism that if we work hard at anything long enough that we might experience some success. God allows sin to ripen (see Genesis 15:16). God will judge evildoers: “You may be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). “Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows” (Galatians 6:7). The parable of the weeds and the wheat (Matthew 13) told by our Lord Jesus Himself, reminds us that there is often a lengthy period of time between sowing and reaping. But judgment is coming, and it will be harsh for all deceivers and “blind leaders of the blind”.

WITH THIS ISSUE

Winfrey Oprah has become one of the most influential and wealthy women in the world. Her ascendance to stardom from a very humble background is a remarkable story of grit and achievement. Very few people have done more to eradicate aids, particularly in Africa. Her daily TV programs are watched by millions. However, her foray into religion has produced enormous and disquieting ripples among evangelicals and even mainstream Christian churches. The course that she is teaching definitely has syncretistic overtones. What does Buddhism/New Age have to offer us that the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ don't? The article by Warren Smith exposes this mixture of ideology and religions. Smith's own experience is a linchpin in the refutation of Oprah's teaching.

This issue also includes two examinations of the world of Islam. The first is from a secular source - indeed, from the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom! This commission has no particular ax to grind. It lays out candidly the present status of religion in Saudi Arabia, the historical fountainhead of Islam and Wahabism (affiliated with Osama Bin Laden). The report is disturbing to say the least. The second analysis of Islam is an excellent contrast between Islamic and Christian worldviews. Michael Craven's cogent comparison can help us as we relate to some six to 10 million Moslems in America today.

Finally, Dr. Roy Knuteson's contribution deals with the biblical phrase "a different Spirit". What does this expression suggest? What are its implications? Again, Dr. Knuteson, one of our frequent contributors, demonstrates his exegetical skill but also his awareness of aberrant teaching today.

The Quiz caps off this ample diet in this issue. Can we immediately pinpoint the source of the literature we receive per post, per e-mail or per conversation? It behooves us to know the key authors and their doctrines and their publishing houses/locations if we are to successfully confront false teaching.

Laurence J. Sutherland

“OPRAH AND FRIENDS” TO TEACH COURSE ON NEW AGE CHRIST

By Warren Smith

Oprah Winfrey will be letting out all the stops on her XM Satellite Radio program this coming year. Beginning January 1, 2008, “Oprah & Friends” will offer a year-long course on the New Age teachings of *A Course in Miracles*.¹ A lesson a day throughout the year will completely cover the 365 lessons from the *Course in Miracles* “Workbook.”

For example, Lesson #29 asks you to go through your day affirming that **“God is in everything I see.”**² Lesson #61 tells each person to repeat the affirmation **“I am the light of the world.”**³ Lesson #70 teaches the student to say and believe **“My salvation comes from me.”**⁴

By the end of the year, “Oprah & Friends” listeners will have completed all of the lessons laid out in the *Course in Miracles* Workbook. Those who finish the Course will have a wholly redefined spiritual mindset—a New Age worldview that includes the belief that there is no sin, no evil, no devil, and that God is “in” everyone and everything. *A Course in Miracles* teaches its students to *rethink* everything they believe about God and life. The *Course* Workbook bluntly states: **“This is a course in mind training”**⁵ and is dedicated to **“thought reversal.”**⁶

Teaching *A Course in Miracles* will be Oprah’s longtime friend and special XM Satellite Radio reporter Marianne Williamson—who also happens to be one of today’s premier New Age leaders. She and *Conversations with God* author Neale Donald Walsch co-founded the American Renaissance Alliance in 1997, that later became the Global Renaissance Alliance of New Age leaders, that changed its name again in 2005 to the Peace Alliance. This Peace Alliance seeks to usher in an era of global peace founded on the principles of a New Age/New Spirituality that they are now referring to as a “civil rights movement for the soul.”⁷ They all agree that the principles of this New Age/New Spirituality are clearly articulated in *A Course in Miracles*—which is fast becoming the New Age Bible. So what is *A Course in Miracles* and what does it teach?

A Course in Miracles is allegedly “new revelation” from “Jesus” to help humanity work through these troubled times. This “Jesus”-who bears no doctrinal resemblance to the Bible’s Jesus Christ-began delivering his channeled teachings in 1965 to a Columbia University Professor of Medical Psychology by the name of Helen Schucman.

One day Schucman heard an “inner voice” stating, “This is a course in miracles. Please take notes.”⁸ For seven years she diligently took spiritual dictation from this inner voice that described himself as “Jesus.” *A Course in Miracles* was quietly published in 1975 by the Foundation for Inner Peace. For many years “the Course” was an underground cult classic for New Age seekers who studied “the Course” individually, with friends, or in small study groups.

As a former New Age follower and devoted student of *A Course in Miracles*, I eventually discovered that the *Course in Miracles* was-in reality-the truth of the Bible turned upside down. Not having a true understanding of the Bible at the time of my involvement, I was led to believe that *A Course in Miracles* was “a gift from God” to help everyone understand the “real” meaning of the Bible and to help bring peace to the world. Little did I know that the New Age “Christ” and the New Age teachings of *A Course in Miracles* were everything the real Jesus Christ warned us to watch out for. In Matthew 24 Jesus warned about false teachers, false teachings and the false “Christs” who would pretend to be He.

When I left the New Age “Christ” to follow the Bible’s Jesus Christ, I had come to understand that the “Jesus” of *A Course in Miracles* was a false “Christ,” and that his *Course in Miracles* was dangerously deceptive. Here are some quotes from the “Jesus” of *A Course in Miracles*:

- “There is **no sin**. . .”⁹ [See note]
- A “slain Christ has **no meaning**.”¹⁰
- “The journey to the cross should be the last ‘**useless** journey.’”¹¹
- “Do not make the pathetic error of ‘clinging to the old rugged cross.’”¹²
- “The Name of Jesus Christ as such is but a symbol... It is a symbol that is safely used as a replacement for the many names of **all the gods to which you pray**.”¹³

- “**God is in everything** I see.”¹⁴
- “The recognition of **God is** the recognition of **yourself**.”¹⁵
- “The oneness of the Creator and the creation is your wholeness, your sanity and your limitless power.”¹⁶
- “The Atonement is the final lesson he [man] need learn, for it teaches him that, never having sinned, he has no need of salvation.”¹⁷

Most Christians recognize that these teachings are the **opposite of what the Bible teaches**. In the Bible, Jesus Christ’s atoning death on the cross of Calvary was hardly a “useless journey.” His triumph on the cross provides salvation to all those who confess their sin, accept Him and follow Him as their Lord and Saviour. His victory on the cross rings throughout the New Testament. It has been gloriously sung about in beloved hymns through the ages and is at the heart of our Christian testimony.

I found the Jesus of the Bible to be wholly believable as He taught God’s truth and warned about the spiritual deception that would come in His name. The “Jesus” of *A Course in Miracles* reveals himself to be an **imposter** when he blasphemes the true Jesus Christ by saying that a “slain Christ has no meaning” and that we are all “God” and that we are all “Christ.” It was by reading the Bible’s true teachings of Jesus Christ that I came to understand how deceived I had been by *A Course in Miracles* and my other New Age teachings.

I was introduced to *A Course in Miracles* by Dr. Gerald Jampolsky’s book *Love is Letting Go of Fear*. Jampolsky declared in his easy-to-read book how the teachings of *A Course in Miracles* had changed his life. As an ambassador for *A Course in Miracles* over the years, Jampolsky has been featured not only in New Age circles but at least twice on Robert Schuller’s Hour of Power. While Schuller introduced Jampolsky and his “fabulous”¹⁸ *Course in Miracles*-based books to his worldwide television audience, it was Marianne Williamson’s appearance on a 1992 Oprah Winfrey Show that really shook the rafters.

On that program, Oprah enthusiastically endorsed Williamson’s book, *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles*. Oprah told her television audience that Williamson’s book about *A Course in Miracles* was one of her favorite books, and that she had already bought

a thousand copies and would be handing them out to everyone in her studio audience. Oprah's endorsement skyrocketed Williamson's book about *A Course in Miracles* to the top of the New York Times bestseller list. Ironically, all of this was happening after I had left the Course and the New Age. In fact, I was doing the final editing on my book *The Light That Was Dark* that warned about the dangers of the New Age-and in particular *A Course in Miracles*.

After being introduced to the world on Oprah, Marianne Williamson has continued to grow in popularity and, as previously mentioned, has become one of today's foremost New Age leaders. Williamson credits Winfrey for bringing her book about *A Course in Miracles* before the world: "For that, my deepest thanks to Oprah Winfrey. Her enthusiasm and generosity have given the book, and me, an audience we would never otherwise have had."¹⁹ In her 2004 book, *The Gift of Change*, Williamson wrote:

"Twenty years ago, I saw the guidance of the Course as key to changing one's personal life; today, I see its guidance as key to changing the world. More than anything else, I see how deeply the two are connected."²⁰

Thus the New Age teachings of *A Course in Miracles* are about to be taught by Marianne Williamson to millions of listeners on Oprah's XM Satellite Radio program. Listeners are encouraged to buy *A Course in Miracles* for the year-long course. An audio version of *A Course in Miracles* recited by Richard (John Boy Walton) Thomas is also available on compact disc.

Popular author Wayne Dyer told his PBS television audience that the "brilliant writing" of *A Course in Miracles* would produce more peace in the world.²¹ Williamson's New Age colleague, Neale Donald Walsch, said his "God" stated that "**the era of the Single Saviour is over**"²² and that he ("God") was responsible for authoring the teachings of *A Course in Miracles*.²³

Meanwhile, Gerald Jampolsky's Course in Miracles-based book, *Forgiveness*, continues to be sold in Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral bookstore as Schuller prepares to host a January 17-19, 2008, "Rethink Conference" at his Crystal Cathedral.²⁴

At this critical time in the history of the world, the New

Gospel/New Spirituality is coming right at the world and the church with its New Age teachings and its New Age Peace Plan. But this New Age Peace Plan has at its deceptive core the bottom-line teaching from *A Course in Miracles* that “we are all one” because God is “in” everyone and everything. But the Bible is clear that we are not God (Ezekiel 28:2; Hosea 11:9). And per Galatians 3:26-28, our only oneness is in Jesus Christ-not in ourselves as “God” and “Christ.” What Oprah and Marianne Williamson and the world will learn one day is that humanity’s only real and lasting peace is with the true Jesus Christ who is described and quoted in the Holy Bible (Romans 5:1).

Oprah Winfrey’s misplaced faith in Marianne Williamson and the New Age teachings of *A Course in Miracles* is a sure sign of the times. But an even surer sign of the times is that most Christians are not taking heed to what is happening in the world and in the church. We are not contending for the faith as the Bible admonishes us to do (Jude 3).

It is time for all of our Purpose-Driven and Emerging church pastors to address the real issue of the day. **Our true Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is being reinvented, redefined, and blasphemed right in front of our eyes and hardly anyone seems to notice or care.** If we want the world to know who Jesus Christ is, we need to also warn them about who He is not. There is a false New Age “Christ” making huge inroads into the world and into the church. The Apostle Paul said that “it is a shame” we have to even talk about these things, but talk about them we must (Ephesians 5:12-16).

If people want to follow Oprah Winfrey and the New Age “Christ” of *A Course in Miracles* they certainly have that right. But let them be warned that the New Age “Christ” they are following is not the same Jesus Christ who is so clearly and authoritatively presented in the pages of the Bible.

Note from Andy and Berit: Many of you are here because of a letter that is circulating on the Internet with a link to this article. We thank you for coming to our website and hope it will encourage you. But we also want you to know that we didn’t write the letter.

For more information on this topic, we recommend that you also read:

Deceived by a counterfeit “Jesus” -- The Twisted Truths of *The Shack* & *A Course in Miracles* The Armor of God & The Nature and Tactics of Satan

Warren Smith is a former New Age follower who at one time was deeply involved in the New Age teachings of *A Course in Miracles*. He is the author of these insightful books:

Deceived on Purpose:

<http://www.bookmasters.com/marktplc/01743purpose.htm>

The Light that was Dark:

<http://www.atlasbooks.com/marktplc/01743light.htm>

Reinventing Jesus Christ (2nd edition which is posted online):
43light.htm

Reinventing Jesus Christ (2nd edition which is posted online):
<http://www.reinventingjesuschrist.com>

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Endnotes:

- ¹ <http://marianne.com/books/index/htm>
- ² *A Course in Miracles: Combined Volume* (Glen Ellen, California: Foundation for Inner Peace, 1975), (Workbook), p. 45.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 119.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, (Text), p. 16.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, (Preface), p. ix.
- ⁷ Neale Donald Walsch, *Tomorrow's God: Our Greatest Spiritual Challenge* (New York: Atria Books, Simon & Schuster, 2004), pp. 262-263.
- ⁸ Robert Skutch, *Journey Without Distance: The Story behind "A Course in Miracles"* (Berkeley, California: Celestial Arts, 1984), p. 54.
- ⁹ *A Course in Miracles: Combined Volume*, (Workbook), p. 183.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, (Text), p. 425.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, (Teachers Manual), p. 58.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, (Workbook), p. 45.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, (Text), p. 147.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 237.
- ¹⁸ http://www.hourofpower.org/interviews/interviews_detail.cfm?ArticleID=3079
- ¹⁹ Marianne Williamson, *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles A Course in Miracles* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996), p. ix.
- ²⁰ Marianne Williamson, *The Gift Of Change: Spiritual Guidance for a Radically New Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004), p. 5.

- ²¹ Wayne Dyer, "There's a Spiritual Solution to Every Problem," Public Broadcasting System broadcast in 2001.
- ²² Neale Donald Walsch, *The New Revelations: A Conversation with God* (New York: Atria Books, 2002), p. 157.
- ²³ Neale Donald Walsch, *Conversations with God: an uncommon dialogue, Book 1* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1996), p. 90.
- ²⁴ <http://www.rethinkconference.com> (See also WorldNetDaily.com 10/30/07 "What is Robert Schuller 'rethinking'?" by Joseph Farah and "Rethinking Robert Schuller" by Warren Smith. See also Herescope: "Rethinking Culture" and "Rethinking and Reinventing" (10/30/07))

SAUDI ARABIA

*From the
2006 Annual Report of the United States Commission on
International Religious Freedom*

The government of Saudi Arabia engages in systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief. Despite the State Department's contention in its 2005 *International Religious Freedom Report* that there were, in fact, slight improvements in Saudi government efforts to foster religious tolerance in Saudi society, the report again concluded that freedom of religion "does not exist" in Saudi Arabia. Since its inception, the Commission has recommended that Saudi Arabia be designated a "country of particular concern," or CPC. In September 2004, the State Department for the first time followed the Commission's recommendation and designated Saudi Arabia a CPC. In September 2005, Secretary of State Rice approved a temporary 180-day waiver of further action, as a consequence of CPC designation, to allow for continued diplomatic discussions with the Saudi government and "to further the purposes of the International Religious Freedom Act." The waiver expired in late March 2006.

The repressive Saudi government continues to engage in an array of severe violations of human rights as part of its repression of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief. Abuses include: torture and cruel and degrading treatment or punishment imposed by judicial and administrative authorities; prolonged detention without charges and often incommunicado; and blatant denials of the right to liberty and security of the person, including coercive measures aimed at women and the broad jurisdiction of the *mutawaa* (religious police), whose powers are vaguely defined and exercised in ways that violate the religious freedom of others.

The government of Saudi Arabia continues to enforce vigorously its ban on all forms of public religious expression other than the government's interpretation and enforcement of the Hanbali school of Sunni Islam. This policy violates the rights of the large communities of non-Muslims and Muslims from a variety of doctrinal schools of Islam who reside in Saudi Arabia, including Shi'as, who make up 8-10 percent of the pop-

ulation. The government tightly controls even the restricted religious activity it permits—through limits on the building of mosques, the appointment of imams, the regulation of sermons and public celebrations, and the content of religious education in public schools—and suppresses the religious views of Saudi and non-Saudi Muslims who do not conform to official positions.

Members of the Shi'a and other non-Sunni communities, as well as non-conforming Sunnis, are subject to government restrictions on public religious practices and official discrimination in numerous areas, particularly in government employment. In past years, prominent Shi'a clerics and religious scholars were arrested and detained without charge for their religious views; some were reportedly beaten or otherwise ill-treated. Reports indicate that some of these Shi'a clerics have been released, but the current status of a number of others remains unknown. Between 2002-2004, several imams, both Sunni and Shi'a, who spoke out in opposition to government policies or against the official government interpretation of Islam, were harassed, arrested, and detained. On a positive note, in February 2006, thousands of members of the Shi'a community in Qatif, in the Eastern Province, made their largest public appearance in observance of Ashura without government interference.

Spurious charges of “sorcery” and “witchcraft” continue to be used by the Saudi authorities against non-conforming Muslims. Several individuals remain in prison on these charges. In 2000, in the Najran region, after the *mutawaa* raided an Ismaili mosque for practicing “sorcery,” approximately 100 Ismailis, including clerics, were arrested. Many were released after serving reduced sentences, but dozens remain in prison and reports indicate that some are occasionally subject to flogging. Members of the Sufi community continue to be harassed, arrested, and detained because of their non-conforming religious views; some are held for hours but others are detained for days. In September 2003, the *mutawaa* arrested 16 foreign workers for allegedly practicing Sufism; their status remains unknown. In June 2005, Saudi authorities shut down a weekly gathering held by a Sufi leader who adheres to the Shafi'i school of Islamic jurisprudence.

Criminal charges of apostasy, blasphemy, and criticizing the nature of the regime are used by the Saudi government to sup-

press discussion and debate and silence dissidents. Promoters of political and human rights reforms, as well as those seeking to debate the appropriate role of religion in relation to the state, its laws, and society, are typically the target of such charges. For example, in April 2006, a Saudi journalist was arrested and detained by Saudi authorities for almost two weeks for “denigrating Islamic beliefs” and criticizing the Saudi government’s strict interpretations of Islam. In November 2005, a Saudi high school teacher, accused for discussing topics such as the Bible, Judaism, and the causes of terrorism, was tried on charges of blasphemy and insulting Islam and sentenced to three years in prison and 750 lashes. Although he was pardoned by King Abdullah in December 2005, he nevertheless lost his job and suffered other repercussions. In a positive development, in August 2005, King Abdullah pardoned three human rights reformers who had been imprisoned since March 2004 on charges of “sowing dissent and disobeying the ruler.”

Restrictions on public religious practice, for both Saudis and non-Saudis, are enforced in large part by the *mutawaa*, official enforcers of religious behavior that fall under the direction of the Ministry of Interior. The *mutawaa* conduct raids on worship services, including in private homes. They have also harassed, detained, whipped, beaten, and otherwise meted out extrajudicial punishments to individuals deemed to have strayed from “appropriate” dress and/or behavior, including any outward displays of religiosity, such as wearing Muslim religious symbols not sanctioned by the government. In November 2004, a press report identified a former member of the *mutawaa* as the leader of an attack on the U.S. consulate in Jeddah that resulted in the deaths of five people. In recent years, the Saudi government has stated publicly that it has fired and/or disciplined members of the *mutawaa* for abuses of power, although reports of abuse persist. Equally troubling, many of the human rights abuses committed by the *mutawaa* are within the scope of their authority.

Although the government has publicly taken the position—reiterated again in early 2006—that it permits non-Muslims to worship in private, the guidelines as to what constitutes “private” worship are vague. Surveillance by the *mutawaa* and Saudi security services of private non-Muslim religious activity continues unabated. Many persons worshipping privately con-

tinue to be harassed, arrested, imprisoned, tortured, deported, and generally forced to go to great lengths to conceal religious activity from the authorities. Even diplomatic personnel from Western countries report difficulties in their religious practices. Foreign guest workers without diplomatic standing, and with little or no access to private religious services conducted at diplomatic facilities, face even greater difficulties. Moreover, the Saudi government does not allow clergy to enter the country for the purpose of performing private religious services for foreigners legally residing in Saudi Arabia.

There is a continuing pattern of punishment and abuse of non-Muslim foreigners for private religious practice in Saudi Arabia. In September 2004, seven Filipino Christian leaders were arrested and detained when the *mutawaa* raided a religious service. All were released within one month, but the *mutawaa* reportedly pressured their employers to deport them, resulting in six deportations by late 2005. In March 2005, a Hindu temple constructed near Riyadh was destroyed by the *mutawaa*, and three guest workers worshiping at the site were subsequently deported. Also in March 2005, the *mutawaa* arrested an Indian Christian and confiscated religious materials in his possession; he was released in July 2005 after four months of detention. In April 2005, the *mutawaa* raided a Filipino Christian private service in Riyadh and confiscated religious materials such as Bibles and Christian symbols. Also in April 2005, at least 40 Pakistani, three Ethiopian, and two Eritrean Christians were arrested in Riyadh during a raid on separate private religious services. All of the Pakistani Christians were released within days and all five of the African Christians were released after a month in detention. In May 2005, at least eight Indian Protestant leaders were arrested, interrogated, and subsequently released for reportedly being on a list, obtained by the *mutawaa*, of Christian leaders in the country. Throughout the spring of 2005, dozens of Christian guest workers were detained, some for several days and others for several months, for holding religious worship services in private homes. Several of those who were released have been deported and others fear criminal charges and possible deportation. In April 2006, an Indian Catholic priest, who was visiting Saudi Arabia, was deported after being detained for four days in Riyadh for conducting a private religious service.

The government's monopoly on the interpretation of Islam and other violations of freedom of religion adversely affect the

human rights of women in Saudi Arabia, including freedom of speech, movement, association, and religion, freedom from coercion, access to education, and full equality before the law. For example, women must adhere to a strict dress code when appearing in public and can only be admitted to a hospital for medical treatment with the consent of a male relative. Women need to receive written permission from a male relative to travel inside or outside the country and are not permitted to drive motor vehicles. Religiously based directives limit women's right to choose employment by prohibiting them from studying for certain professions such as engineering, journalism, and architecture. In addition, the Saudi justice system does not grant women the same legal status as men.

In March 2006, the Saudi Embassy in Washington published a report summarizing efforts by the Saudi government to revise the state curriculum and a number of school textbooks to exclude language promoting religious intolerance. Nevertheless, non-governmental organizations from outside Saudi Arabia continue to report the presence of highly intolerant and discriminatory language, particularly against Jews, Christians, and Shi'a Muslims, in these educational materials. Moreover, in the past year, there were frequent reports of virulently anti-Semitic and anti-Christian sentiments expressed in the official media and in sermons delivered by clerics who are under the authority of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. In some cases, the State Department reported, clerics prayed for the death of Jews and Christians.

In March 2004, the Saudi government approved the formation of a National Human Rights Association, the country's first purportedly independent human rights body, comprised of 40 members and chaired by a member of the Consultative Council, a 150 member advisory body appointed by then-Saudi King Fahd. In September 2005, the Council of Ministers, chaired by King Abdullah, approved the establishment of a government-appointed, 25 member Human Rights Commission. The following month, King Abdullah appointed, with the rank of minister, Turki bin Khaled al-Sudairi, a former state minister and Cabinet member, as chairman of the Commission. The Human Rights Commission is mandated to "protect human rights and create awareness about them ... in keeping with the provisions of Islamic law." It is not yet possible to determine if either human rights body will prove to be a positive mechanism for addressing human rights concerns in Saudi Arabia.

Throughout the past year, senior Saudi government officials, including the Crown Prince and the Grand Mufti, made statements with the reported aim of improving the climate of tolerance toward other religions; both also continued publicly to call for moderation. In a public interview in October 2005, King Abdullah reiterated that non-Muslims are free to practice their faith privately but that public worship by non-Muslims is not permitted. He also said that to allow any non-Muslim places of worship to be built in Saudi Arabia “would be like asking the Vatican to build a mosque inside of it.”

In addition to the Saudi government’s violations of religious freedom within its own borders, evidence has mounted that funding originating in Saudi Arabia has been used to finance globally religious schools and other activities that support religious intolerance, and, in some cases, violence toward non-Muslims and disfavored Muslims. The Saudi government itself has been implicated in promoting and exporting views associated with certain Islamic militant and extremist organizations in several parts of the world, and a number of reports have identified members of extremist and militant groups that have been trained as clerics in Saudi Arabia. These reports point to a role for the Saudi government in propagating worldwide an ideology that is incompatible with universal norms of the right to freedom of religion or belief.

The Saudi government funds mosques, university chairs, Islamic study centers, and religious schools known as madrasas all over the world. During Afghanistan’s war against the former Soviet Union, Saudi-funded madrassas were established in Pakistan that were concerned less with scholarship than implementing an extremist agenda glorifying violence. These madrassas provided ideological training for some of those who went to fight in Kashmir, Chechnya, and Afghanistan—and some of these schools still do. The peaceful propagation of religious beliefs, including Islam, is a human right. However, there is legitimate concern when a government may be propagating an ideology that promotes hatred and violence against both Muslims and non-Muslims.

The form of Islam allegedly preached by some Saudi clerics and the violence incited and perpetrated by certain radicals continues to warrant further investigation by the U.S. government. The Commission has urged the U.S. government to address publicly concerns arising from the propagation of reli-

religious hatred and intolerance from Saudi Arabia. The Commission has published reports and held public hearings over the past several years regarding this issue, and issued a number of recommendations for U.S. policy. The Commission welcomed the public statements made in the past year by the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, John V. Hanford III, and the State Department Deputy Spokesman Adam Ereli, raising concerns about the role of the Saudi government in the promotion of religious intolerance and extremism.

In 2004, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) was asked by the Government Affairs Committees of the House and Senate to undertake a comprehensive review of U.S. oversight of Saudi support for an ideology promoting violence and religious intolerance globally. The study was inspired by the Commission's 2003 recommendation that Congress initiate a review of Saudi Arabia's global exportation of religious hatred and intolerance. The unclassified portion of the report was released in September 2005; the classified portion of the report is available but has not been officially released. The public GAO report concludes that while Saudi Arabia claims to have made reforms, and in some case has done so, "U.S. agencies do not know the extent of the Saudi government's efforts to limit the activities of Saudi sources that have allegedly propagated Islamic extremism outside of Saudi Arabia." Moreover, the report states that, "as of July 2005, agency officials did not know if the government of Saudi Arabia had taken steps to ensure that Saudi-funded curricula or religious activities in other countries do not propagate extremism." It should be noted that the GAO's public report also states that very few U.S. government agencies actually responded to the GAO's inquiries, and none of the U.S. government's intelligence agencies are cited in the report. Thus, the study should be seen as a first step in a continuing investigation.

Throughout the past year, the Commission has spoken out numerous times about religious freedom concerns in Saudi Arabia. After the State Department failed to act for several months in accordance with the requirements of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA) in response to the designation of Saudi Arabia as a CPC, the Commission released a statement in April 2005 expressing concern about this inaction. In May 2005, a Commission oped was

published in the *Dallas Morning News* on this and other concerns about Saudi Arabia.

In September 2005, one year after the designation of Saudi Arabia, Secretary Rice approved a temporary 180-day waiver of further action, as a consequence of CPC designation, to allow for continued diplomatic discussions with the Saudi government and “to further the purposes of the International Religious Freedom Act.” Later that month, the Commission stated publicly that the U.S. government should use the 180-day extension directly to engage the Saudi government to achieve demonstrable progress by the end of that period of time. The waiver expired in late March 2006. As of the time this report went to print, no action with regard to Saudi Arabia had been announced by the U.S. government. Given the extent of religious freedom violations in Saudi Arabia, the Commission urged Secretary Rice in its May 2006 letter to consult with Congress and other parts of the U.S. government, including the Commission, during its discussions with the Saudis, and to make any agreement reached with the Saudi government public in the interest of the accountability that results from transparency. Since religious freedom conditions in Saudi Arabia have not substantially improved in the last year, the Commission also told Secretary Rice that the U.S. government must not hesitate in taking aggressive action as suggested below which meets the requirements of IRFA to demonstrate that it will not disregard the persistent and egregious religious freedom violations committed by the Saudi government.

Throughout 2005, the Commission continued to meet with representatives of a variety of human rights and other non-governmental organizations, academics, and other experts on Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the Commission influenced a number of legislative initiatives, including the Saudi Arabia Accountability Act of 2005, which is still pending and which contains Commission recommendations with regard to prohibitions on the issuance of any specific licenses and not granting any other specific authority for the export to Saudi Arabia of any item on the U.S. Commerce Control List of dual-use items.

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CHRISTIANITY & ISLAM: TWO WORLDVIEWS AND WHY THEY MATTER

By Michael Craven

Recently, the *Arab League* reported that “nearly one-third of Arabs are illiterate, including half of Arab women.” The report also points out that “it’s not just the older generation: Three quarters of the 100 million illiterate people in 21 Arab countries are between the ages of 15 and 45.”

By contrast, 99 percent of Americans 15 years and older are literate, according to the latest government figures. Western nations have for centuries had the most literate populations and literacy rates in the US have been among the highest in the world going back as far as the 1600s when it was estimated that “the literacy rate for men in Massachusetts and Connecticut was somewhere between 89 and 95 percent...” And for “women in those colonies it is estimated to have run as high as 62 percent in the years 1681 – 1697.” (Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 1985)

Where Christianity spreads, literacy inevitably follows. A Ugandan university study published in 2007 reveals that while “Arab Muslims were the first to introduce written information (texts) in Uganda, they did not make any effort to teach reading and writing... Literacy in the Roman alphabet was introduced into Uganda by Christian missionaries in the late 19th century.” The report goes on to add that within contemporary Ugandan culture, “Christianity provides the impetus for local literacy practices...”

Another study by the *Organization of the Islamic Conference* on the status of scientific research in its 57 member states reveals a similar shortcoming in the area of scientific accomplishment.

Of the more than 11.5 million scientific papers published worldwide each year; Muslim countries contribute just 2.5 percent. There are more than 1.5 billion Muslims living across the Islamic world — about a quarter of the world’s population — and yet they have generated barely more than one percent of

the world's scientific literature and produced only two scientific Nobel Prize winners.

The Islamic approach to healthcare is still largely based on the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. These sayings, in which Muhammad gave his opinions on medical practices, formed the basis for a distinctive and inadequate medical system from the ninth century onward.

There are simply no scientific innovations emerging out of the Islamic world: no space program, no hi-tech developments, no medical breakthroughs—nothing! Islam cannot provide an adequate basis for science because Islam does not embrace the notion that the universe runs along fundamental principles or laws laid down at creation. Allah—unlike the God of Scripture who is both personal and rational—is impersonal and his intrusion upon the world is arbitrary.

In Christianity, God acts upon nature and the world in ways consistent with His special (Scripture) and natural (creation) revelation. In other words, the God of Scripture is a God of order who created according to laws that are universal and thus men could discern these laws and by theorizing based on these fixed laws, gain a greater understanding of creation. This served as the basis of Western science and its preeminence.

Economically, the Islamic world fares no better. In fact, the Gross Domestic product (GDP) of all Arab countries combined stood at just \$1.2 trillion in 2005 – less than that of Spain. This pales in comparison to the U.S. GDP of more than \$13 trillion! Unemployment among Arab nations, which hovers around 15 percent, is the highest in the world. The source of what little wealth the Arab world does generate is primarily due to oil, which without Western intervention would have remained an unrealized natural resource.

In the Christian West, it was the biblical principles of personal responsibility, thrift and reinvestment of profits that gave rise to free-market capitalism. This coupled with a moral vision that led people to restrain their material consumption while vigorously seeking wealth, produced the most productive economies in all of human history.

On the matter of justice, this hardly bears examination as Islamic justice is nearly an oxymoron. There is no presumption of innocence and the burden of proof does not rest with the state. This is a culture in which a woman who is the victim of

rape will likely find herself executed or whipped and fathers can murder their children for associating with infidels—so called “honor killings.” Of the 48 countries with a full or near Muslim majority, none has yet evolved a stable, democratic political system.

Hisham Sharabi, the noted Palestinian-born scholar of Georgetown University writes that the Arab world is for the most part “a culturally and politically desolate and oppressive place in which to live and to work . . . a difficult place in which to struggle to build a decent and humane society.” Clearly the Islamic worldview fails to correspond with reality at every point, producing less than adequate results in every standard by which we measure personal, social, and economic well-being.

Conversely, Christianity is more than mere religion; it is the true interpretation of reality in which individuals and societies alike fare better in every category when they live consistent with biblical truth. Rodney Stark points out in his insightful book, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success*, “While other religions emphasized mystery and intuition, Christianity alone embraced reason and logic as the primary guide to religious truth.” This emphasis on “reason and logic” naturally flows from a rational God who has revealed Himself through both the written word and an orderly creation. These combine to provide a rational theology that through reason men are able to apprehend and apply to every aspect of life and culture producing humane and successful societies.

So, why does this matter? Because for one, roughly one-fifth of the world’s population suffers under the oppressive yoke of Islam and two, there are many who are determined to spread Islam at any cost until the entire world comes under its destructive control.

For American Christians, the response is simple. The Lord in His providence has brought somewhere between 6 and 10 million (exact numbers are unavailable) Muslims to our shores. Thus the Muslim *is* now our neighbor and we are to love our neighbors. This means we endeavor to create real and meaningful relationships with those Muslims the Lord has very intentionally brought into our lives for it is ultimately the love of Christ that will overcome the tyranny of Islam.

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S. Michael Craven is the founder and President of the Center for Christ & Culture. The Center for Christ & Culture is dedicated to renewal within the Church and works to equip Christians with an intelligent and thoroughly Christian approach to matters of culture in order to recapture and demonstrate the relevance of Christianity to all of life. For more information on the Center for Christ & Culture, additional resources and other works by S. Michael Craven visit: www.battlefortruth.org

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A DIFFERENT SPIRIT?

By Roy E. Knuteson Ph.D.

Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians was written to a group of new converts, recently saved out of paganism. In spite of Paul's eighteen month ministry in their city, he still considered them as "*mere infants in Christ*". He told them: "*I gave you milk and not solid food for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready*" (1 Cor. 3:1-2). There was a serious lack of spiritual understanding in this congregation, largely because they had no Bibles, and were therefore dependent upon their memories of what Paul had taught them while there. A year after Paul had moved on to Ephesus his spiritual burden for these new Christians became so great that he wrote a second letter to caution them, among other things, that they were in danger of receiving a "*different spirit from the one they had already received*" (2 Cor. 11:4). This is a very provocative verse of Scripture which is subject to several different interpretations and applications. There is also a translation difference which hinders our understanding of this important statement from God's Word.

For example, the King James Version translates these seven Greek words in 2 Cor. 11:4 this way: "*or if you receive another spirit, which you have not received*". The New American Standard Version renders it: "*or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received*". The New International Version reads: "*or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received*". The New English Bible says "*or if you then receive a spirit different from the Spirit already given unto you*".

The Context

Our key verse of Scripture also warns of believing in another "Jesus" or another "gospel". This is easily understood since there are many different Jesus' and gospels being promulgated by the various world religions, the cults of Christendom, and by liberal theologians and preachers today. The danger of being confused about these very important doctrinal issues is ever present and we are cautioned: "*Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from*

God because many false prophets have gone out into the world”
(1 John 4:1).

What is not understood is this statement about receiving “a different spirit”. Rare is the commentary that even attempts to explain this statement. Paul implies that these First Century Christians were capable of receiving such a false spirit. What is this “different spirit” which true believers could possibly receive? It is extremely important that we understand this statement by Paul lest we also fall into the error of the Corinthians.

Different spirits today

It is an observed fact that the cults always deny the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity which includes a denial of the deity of the Holy Spirit. Jehovah’s Witnesses, for example, reject the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit throughout their New World Translation by not capitalizing the word “spirit”. Instead, they define the Holy Spirit as “the invisible active force of Almighty God which moves his servants to do his will” (Let God Be True, p.108). Members of this cult actually believe that they have the Spirit of God, but it is a different spirit by their own definition and is therefore a spurious one.

Christian Science teaches that God is devoid of any personality, which includes the Holy Spirit. Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of this cult, claimed that the “Holy Ghost” is “Divine Science — the development of life, truth, and love” (Science and Health, p.538). Adherents to this cult testify that they have received the holy spirit through Divine Science. Their witness, although sincere, is false because their doctrine is false.

Mormons swear allegiance to a polytheistic pantheon of gods, and thus deny the personage of the Holy Spirit. Parley Pratt, an eminent Mormon theologian, wrote that the Holy Spirit is “a divine substance or fluid” (Key to Theology p. 38) and therefore, like God the Father, is neither omnipresent nor omniscient. Such a “spirit” is indeed a “different one” and is believed to be received by the laying on of hands by the Elders in the local Mormon church. Mormon pneumatology is at total variance with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit revealed in the Word of God. Mormons sincerely believe that they have received the “Holy Ghost”, but it is a different spirit, not

unlike the one Paul warned the Corinthian believers to avoid.

Charismatics are also prone to experiencing a “different spirit” by their emphasis on speaking in tongues as the sign of having received the Holy Spirit. Many a naïve and gullible person has been led into an emotional experience by uttering a single word or phrase which they did not understand, and this became the proof that they had received the Spirit as stated in the doctrinal statement of the Assemblies of God denomination. This is unscriptural because the Spirit of God does not initiate ecstatic speech or gibberish which is exactly what glosalalia is as practiced today. It is not a known foreign language that is translatable as the Bible clearly teaches and demands. Since it is not of the Holy Spirit it must be a different spirit.

The Spirit and a spirit

Although the translations of this provocative verse may vary somewhat, it is abundantly clear from the same passage, that the Corinthians had received the Holy Spirit by faith in Jesus Christ. In Paul’s first epistle to this local church, he informed them that their *“body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God”* (1 Cor. 6:19). In Romans 8:9 he emphatically declared : *“If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ”* . In 1 Cor. 2:12 he testifies that *“we have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit who is from God”*. We can therefore conclude that born-again believers have already received the Spirit at the moment of faith in the Savior. The Holy Spirit’s indwelling is instantaneous and non-experiential. It does not depend upon feelings or physical sensations. It is a once for all happening and is not to be confused with the Spirit’s infilling, which is repetitive and experiential.

We must point out that every person has a human spirit which needs regenerating. For apart from the new birth, the human spirit is spiritually dead. *“The Spirit gives birth to spirit”* Jesus said in John 3:6. Paul states in Romans 8:10: *“But if Christ be in you your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness”*. Our regenerated spirit is the means whereby the Holy Spirit *“testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children”*, according to Romans 8:16.

Having observed the truth of the Holy Spirit’s residence in

the body of every believer, we therefore naturally ask: Who or what is this “different spirit” which Paul said the Corinthians could or had received? Is it possible for a genuine Christian to receive “a different spirit” in addition to the Holy Spirit? A conditional answer is “yes”. From the Scripture text of this study, it appears possible for an ill-taught Christian to believe that he had received a Spirit from God because of cultic influence, religious peer pressure, or personal subjective experience and be as confused as the new believers in Corinth were. In actuality, they may have unwittingly been brought into a relationship or experience which indeed is of a “different spirit”. We do not believe that a genuine Christian can be “demon-possessed” or “demonized” as some are teaching today. He can however, be influenced, deceived, or even temporarily “taken captive” by Satan as revealed in 2 Timothy 2:26.

In the light of these observations, what can believers do now to ward off the possibility of being deceived into believing they have received the Spirit when in reality, they have received “a different spirit”? I have three suggestions. First, read your Bible every day. Search the Scriptures as the believers did after listening to the Apostle Paul at Berea. They were commended for carefully checking the Word of God to see if what they heard was true. (Acts 17:11). We must do the same. The Bible commands us to “*Test everything. Hold on to the good*” (1 Thess. 5:21).

Secondly, pray to the Lord that the Holy Spirit would “*guide you into the truth*”, as Jesus promised in John 14:15-17 and in John 16:13-15. The Apostle John echoes this promise when he wrote under divine inspiration “*I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him*” (1 John 2:26-27).

Thirdly, check with your Pastor regarding a good book on Bible doctrine, which systematically explains the various doctrines of Scripture, including the person and work of the Holy Spirit which has been the major emphasis of this article on “A Different Spirit”.

All Scripture quotations are from the New International Version, unless otherwise noted.

QUIZ: Whence Their Literature?

1. "Plain Truth" is the ubiquitous publication of
 a. Theosophy
 b. Free Masonry
 c. Scientology
 d. Armstrongism
2. Who constructed the formula "1+1+1=3" in his/her rejection of the biblical Trinity?
 a. Judge Rutherford
 b. Helena Basant
 c. Ron Hubbard
 d. Joseph Smith
3. The New World Translation of the Bible is a production that occurred during the tenure of which JW leader?
 a. Charles Russell
 b. Judge Rutherford
 c. Nathan Knorr
 d. Milton Henschel
4. The "MO" letters on "flirty fishing" were written by
 a. Mary Baker Eddy
 b. David Moses Berg
 c. Dalai Lama
 d. David Spangler
5. Who wrote the Satanic Bible?
 a. Shirley MacLaine
 b. Aleister Crowley
 c. Salman Rushdie
 d. Anton LaVey
6. Author of the DaVinci Code was
 a. Jimmy Bakker
 b. Jean Sartre
 c. Dan Brown
 d. George Bernard Shaw

7. “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures” was published in
 ___ a. Boston, MA
 ___ b. New York City, NY
 ___ c. Hartford, CT
 ___ d. Philadelphia, PA
8. “Awake” and “Watchtower” are printed in
 ___ a. San Diego, CA
 ___ b. Memphis, TN
 ___ c. Brooklyn, NY
 ___ d. Salt Lake City, UT
9. The Beatles dedicated one of their musical albums to this Satanist:
 ___ a. Aleister Crowley
 ___ b. Anton LaVey
 ___ c. Gerald Gardiner
 ___ d. Peter Gilmore
10. If you are reading “Doctrines and Covenants” you are reading literature about
 ___ a. Jehovah’s Witnesses
 ___ b. Mormons
 ___ c. Christian Scientists
 ___ d. Wiccans

See answers below

Answers: 1. (d); 2. (a); 3. (c); 4. (b); 5. (d); 6. (c); 7. (a); 8. (c); 9. (c); 10. (b)

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