

CULTS

Meet the Editor -- Rick Miesel

I was born in 1943 in Gary, Indiana. I grew up in a non-Christian home, graduated from high school in 1961, and went on to college at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana (IUB). I graduated from IUB in 1965 with an A.B. in Industrial Sociology (minor in Labor Economics). In 1965, I enlisted in the Navy, where I served five years (1-1/2 years enlisted; 3-1/2 years as an officer), including a year in Viet Nam. I met my wife, Gail, in 1970 while stationed at Great Lakes Naval Station in Waukegan, Illinois. We married in 1971. We have two adult children and three grandchildren.

I earned an MBA in Finance from Indiana University in 1975, worked in the investment department for an insurance company in Nebraska from 1975-1977, and moved to the Chicago area in late-1977 to work for an investment counseling firm. I became a partner at that firm in 1983, holding the positions of High-Yield Corporate Bond Fund Manager and Head of the Corporate Bond Research Department. I retired (for health reasons) at the end of 1986.

By the late-1970s, my wife realized she had made a serious error -- she had married a pagan; worse yet, an evolutionist pagan! So, by late-1984, Gail, and some of her Christian women friends, began praying for my salvation in earnest. But I had no reason to even "seek" God; my life was wonderful exactly like it was. We had no financial problems, our children were relatively well behaved, I liked my job, etc..

But God had other plans for me. Gail and I argued often about my evolutionist views. So in early-1985, when the church she and the children were attending announced that they were going to show the six-part *Origins* film series, I saw an opportunity to intellectually destroy all the arguments that the film's producers might employ.

It was mid-February of 1985, when Film#1 -- "The Origin of the Universe" -- was shown. I was prepared, legal pad in hand, to knock down the silly creationist arguments I knew would be taught. I don't think the film had been running more than five minutes when the Lord cut through my hard heart and impressed upon me the truth of creation and the lie of evolution.

Was I saved at that point? No. It was a significant intellectual event, and even somewhat emotional, but I had no concept of my lost condition nor what salvation really meant. I seriously considered spiritual matters when I was hospitalized in July of 1985 for aortic valve replacement surgery (at which time a brain cyst was also discovered), but it wasn't until October of 1985, when preparing my testimony to give at my scheduled baptism, that God brought me face-to-face with my totally depraved, sinful condition. At that point, God granted me repentance and I trusted Christ as my Lord and Savior.

At that time, I also came to realize that salvation is a miracle of God, in which God is totally sovereign. God didn't save me from a life of drunkenness or debauchery; He saved me from a moral, clean-living lifestyle! I had no reason to be saved -- in human terms. My life was about as perfect as it could be. But by God's miraculous hand, He opened up my heart to the truth of the Gospel and enabled me to believe on His Son! I became a new person, seeking after new things -- spiritual things. My life has never been the same. I thank God every day for His grace and mercy in saving me.

In mid-1987, we moved to Bloomington, Indiana, for the lower cost of living and for the beauty of Southern Indiana. We moved back to Nebraska for a short 1-1/2 years (12/90-6/92), and then back to Southern Indiana until May of 2002. We now live in Valparaiso, Indiana.

By late-1989, people would ask me what I could tell them about the teachings of various religious leaders and organizations. Most wouldn't believe me when I told them what I knew. So I started to compile and assemble the documentation I had accumulated. That's how I got started doing exposés of various teachers and their organizations.

At first, I had an inventory of about 15-20 reports that I would give to people when they asked. As the number of reports I compiled increased, I decided to put them in a loose-leaf notebook (dubbed the *Discernment Notebook*) and make it available to pastors or researchers free of charge. The *Notebook* is now available free for viewing and or download to anyone having Internet access; it contains more than 420 reports in HTML format (many of those being off-site links to, or the re-posting of, the articles and reports of others). It is now called the *Computer Discernment Notebook*.

What do I believe doctrinally? Click on the Statement of Faith link on the BDM home page. What are my views on exposing false teachers and their teachings, go to the Introduction section of the *Discernment Notebook*, which can also be found by linking through the BDM home page, and read the reports/articles found there. If you'd like to contact me about anything I have compiled, you may do so at <rambdm@csinet.net>.

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The Marks of a Cult¹

One must be careful to distinguish between the sociological position of what constitutes a cult (i.e., which states that whatever is normative to a given culture is *not* cultic) and the theological position (i.e., which states that only those groups that adhere to the Bible as the basis for all theology and practice are considered normative, and thereby, *not* cultic).

From the theological viewpoint, any group or religious system, whether it calls itself "Christian" or not, that offers other criteria as equal to or superior to the Bible, including but not limited to erroneous and/or exclusive interpretations of Scripture, should be considered a cult. From the theological position, then, a cult can be best defined as:

A system of religious beliefs and rituals with a body of adherents deeply devoted to an extrabiblical person, idea, or thing; it cultivates worship in a religion that, with reference to its basis for man's salvation, is considered to be unorthodox, spurious, or false, thereby insulating its members against true salvation in Christ. And inasmuch as the central doctrine of Biblical Christianity is the sacrificial death of Christ for man's sin (Eph. 2:8,9), all cultic deviations tend to downplay the finished work of Christ and emphasize the importance of earning moral acceptance before God through one's own religious works.

From the theological viewpoint, all the groups/religious systems included in the Cult section of the *Notebook* are obviously cults. They are all centered in religious beliefs or practices calling for devotion to a religious view centered in false doctrine -- it is nothing less than organized heresy.

To be classified as a cult, *not* all of the following characteristics have to be present, but in most cases, in one form or another, all of them will be:

- 1) **Extrabiblical Authority:** All cults deny what God says in His Word as true. Cults have shifted their theological point of authority away from God's full and final written Word, the Bible, to their own unique, self-promoting opinions about the Bible; they generally will use parts of the Bible but will have their own unique scripture which is considered to be superior to the Bible. While some cult groups give token respect for the Bible and go through the motions of accepting the authority of Scripture, in reality, they honor the group's or leader's novel *interpretation* of Scripture as normative.
- 2) **Works Salvation/Legalism:** Cults teach that eternal life depends upon something other than the Atonement; i.e., faith in the atoning, finished work of Christ on the cross is deemed *not* to be sufficient (usually replaced with human works and human responsibility). Rather than relying on the grace of God alone for salvation, the salvation message of the cults always boils down to required

¹ The information herein was adapted from the following sources: (1) *The Marks of a Cult*, Dave Breese; (2) "Roman Catholicism: Is It A Cult?," *Media Spotlight*, Albert James Dager; (3) *What They Believe*, Harold J. Berry; (4) *Cults and the Church of Christ*, George Faull and Brooks Alexander of the Spiritual Counterfeits Project; (5) "Patterns in the Cults," Rick Branch (*Watchman Fellowship Profile*, 1994); and (6) *Examining & Exposing Cultic & Occultic Movements*, Jack Sin, April 2000, pp. 14-16; 73-78

obedience to, or abstention from, certain obligations and practices (some even including obedience to the Old Testament law).

- 3) **No Assurance of Salvation:** The issue of a cult member's salvation is never settled, but is constantly affected by the changing circumstances of life; in this way, cult leaders are able to produce continued obligation and spiritual bondage, rather than spiritual freedom.
- 4) **Guru-Type Leader/Modern Prophet:** The cult leader is looked to as the infallible interpreter of Scripture, specially appointed by God to be a special saint, guru, or contemporary messiah, and thereby, has divine authority that must not be violated. Cultists almost always quote their leader rather than the Bible. The cult's adherents often expound the virtues of the founders and seek to cover the founder's sins and wickedness.
- 5) **Vacillating, Ambiguous Doctrines/Spiritual Deception:** In order to gain favor with the public, and thereby aid in the recruitment of new members, cult "doctrine" tends to be characterized by many false or deceptive claims concerning the cult's true spiritual beliefs (e.g., Mormons are not quick to reveal their belief that God was a man, who has now become the God of planet Earth).
- 6) **Exclusivity from/Denunciation of Other Groups:** Each cult group, regardless of what other doctrines are taught, will all have this one common idea -- "The Only True Church Syndrome." The members of each specific organization have been taught that their church, organization, or community, is the only true group and that all other groups are false. The group's leaders will explain that it is impossible to serve God without being a member of the specific group. Moreover, when the cult leader announces himself as the true "Messiah," all others are declared to be dishonest, deceitful, and deluded, and must be put down; alternative views are denounced as being satanic and corrupt. Persecution is welcomed, and even glorified in, as "evidence" that they are being persecuted for righteousness sake. Thus, if a member decides to leave the group, they have been told that they are not simply leaving an organization, but rather they are leaving God and His only true organization. Hence, for a member of a cult who has been in a group for any length of time, the action of leaving the group is much more difficult than what most Christians understand. To leave the group is, in the minds of the cult member, tantamount to leaving God.
- 7) **Claims of Special Discoveries/Additional Revelation:** Acceptance of new, contemporary, continual revelations that either deny the Bible or are allowed to explain it. The fundamental characteristic of Christianity is that it is historical, not dependent upon private knowledge and secret, unconfirmable relationships, while the almost universal basis of cult religion is the claimed exclusive revelation that one person has supposedly received. Rather than conforming to Biblical rules of evidence (2 Cor. 13:1), cult leader revelations almost always emanate from hallucinations, visions, dreams, private discoveries, etc. These new revelations often become codified as official written "scripture" of the cults (e.g., *The Book of Mormon*), and are considered as valid as that of the apostles (and even more relevant because they are given in these end times).
- 8) **Defective Christology:** Cults always have a false view of the nature of the Person of Jesus Christ; a cult will usually deny the true deity of Christ, His true humanity, His true origin, or the true union of the two natures in one Person.
- 9) **Defective "Nature of Man":** Most cults do not see man as an immortal being; instead they see him either as an animal without a soul or as a being which is being perfected to the point of becoming a god. They usually do not see man as

a spirit clothed in a body of flesh awaiting the redemption of body and soul.

- 10) **Out-Of-Context Scripture Use as Proof-Texts/Segmented Biblical Attention:** Cults tend to focus on one verse or passage of the Bible to the exclusion of others, and without regard for the context in which Scripture is given (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:29 used by Mormons to justify baptism for the dead). In addition, cults have made an art form out of using Christian terminology, all the while pouring out their own meanings into the words.
- 11) **Erroneous Doctrines Concerning Life After Death and Retribution:** Covering the gamut from soul sleep to annihilationism to purgatory to universalism to the progression to godhood, cults invariably deny the existence of a final judgment of, and a final "resting" place for, the unrighteous.
- 12) **Entangling Organization Structure:** The less truth a movement represents, the more highly it seems to have to organize itself; the absence of truth seems to make necessary the application of the bonds of fear. Cults often demand total commitment by their converts to an organizational involvement that entangles them in a complicated set of human restrictions, giving the impression of passionate and often irrational devotion to a cause.
- 13) **Financial Exploitation:** The cultic practitioner strongly implies that money contributed to the cause will earn the contributor numerous gifts, powers, and abilities, and in many cases, outright salvation.
- 14) **Pseudomystical/Spiritistic/Occultic Influence:** Occult influence is many times found in either the origin of the group and/or in its current practices.

Roman Catholicism

Roman Catholicism : Christian or Pagan?

The Roman Catholic Church, headquartered in Rome, Italy, has its own powerful City-State, the Vatican, and claims over 968 million members worldwide and 60 million in the U.S. and Canada (as of 1996). (Catholic membership figures are considerably misleading, though, in that they count as members every person who has been baptized Catholic, including millions of people who were baptized as infants but who are not practicing Catholics.) The Roman Catholic Church, in its pagan form, unofficially came into being in 312 A.D., at the time of the so-called "miraculous conversion" to Christianity of the Roman Emperor Constantine. Although Christianity was not made the official religion of the Roman Empire until the edicts of Theodosius I in 380 and 381 A.D., Constantine, from 312 A.D. until his death in 337, was engaged in the process of simultaneously building pagan temples and Christian churches, and was slowly turning over the reigns of his pagan priesthood to the Bishop of Rome. However, the family of Constantine did not give up the last vestige of his priesthood until after the disintegration of the Roman Empire -- that being the title the emperors bore as heads of the pagan priesthood -- *Pontifex Maximus* -- a title which the popes would inherit. (The popes also inherited Constantine's titles as the self-appointed civil head of the church -- *Vicar of Christ* and *Bishop of Bishops*.)

Prior to the time of Constantine's "conversion," Christians were persecuted not so much for their profession of faith in Christ, but because they would not include pagan deities in their faith as well. Then, with Constantine's emphasis on making his new-found Christianity palatable to the heathen in the Empire, the "Christianization" of these pagan deities was facilitated. For example, pagan rituals and idols gradually took on Christian meanings and names and were incorporated into "Christian" worship (e.g., "saints" replaced the cult of pagan gods in both worship and as patrons of cities; mother/son statues were renamed Mary and Jesus; etc.), and pagan holidays were reclassified as Christian holy days (e.g., the Roman Lupercalia and the feast of purification of Isis became the Feast of the Nativity; the Saturnalia celebrations were replaced by Christmas celebrations; an ancient festival of the dead was replaced by All Souls Day, rededicated to Christian heroes [now Hallowe'en]; etc.). A transition had occurred -- instead of being persecuted for failure to worship pagan deities, Christians who did not agree with the particular orthodoxy backed by the Emperor were now persecuted in the name of Christ! "Christianized" Rome had become the legitimate successor of pagan Rome! This is the sad origin of the Roman Catholic Church.

Below are the highlights of what Catholics believe concerning their source of authority; God, Christ, and Mary; salvation and the sacraments; and heaven and hell. So much more could be said concerning not only the items listed below, but also concerning other areas of Catholic teaching (such as the claims of the Roman priesthood and its supposed origin in the Apostles; the nature of the pope's alleged infallibility and the supposed origin of his office in the Apostle Peter; the nature of the Confessional; the doctrine of penance/indulgences; practices concerning rituals, ceremonies, and relics; the doctrine of Celibacy; policies on marriage and divorce; the role of the parochial school; etc.). Excellent reference sources for a thorough treatment of Catholicism's origins, beliefs,

and practices would be *Roman Catholicism* (466 ppgs.) and *A Woman Rides the Beast* (544 ppgs.).

- 1. Source of Authority.** With respect to the Bible, Catholics accept the apocryphal books in addition to the 66 books of the Protestant Bible. They also accept tradition and the teaching of the Catholic Church as authoritative and at least equal to that of the Bible (cf. Mk. 7:8,9,13; Matt. 15:3,6,9; Col. 2:8). With respect to papal infallibility, Catholics believe that ecumenical councils of bishops and the pope are immune from error when speaking *ex cathedra* about faith and morals (i.e., "from the chair" -- by sole virtue of position or the exercise of an office). (And by "infallible," Catholics mean much more than merely a simple, *de facto* absence of error -- it is positive *perfection*, ruling out the *possibility* of error. For more on infallibility, see notes on Vatican II below). In actuality, Roman Catholicism places itself above Scripture; i.e., it teaches that the Roman Catholic Church produced the Bible and that the pope is Christ's vicar on earth. Catholics also maintain the belief in sacerdotalism -- that an ordained Catholic priest has the power to forgive sins (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5).
- 2. Jesus Christ.** Catholicism teaches that Christ is God, but they, nevertheless, do not believe that Christ's death paid the *full* penalty for sin; i.e., they believe that those who qualify for heaven must still spend time in purgatory to atone for sin (cf. Jn. 19: 30; Heb. 10:11,12).
- 3. Mary.** The Catholic Church gives honor and adoration to Mary that the Scriptures do not; she is readily referred to as "holy," the "Mother of God," and has been dubbed the "Co-Redemptrix," thereby making her an object of idolatrous worship (e.g., the rosary has ten prayers to Mary for each two directed to God). In 1923, Pope Pius XI sanctioned Pope Benedict XV's (1914-1922) pronouncement that Mary suffered with Christ, and that with Him, she redeemed the human race. And Pope Pius XII officially designated Mary the "Queen of Heaven" and "Queen of the World." Catholics claim not only that Mary was perfectly sinless from conception, even as Jesus was (doctrine of Immaculate Conception, proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1854), but that the reason she never sinned at any time during her life was because she was *unable* to sin (cf. Lk. 1:46,47; Rom. 3:10,23; 5:12; Heb. 4:15; 1 Jn. 1:8,10). Catholics also believe that Mary was a perpetual virgin (cf. Ps. 69:8; Matt. 1:24,25; 13:54-56; Mk. 6:3; Jn. 7:5), and that she was assumed, body and soul, into heaven (doctrine of Assumption of Mary, declared *ex cathedra* by Pope Pius XII in November of 1950 -- that Mary was raised from the dead on the third day after her death, and anyone who refuses to believe this has committed a mortal sin). The consequence of all this veneration of Mary, in effect, establishes her authority *above* Christ's -- Rome says, "He came to us through Mary and we must go to Him through her." All this is so obviously idolatrous, one wonders why Catholics take offense when their religious affections are called cultic.
- 4. Salvation.** Catholics teach that a person is saved through the Roman Catholic Church and its sacraments, especially through baptism; they do not believe that salvation can be obtained by grace through faith in Christ *alone*, but that baptism is essential for salvation. Catholics believe that no one outside the Catholic Church can be saved (*Unum Sanctum*) (cf. Jn. 5:24; Eph. 2: 8,9; Gal. 2:21; Rom. 3:22,23). (See also The Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism and the New Catholic Catechism (paras 819 and 846.) They also believe that one's own suffering can expiate the sin's of himself *and* of others, so that what Christ's

suffering was not able to achieve, one can achieve by his own works and the works of others (Vatican II).

5. **Sacraments.** Catholics have seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist (mass), penance/reconciliation (indulgences), extreme unction (last rights), marriage, and orders (ordination). Although not even formally decreed until the Council of Florence in 1439, the Council of Trent later declared all to be anathema whom do not hold Rome's position that it was Christ Himself who instituted these seven sacraments! (The idea behind the sacraments is that the shedding of Christ's Blood in His death upon the cross is of no value unless it is somehow dispensed and applied "sacramentally" by the Catholic priesthood.) Although Catholics believe that the first five sacraments are indispensable for salvation (because without any one of them, a mortal sin has been committed), baptism is considered the most important. Catholics believe that a person enters into the spiritual life of the Church through baptism; i.e., baptismal regeneration -- that a person can be saved through baptism (actually, 'on the road to salvation,' because Catholics never know exactly when they are saved). They practice infant baptism because they believe baptism erases original sin (cf. Jn. 3:18).
6. **The Mass.** Unknown in the early church, the mass did not become an official doctrine until pronounced by the Lateran Council of 1215 under the direction of Pope Innocent III, and reaffirmed by the Council of Trent. The Church of Rome holds that the mass is a continuation of the sacrifice that Christ made on Calvary -- in effect a re-crucifixion of Christ over and over again in an unbloody manner (cf. Heb. 9:22; 1 Jn. 1:7). They believe that by this means Christ offers Himself again and again as a sacrifice for sin (cf. Heb. 7:27; 9:12,25,26; 10:10,12,14,18), and that this sacrifice is just as efficacious to take away sin as was the true sacrifice on Calvary. Catholics thus teach the doctrine of *transubstantiation* (meaning a change of substance) -- that the bread and wine (at communion) actually *become* (by the power of the priest!) the body and blood of Christ, which is then worshiped as God Himself! Indeed, the sacrifice of the mass is *the* central point of Catholic worship, as evidenced by the fact that those abstaining from attending mass are considered to have committed a mortal sin.
7. **Purgatory.** Though of pagan origin, the doctrine of purgatory was first conceptualized in the professing church in the second century; the Roman Church proclaimed it as an article of faith in 1439 at the Council of Florence, and it was confirmed by Trent in 1548. The Catholic Church teaches that even those "who die in the state of grace" (i.e., saved and sins forgiven) must still spend an indefinite time being purged/purified (i.e., expiated of sins/cleansed for heaven). (Technically, this "purging" can occur in this life rather than in purgatory itself, but as a practical matter, purgatory is the best the average Catholic can hope for.) Some Catholics will admit that the doctrine of purgatory is not based on the Bible, but on Catholic tradition (which, by Catholic standards, is equally authoritative) (cf. Jn. 5:24; Lk. 23:43; 1 Jn. 1:7,9; Phil. 1:23). (Others teach that it is based upon the interpretation of several Scriptural texts -- 1 Cor. 3:15; 1 Pe. 1:7; 3:19; Matt. 12:31.) They teach that those in purgatory can be helped by the prayers and good works of those on earth (which would include the "purchase" of masses and/or other indulgences), but they are not certain how these prayers and works are applied (cf. 2 Pe. 1:9; Heb. 1:3; Jn. 3:18; 19:30; 2 Cor. 5:6-8).
8. **The Church Councils.** There have been three major Roman Catholic Councils: Council of Trent (1545-1563), Vatican I (1869-1870), and Vatican II (1962-

1965). The last Council, Vatican II, offered no new doctrines nor repudiated any essential teaching of the Roman Church; it referred to Trent dozens and dozens of times, quoted Trent's proclamations as authority, and reaffirmed Trent on every hand. Even the New Catholic Catechism (1992/1994) cites Trent no less than 99 times! There is not the slightest hint that the proclamations of the Council of Trent have been abrogated by Rome. At the opening of the Second Vatican council, Pope John XXIII stated, "I do accept entirely all that has been decided and declared at the Council of Trent," and all of the Catholic leaders who attended Vatican II signed a document containing this statement. (The current pope, Pope John Paul II, has even cited the Council of Trent as authority for his blasphemous position on Mary.):

Council of Trent -- The Council of Trent was held in an attempt to destroy the progress of the Protestant Reformation; it approved many superstitious and unbiblical beliefs of the Middle Ages (all to be believed under the threat of "anathema"):

- (a) Denied every doctrine of the Reformation, from *Sola Scriptura* to "salvation by grace through faith alone";
- (b) Pronounced 125 anathemas (i.e., eternal damnation) upon anyone believing what evangelicals believe and preach today;
- (c) Equal value and authority of tradition and Scripture (in actuality, tradition is held above Scripture);
- (d) Scriptures for the priesthood only (prohibited to anyone in the laity without written permission from one's superior -- to violate this was [and still is in most "Catholic countries" today] considered a mortal sin);
- (e) Seven sacraments;
- (f) Communion by eating the bread only (*not* drinking the wine);
- (g) Purgatory;
- (h) Indulgences;
- (i) The Mass as a propitiatory offering.

Vatican I

- (a) Defined the infallibility of the pope;
- (b) Confirmed *Unum Sanctum* (no salvation outside of the Catholic Church).

Vatican II -- made *no new* doctrines, nor did it change or repudiate any old ones; Trent and Vatican I stand as is (i.e., Vatican II verified and validated all the anathemas of Trent). Vatican II reaffirmed such Roman heresies as papal supremacy; the Roman priesthood; the mass as an unbloody sacrifice of Christ; a polluted sacramental gospel; Catholic tradition on equal par with Scripture; Mary as the Queen of Heaven and co-Redemptrix with Christ; auricular confession; Mariolatry; pilgrimages to "holy shrines"; purgatory; prayers to and for the dead; etc. (Although the restriction against laity reading the Scriptures has been removed, it is still a mortal sin for a Roman Catholic *anywhere* to read *any* Protestant version of the Bible. That the real attitude of the Vatican toward the Bible has not changed is shown by the fact that in 1957 the depot of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Madrid, Spain was closed and its stock of Bibles confiscated and burned.)

- (a) Reaffirmed the infallibility of the pope (and even when he does not speak *ex-*

- cathedra*, all Catholics must still give complete submission of mind and will to what he says);
- (b) Divided Catholic doctrine into that which is essential core of theology, and must be received by faith, and that which is still an undefined body of theology which Catholics may question and debate without repudiating their essential Catholicism;
 - (c) Established 20 complex rules concerning when and how any indulgence may be obtained, and condemned "with anathema those who say that indulgences are useless or that the Church does not have the power to grant them ... [for] the task of winning salvation."
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A Sampling of the Anathemas of Trent:

If any one shall deny that the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore entire Christ, are truly, really, and substantially contained in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist; and shall say that He is only in it as a sign, or in a figure, or virtually -- let him be accursed (Canon 1).

If any one shall say that the substance of the bread and wine remains in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist, together with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and shall deny that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, the outward forms of the bread and wine still remaining, which conversion the Catholic Church most aptly calls transubstantiation -- let him be accursed (Canon 2).

If any man shall say that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is not to be adored in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, even with the open worship of latria, and therefore not to be venerated with any peculiar festal celebrity, nor to be solemnly carried about in processions according to the praiseworthy, and universal rites and customs of the holy Church, and that he is not to be publicly set before the people to be adored, and that his adorers are idolaters -- let him be accursed (Canon 6).

If anyone shall say that the ungodly man is justified by faith only so as to understand that nothing else is required that may cooperate to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is in no wise necessary for him to be prepared and disposed by the motion of his own will ... let him be accursed (Canon 9).

If anyone shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy pardoning sins for Christ's sake, or that it is that confidence alone by which we are justified ... let him be accursed (Canon 12).

Roman Catholicism : General Notes

- ❖ "... Rome's false religion is worse than no religion because Rome substitutes religion for truth. ... Hinduism is so parallel to Romanism [as to the common idolatry] that many Hindus can become Catholics and not need to give up Hinduism. ..." (3/1/91, *Calvary Contender*). During the past fifty years, at least three important trends in the Roman Catholic Church are clearly observable. These are: (1) a greater emphasis upon the place of Mary; (2) the acceptance of the so-called Charismatic renewal within the Church with new emphasis upon the claimed "ministry of the Holy

Spirit"; and (3) a major emphasis upon ecumenical activities with a view to seeking the full visible unity of all religions. Concerning the latter item, the 3/97 *C.E.C. Journal* had an ad from the 3/96 *New Covenant* (Franciscan University, Steubenville, Ohio). It read (emphasis theirs):

"**The Holy Father** has a sweeping vision for the new millennium: a Church HEALED of division, BOUND together by love, and **celebrating** a Eucharistic unity ... See how Mary, the Mother of Mercy, is leading the Church into the third millennium."

- ❖ The long-held claim that the Roman Catholic Church was the only unchangeable church is not supported by church history -- not even Roman Catholic history. How sad to realize that this false claim influenced so many to join or to stay in this false church, which actually is the product of centuries of changes. Most of these changes resulted from the Roman Catholic Church's yielding to heathen customs and practices that were subsequently incorporated into Roman Catholic teachings and worship. The following is a partial list of heathen, unscriptural practices that became a part of Roman Catholic dogma over a period of seventeen centuries. Some of the dates given are approximate. In many cases, these heresies were even debated for years before being given the status of required beliefs. Although some of these heresies are now being questioned by many individuals inside and outside the Roman Catholic Church, none have been officially repudiated and all continue to be practiced by millions of Catholics around the world (Source: "The Truth About Roman Catholicism," September-October 1996, *Foundation* magazine, pp. 5-16.):

- 1) Prayers for the dead -- 300 AD
- 2) Making the sign of the cross -- 300 AD
- 3) Veneration of angels & dead saints -- 375 A.D.
- 4) Use of images in worship -- 375 A.D.
- 5) The Mass as a daily celebration -- 394 AD
- 6) Beginning of the exaltation of Mary; the term, "Mother of God" applied at Council of Ephesus -- 431 AD.
- 7) Extreme Unction (Last Rites) -- 526 AD
- 8) Doctrine of Purgatory (Gregory I) -- 593 AD
- 9) Prayers to Mary & dead saints -- 600 AD
- 10) Worship of cross, images & relics -- 786 AD
- 11) Canonization of dead saints -- 995 AD
- 12) Celibacy of priesthood -- 1079 AD
- 13) The Rosary -- 1090 AD
- 14) Indulgences -- 1190 AD
- 15) Transubstantiation (Innocent III) -- 1215 AD
- 16) Auricular Confession of sins to a priest -- 1215 AD
- 17) Adoration of the wafer (Host) -- 1220 AD
- 18) Cup forbidden to the people at communion -- 1414 AD
- 19) Purgatory proclaimed as a dogma -- 1439 AD
- 20) The doctrine of the Seven Sacraments confirmed -- 1439 AD
- 21) Tradition declared of equal authority with Bible by Council of Trent-- 1545 AD
- 22) Apocryphal books added to Bible -- 1546 AD
- 23) Immaculate Conception of Mary -- 1854 AD
- 24) Infallibility of the pope in matters of faith and morals, proclaimed by the Vatican Council -- 1870 AD
- 25) Assumption of the Virgin Mary (bodily ascension into heaven shortly after her death) -- 1950 AD
- 26) Mary proclaimed Mother of the Roman Catholic Church -- 1965 AD

- ❖ Rome has a long history of persecuting Protestants, not hesitating to put to death all who oppose her. During the latter years of the Inquisitions, no fewer than 900,000 Protestants were put to death in the pope's war to exterminate the Waldenses (1450-1570). In the Netherlands, over 100,000 were massacred. In St. Bartholomew's Massacre (August 24, 1572, lasting for five or six days), approximately 50,000 Huguenots were killed; in the Huguenot Wars, 200,000 perished as martyrs, and another 500,000 fled for their lives. In Bohemia, a country with a population of four million by the year 1600, 3.2 million of which were Protestant, only the 800,000 Catholics were left alive by the time the Hapsburgs and Jesuits were through. The list of Catholic burnings and torture of Protestants is almost endless. (Reported in the 3/1/91, *Calvary Contender*.)

Actually there were three Inquisitions. The first was to suppress people like the Catharists by both church and state between 1231 and 1400. Pope Innocent IV authorized the use of torture in 1251, and religious leaders were quite forward in their participation. The second was the Roman Inquisition established by Pope Paul III in 1542 to defeat Protestantism, and continued until 1572. The torture used was so notorious that even the Turks and Saracens were repulsed by what they observed to be "Christian" barbarity. The third was "The" Inquisition. Pope Sixtus IV issued a bull in 1578 authorizing Roman Catholic kings to establish what they called the

"Tribunal of the Holy Office." By 1500, the Inquisition had extended to the New World, especially Peru and Mexico. Countless lives were snuffed out, often without cause. Catholic friars reportedly would baptize babies and children and throw them to starving dogs. All totaled, the Inquisitions claimed 68 million victims!

Yet Rome, never noted for her toleration, has never acknowledged her sin of killing these Protestants -- calling Protestants "separated brethren" is just an accommodation to gain acceptance. Rome would like to whitewash it out of history. Indeed, she has been quite successful at doing so. The blame for such atrocities has now been shifted from Roman Catholic religious leaders to the state. But it must be remembered that the state was controlled by the religious leaders! During the Tribulation, with Rome back in power as the religious authority in the world, we can expect additional Inquisition-like outbreaks of terror. (Sources: J.B. Wilder, *The Other Side of Rome*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, p. 153; and 2/94, *Mission to Catholics CHALLENGER*, pp. 1-2.)

- ❖ Some reports have stated that the Pope **has** apologized for the Catholic Church's persecution of the saints. This is only a half truth. While the Pope has uttered some regrets of sorts, referring to certain "weaknesses" and "mistakes" and "harmful acts" of the past, he has not plainly admitted that the Roman Church has butchered millions of humble Christians, and he has not plainly apologized for Rome's bloody history. He has not acknowledged that the Roman papacy has been one of the bloodiest and most inhumane institutions in human history. He has not acknowledged that the papacy, through its blasphemous claims and sacramental gospel, has led multitudes to eternal Hell. In a 5/96 encyclical, for example, Pope John Paul II refers to certain "painful recollections" which some Protestants have in regard to the history of the papacy. He then says, "To the extent that we are responsible for these, I join my predecessor Paul VI in asking forgiveness." Is that a genuine apology over Rome's bloody history? No, it isn't. He cleverly leaves it up to his hearers to decide to what extent Rome is responsible for any "painful recollections." That is a sorry excuse of an apology for one who sits in the seat of the men who were responsible for the murder and torment of MILLIONS of humble, Bible-believing children of God.

What would the Bible require of the Pope if he were truly to repent of Rome's error? Repentance means a change of mind which results in a change of action. In the Pope's case, this would involve a great many things. A repentant Pope would cast aside his blasphemous position and titles in fear and trembling. Instead of "holy father" he would desire to be called "lowly sinner." A repentant Pope would reject heretical Roman Catholic dogmas such as the Mass, the Priesthood, the Sacraments, and the intercession of Mary and the Saints. He would reject the damnable sacramental gospel of Rome (Galatians 1:6-9) and joyfully confess that salvation is the free gift of God to everyone that believeth (Romans 1:16,17; 3:23-25; 10:9-13) and that eternal life is the *present* possession of every child of God (1 John 5:11-13). (Source: David Cloud, 5/16/96, *FBIS*.)

- ❖ Mexico is another case in point concerning Catholicism's lack of toleration of non-Catholic faiths -- Mexico is over 90% Catholic and the Roman Catholic hierarchy is generally hostile toward evangelicals. A large Pentecostal denomination was notified in March of 1991 that all churches not registered with the government would be closed within three months; in one Pentecostal group, over 30 churches were closed

due to threats of violence by radically-minded Catholics. Two evangelicals were also stoned to death by Catholics. As has occurred throughout history, "ecumenical" Roman Catholicism shows a different face when it is in the majority. (Reported in the 7/1/91, *Calvary Contender*.)

- ❖ The Roman Catholic hierarchy is pressuring Nicaragua's public schools to use textbooks which promote Catholicism and which blame racial tension and other societal problems on Protestants. The textbooks are produced by the Catholic archdiocese of Managua. A textbook for fourth grade of secondary school has a picture of Pope John Paul II on the cover and warns Protestants not to criticize Catholic devotion to the Virgin Mary: "To scorn Mary is an absurdity, something only the devil can incite," the textbook states. "Be careful, Protestant brothers. You're playing with fire. If you want to increase your numbers by misleading unprepared Catholics, don't mess with Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our mother. It's something serious for which you'll pay heavily." (*Ecumenical News International*, 4/28/97).
- ❖ "To deny that Roman Catholicism is a cult is to repudiate the reformation and mock the millions of martyrs who died at Rome's hands. ... The 'Christ' of Roman Catholicism is just as false as its 'Mary' -- as much 'another Jesus' as that of Mormonism or any other cult" (June 1991, *CIB Bulletin*). Yet charismatic and neo-evangelical cult "experts" continue to omit Roman Catholicism from their lists of cults, and even explicitly approve it (e.g., Walter Martin's Christian Research Institute; Josh McDowell's *Understanding the Cults*; J. Oswald Sander's *Cults and Isms*; and J.I. Packer, who calls Catholics "brothers in Christ" and has signed the "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" accords).
- ❖ A Roman Catholic pamphlet entitled, "A Pastoral Statement For Catholics On Biblical Fundamentalism," is a warning from Catholic Bishops to Catholics "who may be attracted to Biblical Fundamentalism without realizing its serious weaknesses." It criticizes Fundamentalists for "rigid doctrinal and ideological positions" and for interpreting the Bible to be literally true. It says: "We do not look upon the Bible as an authority for science or history." And: "The gospel comes to us through the Spirit-guided Tradition of the [Catholic] Church and the inspired books. ... The Church produced the New Testament, not vice versa." It said Fundamentalists "try to find in the Bible all the direct answers for living. ... We look to both the Church's official teaching (or Magisterium) AND [our emphasis] Scripture for guidance in addressing life's problems." The pamphlet emphasizes the necessity of the seven sacraments, the "veneration of the Blessed Mother," etc. (4/1/95, *Calvary Contender*).

In 1994, the Vatican officially criticized a literal interpretation of the Bible and said the fundamentalist approach to Scripture was "a kind of intellectual suicide." The document said fundamentalism "refuses to admit that the inspired Word of God has been expressed in human language ... by human authors possessed of limited capacities and resources." The 125-page document, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," was written by the Pontifical Biblical Commission, a group of scholars who assist the pope in the study of Scripture. "The fundamentalist approach is dangerous, for it is attractive to people who look to the Bible for ready answers to the problems of life," the document said. "Fundamentalism actually invites people to a kind of intellectual suicide."

A source of further confusion for many is the fact that for centuries Roman Catholics were taught that all those outside their membership were heretics to be shunned, persecuted, or even killed. It was not until the middle of this century that the Roman Catholic Church modified and softened its stand by calling non-Catholics, "separated brethren." More recently, even that negative connotation has been eliminated. Today, Catholics are taught to consider "all Christians" to be "brothers and sisters in Christ." (Source: "The Truth About Roman Catholicism," September-October 1996, *Foundation* magazine, pp. 5-16.)

- ❖ The Bible contains much fiction, myth, and embellishments, says an early-1997 issue of *Notre Dame Magazine*. The publication of the (Roman Catholic) University of Notre Dame quotes various Notre Dame professors as attacking such crucial doctrines of historic Christianity as the deity of Christ. The publication is in general agreement with the Roman Catholic professors. Kerry Temple, managing editor of *Notre Dame Magazine*, claims that the story of Jesus in the Bible "is more like poetry" than "a news report or documentary film that presents historical events literally and factually." Terry quotes Father Edward Schillebeeckx, a liberal Roman Catholic theologian who rejects historic Christianity: "The New Testament is the testimony of the believing people, and what they are saying is not history but expressions of their belief in Jesus as Christ." She also quotes Albert Schweitzer: "The Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the Kingdom of God, who founded the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and died to give his work its final consecration never had any existence."

"Less credence is given to claims for other kinds of miracles. 'Anything involving changes of nature,' says Notre Dame's John Collins, 'we are more inclined to regard as theological fictions.' The purposes of these legends, scholars believe, are to give insight into Jesus's teachings, to demonstrate his supernatural powers, to affirm his divinity and to reinforce faith. Among theologians today the consensus seems to be: Don't count on the miracles to prove that Jesus was God. 'These nature miracles,' says Thomas Sheehan in the highly controversial book *The First Coming*, 'are simply legends which arose among early Christians and which were projected backward, under the impact of faith, into the life of the historical Jesus.'" (Source: "RC Publication and Professors Attack Deity of Christ," *Christian News*.)

- ❖ Pope John Paul II's devotion to Mary is without question. In 1984, he dedicated the whole earth to Mary. His motto is "Mary, I'm all yours." In a visit to Portugal in May of 1991, he attributed the fall of communism in Europe to the intervention of the Virgin Mary of Fatima. He has also credited her with saving his life in the 1981 assassination attempt. Contrary to what some Catholics will publicly admit, they do continue to pray to and worship Mary -- an 1854 papal decree (Pope Pius IX) on the Immaculate Conception of Mary, that has never been revoked, states, "Let all the children of the Catholic Church ... continue to **venerate**, invoke, and pray to **the most blessed Virgin Mary**, mother of God, conceived without original sin." (Reported in the 7/15/91, *Calvary Contender*).

Moreover, in "The Holy Father's Prayer for the Marian Year [1987]," John Paul II asks Mary to do what only God can do -- comfort, guide, strengthen, and protect "the whole of humanity ..." His prayer ends: "Sustain us, O Virgin Mary, on our journey of faith and obtain for us the grace of eternal salvation." What blasphemy to ask Mary to obtain what God offers freely by His grace through Christ! (4/97,

Berean Call).

- ❖ Contrary to what many Catholics will publicly admit, Catholics **do** continue to pray to the "patron saints" -- in fact, some of the causes eliciting such prayer would be comical were it not tragic for those souls caught up in it. For example, in preparing for an expected earthquake in December, 1990, in the Saint Louis area, parishioners at St. Agatha Roman Catholic Church turned to St. Agatha, "the patron saint of protection from the devastation of volcanoes, earthquakes, fire, and all kinds of violence." The Church reported in the *St. Louis Southwest City Journal* of 10/21/90 that a novena was to be held, including a recitation of the rosary, a prayer to St. Agatha, and a closing benediction. (Reported in the November/December 1990, *Foundation*.)

Another example of the superstitious idolatry of Catholicism would be the "good" Catholic's ritual for selling his home: Put a statue of St. Joseph in a bottle or mason jar and bury it in the front yard (head first), thereby guaranteeing a quick sale of the home. After the sale, the seller is to dig up St. Joseph, put him in a prominent place in the new residence, and pray to him (Mother Angelica, EWTN Catholic TV, 10/95).

- ❖ Pope John Paul II on his 10th African tour in 2/93, told about 75 "colorfully garbed voodoo worshippers [in Benin] that they would NOT have to forsake all of their culture [nor their voodoo faith] in order to convert" to Catholicism (2/13/93, *World*). The conciliatory pope noted that even as Africans look to their ancestors as objects of worship, Catholics also revere "ancestors in the faith, from the Apostles to the missionaries." "I have never seen God, but today when I have seen the pope, I recognize that I have seen the good God, who prays for all the voduns," said Sossa Guedehoungue, head of Benin's vodun community. Voodoo leader Senou Zannou gave a formal speech in which he announced his son was becoming a Roman Catholic priest. But he also offered a defense of his faith: "God knows that the vodun has nothing to do with the devil or Satan." (Africans passing from Benin into slavery brought vodun worship to Haiti and Brazil, where it mixed with Catholicism and came to be called voodoo.) Other instances of Catholicism's cooperation with the occult and false religions:

- (a) In 1986 in Assisi, Italy, John Paul II joined in a circle to pray and meditate with snake handlers from Togo, shamans and tribal witchdoctors from West Africa, Hindu gurus from India, Buddhist monks from Thailand, and liberal protestant clergymen from Great Britain, as all joined hands in "pray[ing] to their gods for 'peace'." The Pope also announced in Assisi that there are "many paths to God." (Sources: *Christian News* in a reprint of a 1993 article by Michael A. Hoffman in *Researcher*, Vol. 4, No. 3; and the 4/93, *Flashpoint*.)
- (b) Again in 1986, in Fiji, "the Pope quaffed a potent island liquor, accepted three whale's teeth and watched a spear dance during an ancient welcoming ceremony dating back to when the Fijians practiced cannibalism. ... [Fijian tribal] chiefs handed the Pope a mud-colored, alcoholic drink called kava [a drink condemned by early missionaries to Fiji as devil worship] ... [which] he downed in a single gulp." At the Pope's next stop in Auckland, New Zealand, 15 elders of the Maoris tribe pressed noses with the Pope, "to exchange each other's breath, which is the life force." (Source: 11/22/86, *Chicago Tribune*.)

- (c) Throughout Central and South America, Catholicism is in the most blatant partnership with spiritism and paganism. In Brazil, Aparecida is the largest cathedral in the world next to St. Peter's in Rome. It is dedicated to a small idol of a "Black Virgin" -- pulled from a nearby lake in a fishing net -- that now performs "miracles." The Pope came to honor this idol in 1991. At the mass, the priest led the people in prayers and songs to the idol, asking *it* for salvation and dedicating their lives to *it*. Aparecida's large bookstore also carries many of the same "positive" books that delude Protestants -- books in Portuguese by American authors, from Norman Vincent Peale to "Christian psychologists." (Reported in the October 1991, *CIB Bulletin*.)
- (d) In his visit to Senegal in 1992 where, instead of calling the heathen African religions by their proper and accurate name, Pope John Paul II referred to "African customs" and urged Senegal's Roman Catholics to "strike the right balance between African customs and church requirements." But there is no "right balance" between truth and error -- they are mutually exclusive. Yet the Pope said that the "blending of authentically African fruits in union with the universal church was essential to the spread of Catholicism on the continent." (Source: 4/93, *Flashpoint*.) [Contrast such statements with the Word of God: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). God says: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil..." (Isa. 5:20). All idolatry is an abomination to God and needs to be recognized as such. Of course, since the Roman Catholic Church actually worships idols while claiming to be "Christian," it is understandable that they will not rebuke heathen idolaters who make no profession of faith in Christ.]
- (e) On January 9-10, 1993, the Pope again hosted the Dalai Lama of Tibetan Buddhism and representatives of many other false and ungodly religions. It was an incredible sight to see these weird persons, "holy books" in hand, all standing serenely, side-by-side with the Pope. In the 2/10/93 issue of the official Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Pope said he recognizes within the devil worship sect of Voodoo, "God's riches ... the seed of the Word ... solidarity among believers ... for ... human liberation." (Sources: *Christian News* in a reprint of a 1993 article by Michael A. Hoffman in *Researcher*, Vol. 4, No. 3; and the 4/93, *Flashpoint*.) [The whole testimony of the Bible is that consorting with such hellish works is, in fact, the same as being in league with the devil. The Bible says we are to have *no* spiritual fellowship with the false cults. The Pope says we can. Those interested in a history of Voodoo and its curse upon the black people of Africa for a thousand years, should read the 1989 book by former high priest of African Voodoo Isaiah Oke, *Blood Secrets: The True Story of Demon Worship and Ceremonial Murder*.]
- (f) *The Philippine Star* of 8/25/94 reported that José Silva, founder of the world-famous Silva Method, received the Special Apostolic Blessing bestowed on him by Pope John Paul II on the occasion of his 80th birthday. Reports reaching Silva International say the Vatican has given its approval to the Silva training course.
- (g) Although it passed completely without notice in the U.S. press, a bombshell that was dropped in Rome in November of 1996 continues to send shockwaves that

are being felt in political and religious circles worldwide. The explosive charge was released by Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo in an address to the Fatima 2000 International Congress on World Peace held in Rome 11/18/96-11/23/96. Addressing an international audience of bishops, priests, nuns, and laity, the archbishop charged that there are members of the Catholic Church hierarchy in Rome who are secretly involved in formal satanic worship. He accused fellow Roman Catholic clergymen of protecting Satan and his minions:

"The devil in the Catholic Church is so protected now that he is like an animal protected by the government; put on a game preserve that outlaws anyone, especially hunters, from trying to capture or kill it. The devil within the Church today is actually protected by certain Church authorities from the official devil-hunter in the Church -- the exorcist. ... To the question, 'Are there men of the curia who are followers of Satan?' Milingo responded, 'Certainly there are priests and bishops. I stop at this level of ecclesiastical hierarchy because I am an archbishop, higher than this I cannot go.' Milingo cited papal statements to back up his charges. 'Paul VI said that the smoke of Satan had entered into the Vatican.'" (Reported in the 3/3/97, *The New American*.) [Archbishop Milingo, an exorcist, is the author of the book, *Face to Face With the Devil*.]

- (h) In a 4/3/91 letter written by Pope John Paul II, addressed to "my beloved Muslim brothers and sisters," the Pope said, "I close my greeting to you with the words of one of my predecessors Pope Gregory VII, who in 1076 wrote to Al-Nasir, the Muslim ruler of Bijaya, present day Algeria: 'We believe in and confess one God, admittedly in a different way, and daily praise and venerate him, the creator of the world and the ruler of this world.'" The name Allah, was not invented by Muhammad, but was the name of a pagan god, long known and worshiped in the Middle East. In pre-Islamic days, Allah worship was on par with Baal worship, both originating in the Babylon region and both being Astral religions: the Sun, Moon, and Stars were the objects of worship. An Allah idol was one of some 360 idols in the Kabah, the sacred building at Mecca, now containing the famous black stone, a place of Islamic prayer and pilgrimages., the place to which the faithful turn to pray, again not new to Islam, but a practice of very ancient origins. The tribe into which Muhammad was born was devoted to the god Allah, Allah being the personal name of the Moon god. That the Pope worships a god other than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ought not surprise us when one considers that both Islam and Romanism come from the same Babylonian stock. (Source: 8/94, *Perilous Times*.)

- ❖ The Catholic Church is teaming up with America's space agency to search for extra-terrestrials. Jesuit priests who run the Vatican Observatory near Rome say they are joining forces with the NASA agency to hunt for UFOs and signs of life on planets in solar systems similar to Earth's. NASA's job will be to monitor for "alien" communications signals; the Vatican, which has helped to build a new reflector telescope in Tucson, Arizona, would search for planets displaying conditions for life. "Father" George Coyne, director of the Vatican Observatory, said that should intelligent alien life be found, "the Church would be obliged to address the question of whether extra-terrestrials might be brought within the fold and baptized." (Reported in the 2/93, *O Timothy*.)

Similarly New Ageish in his celebrated book, *Crossing The Threshold of Hope*

(Knopf:1994), Pope John Paul II explains that "salvation and divinization" are the "ultimate purpose" of man's life: "The divinization of man comes from God" (p. 195). Likewise, the new universal Catechism of the Catholic Church, quoting St. Athanasius and St. Thomas Aquinas, declares, "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God. ... The only begotten Son of God ... assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods" (par 460).

- ❖ Pope John Paul II, in a 10/96 message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, stated that the theory of evolution is more than a hypothesis and that it must be taken seriously by Christians (Vatican Information Service, 10/23/96). In 1/97, after considerable heat on the Pope for his statement, the Vatican news service issued a statement that it had "mistranslated" the Pope's evolution statement, now saying that John Paul II said there is "more than one hypothesis in the theory of evolution," not that evolution is "more than a hypothesis" (*World*, 1/25/97). In light of the following statements by this and other popes, as well as other official Roman Catholic organizations, this explanation is not credible:
 - (a) The pope reminded the Academy that the Roman Catholic Church has long given tentative approval to the theory of evolution. He cited a 1950 papal encyclical entitled "Humani Generis" by Pius XII, which "considered the doctrine of 'evolutionism' as a serious hypothesis, worthy of a more deeply studied investigation and reflection on a par with the opposite hypothesis. ... Today, more than a half century after this encyclical, new knowledge leads us to recognize in the theory of evolution more than a hypothesis. ... The convergence, neither sought nor induced, of results of work done independently one from the other, constitutes in itself a significant argument in favor of this theory."
 - (b) In May of 1982, honoring Charles Darwin on the 100th anniversary of his death, the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Sciences issued this statement: "[M]asses of evidence render the application of the concept of evolution ... beyond serious dispute" [Edward Daschbach, S.V.D., "Catholics and Creationism," *Visitor* (Oct. 21, 1984)]. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* says, "[S]pecialists ... over a period of 100 years, have assembled the necessary evidence ... evolution has been established as thoroughly as science can establish facts ..." [*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 5 (McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 689]. To the contrary, the Apostle Paul says that sin entered the world through Adam, and death by sin (Rom 5:12). If Adam and Eve had ancestors who had lived and died during thousands (or millions) of years of evolution until God humanized them, death would have operated on earth before Adam sinned -- a clear contradiction of Genesis, of Christ's teaching, of Paul's preaching, and of the gospel. (New York's Cardinal O'Connor says Adam and Eve may have been "lower animals.")
 - (c) The pope attempts to reconcile the Bible with evolution by claiming that while the world was made by the process of evolution, the soul of man was "directly created by God." Pius XII described this theory in these words: "If the origin of the human body is sought in living matter which existed before it, the spiritual soul is directly created by God." This is an impossible position. It is impossible to reconcile the modern theories of evolution with the Biblical account of creation. If one is true, the other is a myth. (Excerpted and/or adapted from the 2/97, *Berean Call*.)

Roman Catholicism : Is It A Cult?²

To many Christians, the Roman Catholic Church is an enigma -- a mysterious ecclesiastical system of laws, rituals, and religious orders. For centuries there have been angry denouncements from Roman Catholics against Protestantism for the schism created by the Reformation, and from Protestants against Roman Catholicism for its theological errors and its claim to be the only one true church.

Out of this controversy, charges have arisen that Roman Catholicism is not truly Christian, but is in fact, the largest and oldest "Christian" cult in the world.

The Christian Research Institute, (CRI), founded by the late Dr. Walter Martin, is regarded by many as the foremost authority on cults and the occult. They also see themselves as experts on what constitutes Biblical theology. CRI has produced position papers on Roman Catholicism, addressing some of the doctrines with which they are in disagreement. They have stopped short, however, of acknowledging Roman Catholicism as a cult. They are, in fact, adamant in their defense of Roman Catholicism as an orthodox Christian religion. In this regard, they have come against others for their insistence that Roman Catholicism meets the criteria of a cult.

That there are grave problems with many Roman Catholic doctrines and interpretations of Scripture, no knowledgeable non-Catholic would dispute. But to what degree does Roman Catholicism present a danger to the purity of Biblical truth? Are their teachings, practices, and liturgy commiserate with cultism? Or are they truly Christian, differing only in minor interpretations and applications? To answer these questions, it is necessary to define just what constitutes a cult.

What is a Cult?

The word "cult" connotes neither good nor evil. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines a cult as "a system of religious beliefs and ritual; *also*: its body of adherents."

Based on this rather simple definition, every church body may be classified as a cult. But there is another definition offered by *Webster's*, which is more akin to the use of the word employed by theologians and sociologists: "a religion regarded as unorthodox or spurious; *also*: its body of adherents," and "great devotion to a person, idea, or thing."

But even this definition is inadequate in light of current trends in Christian thought. There is a wide distinction between the sociological and theological viewpoints.

Our concern is with the theological definition. Yet even here, one of the problems we have today is that there have developed several benchmarks from which to define a cult. For example, the Christian Research Institute has established as its benchmark what it terms "orthodoxy." That is, the historical position of the Church or churches from the time of the apostles to the present. This definition includes the early Roman Catholic Church fathers. On this basis, CRI (as do other cult-watching groups) considers Roman Catholicism as orthodox, but in error in only some teachings. However, Dr. Martin's original assessment would have to include Roman Catholicism:

² This material (preceding the Note directly above) has been excerpted and/or adapted from a Media Spotlight Special Report of October, 1991

"... a cult might also be defined as a group of people gathered about a specific person or person's interpretation of the Bible. For example, Jehovah's Witnesses are, for the most part, followers of the interpretation of Charles T. Russell and J. F. Rutherford. The Christian Scientist of today is a disciple of Mary Baker Eddy and her interpretations of Scripture. The Mormons, by their own admission, adhere to those interpretations found in the writings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. It would be possible to go on citing many others, including the Unity School of Christianity, which follows the theology of Charles and Myrtle Filmore. From a theological viewpoint, the cults contain not a few major deviations from historic Christianity. Yet paradoxically, they continue to insist that they are entitled to be classified as Christians" (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 11).

The basis for determining what constitutes a cult must go beyond stated doctrinal positions. If we use Dr. Martin's original test, "a group of people gathered about a specific person or person's interpretation of the Bible," we will not be fooled into thinking that, just because an organization issues a doctrinal statement in conformity with "orthodoxy," that organization is truly Christian.

Even if an organization can be said to have been established by God, there are no guarantees that God is going to continue to sanction it if it doesn't continue in the spirit and purpose for which He established it. And unless its criterion for establishing truth is the unadulterated Word of God rightly divided, its existence is counterproductive to the Faith. Add to this any liturgy or practices which are counter to the spirit of the Word, and you have the makings of a cult in the theological sense.

Ron Enroth, author of *The Lure of the Cults and New Religions*, and professor of sociology at [the neo-evangelical and liberal] Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California, cites Brooks Alexander, co-founder of the Spiritual Counterfeits Project, as having established the criteria for determining what constitutes a cult from a Biblical theological perspective. These are twofold:

- 1) *A false or inadequate basis of salvation.* The apostle Paul drew a distinction that is utterly basic to our understanding of truth when he said, "By grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Inasmuch as the central doctrine of biblical Christianity is the sacrificial death of Christ for our sin, all cultic deviations tend to downplay the finished work of Christ and emphasize the importance of earning moral acceptance before God through our own religious works *as a basis of salvation*.
- 2) *A false basis of authority.* Biblical Christianity by definition takes the Bible as its yardstick of the true, the false, the necessary, the permitted, the forbidden, and the irrelevant. Cults, on the other hand, commonly resort to extra-biblical documents or contemporary "revelation" as the substantial basis of their theology (e.g. Mormons). While some cult groups go through the motions of accepting the authority of Scripture, they actually honor the group's or leader's novel *interpretation* of Scripture as normative (e.g. Jehovah's Witnesses, The Way International) (Enroth, *The Lure of the Cults & New Religions*, p. 21).

Enroth and Alexander make the distinction between *sociological* understanding of what constitutes a cult, and *theological* understanding. The sociological position is that whatever is normative to a given culture is not a cult. The Biblical theological position

is that those groups that adhere to the Bible as the basis for all theology and practice are normative. Those groups that offer other criteria as equal to or superior to the Bible, including erroneous and/or exclusive interpretations of Scripture, are cults.

From the sociological point of view, Roman Catholicism is not a cult. But what about the Biblical theological point of view? To ascertain the answer to this question, we will be quoting almost exclusively from the Vatican II documents. This is because of the misconception that the Roman Catholic Church is not the same as it was in the past, and that it has instituted reforms through the Vatican II Council which allow for evangelical Christianity to seek unity with the papacy. While Vatican II has softened its stance in regard to its approach toward non-Catholics, it will be seen that it still holds major doctrines and practices that rule out unity for true Christians who have the knowledge to understand the insurmountable barriers erected by the Roman Church itself.

The Basis for Salvation

The Roman Catholic Church claims that salvation is by grace through the shed blood of Christ on the cross. But in practice and other teachings, how true is their affirmation of that crucial doctrine?

Historically, Roman Catholicism has maintained that Jesus merely made the way open for salvation. But to enter into that salvation, one must live in obedience to the authority of the papacy. In addition, Jesus' provision for salvation not being complete, the Church offers other means to assure one's salvation.

It is through the Roman Catholic Church **alone** that salvation in its fullest sense can be attained:

"For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the universal help towards salvation. that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained. It was to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, that we believe that Our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to establish on earth the one Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the people of God" (*Vatican Council II*, p. 456).

Penance

On the subject of salvation and the expiation of sin, Vatican Council II stated:

"Therefore, the Church announces the good tidings of salvation to those who do not believe, so that all men may know the one true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent and may be converted from their ways, doing penance (*Vatican Council II*, p. 6).

"The full taking away and, as it is called, reparation of sins requires two things. Firstly, friendship with God must be restored. Amends must be made for offending his wisdom and goodness. This is done by a sincere conversion of mind. Secondly, all the personal and social values, as well as those that are universal, which sin has lessened or destroyed must be fully made good. This is done in two ways. The first is by feely making reparation, which involves punishment. The second is by accepting the punishments God's just and most holy wisdom has appointed. From this the holiness and splendor of his glory shine out through the world. ...

"The doctrine of purgatory clearly demonstrates that even when the guilt of sin has been taken away, punishment for it or the consequences of it may remain to be expiated or cleansed. They often are. In fact, in purgatory the souls of those 'who died in the charity of God and truly repentant, but who had not made satisfaction with adequate penance for their sins and omissions' are cleansed after death with punishment designed to purge away their debt" (*Vatican Council II*, p. 64).

Indulgences

One means of attaining salvation from the punishment of one's sins is what the Roman Church calls indulgences. These may be purchased with money or through acts of penitence, acts of charity, or other pietistic means. The concept of indulgences is based on the idea that one's good works merit God's grace. Since Christ's sacrifice was insufficient for the full payment of the penalty of sin, acts of piety and gifts to the Roman Church may be used as partial payment for one's sins. The efficacy of an indulgence depends upon the merit attributed to it by the church. For example, one may pay to have a mass said for a relative believed to be in purgatory. The mass will then account for a certain number of days deleted from his purgatorial sentence.

"The use of indulgences spread gradually. It became a very clear element in the history of the Church when the Popes decreed that certain works which were suitable for promoting the common good of the Church 'could replace all penitential practices' and that the faithful who were 'genuinely sorry for and had confessed their sins' and done such works were granted 'by almighty God's mercy and ... trusting in his Apostles merits and authority' and 'by virtue of the fullness of the apostolic power' 'not only full and abundant forgiveness, but the most complete forgiveness possible for their sins.

"For 'God's only-begotten Son ... has won a treasure for the militant Church ... he has entrusted it to blessed Peter, the key-bearer of heaven, and to his successors who are Christ's vicars on earth, so that they may distribute it to the faithful for their salvation. They may apply it with mercy for reasonable causes to all who have repented for and have confessed their sins. At times they may remit completely, and at other times only partially, the temporal punishment due to sin in a general as well as in special ways (insofar as they judge to be fitting in the sight of the Lord). The merits of the Blessed Mother of God and of the elect ... are known to add further to this treasure'" (*Vatican Council II*, p. 70).

While acknowledging that indulgences have been abused, the Roman Church ascribes that abuse to "the past," as if no such abuse occurs today. But the very nature of indulgences is an abuse against the purity of the Faith. To make matters worse, the Roman Church condemns those who oppose the idea of indulgences:

"[The Roman Catholic Church] 'teaches and commands that the usage of indulgences -- a usage most beneficial to Christians and approved by the authority of the Sacred Councils -- should be kept in the Church; and it condemns with anathema [cursing by ecclesiastical authority] those who say that indulgences are useless or that the Church does not have the power to grant them.'" (*Vatican Council II*, p. 71)

The Roman Catholic Church says it alone can grant this essential blessing for full salvation, and then condemns to hell those who disagree -- virtually all non-Catholics!

It was primarily Martin Luther's opposition to the evil practice of selling indulgences that sparked the Reformation. While he sought to remain in the Roman Church and bring reform to it [e.g., Martin Luther never gave up the false doctrine of baptismal regeneration], he was eventually excommunicated for his stand, as were other Reformers.

The response of Roman Catholicism to the Reformation was a hardening of the papal heart which resulted in mass executions, torture, and other violent means to squelch the rejection of papal authority. The Counter-Reformation resulted in the creation of Order of Jesus -- the Jesuits -- as a means to spy out and destroy those who sought to follow the path to freedom from Rome's tyrannical grip upon their souls. Thus ensued one of the bloodiest periods in the history of the Church, which saw countless martyrs for Christ at the hands of the papacy. With all its posturing to win the hearts of non-Catholic Christians today, the Roman Catholic Church has never offered an apology for its murdering of our ancestral brethren. This chapter in history is virtually ignored by the Vatican.

The Eucharist & The Mass

Roman Catholicism states that redemption is accomplished in the Eucharist:

"For it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, 'the work of our redemption is accomplished'" (*Vatican Council II*, p. 1).

In Roman Catholic belief, the Eucharist is the embodiment of Christ in the bread of the Roman Catholic communion table; the bread is *literally* His body, and the wine is *literally* His blood. To non-Catholics, this can be confusing. But the Vatican II documents spell out the degree to which this literalness is held by its affirmation of the Council of Trent's Decree on the Eucharist that *the wafer is to be worshiped as God*. Is not idolatry the sign of a cult?

"There should be no doubt in anyone's mind 'that all the faithful ought to show to this most holy sacrament the worship which is due to the true God, as has always been the custom of the Catholic Church. Nor is it to be adored by any the less because it was instituted by Christ to be eaten'" (*Vatican Council II*, p. 104).

The Roman Church insists that Christ's sacrifice was not sufficient in itself to take away the penalty for our sins, but that we must add to His sacrifice through penance and through the application of the Roman Catholic mass as an ongoing sacrifice:

"Hence the Mass, the Lord's Supper, is at the same time and inseparably: a sacrifice in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated (*Vatican Council II*, p. 102).

"Christ's own association of what he did at the Last Supper with what he was to do on Good Friday has been the Church's own norm for intimately relating the two. The sacrifice of the altar, then is no mere empty commemoration of Calvary, but a true and proper act of sacrifice, whereby Christ is the high priest by an unbloody immolation offers himself a most acceptable victim to the eternal Father, as he did on the cross. 'It is one and the same victim; the same person now offers it by the ministry of his priests, who then offered himself on the cross. Only the manner of offering is different.' ... Worth stressing is that what makes the Mass a sacrifice is that Christ is a living human

being with a human will, still capable of offering (hence priest) and being offered (hence victim), no less truly today than occurred on the cross. (John Hardon, *The Catholic Catechism*, pp. 465-66) (cf. Heb. 10:12-18).

Scripture is clear that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was sufficient for taking away not only the guilt, but also the punishment for our sins. The whole purpose of His suffering was to bear our punishment (Isa. 53:4-6).

The chastisement (or punishment) that reconciled us to God (establishing peace with Him) was laid upon Jesus at the cross. There is not a single Scripture that speaks of punishment for our sins if we die in Christ. At worst, we will suffer the loss of reward for our failure to produce fruit in our lives to our capabilities. But all Scriptural references to punishment apply to unbelievers only. For the believer, to be absent from the body is to be present with Christ (2 Cor. 5:8).

Does this make us more inclined to sin and take a cavalier attitude about our position in Christ? Just the opposite. When those who have the Spirit of God consider the awful price paid for our redemption, we abhor our sins all the more. If we fall, it is as Paul said, the result of sin that dwells in our mortal bodies. But our spirits -- our attitude -- is one of hatred for sin.

The history of the Catholic Church proves conclusively that its means for salvation is not by grace, but by works of its own laws. This, in itself, qualifies it to be deemed a cult. It was one of the "approved religions" under the pagan emperor Constantine -- the first major cult that broke from the teachings of the apostles.

The Basis for Authority

Perhaps the most cogent argument offered against the cults by true believers in Christ Jesus is that Scripture is the sole authority for all belief and practice for those who are in Christ. The first avenue of attack against a cult's theology takes the researcher through that cult's basis for belief. Even those cults which affirm the validity of the Bible as the sole authority, add their own authorities to it. And that is what cult researchers mark as one of the unmistakable signs of a cult.

Like other cults, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and that is the basis for establishing truth, doctrine, and practice. But it also has other criteria that it says are equal to Scripture: tradition, and Magisterium (the teaching authority of the Church).

While asserting, as do all aberrant "Christian" cults, that Scripture is the primary source of all revelation, the Roman Catholic Church in practice and in its teachings affirms that *its* interpretation of Scripture is the only valid basis upon which all truth resides and upon which its other authorities rest.

"Sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine wellspring, move towards the same goal. Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. And Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles [the pope and

bishops of the Roman Catholic Church] so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching. Thus it comes about that the Church does not draw her certainty about all revealed truths from the Holy Scriptures alone. Hence, both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal feelings of devotion and reverence...

"But the task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith.

"It is clear, therefore, that, in the supremely wise arrangement of God, sacred Tradition, sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that *one of them cannot stand without the others*. Working together, each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls" (*Vatican Council II*, pp. 755-756). (Emphasis ours.)

In addition, the Roman Church openly professes that its view of Scripture differs from that of 'other' Christians:

"But when Christians separated from us affirm the divine authority of the sacred books, they think differently from us -- different ones in different ways -- about the relationship between the scriptures and the Church. For the Church according to Catholic belief, its authentic teaching office has a special place in expounding and preaching the written Word of God (*Vatican Council II*, p. 468).

"It is for the bishops, 'with whom the apostolic doctrine resides' suitably to instruct the faithful entrusted to them in the correct use of the divine books, especially of the New Testament, and in particular of the Gospels. They do this by giving them translations of the sacred texts which are equipped with necessary and really adequate explanations. Thus the children of the Church can familiarize themselves safely and profitably with sacred Scriptures, and become steeped in their spirit.

"Moreover, editions of sacred Scripture, provided with suitable notes, should be prepared for the use of even non-Christians and adapted to their circumstances. These should be prudently circulated, either by pastors of souls, or by Christians of any rank" (*Vatican Council II*, pp. 764-765).

The cry of Reformation was *sola scriptura* -- the insistence that the Bible alone is the ultimate authority for all believers. The Holy Spirit's enlightenment is a safeguard against religious tyranny.

But for the Roman Catholic Church, the Scriptures are not sufficient of themselves to provide all that is necessary "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17) without the Roman Church's interpretations. Isn't that what CRI originally established as one of the primary criteria for determining if a group is as

cult?

Exclusivity

Another sign of a cult is its exclusivity and insistence that it alone holds the authority as God's only true church. Rather than acknowledge that the true Church is comprised of individuals bound to God the Father through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, a cult looks upon the organization itself -- that is, the hierarchical structure -- as the Church. This is true of Romanism.

Although the Roman Catholic Church admits today that God's grace is active in non-Catholic Christians, we are referred to as "separated brethren" (which the Roman Church, through its ecumenical movement, hopes to some day bring into fellowship under its authority). According to Romanism, unless we acquiesce to this movement toward "unity," we remain outside the graces of the Church, regardless of how much in God's grace we live.

"Bishops should show affectionate consideration in their relations with the separated brethren and should urge the faithful also to exercise all kindness and charity in their regard, encouraging ecumenism as it is understood by the Church" (*Vatican Council II*, p. 573).

The key phrase in this statement is "as it is understood by the Church." This betrays Roman Catholicism's cult mindset that sees the Church as a separate entity from the corporate body of all true believers. How the Roman Church views ecumenism is revealed in the Vatican II documents:

"The term 'ecumenical movement' indicates the initiatives and activities encouraged and organized, according to the various needs of the Church and as opportunities offer, to promote Christian unity" (*Vatican Council II*, p. 457).

To the papacy, the purpose of the ecumenical movement is to meet the needs of the Vatican's ecclesiastical system on the pretext of promoting Christian unity. But on what terms is unity to be realized?

"This sacred Council urges the faithful to abstain from any frivolous or imprudent zeal, for these can cause harm to true progress toward unity. Their ecumenical activity cannot be other than fully and sincerely Catholic, that is, loyal to the truth we have received from the Apostles and the Fathers, and in harmony with the faith which the Catholic Church has always professed, and at the same time tending toward that fullness in which our Lord wants his Body to grow in the course of time" (*Vatican Council II*, p. 470).

Through the ecumenical movement, the Roman Catholic Church is attempting to undo the Reformation, and to bring all of Christendom under the authority of the papacy. While it encourages "dialogue" with non-Catholic Christians, its position is adamant: there will be no unity without surrender to "Mother Church."

This establishes the pope as the central figure for the Faith in the same way that the apostles of other cults are established. While they acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the central figure of the faith to which they adhere, there can be no true relationship with

Him apart from the dictates of the hierarchical pronouncements. **The cult of the papacy is in itself sufficient grounds to recognize the Roman Church as a cult.** The display of adoration, the gaudy parade of a mere man as if he were a god, the pandering to idolatrous worship through bowing down and kissing his ring, the insistence that he be addressed as His Holiness the Pope (or Father) of all Christians cannot but confirm to any Christian -- let alone professed cult-watchers -- that Roman Catholicism is a cult.

Conclusion

There are other evidences of cultism in Roman Catholicism, too numerous to mention here. One significant consideration: any religious group that threatens damnation and/or excommunication to any segment of its membership for eating, drinking, marrying, or failure to attend religious rites is a cult.

Note: Dr. Bill Jackson, president of the Association of Fundamentalists Evangelizing Catholics (AFEC), prepared the following, "The Marks of a Cult," as applied to the Roman Catholic Church:

- 1) **Extra Biblical Revelation.** Dr. Ludwig Ott, probably the most readable and conservative Roman Catholic theologian, has written in *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*: "Theology, like faith, accepts as the source of its knowledge Holy Writ and Tradition ... and also the doctrinal assertions of the church ... this latter means the day by day teaching ministry of the Church through the pope and the bishops united with the pope." (This latter is referred to as the Magisterium.)
- 2) **False Basis of Salvation.** From *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), #16: "the ways of reaching beatitude—through right conduct, with the help of God's law and grace, through conduct that fulfills the twofold commandment of charity, specified in God's Ten Commandments."
- 3) **Uncertain Hope.** A very complimentary article in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* stated of the late Cardinal Krol: "He doesn't have to worry about food, clothing, shelter. What are his worries? 'My salvation, getting to Heaven' says the Prelate."
- 4) **Presumptuous Messianic Leadership.** If the pope is NOT the Vicar of the Messiah (Christ), he is presumptuous in thus identifying himself. Jesus Christ knew His church would need an infallible Head, so He Himself chose His Vicar in John 14:26, 15:26 and 16:7-15. This Vicar is not only infallible, He is infinite. He is the Holy Spirit.
- 5) **Doctrinal Ambiguity.** From the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*: "The Bible as a literary work had traditions that included myth" (Vol. 10, p. 184); "Some of the miracles recorded in Holy Scripture may be fictional and include imaginative literary exaggerations. The episode of Noah and the Ark is imaginative literary creation" (Vol. 9, p. 887); "The Gospels are not biographies of Jesus and still less scientific history" (Vol. 12, p. 403).
- 6) **Claims of Special Discoveries.** These, in Catholicism, are numberless. They go from the *Letter of the Oration*, a "true letter" of Jesus found in the Holy Sepulchre to the revelations at Fatima (an apparition approved by the Vatican). In between are countless appearances of Mary to Catherine Laboure, Simon Stock, the visionaries at Medjugorje and Bernadette Soubirous, etc. Add a few of Bob and Penny Lord's "Eucharistic Miracles" and you have more special discoveries than all the other cults combined.

- 7) **Defective Christology.** Pius XII's encyclical, *Mediator Dei*: Christ "has offered and continues to offer Himself as a victim for our sins." Hebrews 9:25 says, "nor yet that he should offer himself often." Hebrews 10:14, "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."
- 8) **Segmented Biblical Attention.** "The Seven Verses of Scripture Authoritatively Interpreted by Rome" (from the *Denver Catholic Register*, 3/29/90, p. 10): "Father (Francis X.) Cleary (S.J.), scripture scholar and professor in the Department of Theological Studies of St. Louis University, writes, 'Many people think that the Church has an official "party line" about every sentence in the Bible. In fact, only seven passages have been definitively interpreted.'"
- 9) **Enslaving Organizational Structures.** This may not be as evident in contemporary "liberated" American Catholicism, but it was very much a fact for Europe's millions in past centuries. All were taught that there was no salvation outside of the Catholic Church, which through her bishops could impose anathemas or excommunication seemingly at will. The masses of people were controlled by that system. Even the kings of Europe quaked at the possibility of papal displeasure.
- 10) **Financial Exploitation.** The coins ringing in the coffers of Tetzels have ceased, and exorbitant payments for early purgatorial release can be relegated to previous centuries, but the very fact that any Mass stipend is expected for Masses to remit fictitious purgatorial suffering is a case for financial exploitation.
- 11) **Denunciation of Others.** Priest Lawrence Feeney of the Boston Heresy Trial believed "extra nullus salus ecclesia" (no salvation outside the church). He was approached by Bobby Kennedy, who complained that Feeney was sending his Protestant friends to hell. Feeney replied, "I'm not sending them to hell, but I am telling them where to come if they want to get to Heaven."
- 12) **Syncretism.** From *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), #846: "Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try by their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation."

Roman Catholicism : Mariology³

Official RC Position on the Person and Work of the Virgin Mary

- ❖ Although for hundreds of years the Roman Catholic Church has given honor and adoration to Mary that the Scriptures do not, during the past fifty years, one of the most important trends in the Catholic Church has been an even greater emphasis upon the place of Mary. She is readily referred to as "holy," the "Mother of God" (official Catholic dogma in 431 A.D.), with prayers to her proclaimed in 600 A.D., and has been dubbed the "Co-Redemptrix," thereby making her an object of idolatrous worship (e.g., the Rosary has ten prayers to Mary for each two directed to God). In 1923, Pope Pius XI sanctioned Pope Benedict XV's (1914-1922)

³ Much of the material in this report (unless otherwise noted) has been excerpted and/or adapted from an article titled, "The Truth About Roman Catholicism," September-October 1996, Foundation magazine, pp. 5-16

pronouncement that Mary suffered with Christ, and that with Him, she redeemed the human race. And Pope Pius XII officially designated Mary the "Queen of Heaven" and "Queen of the World."

Catholics claim not only that Mary was perfectly sinless from conception, even as Jesus was (doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary," proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1854 -- "Let all the children of the Catholic Church ... continue to **venerate**, invoke, and pray to **the most blessed Virgin Mary**, mother of God, conceived without original sin."), but that the reason she never sinned at any time during her life was because she was **unable** to sin (cf. Lk. 1:46,47; Rom. 3:10,23; 5:12; Heb. 4:15; 1 Jn. 1:8,10). Catholics also believe that Mary was a perpetual virgin (cf. Ps. 69:8; Matt. 1:24,25; 13:54-56; Mk. 6:3; Jn. 7:5), and that she was assumed, body and soul, into heaven shortly after her death (doctrine of the "Assumption of the Virgin Mary," declared by Pope Pius XII in 1950). Finally, she was given the title "Mother of the Church" in 1965. The consequence of all this veneration of Mary, in effect, establishes her authority **above** Christ's! Rome says, "He came to us through Mary and we must go to Him through her." All this is so obviously idolatrous, one wonders why Catholics take offense when their religious affections are called cultic.

- ❖ There are some Roman Catholic observers that continue to believe that Mary has still not **officially** been proclaimed "Co-Redemptrix with Christ." In fact, the premier issue of the Roman Catholic publication *Catholic Heritage* displayed a front page with the title: "Mary, Mother of the Church." In a Question and Answer column the question is asked, "At the foot of the cross, Mary shared in the mystery of the passion. True or False? Answer: True. Mary united her sorrows to those of her Son. The sorrowful and immaculate heart of Mary bled with her Son for all of mankind. For this reason, **we invoke her under the title of Co-Redemptrix.**" (Emphasis added.)
- ❖ During the past forty years, each pope has done his part to increase Mary's influence in the Roman Catholic Church, based completely on tradition rather than upon the Bible. In the 8/25/75 issue of the official Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, **Pope Paul VI**, speaking of the ceremony celebrated the day before in honor of the Madonna at the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, said, "Her venerate image, known as 'Salus Populi Romani,' was carried in procession from St. Mary Major's as part of the Holy Year ceremonies, so that the overflow crowd of pilgrims, coming from all parts of the world, could see it and thus increase their devotion to her. In this way we should all be reminded of the meaning and practice of the cult of Mary, inseparable from the unique and central cult of Christ ... **Let us pray to her** with humble, trusting, and childlike faith." (Emphasis added.)
- ❖ The present pope, **John Paul II**, has dedicated himself completely to Mary. During his visit to Vancouver, B.C. in 1985, the special souvenir edition of *B.C. Catholic* carried a full page color photo of the pope under the caption of *Totus Tuus*, which, in Latin, means "all yours." The following explanation was then given:

"When Karol Wojtyla [John Paul II] was consecrated bishop of Krakow by Pius XII in 1958 he took, 'Totus Tuus' (all yours) as his motto, thus presenting himself to Mary. In his first Urbi et Orbi message immediately after being elected pope he said, 'At this difficult hour, full of fear, we must turn our thoughts with filial devotion to

the Virgin Mary who always lives in the midst of Christ and exists as his mother. We must repeat the words, *Totus Tuus* which 20 years ago were inscribed into our heart and soul."

Additionally, in "The Holy Father's Prayer for the Marian Year," John Paul II asks Mary to do what only God can do -- comfort, guide, strengthen, and protect "the whole of humanity ..." His prayer ends: "Sustain us, O Virgin Mary, on our journey of faith and obtain for us the grace of eternal salvation." What blasphemy to ask Mary to obtain what God offers freely by His grace through Christ! (4/97, *Berean Call*). To conclude the Marian Year, John Paul II's televised rosary on June 6, 1987, viewed by an estimated 1.5 billion people and broadcast by Vatican Radio in 35 languages, featured the pope praying to Mary and seeking her blessings. The pope concluded, "**with a smile from the Virgin Mary, the rosary will bring to our world the tender tones of God's love for anxious humanity in the 20th century**" (David Cloud, 6/13/97, FBIS).

- ❖ More recently, at his general audience in St. Peter's Square on 4/9/97, Pope John Paul II said that Mary uniquely collaborated in the work of salvation. According to the 4/9/97 Vatican Information Service, the pope stated that "in union with Christ and yielding to Him, She collaborated to obtain the grace of salvation for all humanity." He also said: "Having created man 'male and female,' in the Redemption too, the Lord wanted to put the New Eve next to the New Adam. ... Mary, the New Eve, thus becomes the perfect icon of the Church. She, in the divine plan, represents under the Cross redeemed humanity, which, needy of salvation, is made capable of offering a contribution to the development of the saving work."

This is nonsense, of course. The Bible nowhere says that Mary collaborated in salvation. The Bible nowhere says that Mary is the New Eve. To the contrary, the Bible says that the Lord Jesus Christ is the sole mediator between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5) and that He "BY HIMSELF purged our sins" (Heb. 1:3). Christ had absolutely no help in obtaining our salvation. Mary was a sinner and was saved in the same way that all sinners are saved -- by placing her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. She is not the Mother of God or the Queen of Heaven. The Apostles did not exalt Mary nor did they teach us to pray to her. She cannot answer prayer nor assist anyone in their needs, neither spiritually or physically (David Cloud, 4/27/97, FBIS).

- ❖ On 5/7/97, Pope John Paul II dedicated his general audience to "the Virgin Mary" and urged all Christians to accept Mary as their mother. He noted the words spoken by Jesus on the cross to Mary and to John -- "Woman, behold thy son!" and "Behold thy mother!" (John 19:26,27), and he claimed that in this statement "**It is possible to understand the authentic meaning of Marian worship** in the ecclesial community ... which furthermore is based on the will of Christ" (Vatican Information Service, May 7, 1997).

John Paul II underlined that "the history of Christian piety teaches that **Mary is the path that leads to Christ**, and that filial devotion to her does not at all diminish intimacy with Jesus, but rather, it increases it and leads it to very high levels of perfection." He concluded by asking all Christians "to make room (for Mary) in their daily lives, **acknowledging her providential role in the path of salvation**" (Ibid.).

This is heretical and blasphemous. Mary was a sinner who was saved by grace in the same manner of any sinner who trusts Jesus Christ for salvation. The Bible says absolutely nothing about her beyond this. She is not the Mother of God or Ever Virgin or the Queen of Heaven or Co-Redemptress with Christ. She cannot hear or answer prayer, which is a prerogative of Almighty God alone. The Apostles taught absolutely nothing about "Marian worship." Men do not need Mary to bring them to Christ. The needy sinner comes directly to the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole Mediator between God and men: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:5-6). Christ promised, "COME UNTO ME, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). The Bible nowhere invites men to come to Mary or to trust Mary or to pray to Mary (David Cloud, 5/7/97, FBIS).

Pope John Paul II has visited many of the major Shrines to Mary. He attributed his escape from death at the hands of a would-be assassin and the overthrow of communism in Eastern Europe to the intervention of Mary. In 10/95, he said, "Mary is recognized and venerated as the true Mother of God and the Redeemer ... she contributed effectively to our spiritual birth and to the development of the life of grace within us." In his 12/18/96 general audience, he stated: "Mary intensely and mysteriously unites her life with Christ's sorrowful mission: She was to become her Son's faithful coworker for the salvation of the human race" (2/17/97, *Christian News*). In his general audience on 6/19/96, he proclaimed that Mary was sinless throughout her life:

"At today's general audience, Pope John Paul continued his catechesis on Mary, recalling that the Church holds, in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, that she was preserved from original sin at the first moment of her existence and, as well, that 'Mary was free from personal sin and moral imperfection throughout her life.' The Holy Father went on to say that 'the possibility of sinning does not spare even a Christian who is transformed or renewed by grace ... unless, as the Council of Trent stated, a special privilege assures such immunity from sin. This is what happened to Mary.' The council, stating that the Church 'firmly holds this (privilege of Mary), ... confirms its solid doctrinal character'" (6/19/96, Vatican Information Service, Vatican City).[1](#)

- ❖ The pope is not alone in his veneration of Mary:
 - (a) A Roman Catholic priest, in the Summer 1991 issue of the *Fatima Crusader*, said that Mary came to Fatima to save our souls and that Mary herself said that "I will save the world, with my Rosary and My scapular." The priest also said that if a Catholic says the Rosary every day, and always wears the scapular of Mary, then she is bound to save you from hell, *a guarantee for salvation!!* (Reported in the 9/15/91, *Calvary Contender*).
 - (b) Millions of Catholics are making pilgrimages to the various Marian shrines, seeking and often claiming miracles of healing and answers to their prayers to Mary. New apparitions of Mary and special messages from her are being claimed in various parts of the world [even on the outside glass walls of a Savings & Loan building in Florida in 1996!]. On 6/20/96, more than 1,000 Catholic priests gathered in Fatima, Portugal, for the First International Meeting

of Priests. The Vatican Information Service said that the priests gathered at the foot of the statue of Mary and "consecrated themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary." (Reported in a 6/28/96 FBIS report.)

(c) The Winter '94 *Fatima Crusader* (published by Roman Catholics) had the following quotes: "Madonna has a share in the royalty of God ... One rightly calls her Jesus' Queen-Mother, and ... She now takes her place in glory at Her Son's right hand. ... Yes, O Mary, Mother of God, Sovereign Virgin, God's most glorious creature, we want to follow You as our Queen of love, who art all-powerful ... The Holy Mother of God revealed ...: 'I am She who is in the Divine Trinity ... Submit yourself to the authority of the Pope ...' The Madonna brings Jesus to us and takes us to Jesus. That is why we call her Mediatrix. ... Mary came to Fatima to save souls from Hell. ... Mary said, 'Through the Rosary and Scapular I will save the world.'"

- ❖ The 6/97 issue of *New Covenant* magazine features an article by Catholic priest Michael Scanlan entitled, "Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit: What God Has Joined Should Remain Joined in Our Hearts." *New Covenant* is a charismatic Roman Catholic publication which promotes charismatic experiences and traditional Catholic doctrines. Scanlan is the head of the Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio. (The Catholicism of the Franciscan University is even more dangerous than traditional Catholicism, because its adoption of charismatic experience has given it a semblance of Biblical piety and spiritual fervor.) Consider the following amazing excerpt:

"Today, I sense a new oneness, or completion, in my spiritual life **as I seek to join Mary and the Holy Spirit in my prayer**. I've also seen this new fullness and vitality flow into student groups on our campus and into prayer groups as they've celebrated **the spousal unity of our Lady and the Holy Spirit**. ... Mary didn't say, 'I **was** immaculately conceived,' as if it were a past event and she just wanted to reinforce the fact of **her sinless conception**. Mary identifies herself as the Immaculate Conception in the present tense ... to show that, from her conception forward, her spirit has been totally united and totally subjected to the Holy Spirit. Thus **Mary became the spouse of the Holy Spirit when she was conceived**, not years later when she gave her consent to the angel Gabriel and conceived Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. ...

"This spousal union is such that you can't have one without the other: The Holy Spirit is present wherever and whenever He acts. I don't claim to fully understand this mysterious unity, but I know that **any attempt to divorce Mary and the Holy Spirit impoverishes us spiritually**. It's only to the extent to which Mary and the Holy Spirit are together in our hearts, minds and spirits that we can experience the power and grace of their spousal union....

"I pray the De Montfort Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary every morning. ... **I specifically invite our Lady, my Mother and Queen, to oversee, guide and protect my day, consecrating all that I do to her** ... At the same time, I invite the Holy Spirit to guide, empower, enlighten and inspire my day. Since I've started consciously uniting Mary and the Holy Spirit, I have experienced new blessings of infused prayer and the presence of the Lord Jesus and the Father. ... Both Mary and the Holy spirit are given to us and for us as advocates. Both Mary

and the Holy Spirit serve to mediate grace in our lives" (Michael Scanlan, "Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit," *New Covenant*, June 1997, pp. 16-18).

This is absolute blasphemy. Nowhere in the Scriptures is Mary exalted this way. Not one time do we find the Apostles or early Christians praying to her. None of the Apostolic epistles to the churches even mention her. Everything Scanlan says about Mary is based on human thinking apart from divine revelation, and the Mary that he consecrates his life to exists only in his imagination.

The Franciscan University sponsors annual "Defending the Faith" conferences, in which Catholic dogma is upheld and defended with great boldness. One conference in 1996 was dedicated to "Mary as spouse of the Holy Spirit." The announcement said, "Rediscover Mary's prophetic role through her recent apparitions." The cover of the 1997 issue of the Franciscan University Summer Conference Magazine features this prayer by President Scanlan: "With renewed fervor, we reconsecrate our lives and our work to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary." (Excerpted in part from the 6/10/97 FBIS.)

- ❖ The following *random* quotes from the book *Ten Series of Meditations on the Mystery of the Rosary*, by John Ferraro, is intended to give an overview of Roman Catholic dogma concerning the Virgin Mary. Ferraro's book was given the **Nihil Obstat** and the **Imprimatur**, which is an official statement by the Roman Catholic Church that the book "is free of doctrinal or moral error." Therefore, **we can take these quotes as official Roman Catholic doctrine:**
 - (a) She [Mary] is co-Redemptrix of the human race.
 - (b) The church and the saints greet her thus: "You, O Mary, together with Jesus Christ, redeemed us."
 - (c) God has ordained that no grace will be granted to us except through Mary. It is a doctrine preached by all the saints that no grace will come to us from heaven without passing through Mary's hands. No one will be saved nor obtain mercy except through You, O' heavenly lady. Remember this well, no one will enter heaven without passing through Mary as one would pass through a door. O' Mary, our salvation is in your hands.
 - (d) During His passion, Mary suffered in her heart all the pains that Jesus suffered in His body. For this reason, God exalted her so greatly.
 - (e) Mary is our co-Redemptrix because she gave us Jesus pledge of our salvation. Furthermore, she is co-Redemptrix of the human race, because with Christ she ransomed mankind from the power of Satan.
 - (f) Jesus redeemed us with the blood of His body, Mary with the agonies of her heart.
 - (g) We were condemned through the fault of one woman; we are saved through the merits of another woman. Just as Eve was the root of death for everyone, so Mary was the source of life for everyone.
 - (h) Mary is our co-Redemptrix because she suffered in her heart whatever was *lacking* in the passion of Christ. Are we obligated to Jesus for His passions? -- so we are indebted to Mary for her participation in His passions. She gave birth to Jesus with joy; she gave birth to us, brothers of Jesus, in anguish and sorrow.
 - (i) Mary, Queen of the Apostles: She is queen of apostles because she *formed* them and *directed* them in their preaching. Mary is Queen of Apostles because by herself she routed all the heresies. Mary is Queen of Apostles because she is mother of grace and channel of mercy. She is Queen of Apostles because in her

every hope is life and virtue. She is Queen of Apostles because she is conqueror of the Infernal Dragon. (Emphasis added.)

- (j) If we spread devotion to Mary, we will gain heaven -- "Who explains me will have life everlasting."
- (k) God shared His power with her [Mary]. "My mother, ask, for I must not turn away your face." Christ speaking to Mary: "Without your command, no one shall move hand or foot in the whole land."
- (l) All grace is passed from God to Jesus, from Jesus to Mary, and from Mary to us. The grace of God, cure for our ills, comes to us through Mary like water through an aqueduct.
- (m) Mary is the compliment of the Holy Spirit. Before God she asks not -- she commands!
- (n) No true devotee of Mary will be damned because she is the terrible conqueror of the devil.
- (o) Because she believed in Christ's mission of salvation, she became the co-Redemptrix of the whole human race.
- (p) Mary is holier than the saints, loftier than the heavens, more glorious than the cherubim, more venerable than any other creature.
- (q) No one can acquire an intimate union with Jesus and a perfect fidelity to the Holy Spirit without being greatly united with Mary.
- (r) It is necessary for us to have a mediator *besides* Jesus as mediator, and we will never find one more qualified than Mary. (Emphasis added.)
- (s) It was never written of anyone that he became a saint without having a special devotion to Mary.
- (t) When God deeply loves a soul, and finds it stained with sin, He covers it with a beautiful mantle that makes it precious to Him -- that mantle is Mary.
- (u) Mary is the ark of salvation built by God on the deluge of our faults so that whoever desires may enter and be saved.
- (v) Whoever is enamored of Mary, attaches his soul to a steadfast anchor that will draw him to the port of happiness.
- (w) It is important to be devoted to Mary as it is to enter heaven, because no one can enter Paradise who is not devoted to Mary.
- (x) In reward for humility, God gave to Mary the power of filling with blessed souls the thrones left empty by the rebellious angels.
- (y) Mary is secretary of the King of Heaven. It is she who writes in the Book of Life the names of the predestined, and signs them with the emblem of God. She herself is the Book of Life from which God will read the names of the elect on the day of judgment.
- (z) To be devoted to you, O' Mary, is a weapon of salvation which God gave to those whom He positively wants to save.

❖ There is absolutely no Scriptural foundation for any of the beliefs or practices detailed in this report. Mary was indeed a virgin in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy that Christ would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7: 14). She was a godly woman, but not sinless. As with all true believers in Christ, when Mary died, her soul and spirit went to heaven, but her body awaits the resurrection. She did not bodily ascend to heaven as did Jesus Christ. Nothing in Scripture indicates that prayers were ever offered to Mary nor that she was worshiped by anyone. Most of Roman Catholic teaching concerning Mary is based entirely on human tradition and contradicts God's Word.

1 Commenting on the pope's statements about Mary, David Cloud, in a 6/20/96 FBIS report, said:

"This blasphemous dogma [Mary's sinlessness] detracts from the sinlessness of Christ, who ALONE was born of a virgin and immaculate. The Bible nowhere says Mary was sinless. It says 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23). The only exception is the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens' (Heb. 7:26). Mary knew her own sin and acknowledged her need of a Saviour (Luke 1:47). None of the Lord's Apostles exalted Mary; none of them applied to her such titles as sinless, immaculate, ever-virgin, Mother of God, Blessed Virgin, Holy Queen, Queen of Heaven, Our Lady, Co-Redemptress, Immaculate Virgin, etc. The Apostles taught us that Jesus Christ ALONE is the Mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5). The Roman Catholic Church's doctrine of Mary is blasphemous error. Mary cannot answer prayer. She cannot aid in man's salvation. She cannot intercede with Christ in behalf of God's people. She is not Queen of Heaven. The only Queen of Heaven mentioned in Scripture is an Old Testament idol (Jer. 44:18-19). Every prayer addressed to Mary is idolatry. If the Roman Catholic Church did not hold any false doctrine other than its dogmas pertaining to Mary, the Bible would require us to reject it as a false church on this basis alone.

"The pope also cited the Council of Trent as authority for his position on Mary. The Council of Trent was a Catholic council held from 1545-1563 in an attempt to destroy the progress of the Protestant Reformation. This council denied every Reformation doctrine, including Scripture alone and grace alone. Trent hurled 125 anathemas (eternal damnation) against Bible-believing Christians. The Council of Trent has not been rejected by modern Catholicism. The modern Popes and Councils continue to cite it as authoritative."

Roman Catholicism: The Paganization of Christianity —Constantine and the Catholic Church-State⁴

Constantine: Builder of Christendom

To suggest, as some historians (and many others with axes to grind) have done, that Constantine rescued the Christian church from persecution is fantasy. Christians had enjoyed complete tolerance in the Roman Empire from 260-302. More importantly, Christians were persecuted by the regime that Constantine constructed.

What was happening to the churches during that period is significant. As Peter Brown, one of the more reliable ancient historians put it: "The conversion of a Roman emperor to Christianity, of Constantine in 312, might not have happened—or, if it had, it would have taken on a totally different meaning—if it had not been preceded, for two generations, by the conversion of Christianity to the culture and ideals of the Roman world" (Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity, A.D. 150-750*, London and New York, 1971, p. 82). Brown sees two generations of accommodation, compromise, corruption, and finally conversion of the churches to their culture. But the worldliness

⁴ Excerpted and or adapted from: "Christ and Civilization" Part 3, *The Trinity Review*, February 2003, pp. 2-4

of the churches began much earlier, even before the deaths of the apostles.

What the Constantinian establishment of the Catholic Church meant was that the bishops (note that the Biblical, Presbyterian form of church government had been abandoned by the churches before the time of Constantine) now joined the bureaucrats to form a new governing class in the Empire. The bishops of Italy became the heirs of the Roman Senate, and the bishop of Rome became the Emperor's successor. Throughout the Empire, Catholic bishops used monks (communist ascetics) as terrorists to enforce their rule:

"Bands of monastic vigilantes, led by Schenudi of Atripe (died c. 466) patrolled the towns of Upper Egypt ransacking the houses of pagan notables for idols. In North Africa, similar wandering monks, the Circumcellions, armed with cudgels called 'Israels,' stalked the great estates, their cry of 'Praise be to God' more fearful than the roaring of a mountain lion" (Brown, p. 104). [And we wonder where the Muslims got the idea for their war cry, "Allah Akbar."]

"The Christian bishop," Brown reports, "now ruling large congregations and backed by the violence of the monks, had come to the fore. The Emperor Theodosius committed the bloodbath of Thessalonica [massacring the residents of the city in 390] ... yet he went down to history as Theodosius the 'Great,' the exemplary Catholic monarch" (Brown, p. 106).

With its legal establishment, the Catholic Church became wealthy as well as bloody:

"Wealth might be used to cover the costs of an acquittal at the Last Day.... From the fifth century onwards, this rich flood welled into the Christian Church 'for the remission of sins.' The rise of the economic position of the Christian Church was sudden and dramatic: It mushroomed like a modern insurance company. By the sixth century, the income of the bishop of Ravenna was 12,000 gold pieces; the bishop of a small town drew a salary as great as that of a senatorial provincial governor" (Brown, p. 109).

The time-honored, traditional Roman system of exploitation of inferiors by superiors, with all the hierarchy exploiting the people, had been adopted by the Catholic Church-State. This exploitation was possible only because the Catholic Church had already rejected the Gospel of salvation by free grace. The Catholic Church's rejection of the Gospel of justification by faith alone made all its subsequent errors and atrocities not only possible, but inevitable.

Constantine did not establish Christianity as the only lawful *religion* of the Empire (an act that would have been Antichristian); he established the Catholic Church as the only lawful *church* in the Empire, a different Antichristian act.

Some have argued that Constantine's initial intention was freedom of worship for all. The Edict of Milan, issued in 313 with Emperor Licinius, read, in part:

"Since we saw that freedom of worship ought not to be denied ..., to each man's judgment and will the right should be given to care for sacred things according to each man's free choice."

Eusebius (263-339), bishop of Caesarea, reported a rescript of the Edict of Milan sent to a provincial governor bearing these words:

"For a long time past we have made it our aim that freedom of worship should not be denied, but that every man, according to his own inclination and wish, should be given permission to practice his religion as he chose Every man may have permission to choose and practice whatever religion he wishes" (Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, Book 10, paragraph 5).

Whatever Constantine's intention—to recognize genuine freedom of religion or merely to use freedom of religion as a transition from established paganism to established Catholicism—freedom of religion was *not* the result of his edicts.

In the same year in which he issued the Edict of Milan, Constantine ordered his prefect in Africa to persecute the Donatists:

"I consider it absolutely contrary to the divine law that we should overlook such quarrels and contentions, whereby the Highest Divinity may perhaps be moved to wrath, not only against the human race, but also against me myself, to whose care He has, by His celestial will, committed the government of all earthly things For I shall really and fully be able to feel secure and always to hope for prosperity and happiness from the ready kindness of the most mighty God, only when I see all venerating the most holy God in the proper cult of the Catholic Religion with harmonious brotherhood of worship."

Constantine did not establish Christianity because Constantine, quite frankly, did not know what Christianity is. The legend of Constantine, which Constantine himself promoted, says that before the Battle of Milvian Bridge, he had seen a vision of a cross—but pagan Romans had seen visions for centuries. In fact, this was not the first vision Constantine had seen; he had earlier seen Apollo, who had guaranteed his earlier military victories. But at a feast concluding the Council of Nicaea in 325 (which he had summoned), Constantine first gave a public account—13 years after the fact—of the apparition he had experienced, and Eusebius, his obsequious biographer, reported it for us:

"The Emperor said that about the noon hour, when the day was already beginning to wane, he saw with his own eyes in the sky above the Sun a cross composed of light, and that there was attached to it an inscription saying, 'By this conquer.' At the sight, he said, astonishment seized him and all the troops who were accompanying him on the journey and were observers of the miracle. He said, moreover, that he doubted within himself what the import of this apparition could be. And while he continued to ponder and reason on its meaning, night suddenly came on; then in his sleep, the Christ of God appeared to him with the same sign which he had seen in the heavens, and commanded him to make a likeness of that sign which he had seen in the heavens, and to use it as a safeguard [i.e., a charm] in all engagements with his enemies. At dawn of day, he arose, and communicated the marvel to his friends; and then, calling together the workers in gold and precious stones, he sat in the midst of them, and described to them the figure of the sign he had seen, bidding them represent it in gold and precious stones. And this representation I myself have had opportunity of seeing" (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book 1, chapter 30).

If indeed Constantine saw or heard something, it was a demonic vision and voice, not a word from God. Brown tells us that after his "conversion," "The first Christian emperor accepted pagan honours from the citizens of Athens. He ransacked the Aegean for pagan

classical statuary to adorn Constantinople. He treated a pagan philosopher as a colleague. He paid the travelling expenses of a pagan priest who visited the pagan monuments of Egypt" (Brown, p. 88). Sol Invictus, the pagan Sun god, was honored on Constantine's coins until 321.

It was this man who is credited with making "Christianity" the lawful religion of the Empire, but Constantine, himself not knowing what Christianity is, turned to the Catholic bishops, who gave him various answers. That was intolerable. And for that reason, Constantine summoned councils in an attempt to unify the Empire theologically, just as he had unified it militarily in 324, when he defeated Licinius, his last rival for power. Councils assembled in response to his orders and those of subsequent emperors; and creedal formulations from the fourth century onward become the creedal formulations approved by the Roman Emperor. All who disagreed were banished from the Empire, or punished in more painful ways.

In 324, after defeating Licinius, Constantine proclaimed himself head of the Catholic Church and summoned bishops to Nicaea for a council in which he himself would preside. Two hundred fifty obeyed. In another summons he wrote: "such is the regard I pay to the lawful Catholic Church that I desire you to leave no schism or division of any kind anywhere."

Not only would the Emperor permit no disagreement (for there must be unity of doctrine to match the political unity of the Empire), he also began to subsidize the Catholic Church:

"Inasmuch as I have resolved that in all provinces, namely Africa, Numidia, and Mauretania, certain named ministers of the lawful and most holy Catholic Religion should receive some contribution toward expenses, I have sent a letter to Ursus, the Eminent Finance Officer of Africa, informing him that he must arrange the transfer to Your Steadfastness [Caecilian, bishop of Carthage] of 3000 *folles* in cash [an enormous amount in that time]. Your task on receipt of this sum of money will be to see that it is distributed among all the persons named above according to the schedule supplied to you by Hosius [bishop of Corduba and religious adviser to Constantine]. If later you find that you still lack means to carry out my intentions in this matter in respect of them all, you must not hesitate to ask Heraclidas our treasurer for whatever you find necessary. I have given him orders in person that if Your Steadfastness should ask him for any sum, he is to arrange for its transfer to you without question" (Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, Book 10, chapter 6).

In 315, Constantine issued an edict making it a crime for Jews to proselytize. His goal in all this was to ensure that the "proper cult of the Catholic Religion" would be observed throughout the Empire. So much for every man being permitted to practice his religion as he chose. A century later, the penalty for Jewish proselytizing was made death.

Papal Rome

Fifteen centuries after the birth of Christ, little had changed in Western Europe but the names of the gods worshiped. The Western Europeans of the fifteenth century still lived in an enchanted world—a world of magic and miracles.

- ❖ Instead of the twelve gods of ancient Rome, there were the cults of the twelve apostles, whose relics could cure diseases, control the weather, and inflict harm on those who opposed them.
- ❖ Instead of the departmental deities of ancient Rome, there were the departmental Saints of papal Rome.
- ❖ Instead of the cult of Diana, Queen of Heaven, there was the cult of Mary, Queen of Heaven.

The holidays (in pre-Reformation Germany, there were 161 days of holy fasting and abstinence each year), processions, sacrifices, and rituals continued; the apparitions, pilgrimages, relics, and shrines remained; the gladiatorial contests were replaced by *autos da fe* at which the religious would chant the *Psalms* and pray the liturgy. Laing wrote, "though there is a notable difference in the character of the supernatural beings that in the fourth century succeeded to the multitudinous functions of the old departmental spirits, there is little or no change in the attitude of mind"

The founders of the Catholic Church-State "were keenly interested in winning the pagans to the faith, and they succeeded. But undoubtedly one element in their success was the inclusion in their system of the doctrine of the veneration of Saints. They seem to have felt that in order to make any headway at all, it was necessary for them to match the swarms of spirits available for the pagans with a multitude of wonder-working Saints and Martyrs. How far they were prepared to go is indicated by their favorable attitude toward the pagan veneration of Virgil that amounted almost to deification The Saints succeeded to the worship of the dead just as they had succeeded to the cult of the departmental deities and to the little gods of the Roman household Reports of miracles wrought by human beings were common among the ancient Romans and were accepted by the great mass of people without question The [Roman] Christians adapted themselves to the pagan attitude. They matched the miracle-workers of the pagans with the wonder-working Saints; and with their success the number of miracles increased. The sanctity of relics, well established as it has been among the pagans, acquired far greater vogue in [medieval] Christian times and was given a degree of emphasis that it had never had before Like the deified heroes and emperors of pagan times, the Saints were honored with altars, sacred edifices, incense, lights, hymns, *ex-voto* offerings, festivals with illuminations and high hilarity, prayers, and invocations. They became intermediate divinities" (Gordon J. Laing, *Survivals of Roman Religion*, pp. 8-9, 83, 120-121).

One Roman Catholic historian described the religion of early sixteenth-century Europe in these words:

"In 1509 when John Calvin was born, Western Christendom still shared a common religion of immanence. Heaven was never too far from Earth. The sacred was diffused in the profane, the spiritual in the material. Divine power, embodied in the [Roman] Church and its sacraments, reached down through innumerable points of contact to make itself felt: to forgive or punish, to protect against the ravages of nature, to heal, to soothe, and to work all sorts of wonders. Priests could absolve adulterers and murderers, or bless fields and cattle. During their lives, saints could prevent lightning from striking, restore sight to the blind, or preach to birds and fish. Unencumbered by the limitations of time and space, they could do even more through their images and relics after death.

A pious glance at a statue of St. Christopher in the morning ensured protection from illness and death throughout the day. Burial in the habit of St. Francis improved the prospects for the afterlife. A pilgrimage to Santiago, where the body of the apostle James had been deposited by angels, or to Canterbury ... could make a lame man walk, or hasten a soul's release from purgatory. The map of Europe bristled with holy places; life pulsed with the expectation of the miraculous. In the popular mind and in much of the official teaching of the [Roman] Church, almost anything was possible. One could even eat the flesh of the risen Christ in a consecrated wafer.

"Much of late medieval religion was magical, and ... the difference between church men and magicians lay less in what they claimed they could do than in the authority on which their claims rested. This is illustrated by the crucifix that 'controlled' the weather at Tallard Late medieval piety showed an almost irrepressible urge to localize the divine power, make it tangible, and bring it under control" (Carlos Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin*, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 1 & 11).

The New Catholic Catechism

By David W. Cloud

The Roman Catholic Church published a new Catechism in 1992 in Latin and the English translation was completed in 1994. The following excerpts demonstrate without question that the Roman Catholic Church is apostate and cursed of God. Bible-believing people are commanded by God to separate from those who preach a false gospel. Some counter that not all Roman Catholics believe the following false doctrines. That might be so, but the fact is that the following is the most recent and most official declaration of true Catholic belief in print. If a professed Catholic does not agree with the following dogmas, he should not claim to be a Roman Catholic, because this IS Roman Catholicism.

The blasphemous dogmas of this official Catholic catechism reveal the blindness and wickedness of those "evangelicals" who are calling for closer relationships with Romanism.

It is interesting, in passing, to note that all Scripture references in this new catechism are cited from the Revised Standard Version or from the New Revised Standard Version. The fact that the chief Apostate "church" has put such an unhesitating stamp of approval upon the critical text and the modern versions thereof is evidence that those versions are corrupted.

We turn now to the Catechism itself:

Introduction by John Paul II

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is the result of very extensive collaboration; it was prepared over six years of intense work ... The project was the object of extensive consultation among all Catholic Bishops, their Episcopal Conferences or Synods, and of theological and catechetical institutes. As a whole, it received a broadly favourable acceptance on the part of the Episcopate. **It can be said that this Catechism is the**

result of the collaboration of the whole Episcopate of the Catholic Church ... the harmony of so many voices truly expresses what could be called the "symphony" of the faith.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, lastly, is offered to every individual ... who wants to know what the Catholic Church believes.

These statements put the lie to the popular idea that there is no one true Catholic dogma and that Romanism has no symphony of faith. It also proves that it IS possible for one to know and understand what Catholicism believes without being a trained Catholic theologian. Following are the heresies of the Roman Catholic Church which are reaffirmed in the new catechism:

TRADITION EQUAL WITH SCRIPTURE

80 Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other.

82 As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, "does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.

BIBLE INTERPRETATION THE SOLE RIGHT OF POPE AND BISHOPS

100 The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him.

MARY, SINLESS, PERPETUAL VIRGIN, MOTHER OF GOD, QUEEN OF HEAVEN, CO- REDEMPTRESS WITH CHRIST

491 Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854...

494 ... As St. Irenaeus says, "Being obedient she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race." ...

495 ... the Church confesses that Mary is truly "Mother of God" (Theotokos).

508 From among the descendants of Eve, God chose the Virgin Mary to be the mother of his Son. "Full of grace," Mary is "the most excellent fruit of redemption" (SC 103): from the first instant of her conception, she was totally preserved from the stain of original sin and she remained pure from all personal sin throughout her life.

964 Mary's role in the Church is inseparable from her union with Christ and flows directly from it. "This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death"; it is made manifest above all at the hour of his Passion. ... enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, joining herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and

lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim, born of her ...

966 "Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son ..." The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection ... "In giving birth you kept your virginity... You conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death" (Byzantine Liturgy, Troparion, Feast of the Dormition, August 15th.).

968 "In a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the Saviour's work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace."

969 "... Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us gifts of eternal salvation. ... Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix."

ROSARY AND PRAYERS TO MARY

971 "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship." The Church rightly honours "the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. ..." The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an "epitome of the whole Gospel," express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.

FULLNESS OF SALVATION ONLY THROUGH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism explains: "For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the universal help toward salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained. It was to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, that we believe that our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to establish on earth the one Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the People of God."

846 Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation ... thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it.

ALL GRACE COMES THROUGH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

819 Christ's Spirit uses these Churches and ecclesial communities as means of salvation, whose power derives from the fullness of grace and truth that Christ has entrusted to the Catholic Church. All these blessings come from Christ and lead to him, and are in themselves calls to "Catholic unity."

834 Particular Churches are fully catholic through their communion with one of them, the Church of Rome "which presides in charity." "For with this church, by reason of its pre-eminence, the whole Church, that is the faithful everywhere, must necessarily be in accord" (St. Irenaeus, Adv. Haeres, 3,3,2:PG 7/1,849; cf. Vatican Council I: DS 3057).

NO CHRISTIAN UNITY APART FROM THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

820 Christ bestowed unity on his Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose ... The desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit.

SALVATION INCLUDES THE MUSLIMS

841 The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day.

SUPREMACY OF THE POPE

882 The Pope, Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, "is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful." "For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered."

891 The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful -- who confirms his brethren in the faith -- he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. ... The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium," above all in an Ecumenical Council. ... This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself.

PRAYERS OF THE DEAD

956 "Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness. ... They do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, as they proffer the merits which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus. ... So by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped."

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

958 "In full consciousness of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honoured with great respect the memory of the dead; and `because it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins' she offers her suffrages for them." Our prayer for them is capable not only of helping them, but also of making their intercession for us effective.

SALVATION THROUGH BAPTISM

1263 By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin.

1257 The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation. ... The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal

beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are "reborn of water and the Spirit." God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism...

1265 Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte "a new creature," an adopted son of God, who has become a "partaker of the divine nature," member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

1267 ... From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant...

PENANCE NECESSARY FOR SALVATION

980 It is through the sacrament of Penance that the baptized can be reconciled with God and with the Church: "Penance has rightly been called by the holy Fathers 'a laborious kind of baptism.' This sacrament of Penance is necessary for salvation for those who have fallen after Baptism, just as Baptism is necessary for salvation for those who have not yet been reborn" (Council of Trent (1551): DS 1672; cf. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Oratio 39, 17: PG 36,356).

THE CHURCH CAN FORGIVE SINS

982 There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive. ... Christ who died for all men desires that in his Church the gates of forgiveness should always be open to anyone who turns away from sin.

PURGATORY

1030 All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation, but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

1031 The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Council of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire. "As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire."

INDULGENCES AND GOOD WORKS FOR THE DEAD

1032 From the beginning the Church has honoured the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead.

SACRAMENTS AND LITURGY COMMUNICATE GRACE

1084 By the action of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit they [the sacraments] make present efficaciously the grace that they signify.

1131 The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us.

SACRAMENTS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION

1129 The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation. ... The fruit of the sacramental life is that the Spirit of adoption makes the faithful partakers in the divine nature by uniting them in a living union with the only Son, the Saviour.

INFANTS BORN AGAIN THROUGH BAPTISM

1250 Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God ... The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth.

THE MASS A RE-SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

1414 As sacrifice, the Eucharist is also offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead and to obtain spiritual or temporal benefits from God.

1365 Because it is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the Eucharist is also a sacrifice. ... In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

1367 The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice: ... "In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner."

THE MASS IS A CONVERSION OF BREAD AND WINE INTO THE VERY CHRIST

1376 The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring "... by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation."

1413 By the consecration the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about. Under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real and substantial manner: his Body and his Blood, with his soul and his divinity (cf. Council of Trent: DS 1640; 1651).

1374 ... In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained."

PRIEST HAS THE POWER TO CONVERT BREAD AND WINE INTO CHRIST

1375 It is by the conversion of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood that Christ becomes present in this sacrament. ... The priest, in the role of Christ, pronounces

these words, but their power and grace are God's. This is my body, he says. This word transforms the things offered. ... The power of the blessing prevails over that of nature, because by the blessing nature itself is changed.

MASS CONDUCTED IN COMMUNION WITH THE DEAD

1370 ... In communion with and commemorating the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, the Church offers the Eucharistic sacrifice.

ELEMENTS OF THE MASS TO BE WORSHIPPED AND CARRIED IN PROCESSIONS

1418 Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar he is to be honoured with the worship of adoration.

1378 Worship of the Eucharist. In the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. ... reserving the consecrated hosts with the utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession.

ALL SINS MUST BE CONFESSED TO A PRIEST

1493 One who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the Church, must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience. The confession of venial faults, without being necessary in itself, is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church.

1456 All mortal sins of which penitents after a diligent self-examination are conscious must be recounted by them in confession, even if they are most secret and have been committed against the last two precepts of the Decalogue. ... those who fail to do so and knowingly withhold some, place nothing before the divine goodness for remission through the mediation of the priest, 'for if the sick person is too ashamed to show his wound to the doctor, the medicine cannot heal what it does not know.'

1497 Individual and integral confession of grave sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS AND ESCAPE FROM PURGATORY THROUGH INDULGENCES

1471 An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints. ... Indulgences may be applied to the living or the dead.

1478 An indulgence is obtained through the Church who ... intervenes in favour of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the punishments due for their sins. ...

1479 Since the faithful departed now being purified are also members of the same communion of saints, one way we can help them is to obtain indulgences for them, so that the temporal punishments due for their sins may be remitted.

SALVATION THROUGH THE GOOD WORKS OF THE "SAINTS"

1475 In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others ... Thus recourse to the communion of saints lets the contrite sinner be more promptly and efficaciously purified of the punishments for sin.

1476 We also call these spiritual goods of the communion of saints the Church's treasury....

1477 This treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are truly immense, unfathomable and even pristine in their value before God. In the treasury, too, are the prayers and good works of all the saints. ... In this way they attained their own salvation and at the same time cooperated in saving their brothers in the unity of the Mystical Body.

VENERATION OF RELICS

1674 Besides sacramental liturgy and sacramentals, catechesis must take into account the forms of piety and popular devotions among the faithful ... such as the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross, religious dances, the rosary, medals, etc.

VENERATION OF IMAGES

2131 Basing itself on the mystery of the incarnate Word the seventh ecumenical council at Nicaea (787) justified against the iconoclasts the veneration of icons -- of Christ, but also of the Mother of God, the angels and all the saints. By becoming incarnate, the Son of God introduced a new "economy" of images.

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Christian Science

Christian or Cult?⁵

The movement known as Christian Science is a religion "emphasizing divine healing as practiced by Jesus Christ." It is officially known as *The Church of Christ, Scientist* (CCS) (with headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts), founded in 1879 by the much married Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy (1821-1910). It is one of the more sophisticated modern cults, attracting many intellectuals. Estimated membership was about 350,000 in the 1930s with approximately 2,500 branch churches, societies, and college organizations in more than 50 countries worldwide. Estimates suggest that membership has fallen to well under 100,000 at the present time. While the branches are democratic in government, they all conform to the rules laid down in Mary Baker Eddy's *Manual of The Mother Church* (1895); church affairs are now overseen by a self-perpetuating board of five people.

Under the leadership of Board of Directors Chairman Virginia Harris, the CCS has embarked on an aggressive, multi-faceted marketing program designed to mainstream itself and to attract new members. For example, the CCS is finding new ways to promote itself in light of our society's current interest in self-awareness, spirituality, mind/body connections, alternative medicine, and women's issues. The CCS's weekly magazine has been redesigned to include quotes from New-Age proponent Oprah Winfrey. Church representatives are also turning up at medical conferences and other places.

Mrs. Eddy was chronically sick growing up, with many ailments including paralysis, hysteria, seizures and convulsions. At 22, she married her first of three husbands, George Glover, who died within 6 months from yellow fever. Following Glover's death, she began to be involved in mesmerism (hypnosis) and the occult practices of spiritualism and clairvoyance (Ruth Tucker, *Another Gospel*, p. 152). Still ill, she married Daniel Patterson in 1853, a dentist and homeopathic practitioner. It was during this time she met mental healer Phineas P. Quimby (1802-1866), whose influence would shape her belief of Christian Science. Quimby believed that illness and disease could be cured through positive thoughts and healthy attitudes, by changing one's beliefs about the illness. She claimed that Quimby cured her; she suddenly improved, but later the symptoms returned (*Another Gospel*, p. 155).

After Quimby's death in 1866, Mrs. Eddy determined to carry on his work. She had developed a "psychic dependence" on Quimby, drawing on his spiritual presence, claiming even visitations by his apparition. Eddy "reached the scientific certainty that all causation rests with the Mind, and that every effect is a mental phenomena." Eddy took Quimby's teachings one step further, claiming that sickness, death, and even our

⁵ Unless otherwise cited, six primary sources were used for this report: (1) Grolier's 1995 Multimedia Encyclopedia; (2) Funk & Wagnall's Encyclopedia; (3) "Christian Science, Attempting a Comeback," *MCO Journal*, Spring 2001, pp. 8-11, 15; (4) "Christian Science," Craig Branch (Watchman Fellowship Profile, 1997); (5) *Examining & Exposing Cultic & Occultic Movements*, Jack Sin, "Christian Science Examined," April 2000, pp. 26-31; and (6) *What They Believe*, Harold J. Berry [HJB], BTTB:1990, pp. 29-49

physical bodies do *not* exist, but are only *imagined*. Based on this absurdity, Mary Baker Eddy formulated her unique interpretations of Scripture upon which Christian Science was founded (and recorded in Eddy's 1875 book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. [HJB] (In 2001, the ten millionth copy of *Science and Health* was sold). In essence, Christian Science is a revival of ancient Pantheism. [Eddy later published 16 other books, including *Retrospection and Introspection* (1891), which tells of her own experience of discovering, practicing, and teaching the "science" of Christian healing.] [The CCS recently announced plans to build (at a cost of \$25 million) the Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity. Scheduled to open in 2002 in Boston, the library will house over 500,000 unpublished documents and artifacts related to Mrs. Eddy. It will also allow the CCS to secure another 45 years of copyright protection for the writings under new U.S. copyright laws that take effect at the end of 2002.]

The event that Mrs. Eddy claimed as the inauguration of Christian Science occurred in February of 1866. She claimed to have had a near fatal fall on icy pavement, but was instantly healed when "the healing Truth dawned upon my senses," and the divine healing ministry was born (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 24; *Science and Health*, p. 107). Testimony from her attending physician as well as other correspondence from Mrs. Eddy at the time strongly dispute Mrs. Eddy's "official" version of those events (Anthony Hoekema, *Christian Science*, pp. 12-13).

Healing became a major distinctive of Christian Science. According to Eddy Baker, the central fact of the Bible is the superiority of spiritual over physical power. The spiritual superiority is evident in other ways than healing. Telepathy is practiced in Christian Science treatment, and may be considered a form of psychic healing. Christian Science claims to prove through the healing of disease and other difficulties that the understanding of God and his spiritual creation is as effective now as it was in Jesus' time. Its adherents, therefore, rely on "divine law" in times of sickness instead of resorting to medical and other material means. Christian Scientists do not use doctors, medicine, or immunizations. Christian Science Practitioners are used to "help people through the false reality of illness." Instead, proper prayer and training are employed to battle the "non-reality" of illness. (The right of Christian Science parents to withhold medical treatment from their children has many times been challenged in court.)

During the formative stages, the church saw many rivalries, scandals, and dissident movements. One of the dissidents was Emma Hopkins, who as an independent Christian Science leader, taught Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, who later founded the Unity School of Christianity (another "mind-science" cult). Because Mrs. Eddy wanted to spread Christian Science, especially to the upper class, she increased her control over all aspects of the movement and would not tolerate any disloyalty (Georgine Milmine, *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy*, p. 234 ff).

Publications of the Christian Science Publishing Society include the *Christian Science Quarterly*, containing Bible lessons for daily study; *The Christian Science Journal*, a monthly magazine; *Christian Science Sentinel*, a weekly magazine; *The Christian Science Monitor*, a daily newspaper; and *The Herald of Christian Science*. In the 1980s, the group expanded into other media, producing both radio and television news programming. Their venture into cable-television operations was ended in 1992, when it was discovered "that the church had secretly transferred \$46.5 million from endowments and pension funds to help cover huge losses on the 'Monitor Channel,'

which had lost over \$325 million" (*Chicago Tribune*, 1/27/93, p. 2). [Additionally, there were losses of \$36 million and the resulting termination of *World Monitor*, a newspaper begun in 1988. *The Christian Science Monitor* is said to be losing \$13 million annually (Martin Gardner, *The Healing Revelations of Mary Baker Eddy*, p. 218).]

Instead of preachers (the CCS has no ordained clergy), Christian Science's Sunday services consist mainly of prescribed readings from the Bible, followed by interpretive readings from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (which Eddy thought was divinely inspired -- "I should blush to write of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* as I have, were it of human origin and I apart from God its author; but [since] I was only a scribe echoing the harmonies of heaven in Divine Metaphysics, I cannot be super-modest of the Christian Science Textbook."). Eddy's "Scientific Statement of Being" (read every week from every Christian Science pulpit) begins with, "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter," and ends with, "Therefore, man is not material; he is spiritual." Wednesday meetings include testimonies of healing from the congregation. Readers, both men and women, are elected from the membership to conduct the services. Practitioners, also both men and women, devote full time to the work of "spiritual healing."

Mrs. Eddy presented Christian Science as a scientific system of healing based upon spiritual laws God (allegedly) had revealed to her. She taught these laws must be followed -- without deviation -- if a believer wishes to practice Christian Science with consistent success. She taught Christian Science cannot be mixed with any other doctrine or spiritual healing system, and, thereby, it is incompatible with medicine. Eddy also believed in "Malicious Animal Magnetism" (MAM), which is negative mental energy or power, on the level of black magic. "Reading Rooms" are local Christian Science libraries where members go to read Eddy's works to aid their spiritual evolvment.

Christian Scientists call themselves Christians, but their beliefs deviate from Biblical Christianity on nearly every central Doctrine. Below are the highlights of what Christian Scientists believe concerning their source of authority, the Godhead, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Resurrection, sin and salvation, heaven and hell, man's destiny, and disease and death:

- 1) **Source of Authority.** Mary Baker Eddy claimed the Bible was her "only textbook" and "only authority." Yet she also said the Bible has thousands of errors -- 30,000 in the Old Testament and 300,000 in the New Testament. Christian Scientists believe that Mrs. Eddy's discovery of Divine Science is the "final revelation" from God. They claim *Science and Health* is divinely inspired (even though it has been proven to contain numerous plagiarisms and revisions). -- *Science and Health* is the "first book" which has been "uncontaminated by human hypothesis" (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany*, p. 115; *Science and Health*, pp. 99, 139, 456-457). **[HJB]** One is only supposed to read the Bible if they have Eddy's "key" in hand, so as to find out what a passage means. The implication is that God couldn't make Himself plain, but has to have Mary Baker Eddy interpret what He says. With this in mind, the world was, in effect, left to grope in darkness until Mrs. Eddy came on the scene.
- 2) **Language.** Christian Scientists have given Bible terms allegorical, metaphysical definitions that are completely different from normal usage. Everything is

spiritualized to the point that the physical no longer exists. New meanings have also been assigned to many traditional theological doctrines. (For example: "Adam was not an actual person who was created by God and fell into sin. 'Adam' means error; a falsity; the belief in 'original sin,' sickness, and death; evil; the opposite of good.")
[HJB]

- 3) **Trinity.** Christian Science clearly repudiates the Trinitarian Godhead: "The theory of three persons in one God (that is, a personal Trinity or Tri-unity) suggests polytheism, rather than the one ever-present I Am" (*Science and Health*, p. 256). Instead, "Life, Truth, and Love constitutes the triune Person called God ... God the Father-Mother; Christ the spiritual idea of sonship; divine Science or the Holy Comforter" (*Science and Health*, p. 331-332). Christian Science teaches that the Biblical concept of the Trinity suggests "heathen gods" (*Science and Health*, p. 152). God is thus viewed as an impersonal "Divine Principle," a conception of one's mind (*Science and Health*, pp. 361, 469). On page 465 in another of Mrs. Eddy's "authoritative" books, entitled *Miscellaneous Writings*, she wrote: "God is incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite, mind, spirit, soul, principle, life, truth, love," but devoid of any personality. **[HJB]** [To the contrary, the Bible teaches that God is a triune, personal, transcendent Being who created "the world and all things in it" (Act 17:24). He is not a pantheistic all-in-all. He is holy and just, as well as love. God created and governs the universe, including man (Acts 17:24-27).]

- 4) **Jesus Christ.** Christian Science denies that the incarnation of Christ was the fullness of deity dwelling in human flesh, denies the perfection of the man Jesus, and attempts to explain away the historical death and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ (*Science and Health*, pp. 336, 29, 332, 53, 398, 313, 593; *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 201) Christian Science believes that Mary's conception of Jesus was spiritual -- on pages 332 and 347 of *Science and Health*, the virgin birth of Christ is described and explained: "Jesus was the offspring of Mary's self-conscious communion with God. ... Mary's conception of him was spiritual." Christian Science believes that the names "Jesus" and "Christ" do not refer to the same person -- that Jesus is the human man and Christ is the "divine idea" (i.e., "dualism"). They teach that the spiritual (good) cannot dwell in material bodies because they are evil; thus Jesus could not have been both God and man. [To the contrary, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is not the divine idea of God but was God uniquely manifested in the flesh, truly God and truly man, one divine Person with two indivisible natures, who is the only Savior and the only truth and Lord (John 1:1-3,14; Col. 2:9; Phil. 2:6-7; John 14:6).] Christian Science believes that Jesus was *not* God and the only way to heaven, but only the "wayshower" (cf. Jn. 20:31; I Jn. 4:2,3).

Christian Science not only denies that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, it also denies that Jesus is one Person with two natures -- fully God and fully man. Christian Science presents Jesus Christ in terms of a Gnostic duality: "The spiritual Christ was infallible: Jesus as material manhood was not Christ" (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 84). "Christ as the true spiritual ideal, is the ideal of God now and forever ..." (*Science and Health*, p. 361). "The Christ is incorporeal, spiritual ..." while, "The corporeal [physical] man Jesus was human only (*Science and Health*, p 332). Yet "matter is mortal error ... matter is the unreal and temporal" (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 21). So what Christian Science actually concludes is that the physical humanity of Jesus was an illusion, "as it seemed to mortal view" (*Science and Health*, p. 315).

Concerning the blood atonement of Jesus Christ: "The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon 'the accursed tree,' than when it was flowing in his veins ..." (*Science and Health*, p. 25). Christian Science teaches that the death of Jesus Christ for sin was a "man-made" theory, and that Jesus was alive in the tomb, demonstrating the "power of Spirit to overrule mortal, material sense" (*Science and Health*, p. 44). Eddy states, "Christ was not crucified ... Jesus, being the man who possessed the Christ consciousness, was the one who went to the cross and who appeared to die." Thus, according to the theology of Christian Science, the Bible only appears to say that Jesus died on the cross and His body was laid in the tomb; it must instead be understood that Jesus actually never died, but was rather in the tomb denying death's reality!

- 5) **Holy Spirit.** Christian Science denies that the Holy Spirit is a personal being. It teaches that the Holy Spirit is Christian Science. -- "This Comforter I understand to be Divine Science" (*Science and Health*, p. 55). It is the unfolding of the thoughts and infinite mind of God (pp. 502-503). [cf. Jn. 16:13-14] Thus, God, the Holy Spirit, cannot indwell a person (*Science and Health*, p. 336).

- 6) **The Resurrection.** It is obvious that if Jesus never physically died on the cross to atone for sins that mankind cannot commit (*Science and Health*, pp. 45-46), then the resurrection must also have a unique meaning in Christian Science. Eddy explains, "When Jesus reproduced his body after its burial, he revealed the myth or material falsity of evil; its powerlessness to destroy good and the omnipotence of the Mind that knows this: he also showed forth the error of nothingness of supposed life in matter, and the great somethingness of the good we possess, which is of Spirit, and immortal" (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 201). Jesus resurrection was thus the manifestation of the error of evil. He demonstrated that sin and death are illusions and that if one wishes to rid themselves of these illusions, they only need to deny their reality.

- 7) **Sin.** Christian Science denies the existence of all matter, including man's physical body. They say that man is "incapable of sin, sickness, and death." They claim sin, sickness, and death are the "effects of error," thereby denying the reality of sin. **[HJB]** Bottom line, to Christian Science, there is no sin (*Science and Health*, p. 447). This is a consistent deduction and fundamental principle of the Christian Science system -- namely, God is all and God is good, and since the real man has never departed from his original state of perfection, he is not in need of salvation. He is saved now and reposing in the bosom of the Father. He has always been saved -- that is, as God's idea of the expression of the mind, man is forever held in the divine consciousness. And since sin and evil have no reality, all ideas of sin and evil are illusions. They are the product of the mortal mind. Hence, it is a sense of sin which is sinful because of the illusory product of the mortal mind. They say that man's real problem is the *belief* of sin, and that "Christ came to destroy the belief of sin." [Eddy writes in *Miscellaneous Writings* in the question and answer section: "If there is no sin, why did Jesus come to save sinners?" She answers, "Jesus came to seek and to save such as believe in the reality of the unreal; to save them from this false belief; that they might lay hold of eternal Life ..." (p. 63). In other words, Jesus came to save mankind from the false belief that sin is real! Jesus saving work was to exemplify the fact that death is unreal, that sin is only an illusion or false belief, and that to deny its existence is the ultimate task of each person.]

- 8) **Salvation.** Since Christian Scientists do not believe that sin is real, they, therefore, see no need for salvation in Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding, Christian Scientists still teach a salvation based on works -- and contrary to even their own teachings, a salvation through victory over *suffering* and *temptation*. [HJB]
- 9) **Hell.** Christian Science denies the existence of hell and eternal punishment, and, therefore, there is no devil (*Science and Health*, p. 469). Hell is defined as "mortal belief; error; lust; remorse; hatred; revenge; sin; sickness; death." They believe that hell is a self-imposed "mental anguish," emanating from the guilt of one's *imagined* sin. [HJB]
- 10) **Man's Destiny.** Christian Science teaches that since God is all good and nothing that is real exists outside God, then sin, sickness, and death are mortal error or an illusion. Christ, as the Truth, therefore came to set man free from these false beliefs by His teachings and example (*Science and Health*, pp. 473, 475, 108). Christian Science denies the penal, substitutionary atonement of Christ, saying, "The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed on 'the accursed tree,' than when it was flowing in his veins as he went daily about His Father's business" (*Science and Health*, p.25). "Jesus taught the way of Life by demonstration. There is but one way to heaven, harmony, and Christ in Divine Science shows us this way" (*Science and Health*, p. 242). "Universal salvation rests on progression and probation ... No final judgment awaits mortals ..." (*Science and Health*, p. 291)
- 11) **Disease and Death.** Christian Scientists claim that since organic disease does not exist, "the cause of all so-called disease is mental" [i.e., 'the belief in sin is thereby the cause of it'], "a mistaken belief" (*Science and Health*, p. 377). They say that since our physical bodies do not exist, disease and death are only illusions (*Science and Health*, pp. 348,386). [To the contrary, the Bible teaches that sin, sickness, and evil are not an illusion, but a result of man's willful choice to rebel against a Holy God, and death (both physical and the spiritual eternal separation from God) is the result of sin (Rom. 3:10, 23; 5:12-14; 1 John 1:8-10).] They believe they have restored Christ's principles of divine healing through their practices of mental healing; i.e., the healing performed by Christian Science involves helping a person to deny the reality of his illness, and thereby, any failure to heal is due to a person's inability to overcome his belief. Mary Baker Eddy claimed to have this power of healing (called Divine Science), though she never provided any tangible proof of it. [HJB] [Whereas the Christian Science approach to healing may help psychosomatic illnesses, it has been scientifically demonstrated that it is not effective with real illness. In fact, studies comparing the cumulative death rates of practicing Christian Scientists with control groups have shown significantly higher death rates among the Christian Scientists (*Journal of American Medical Association*, September 22/29, 1989, pp 1657-58; and *Morbidity Weekly Report*, August 23, 1991, pp. 579-582).]
- 12) **The "Gospel" of Christian Science.** Jesus, who possessed the Christ consciousness as do all men to a lesser extent, went to the cross, not to bring about forgiveness of sin, for sin is an illusion, but rather to demonstrate that death is an illusion. On the morning of the resurrection, the supposed physical body of Jesus was reproduced in its original illusionary form, for all matter is illusion, and thereby demonstrated to mankind that all could do the same by denying the reality of sin and death.

Jesus' "seeming" death on the cross was not intended to pay for our sins, but to prove the unreality of sin, disease, and death. The Bible is full of mistakes. Jesus' words were recorded by "dull disciples ... in a decaying language," and must be spiritually interpreted through Christian Science.

To put it another way: "Jesus was laid down as the result of apparent death, into a fictitious tomb, in an unreal body, to make an unnecessary atonement for sins that had never been a reality and had been committed in an imaginary body, and that He saves from non-existing evil those headed toward an imaginary hell, the false fancy of an erroneous Mortal Mind" (J.K. VanBaalen, *The Chaos of Cults*).

- 13) **Conclusion.** Christian Science offers some real enticements -- a "spiritually scientific" method for healing, victory over life's circumstances, and guaranteed salvation. All one has to do to receive these blessings is to study Eddy's writings and obey them to the letter. She was God's messenger to this age and her writings are considered infallible. Just obey her teaching, and learn to think as she thought, and you will be victorious.

The physical dangers of Christian Science are obvious. Since they are taught that learning about their bodies is spiritually harmful, Christian Scientists are ill equipped to understand the symptoms of illness. They often suffer needlessly from treatable ailments and neglect life-threatening conditions that could be cured if treated in their early stages.

Eckankar (ECK)

New Age Religion

In 1964, a "new" religion made its appearance -- *Eckankar, The Ancient Science of Soul Travel* (Eck). Eck was founded by Paul Twitchell, a journalist, eccentric occult dabbler, and self-proclaimed soldier of fortune. In 1964 and 1965, he wrote articles and gave lectures on his peculiar philosophy of "Biolocation," or supposed out-of-body travels. He evolved the philosophy and practice of Eck out of this experience and from studying the teachings of Ruhani Satsung, Scientology, and several other religious and occult groups. Twitchell, who was born in Paducah, Kentucky sometime between 1908 and 1912, and died in 1971, asserted that Eck did not actually begin in 1964, but rather was a timeless and universal Truth which had been "revived" for public dissemination at that time.

Eck's membership is estimated at approximately 50,000, but there are supposedly about 3 million "followers" throughout the world. It was originally centered in Las Vegas, Nevada, but after Twitchell's death and the coming to power of Darwin Gross, the group moved to Menlo Park, California. Its main headquarters are currently in Minneapolis, Minnesota, but Eck also has active works in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Australia, and Africa. Eck's authoritative books are *An Introduction to Eckankar* and *Eckankar: The Key to Secret Worlds*, both written by Twitchell. Eck also publishes a monthly publication, *Eck World News*.

Twitchell sensed that he had hit upon a winning combination with Eck, proclaiming himself the unique incarnation of God on earth (i.e., the "Living Eck Master"), insisting that only through him and his movement could an individual find truth and salvation. Eck embodies almost all of the characteristics of a "made in America" cult religion -- a recent vintage eclectic movement, combining occult philosophy and mystical experience, big money, misrepresentation of origins, rampant spiritism, manifestations of psychic phenomena, virtual veneration of the leader as God, syncretism, indoctrination, and a form of attempted mind control -- not to mention the standard "esoteric gap," that is, the difference between the image the group projects to the public and the inner truths revealed to initiates. Eck has gone from (literally) nothing to a highly systematized belief system with a large corporate bureaucracy and an in-residence "God-man" as its leader.

Eckankar presents itself as the most ancient teaching known to mankind. It is referred to as "The Path of Total Awareness." Below are the highlights of what Eckankar believes concerning its source(s) of authority, God, sin and salvation, Christ, spiritual practice, the Kingdom of Heaven, reincarnation, and prayer⁶:

⁶ Most of the material in this report was derived from three sources: (1) *SCP Journal*, September 1979; (2) *The DISCERNER*, 2Q1992; and (3) *Mount Carmel Outreach Newsletter*, November 1996

- 1) **Source of Authority.** The current Living Eck Master -- "the MAHANTA, the Vi-Guru, the Light-Giver, the Way Shower, the protector, guide and companion of every ECK chela" -- is the Eckist's sole authority for Eckankar doctrine. Eck also has its own Scriptures, *The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad*, which state that "the faith that one has in the Mahanta must be that of complete understanding and surrender." The "Word of God" in Eckankar is also known as "Shabda, Basni" -- it is the Eckist's security, and "should one have this Word of God flowing from the temple within himself, then he should be protected from bad experiences."

- 2) **Eck Master.** Eckankar teaches that few religious disciplines are able to transcend the lower states, due to ignorance and the error of their way. Only through "soul travel," which is supposedly a superior and exclusive form of out-of-the-body experience, is one able to flow upward (or inward) through the various realms in hopes of eventually reaching the *Sugmad*, which exists as pure formless essence on the topmost plane. And the only way to succeed is by submitting totally to the guidance of the Living Eck Master, or Mahanta, who plugs the *chela* (learner or student) into the cosmic current. [This "current," known simply as the *Eck*, ostensibly flows out from, and back into, the *Sugmad*. Eckists say it can be heard as sound and seen as light; thus with the help of the Mahanta, other spirit guides (i.e., demons), and two of his five senses, the chela learns to flow with the Eck up through the various "God Worlds," gradually attaining enlightenment and spiritual maturity along the way.]

When Living Eck Master Paul Twitchell died in 1971, his wife, Gail, claimed that Twitchell came to her in a dream and told her that Darwin Gross was to succeed him as the new Mahanta. Gail did as she was told and named Gross the new Mahanta. She then married him in October 1972. Gross described himself as "the only man ever manifested in all of history in whom individualism and universalism are combined in their full expression." (Gross was obviously not to be outdone in his claims by Twitchell.) The Grosses were to have a short marriage. Five years later they were divorced. At the suggestion of his advisory council, Gross resigned as the only "God-man" in October of 1981, and was replaced by the current "Living Eck Master," Sri Harold Klemp. This particular God-man was born in Wisconsin.

Klemp and his predecessors are considered to be *Mahantas* -- one step above the normal Eck Masters. A Living Eck Master is held so high that Eckists seem to put him equal with God. Twitchell said this of the Living Eck Master: "The Living Eck Master is the only man, should I say being, who is capable of manifesting both individuals and universalism in their full expressions. He is law unto himself, does what he pleases, has what he wants, comes and goes absolutely at his own will, and asks no favors of any man." Sir Darwin Gross suggested that "self-surrender" by everyone to the Living Eck Master's "radiant form" is the key to spiritual success. An Eck Master, then, turns out to be nothing but a standard avatar, a routine "savior" who "incarnates" to instruct humanity, reputedly being able to lift people out of the cycle of death and rebirth if they submit to him in total faith, submission, and self-negation.

- 3) **God.** Twitchell realized early on that if he was going to create a new religion, he had to conjure up a new concept of God to go with it. He used methods of eclectic cross-fertilization in his effort to come up with a new hybrid, blending together monism and pantheism, with a touch of monotheism to give his theology some character. The final product is a confused, crippled, and impotent deity which he indifferently labels "It." Like most hybrids, Eck's "God" is sterile, incapable of producing new life. If anything, it is a throwback to the primitive fear religions of the animistic and pagan cultures.

The "God" of Eckankar (*Sugmad*) does not manifest as a personality. Consequently, seeking, knowing, or desiring to comprehend God in *personal* terms is impossible; indeed, it may be impossible in *any* terms. Twitchell writes that "we do not, and cannot, know God. ... God itself is realized by the very cessation of all seeking and by dropping of the mind. ... You will never find God by searching for Him. He is here and now within you! So never search. Just realize this!"

Sugmad is a pantheistic god described by Eck as "progressive Self-realization or God-realization." Eck teaches that God is all things, and more significantly, that God is not separate from his creation. Twitchell wrote: "There is nothing in the universe that is not the SUGMAD, the everlasting ECK." By this logic, then, Eck is forced to pin the universe's flaws and problems upon its own "God," and grudgingly admits that it is the Sugmad's "lower natures" that generate negativity. (In Twitchell's book, *The Tiger's Fang*, Sugmad is described as being ignorant, internally inconsistent, in need of wisdom and education, negative, unawakened, wondering, poor, unhappy, not content with "his" creation, and in need of assistance.) Eck tries to evade this dilemma by teaching that the *dynamic* which makes evil operative is a form of free will, which when abused, spawns "ignorance," leading to a lack of God-realization in the self.

- 4) **Sin.** Eck does not adhere to the concept of "original sin." Eck believes this about sin: "The idea of man born in sin is one of the oldest pitfalls which the Kal Niranjana ("Kal" for short -- Eck terminology for the negative force of the cosmos, otherwise identified by Eck as "the Devil") could plan for keeping Soul in ignorance of Its true glory. ... All the doctrines of man born in sin, to be purified by the appearance of a messiah who dies for man's sins, is that of a Kalistic belief." (Eck does not endorse or uphold Christian morals concerning sexual behavior. Also, Eck does not believe this Soul enters the body of an unborn child; thus, they have no problem with abortion.)
- 5) **Salvation.** Twitchell said that "Eck is the highest of all paths to God. ... there is no other way to gain spiritual enlightenment." He sweepingly pronounces that "belief in anything except the Eck is false. ... ECKANKAR is the *only* direct path to God. ... *All other paths* are only stepping stones into the Astral plane. ... belief in anything except the Eck is false ... it is not possible to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven except through the teachings of ECKANKAR."

- 6) **Jesus Christ.** Eck does not recognize any authenticity of the "virgin-birth." Twitchell stated that "Kal is the Jehovah of the Jewish faith and the Father of the Christian teachings. ... Therefore, we really see [Jesus] as a son of Kal Nirnanjan, king of the lower worlds." Thus, in Eck, the Bible, the entire structure of its moral teachings, and Jesus Christ Himself are identified with the evil power of the cosmos -- in a word, with the Devil!
- 7) **Spiritual Practice.** The primary means of spiritual unfoldment practiced by Eck is soul travel or out-of-the-body experiences. Five of the major techniques used are: (1) imaginative projection, (2) meditation, (3) projection via the dream state, (4) trance, and (5) direct projection (intentionally willing one's consciousness to be in another location). Mantras are frequently chanted and contact with spirit guides is practiced as well. Almost all forms and types of occult/mystical consciousness alteration come into play. Trance states and spiritism are encouraged from the outset in Eck spiritual practice, but the experience grows more esoteric as the Eckist travels up through "the realms." There are ten initiations -- one for advancement to each plane. They are generally given yearly and are considered the basic "sacrament" of Eckankar.

The chela finds himself going through thirty-two varied, but unique, phases of "spiritual unfoldment." These are sometimes called the gift of Spirit, or the "essence of the ECK." Some of the most significant are mediumship, E.S.P., telepathy, mind reading, clairvoyance, speaking in unknown tongues, magic, cosmic consciousness, telekinetic powers, alchemy, and weather control. When one finally reaches this "upper level," he merges with the Absolute and becomes a "coworker" with God. He becomes part of God, and there is nothing in the universe that is not Sugmad (God) or the everlasting "ECK."

- 8) **Kingdom of Heaven.** The Kingdom of Heaven to which Twitchell refers is a cosmic layer cake of eleven different realms or planes. Strictly speaking, only the upper six planes are "heavenly," the lower five being ruled by the negative God-forces, especially by a cruel buffoon named Kal Nirnanjan, who supposedly causes all the familiar woes and confusion we experience here on Earth Plane, or First Plane. The second realm, known popularly as the Astral Plane, gives rise to all the garden varieties of occultic and psychic phenomena -- from deceitful spirits to flying saucers and out-of-the-body astral projection experiences.
- 9) **Reincarnation.** According to Eck, as souls live their lives and make both conscious and "unconscious" choices, they accrue *karma* and *karmic debt*. Souls must then pay for or work off negative karma acquired through wrong action, either in this life or a previous one. In Eck, the individual soul must go through seemingly endless rounds of reincarnations to work off karma, taking millions of years and millions of reincarnations as the soul rises up the evolutionary scale of life. Eck teaches that the soul enters the universe as a mineral, then works its way up through plant, fish, reptile, and mammal incarnations, eventually becoming human, where it will spend any number of lifetimes until it attains spiritual enlightenment. [Twitchell claimed to have entered the lower universe as an unspecified mineral eight million years ago, and supposedly got off the "Wheel of 84" (meaning no more reincarnations) when he "translated" (Eckese for "died") in 1971.] The shortcut to God-realization is to meet and follow the Living Eck Master, whose presence will burn away eons of karmic debt, freeing the soul from the endless rebirths on the "Wheel of 84."

10) **Prayer.** Eck believes the Biblical concept of intercessory prayer is an "occult" technique.

Jehovah's Witnesses

Christian or Cult?⁷

Jehovah's Witnesses, also known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (with headquarters in Brooklyn, New York), was officially founded in 1884 [as the Zion's Watch Tower and Tract Society (originally the Zion's Watch Tower in 1879), officially adopting the name of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1931], by Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916). In 1870, Russell was exposed to the teachings of William Miller, one of the founders of the Second Adventist Movement and acquired an interest in end time prophecies. Russell originally denied the doctrine of Hell, and would go on to reject nearly every other Christian doctrine, as well as add many physically and spiritually dangerous doctrines of his own making. Many of these unique and bizarre teachings were to be found in his six volume series titled, *Studies in the Scriptures*.

For the year 2000, the Watchtower Society claims a worldwide membership of over six million (about one million U.S.) in more than 91,000 congregations in 235 countries speaking 340 languages, and takes in approximately 300,000 new members each year (288,907 in 2000). According to JW statistics, yearly proselytizing is accomplished via 4.8 million home Bible studies and 1.2 billion hours of witnessing. The JWs field over 500,000 full and part-time missionaries. Instruction and training are provided for all JWs at five meetings a week, held primarily in "Kingdom Halls." Every week, an average of 45 new JW congregations are formed. [In the year 2000 in the United States alone, it was reported that 988,000 Jehovah's Witnesses spent more than 181 million hours in field service (i.e., door-to-door witnessing and Bible studies).]

JW leadership claims its victims by asserting itself to be the sole Christian religion and authority on the earth today, as well as God's mouthpiece or prophet. The Watchtower further disrupts families through its harsh and unbiblical interpretation of "disfellowshipping" and the practice of "shunning." Family members who are former JWs are labeled by Watchtower adherents as "apostates" and prevented from even social contact. Disfellowshipped or disassociated children, parents, and grandparents are kept from any type of communication with active members of the organization. Divorces are common within the sect when one member becomes disillusioned with Watchtower teaching and mind-control.

Not only has the name of this cult been changed time and again, but they also change their doctrines regularly -- between 1917 and 1928, they changed their doctrines 148 times! (Prior to 1931, Jehovah's Witnesses had also gone by the names of Millennial Dawn, People's Pulpit Association, The Brooklyn Tabernacle, and the International Bible Students Association.) Russell died in 1916 and was replaced by the second president, Joseph F. Rutherford. "A process of replacing Russell's writings with Rutherford's began in 1921 with the publication of Rutherford's *Harp of God*. Between

⁷ Unless otherwise cited, three primary sources were used for this report: (1) Grolier's 1995 Multimedia Encyclopedia, (2) Funk & Wagnall's Encyclopedia, and (3) What They Believe, Harold J. Berry [HJB], BTTB:1990, pp. 51-70; (4) "Watchtower Bible and Tract Society," Rick Branch (Watchman Fellowship Profile, 1993); and (5) *Examining & Exposing Cultic & Occultic Movements*, Jack Sin, "Focus on JWs," April 2000, pp. 16-20

1921 and 1941, Rutherford was to write twenty books and numerous pamphlets, which would slowly revise the doctrine and structure left him by Russell" (*Encyclopedia of American Religions*, G. Melton, Vol. 1, p. 485). One of Rutherford's books that caused a great amount of controversy was the seventh volume of the *Studies in the Scriptures*.

Russell adopted many of his doctrines from the Seventh-Day Adventists, but the JW's began to emphasize door-to-door evangelism and literature distribution after Russell's death and subsequent leadership assumption by Joseph Franklin Rutherford. The JW's have published over ten billion pieces of literature since 1928. Its main periodicals are *The Watchtower* magazine (circulation of over 20 million in more than 130 languages) and *Awake!* (about 16 million copies in more than 80 languages), both published semi-monthly.

Historically, the JW's are best known for their practices of refusing: (1) to serve in the military; (2) to salute the flag; (3) to celebrate Christmas, birthdays, or other holidays; and (4) to give or to accept blood transfusions. [Rejecting the medical practices of vaccinations, organ transplants, and blood transfusions, the Watchtower has caused the deaths of many of its members throughout its history. Interestingly, vaccinations and organ transplants have now been acknowledged by the Watchtower as acceptable practices, contradicting their previous doctrinal position.] (Although some of these practices are neither Biblical nor unbiblical in and of themselves, depending upon one's motives and the exact nature of the practice, the *reasons* the JW's give for them often are unbiblical.)

Below are the highlights of what JW's believe concerning their source of authority, the Godhead, Christ, sin, salvation, heaven and hell, etc.:

- 1) **Source of Authority.** JW's claim the Bible as their final authority, but Russell's writings, especially *Studies in the Scriptures*, are considered "the light of the Scriptures." JW's have their own translation of the Scriptures (*New World Translation*, published in 1961), which reflects *the binding interpretations* of the group's leaders. The JW's' *New World Translation* greatly perverts the Scriptures to avoid placing themselves under the judgment of God (cf. Jn. 1:1; 8:58; I Tim. 2:6; Ac. 10:36; Col. 1:16-17; 2:9-10; etc.). Hence, the leader's interpretation of the Bible, not the Bible itself, is the final authority of JW's. *The Watchtower* magazine is one of the JW's main sources of doctrine, and is considered authoritative by its members.
- 2) **Trinity.** JW's believe that God is not a triune God, but only "Jehovah God" (*Let God Be True*, pp. 100-101); they teach that Trinitarianism is a belief in three gods, and thereby, Satan-inspired polytheism. Rutherford wrote: "... sincere persons who want to know the true God and serve him find it a bit difficult to love and worship a complicated, freakish-looking, three-headed God. The clergy who inject such ideas will contradict themselves in the very next breath by stating that God made man in his own image; for certainly no one has ever seen a three-headed human creature" (*Let God Be True*, 2nd ed., pp. 101-102).
- 3) **God the Father.** Known as Jehovah, the Watchtower considers Him to be the only true eternal God, the Almighty. They write, "There was, therefore, a time when Jehovah was all alone in universal space" (*Let God Be True*, p. 25). Being alone, the first creative act of Jehovah was to create His Son.

- 4) **Jesus Christ.** Since JWs do not believe in the Trinity, they also do not believe that Jesus is God in the flesh. They add the word "other" four times to Colossians 1:16,17, teaching that Christ was God's *first* creation, i.e., the reincarnation of Michael the archangel created by Jehovah, rather than *the Creator*. [The "Watchtower" teaches that Jehovah God created Michael the Archangel before the foundation of the world; Michael was His only begotten son by virtue of the fact that he was the only creature directly created by Jehovah. It was this created Michael who became the JW Jesus (i.e., a denial of the eternality of Christ). JWs say that "Since actual conception took place, it appears that Jehovah God caused an ovum or egg in Mary's womb to become fertile, accomplishing this by the transfer of the life of his first born son (Michael) from the spirit realm to the earth" (*Aid to Bible Understanding*, p. 920). "Marvelously, Jehovah transferred the life-force and the personality pattern of his first born heavenly son (Michael) to the womb of Mary. God's own active force, his holy spirit, safeguarded the development of the child in Mary's womb so that what was born was a perfect human" (*Reasoning*, p. 255).] JWs also add an "a" in John 1:1, making the verse read, "the Word was a god" (which in essence, makes the JWs guilty of the same polytheism of which they accuse Trinitarians).
- 5) **Use of Name Jehovah.** JWs use the name "Jehovah" only for God (in order to distinguish between God and Jesus Christ), while failing to recognize that Jesus is the fulfillment of "Jehovah" in Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:3. [HJB]
- 6) **Resurrection of Christ .** JWs deny the bodily resurrection of Christ through their teaching that the body of Christ was annihilated by God -- not risen -- but rather a new one was *created* three days after His death. This they call the "resurrection" of Christ. Thus, Jesus was "resurrected" as a "glorious spirit creature" and does *not* now have a glorified physical body. Instead, they claim Jesus arose spiritually and only "materialized" at various times after His resurrection so He could be seen alive. (*Awake!*, 7/22/73, p. 4)
- 7) **The Holy Spirit.** JWs deny the deity of the third person of the Trinity, as either God or as a person; they claim that the Holy Spirit is only an impersonal "active force of Almighty God which moves His servants to do His will" (*Reasoning From the Scriptures*, pp. 406-407; *The Watchtower*, 6/1/54, p. 24). They have written, "But the holy spirit has no personal name. The reason for this is that the holy spirit is not an intelligent person. It is the impersonal, invisible active force that finds its source and reservoir in Jehovah God and that he uses to accomplish his will even at great distances, over light years of space" (*Let Your Name Be Sanctified*, p. 269).
- 8) **Sin.** JWs believe that the first man, Adam, disobeyed Jehovah when tempted by the angel Lucifer, who was jealous of man. As a result of disobedience, Adam and all his descendants lost the right to life and so became liable to death. This liability is applied to temporal death only.
- 9) **Salvation .** JWs claim everlasting life is a reward for doing the will of God and carrying out one's dedication -- in other words, salvation is a reward for good works. (JWs are expected to spend five hours per week in door-to-door visitation and witnessing, are responsible for selling twelve subscriptions to *The Watchtower* magazine each month, and are responsible for conducting a "Bible study" each month in the homes of their converts.) According to JW theology, a person has one

of three possible destinies. The Anointed (144,000) will be in heaven to reign with Jehovah God. The rest of the faithful Jehovah's Witnesses (not of the 144,000) will live forever on a paradise Earth. Both of these classifications are determined to a great extent on membership in the Watchtower organization as well as going door-to-door spreading the message of the Watchtower. Those people who are not members of the Watchtower organization will be destroyed by Jehovah God and cease to exist. There is no concept of eternal punishment or hell in Watchtower theology (*Let God Be True*, pp. 90-95, 289). They also believe that men will have a second chance, after death, to be saved.

- 10) **The Body of Christ.** JW's believe that the members of the spiritual Body of Christ, or "Christian Congregation," number only 144,000 (Rev. 7:4-8). Most of those members of Christ's Body are now deceased and are reigning with Jesus in heaven since 1918. (Anybody born after 1936 cannot be in that number.) The remaining members still on earth, approximately 8,000 (out of whom are selected the "Governing Body"), are known as the "Remnant." They are collectively known as Jehovah God's "channel of communication" to men. They are the only ones "born again" and are the only ones who have a hope of going to Heaven. The rest of Jehovah's faithful witnesses only hope to be worthy enough to inherit the Earth, and will never see "Jesus/Michael," nor will they ever go to Heaven. All "so called Christendom" will be destroyed at Armageddon.
- 11) **Soul Sleep.** JW's deny the immortality of the soul. They do not believe the soul can exist apart from the body, but that a corpse remains in an unconscious state in the grave waiting for the resurrection. **[HJB]**
- 12) **Annihilation of the Wicked.** JW's teach that the "second death" is annihilation and extinction -- the wicked will cease to exist and will not suffer everlasting torment. They claim that a "doctrine of a burning hell" is "wholly unscriptural," "unreasonable," "contrary to God's love," and "repugnant to justice." **[HJB]** They claim that "hell" is the grave.
- 13) **Prophecy .** The Bible lists six identifying marks of false prophets, any one of which is sufficient for identification: (1) through signs and wonders they lead astray after false gods (Dt. 13:1-4); (2) their prophecies don't come to pass (Dt. 18:20-22); (3) they contradict God's Word (Isa. 8:20); (4) they bear bad fruit (Mt. 7:18-20); (5) men speak well of them (Lk. 6:26); and (6) they deny that Jesus, the one and only Christ, has come once and for all in the flesh (1 Jn. 4:3), thereby denying His sufficiency in all matters of life and godliness (2 Pe. 1:3). Most cults are founded upon false prophecies, which, if pointed out, offer an effective way to open blind eyes and rescue cultists. Russell's false prophecies formed the basis for what became The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Russell declared that the Second Coming had taken place invisibly in October 1874, and the Lord was truly present, and that in 1914 the faithful (the 144,000) would be translated to heaven and the wicked destroyed. Armageddon (which began in 1874) would culminate in 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth's rulers and the end of the world. C.T. Russell, still on earth, died in 1916.

In the early 1920s, JW's zealously distributed on the streets and from door to door a book titled *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*. It was prophesied, "The year 1925 is a date definitely and clearly marked in the Scriptures, even more clearly than that

of 1914 ... we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old ... to the condition of human perfection" ("Millions Now Living Will Never Die," *The Watchtower*, 7/15/24, p. 89). The JW's even built a house in San Diego where the patriarchs were to live and tried to deed it to King David. (The house was quietly sold in 1954.) In the early 1940s, JW's were declaring that Armageddon, only months away, would end World War II and the defeat of the Nazis would usher in God's rule on earth (*The Watchtower*, 12/41). Their book, *Children*, suggested that plans to marry and have children be postponed until after Armageddon. It's been a long wait! Not giving up, they later prophesied that God's millennial kingdom would commence in 1975. Again JW's were told not to engage in any plans for this world, including marriage and having children. Many quit their jobs, sold their homes, and dedicated themselves to going door to door. (Source: 3/97, *The Berean Call*.) All in all, the Watchtower has predicted the end of the world for 1914, 1918, 1925, 1975, and 1989.

Five Myths of Jehovah's Witnesses

(Source: 4Q1993, *The DISCERNER*.)

Myth #1: The JW's are polytheist, believing in both a big God, Jehovah, and a little God, Jesus Christ.

Fact: JW's are absolutely monotheist, believing in Jehovah the Father who is the one true God and in His son, Jesus Christ, who is not God in any way at all.

Myth #2: JW's are pacifist and refuse to pay taxes.

Fact: JW's today refer to their stand as neutrality, not pacifism; that is, they are not against the use of force or even killing; rather they seek to maintain strict neutrality in the world's affairs, not taking sides or serving any government. As to paying taxes, the Witnesses do pay them.

Myth #3: JW's will not accept blood for any reason.

Fact: While it's true that they will not accept blood transfusions, JW's are allowed to have all the component parts of blood plasma.

Myth #4: The Watchtower Society claims to be an inspired prophet with continuing revelations.

Fact: JW's' Governing Body has always enjoyed all the privileges of prophets or apostles without any of the responsibilities. So, technically, though they do not claim to be inspired prophets, in practice, that is just what they are to the millions of JW's around the world. [Due to the resignation of the Governing Body's president and six other board members in October of 2000, JW's formed three new corporations to run its U.S. operations.]

Myth #5: JW's are super-zealots living exemplary Christian lives.

Fact: The foremost reason for their super zealot reputation is the active door-to-door ministry. Many are impressed by their willingness to spend so much time in their

mission work. But what are their motives? Mainly they are fear and guilt. The tight control the organization holds over its members helps bring about conformity in moral standards.

The Jehovah's Witness "Jesus" -- what JW's confess and what they mean are two totally different things: (Source: 1/94, *Mount Carmel Outreach Newsletter*.)

- (1) "Jesus Christ is the Son of God." -- The first created son of God was known as Michael the Archangel. This angel was recreated as a perfect man on earth and named "Jesus." This Jesus died on a torture stake (not a cross), so that men could **work** their way into God's Kingdom. This Jesus/Michael now rules over his Kingdom invisibly since 1914. (Since he failed to show up then, to destroy the unfaithful, he was declared by the Watchtower "powers that be," to be invisible!)
- (2) "We believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ." -- The angel Michael turned his attention to the affairs of the Earth in 1914 by establishing an invisible heavenly kingdom. This is what is meant by "second coming." He will never return visibly to Earth, but will rule through his "anointed" or "remnant" group of JW's here on Earth.
- (3) "Jesus was resurrected." -- God (Jehovah) placed a newly created copy of Jesus' life pattern (or personality) into a newly created Michael the Archangel's spiritual (not physical) body. Since Jesus had been totally annihilated, Jehovah had to recreate Jesus from his memory, and he is now Jesus/Michael in heaven.

Masons (Freemasonry)

Christian or Anti-Christian?⁸

Freemasonry refers to the principles, institutions, and practices of the fraternal order of the Free and Accepted Masons. The largest worldwide society, Freemasonry is an organization of men based on the "fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," using builders' tools as symbols to teach basic moral truths generally accepted by persons of good will. Their motto is "morality in which all men agree, that is, to be good men and true." It is religious in that a belief in a Supreme Being and in the immortality of the soul are the two prime requirements for membership, but it is nonsectarian in that no religious test is used.¹ The purpose of Freemasonry is to enable men to meet in harmony, to promote friendship, and to be charitable. Its basic ideals are that all persons are the children of one God, that all persons are related to each other, and that the best way to worship God is to be of service to people.

Masons have no national headquarters as such, but the largest regional is the Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction (35 Southern states), which is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia. U.S. membership is claimed at about 3.5 million, with about five million worldwide. The basic unit of Freemasonry is the lodge, which exists under a charter issued by a grand lodge exercising administrative powers. The lodges are linked together informally by a system of mutual recognition between lodges that meet the Masonic requirements. The lodge confers three degrees: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. Additional degrees are conferred by two groups of advanced Freemasonry: the York Rite, which awards 12 degrees; and the Scottish Rite, which awards 30 higher degrees. In the United States and Canada, members have formed a large number of groups to enable them to expand their social and charitable activities. The best known of these groups is the Shriners (official name: "Ancient Arabic Order Nobles Mystic Shrine"), who hold festive parades and support hospitals for crippled and burned children. (To be a Shriner, one must be a 32nd degree Scottish Rite Mason, or its equivalent in the York Rite [Knights Templar]). [The 33rd degree is an honorary degree bestowed upon especially worthy masons who have accomplished outstanding work in such fields as religion and politics.]

Although only men (of at least 21 years of age) can be Masons, related organizations are available for their relatives -- there is the Order of the Eastern Star for Master Masons and their wives; the Order of De Molay for boys; and the Order of Job's Daughters and the Order of Rainbow for young girls. The Masonic Lodge has more than a hundred such fraternal organizations, including Daughters of the Nile, The Tall Cedars of Lebanon, The Mystic Order of Veiled Prophets Of The Enchanted Realm, The Knights Of The Red Cross Of Constantine, and The Blue Lodge.

⁸ Unless otherwise cited, six primary sources were used for this report: (1) *Grolier's 1995 Multimedia Encyclopedia*, (2) *What They Believe*, Harold J. Berry [HJB], BTTB:1990, pp. 71-96); (3) *Freemasonry and Christianity*, Alva J. McClain, BMH Books:1986; (4) *Examining & Exposing Cultic & Occultic Movements*, Jack Sin, "Of Freemasonry and the Lodge," April 2000, pp. 42-46; (5) "Freemasonry: The Cult--The Truth," Jack Harris (former Past Worshipful Master of a Masonic lodge), 3/01, Internet web site; and (6) 7/97, *The Berean Call*

Though some Masons trace their organization's origin back to the beginning of time (much of their teaching is tied to Solomon's temple, but they also claim that John the Baptist and the Apostle John were Masons), modern Masonry dates only to 1717. It was in that year that four lodges in Great Britain formed the first Grand Lodge of England, which became the Premier Grand Lodge of the world. Since that time, lodges have spread all over the world with local grand lodges formed whenever enough lodges exist in an area. Lodges first appeared in America in Philadelphia (1730) and Boston (1733).

The terminology and symbolism of Masonry seem to come mostly from the actual craft of stonemasonry during the Middle Ages. The "free" in Masonry probably came from the "freestones" (stones that could be cut without splitting) with which Masons worked. Stonemasons had three classifications for workers practicing their craft: Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. As mentioned earlier, this is also the terminology used for the first three degrees in Masonry today.

Many allegories and symbols are used in Masonry. The old English Constitution refers to an ancient definition of the ancient craft: "Freemasonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbol," [Freemason's symbols can be made to mean almost anything a person chooses to make them; Master Masons take an oath, "Ever to conceal, never to reveal."²] It seeks to make good men better through the form of belief in "the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the immortality of the soul."

Masonry was originally a means by which people in the occult could practice their "craft" and still remain respectable citizens. The official publication of "The Supreme Council 33" of Scottish Rite Freemasonry is titled *New Age*. Some church denominations are also led by avowed Masons. For example, a 1991 survey by the Southern Baptist Convention Sunday School Board found that 14% of SBC pastors and 18% of SBC deacon board chairs were Masons; it is also estimated that SBC members comprise 37% of total U.S. lodge membership. (A 2000 updated SBC report found that over 1,000 SBC pastors are Masons.)

Many other secret societies seem to be patterned after the Masons. L. James Rongstad says that Freemasonry "is the 'Granddaddy' of all lodges. Its teachings, rituals, customs and practices, and its secrecy have had an inspirational effect on other similar groups such as the Moose, Eagles, Elks, and the National Grange." Mormon Temple rites are also strikingly similar to Masonic Lodge practices (probably because Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church, was also a Mason). Most of the rituals of today's college fraternities are also based more or less directly upon Masonic rituals.

The symbols on the back of the U.S. dollar bill (pyramid, all-seeing eye, the number of feathers on the eagle's spread wings, the stars above the eagle's head in the shape of the Star of David, and the mottos *e pluribus unum* [out of many one] and *novus ordo seclorum* [a new order of the ages]) also appear to emanate from Freemasonry; this would not be surprising considering many of America's so-called founding fathers were themselves Masons -- George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Ethan Allen, John Hancock, John Paul Jones, Paul Revere, Robert Livingston, and 35 other lesser known men who were signers of the Declaration of Independence and/or the Constitution. (It should be noted that there were also a number of the founding fathers who condemned masonry: John Adams, John Quincy Adams, James Madison, Millard Fillmore, Daniel Webster, and Charles Sumner.) Other notable men in history who have

been Freemasons include Mozart, Henry Ford, Rudyard Kipling, Gerald Ford, Norman Vincent Peale, Douglas MacArthur, and Will Rogers.

Since Masons are involved in so many worthy causes, many are unaware that Masonic leaders readily admit that Freemasonry is actually a religion, not merely a "fraternal, social, civic service organization." Joseph Fort Newton (1880-1950), an Episcopal minister and recognized authority in the Masonic world, said, "Masonry is not *a* religion but Religion -- not a church but a worship in which men of all religions may unite." In fact, Freemasonry even sees itself as superseding and unifying all religions. (At various times and places, Freemasonry has met religious and political opposition. Religious opponents, especially the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, have traditionally claimed that Freemasonry is a religion and is a secret organization.)

Henry Wilson Coil is the author of the encyclopedia that many lodges now accept as their authoritative source (*Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*). Coil says that if Freemasonry is not a religion, nothing would have to be added to make it such, and that the religious service at the funeral of a Mason is evidence enough that Freemasonry is a religion. But the fact that Freemasonry is religion would not necessarily condemn it, *except that **the views of the Masonic religion are in open conflict with Biblical Christianity***, so much so that, in our opinion, a knowledgeable and committed Mason could not possibly be a true Christian.

Below is detailed what the Masons believe about their source of authority, God, Jesus Christ, sin, and salvation and future life:

- 1) **Source of Authority.** Masons refer to the Bible as the "Volume of the Sacred Law" (V.S.L.), and it is considered an indispensable part of what is called "the furniture" in a Masonic Lodge. But the Bible is used *only* in a so-called "Christian" lodge -- the Hebrew Pentateuch is used in a Hebrew lodge, the Koran in a Mohammedan lodge, the Vedas in a Brahmin lodge, etc. Jim Shaw, a former 33rd degree Mason, says that Masonry is not based on the Bible (referred to as "The Great Light"), but on the Kabala (Cabala), a medieval book of mysticism and magic. Masonic authority Henry Wilson Coil also admits that the Kabala's teachings can be seen in some of the mystical and philosophical degrees of Masonry. Albert Pike (see next), the man responsible for virtually rewriting the Scottish Rite degrees into their present form, said that the Masonic "search after light" leads directly back to the Kabala, the ultimate source of Masonic beliefs (*Morals and Dogma*). **[HJB]**

One of the great authorities on Masonry was Albert Pike (1809-1901), Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Supreme Council of Scottish Right Freemasonry in the USA and "an honorary member of almost every Supreme Council in the world" (Albert G. Mackey, 33rd degree, and Charles T. McClenachan, 33rd degree, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, The Masonic History Company, 1921, rev. ed.; 2:564). Pike authored *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the Supreme Council of the 33rd Degree*, which was published by its authority. This compendium of official Masonic lore clearly traces Masonry to Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and other Eastern religions. Albert G. Mackey, co-author of *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, is also one of Masonry's highest authorities. In his *Manual of the Lodge*, he traces Masonic teaching back to "the ancient rites and mysteries practiced in the very bosom of pagan darkness. ..." (Albert G. Mackey, *Manual of the Lodge*, Macoy and Sickles, 1802, p. 96).

In the final analysis, Masons do not adjust their beliefs to fit the Bible, the Bible is adjusted to fit their beliefs. A Mason's loyalty is never to God but to the Lodge. Coil has concluded that: "The prevailing Masonic opinion is that the Bible is only a *symbol* of Divine Will, Law, or Revelation, and *not* that its *contents* are Divine Law, inspired, or revealed. So far, no responsible authority has held that a Freemason must believe the Bible or any part of it." Masonry's only concern is that each person must swear by the most holy book he knows, so that he will then keep the oaths of Freemasonry. (See Endnote #2 again.)

- 2) **God.** Masons require one to believe in God to be a member, but the candidate is never required to say *what* god he believes in -- "Masonry ... requires merely that you believe in some deity, give him what name you will ... any god will do, so he is your god" (*Little Masonic Library*, Macoy Publishing, 1977, 4:32). Masons commonly refer to their deity as the "Great Architect of the Universe" (G.A.O.T.U.) or the Supreme Being. God is further described as Grand Artificer, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge Above, Jehovah, Allah, Buddha, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, or Great Geometer. (The "G" in the Masonic ring can refer to God; it can also refer to geometry.) Masons claim that the actual name for God has been lost (cf. Jn. 14:8,9; Phil. 2:9-11; 1 Jn. 5:20) **[HJB]**.
- 3) **Jesus Christ.** The name of Christ is seldom referred to in Masonic literature, apparently due to Masons not wanting to offend their non-Christian members. Some Masonic leaders even teach that the Messiah will not be an individual, but "the perfection of the human race." One such leader thinks that the stories about various Messiahs have their origin in the most ancient of religious beliefs -- Solar Worship. Masons, therefore, consider the discussion about the deity of Christ to be an endless, futile argument. When quoting from the Bible, references to Christ are omitted, and prayer is never allowed to be offered (in a "well-ordered" lodge) *in the name of Jesus Christ*. Masons do not care whether a person privately petitions God or Jehovah, Allah or Buddha, Mohammed or Jesus, the God of Israel or the "Great First Cause," but in the Lodge, the only petition allowed is to the "Great Architect of the Universe." **[HJB]** Clearly then, Freemasonry does not believe that Jesus Christ is God, nor that salvation is available only through Him (cf. 1 Jn. 4:3). Freemasonry is a religion without a Savior.

At the heart of Masonry is a secret Luciferian doctrine which a Mason only comes to understand as he reaches the higher levels. Manly Palmer Hall, another of the great authorities on Masonry, writes, "When the Mason ... has learned the mystery of his Craft, the seething energies of Lucifer are in his hands. ..." (Manly Palmer Hall, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*, p. 48). The Apostle John warned that those who deny that Jesus is the only, all sufficient Christ, and that He came once and for all in the flesh, have embraced the spirit of Antichrist (1 Jn. 4:1-3). That Jesus was not the Christ, but that He had attained to the state of "Christ-consciousness" available to all mankind, is again part of Masonry: "Jesus of Nazareth had attained a level of consciousness, of perfection, that has been called by various names: cosmic consciousness, soul regeneration, philosophic initiation, spiritual illumination, Brahmic Splendor, Christ-consciousness" (Lynn F. Perkins, *The Meaning of Masonry*, CSA Press, 1971, p. 53).

- 4) **Sin.** Sin is seldom referred to in Masonic literature. The reality of sin in the Biblical sense is denied (much like the Christian Scientists); Masons think that any "shortcomings" can be overcome by greater enlightenment. Yet in attaining the degree of Master Mason, the symbolism implies that a person is redeemed from the death of sin and sin's pollution. [HJB]
- 5) **Salvation and Future Life.** Masons think that salvation refers to being brought from the material to the spiritual; i.e., when man returns to "his forgotten inherent spirituality." Masons believe that the degree of Master Mason is symbolical of old age, which allows a person to happily reflect on *a well-spent life* and to "die in the hope of a glorious immortality." Because they deny the reality of sin, Masons see no need of salvation in the Biblical sense. They see salvation as a step-by-step enlightenment, which comes through initiation into the Masonic degrees and their mysteries. [HJB]

In the 19th degree of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, the initiate is told that attachment to Masonry's "statutes and rules of the order" will make him "deserving of entering the celestial Jerusalem [heaven]." In the 28th degree, he is told that "the true Mason [is one] who raises himself by degrees till he reaches heaven" and that one of his duties is "To divest [him]self of original sin ..." Masons clearly teach a salvation by works, or character development, *not* a salvation by *faith in Christ alone*. Even in the 32nd Degree, a Mason never can nor will find the "light" he is looking for.

Endnotes

1 Sectarianism is simply the belief that one's faith has an exclusive corner on the Truth and that all others are false. In fact, Christianity is deemed by Freemasonry to be a *sect*, and Christians who believe in Jesus alone are said by Masons to be *sectarian*. Since it is revealed that their Masonic "God" hates sectarianism, in effect, Freemasonry's elite are admitting that they hate Jesus Christ. That is why the Masonic institution freely accepts Buddhists, Moslems, Zoroastrians, Voodooists, and even Satanists into its fraternal chambers. All are welcomed so long as each agrees that his particular religion is not exclusive. That would be sectarianism. However, Jesus Christ testified that He alone is the one true God, that He alone is "The Way, The Truth, and The Life." Therefore, all those who believe in Him as Lord and Savior refuse to give glory to any other deity. Every true Christian, in the strictest Masonic view, is therefore, necessarily hated and despised as a divisive, sectarian believer. (Source: 1/95, *Flashpoint*.)

2 Most do not realize the terrible oaths that Masons are required to take for each advancing degree in this cult. Each Entering Apprentice, for example, is required to repeat:

"... most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, that I will always hail, ever conceal, and never reveal, any of the arts, parts or points of the hidden mysteries of ancient Freemasonry. ... All this I most solemnly, sincerely promise and swear, with a firm and steadfast resolution to perform the same, without any mental reservation or secret evasion of mine whatever binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by its roots, and buried in the rough sand of the sea at low water mark where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four

hours, should I ever knowingly or willingly violate my solemn oath and obligation as an Entered Apprentice Mason. So help me, God."

Each succeeding degree has a similar horrible oath and penalty connected with it. But Jesus commanded His followers to "not swear at all" (Matthew 5:34; James 5:12). In addition, Jesus would never sanction these required oaths, for He said: "I have said nothing in secret" (John 18:20). Masonry claims to have found the truth, and yet demands that its members swear never to reveal and always to conceal its teachings! -- How unlike true Christianity in which believers are commanded to "go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). Masonry's methods stand condemned by the Word of God.

Mormonism

Christian⁹ or Cult?¹⁰

Mormonism, known as *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* (with headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah -- a state that is now 70% Mormon), was officially founded in 1830 by Joseph Smith Jr. (1805-1844). Smith claimed to have had a personal visit from God the Father at the age of 15, who introduced him to Christ.¹ Jesus then supposedly told him not to join any church because they were all wrong and all the Christian church's doctrines "were an abomination" (*Joseph Smith -- History 19, Pearl of Great Price*). After Smith's murder in 1844, Brigham Young took the cult to Utah, where there is now a major University named after him, and the number of Mormons exceed one million. The Mormon Church currently claims about 11 million baptized members worldwide (5.2 million U.S., ranking it 5th among the largest 25 U.S. denominations), up from about 2.5 million in 1970. Over the last decade, nearly 300,000 individuals over the age of eight have joined the Mormon Church every year. Membership is expected to grow to over 23 million over the next two decades. It is growing fastest in Latin America and Asia. Official publications include *Church News*, a weekly 16-page newspaper, and the *Ensign*, a monthly magazine.

The Mormon Church collects at least \$6 billion a year from its members, and generates at least another \$5 billion in sales from its various business enterprises; total church assets exceed \$30 billion. (At least 100 companies are controlled by the Mormon Church, and some estimate its total annual revenues in excess of \$20 billion! The church also owns 18 radio stations in the U.S.) Part of the Church's income goes to operate an elaborate internal welfare system so its members avoid any governmental assistance. The Mormon Church also has a 58,000-plus missionary force working in more than 160 nations in 102 languages. The Church's Provo, Utah, 26-acre Missionary Training Center receives 500 new missionaries a week into its 3-9 week intensive missionary training program. (All boys, once they turn 19, are expected to dedicate two years of their lives to missionary service.) Fielding missionaries is a \$500 million per

⁹ In recent years, Mormon leaders, including the church's modern-day "Prophet," Gordon B. Hinckley, have sought to align the LDS' public teachings and practices with those of politically correct, global ecumenicism. But it is only until recently that Mormons wanted to be called "Christians," preferring not to be included with Christian denominations, which Joseph Smith Jr. said were, "all wrong ... all their creeds were an abomination in His sight, and that those professors (Christians) were all corrupt" (*Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith, 2:18-19*); Mormons have preferred to be called "saints." However, in the recent years, the LDS church has spent millions of dollars in an intense "PR" campaign aimed at moving the Mormon church into the mainstream of Christianity. The political and economic benefits of Mormons being included in the mainstream of Christianity are obvious. Further, for Mormons to be accepted as traditional Christians would greatly aid in proselytizing the members of Christian denominations into the LDS church. This is why the LDS church is trying so hard to present itself as Christian and is trying to overcome the stigma of being a cult (9/16/96, FBIS, "Are Mormons Christians," by Cooper P. Abrams III). Moreover, Mormons let it be known in early-2001 that they no longer wanted to be referred to as "the Mormon Church," "the Latter-day Saints Church," or by "LDS Church." If the name must be shortened, "the Church of Jesus Christ," or "the Church" is acceptable, they said (3/19/01, *USN&WR*).

¹⁰ This report has been excerpted and/or adapted from two sources: (1) "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Rick Branch (Watchman Fellowship Profile, 1993); and (2) *Examining & Exposing Cultic & Occultic Movements*, Jack Sin, "What is Wrong with Mormonism," April 2000, pp. 21-25

year effort and currently reaps more than 300,000 new converts each year. Nevertheless, only about 46% of Mormons attend a church meeting at least once a month. (The clean-cut image that Mormons have attained has been a major factor in the attractiveness of the Mormon Church to outsiders. They are forbidden to drink coffee, tea, and alcoholic beverages, and use tobacco products.)

The Mormon church (LDS) is organized so that one prophet leads the church. Beneath the prophet in authority is the Council of the Twelve Apostles. A third group of men are called the First and Second Councils of the Seventy. All of these men together are called the General Authorities. Local churches are called *Wards* or *Stake Centers* and meet for worship in what the Mormons call "meetinghouses." The *Temples* are not for worship, but are used for ceremonies for the living and the dead. Less than ten percent of all LDS members are allowed to enter these structures.

As of year-end 2002, there were 114 operating temples of Mormondom worldwide, with another 14 under construction or approved (albeit less elaborate than the 50 temples in existence at the end of 1997). (Approximately 65,000 members must be in an immediate area to qualify for a temple.) Temples are required for Mormon marriages and for proxy baptisms of ancestors. Most people assume Mormon temples are places of worship. This is not true. Only secret, occult rituals for the living and the dead are performed there, and Mormons think they must perform them to have eternal life. It is tragic that over eleven million Mormons think they need secret handshakes, oaths, incantations, and rituals, which originated in occultic Scottish Rite Freemasonry, in order to be with God in heaven! (In the final years of Joseph Smith Jr.'s life, he became a "worshipful master" in the Masonic Lodge.)

Many today are under the false impression that Mormonism is merely another Christian denomination, when in actuality, Mormon beliefs are not only unbiblical, but *anti-Christian*. Below are the highlights of what Mormons believe concerning their source of authority, the Trinity, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, sin, salvation, and heaven and hell:

- 1) **Source of Authority.** Mormonism teaches that the canon of Scripture was not closed when the Bible was completed. They have three sources in addition to the Bible, all of which they believe contain God's revelations -- the *Book of Mormon* [2](#) (changed in more than 4,000 places since 1830), *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the *Pearl of Great Price*. However, Mormons follow the teachings of these three books even when they contradict the Bible. For example, Mormonism teaches that the Bible is the Word of God "as far as it is translated correctly." Then whenever a Mormon belief contradicts Scripture, the Mormons say that particular part of Scripture is translated incorrectly, and that the correct translation is in one of the Mormon scriptures (*The Maze of Mormonism*, p. 131). Thereby, the Bible is rejected as the infallible Word of God. [e.g. "The Bible is considered usable, but suspect due to its many errors and missing parts" (Articles of Faith No. 8, *Ensign*, January 1989, pp. 25, 27).
- 2) **Trinity.** Mormonism teaches polytheism (versus monotheism taught in the Bible), believing that the universe is inhabited by many gods who produce spirit children. Joseph Smith declared, "I will preach on the plurality of Gods. I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods"

(*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 370). Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie spoke about the Godhead in this way, "Plurality of Gods: Three separate personages: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, comprise the Godhead. As each of these persons is a God, it is evident, from this standpoint alone, that a plurality of Gods exists. To us, speaking in the proper finite sense, these three are the only Gods we worship. But in addition there is an infinite number of holy personages, drawn from worlds without number, who have passed on to exaltation and are thus gods" (*Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 576-577).

- 3) **God.** In Mormon theology, the god of our planet is believed to have once been a man on another planet, who through self-effort and the help of his own father-god, was appointed by a counsel of gods in the heavens to his high position as the god of planet Earth, and now has a physical, resurrected, glorified body. Mormonism teaches that through the atonement of Christ and by their good deeds and "holy" living, men can one day become gods, and with their multiplicity of "goddess wives," populate their own planets. (This is what the celestial marriage and the Mormon temple vows are all about.) Mormon theology, therefore, humanizes God and deifies man.³
- 4) **Christ.** Mormonism acknowledges the divinity of Christ, but as noted above, Mormon doctrine on what constitutes divinity falls seriously short of the Biblical standard. Mormonism teaches that Jesus, Lucifer, and all the demons, as well as all mankind, are actually all spirit brothers and sisters, born in the spirit world as spirit babies to our man-god Heavenly Father and his goddess wives. Mormon leaders have consistently taught that God the Father ("Adam-god") had sexual relations on earth with Mary (his own spirit daughter), to produce the physical body of Jesus. Early Mormon apostles also asserted that Christ was a polygamist, and that His wives included Mary and Martha (the sisters of Lazarus) and Mary Magdalene.⁴
- 5) **Holy Spirit.** In Mormonism, a distinction is drawn between the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit. As LDS Apostle Marion G. Romney stated: "The Holy Ghost is a person, a spirit, the third member of the Godhead" (*Ensign*, May 1977, pp. 43-44). The sixth LDS prophet, Joseph F. Smith, explains that the Holy Spirit is not a person but rather an impersonal force: "You may call it the Spirit of God, you may call it the influence of God's intelligence, you may call it the substance of his power; no matter what it is called, it is the spirit of intelligence that permeates the universe" (*Mormon Doctrine*, McConkie, pp. 752-753).
- 6) **Sin.** In Mormon theology, it is not quite clear how the first humans, Adam and Eve, came to live on this earth and received bodies, but somehow they did and began the process of human procreation, whereby bodies are produced for their spirit children. But at the very beginning of the process of human generation, sin entered necessarily. The earthly bodies of Adam and Eve were intended to be immortal tabernacles for their spirits, "but it was necessary for them to possess through mortality and be redeemed through the sacrifice made by Jesus Christ that the fullness of life might come." Therefore, they disobeyed God's commands. Since the fall of man was necessary, it became necessary for men to disobey God in order to do His will. Adam's fall, thereby, was a fall "upward."⁵ Concerning the transmission of sin to Adam's posterity, Mormons take a negative position -- they believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression. Having rejected the doctrine of the imputation of the guilt of sin, Latter-Day Saints likewise

repudiate the transmission of inherent corruption or original sin.

- 7) **Salvation.** Mormon theology teaches that the atonement of Christ was essential to our salvation and eternal life with God, but that it is **not** sufficient. Christ's shed blood on the cross provides for universal resurrection of all people, but does not pay for personal sins; according to Mormonism, only Christ's blood shed in the Garden of Gethsemane atones for personal sin. Besides faith in Christ, complete and permanent repentance of all sin as well as many good works are required.⁶ Mormonism also teaches that one must be baptized in water to be saved (baptismal regeneration), and that salvation will also be available in the next world for those "missing-out" in this one. Therefore, Mormons avidly pursue genealogy and practice baptism for the dead.⁷
- 8) **Heaven and Hell.** Mormonism teaches that there are three degrees of glory: Celestial (for good Mormons able to cease sinning in this lifetime -- see endnote #6 below), Terrestrial (for good people who do not comply with all the teachings of Mormonism), and Telestial (for those who have lived unclean earthly lives). (See also *Mormon Doctrines*, p. 348.) Mormonism teaches that there is a hell, but only for the "sons of perdition," a very small number of souls that cannot be redeemed. According to Mormonism, then, the vast majority of mankind will be "saved," though it should be obvious that no one will make it to the Celestial Kingdom. [Blacks used to be totally out of the equation: "Black people are black because of their misdeeds in the pre-existence" (*Three Degrees of Glory*, LDS Apostle Melvin J. Ballard, p. 21); "The Negro is an unfortunate man. He has been given a black skin. But that is nothing compared with that greater handicap. He is not permitted to receive the priesthood and the ordinances of the temple, necessary to prepare men and women to enter into and enjoy a fullness of glory in the Celestial Kingdom" (Elder George E. Richards). In 1978, however, the Mormon Church announced that God had lifted his curse from the African race.]
- 9) **Temple Rituals.** A typical temple ceremony would take place as follows: "The ritual began in a small cubicle where we had to strip completely. We then put on 'the shield,' a poncho with a hole for the head, but open on the sides (similar to a hospital gown). We went through a series of 'washings and anointings,' as various parts of our bodies were touched by elderly temple workers who mumbled appropriate incantations over them. Our Mormon underwear, 'the garments,' are said to have powers to protect us from 'the evil one.' It had occult markings, which were so 'sacred' that we were instructed to burn them when the garments wore out. The endowment ceremony mocked all doctrines held to by Biblical Christianity, and Christian pastors were portrayed as servants of Satan. We had to swear many blood oaths, promising we would forfeit our lives if we weren't faithful, or if we revealed any of the secrets revealed to us in the temple ceremonies. We were made to pretend by grotesque gestures to cut our throats, chests, and abdomens, indicating how we would lose our lives. We were never told who would kill us! The inference was, and history testifies to, that it would be the Mormon priesthood." (Testimony of a former Mormon.) [Note: The blood oaths and portrayal of Christian pastors were removed in April of 1990, despite the fact that the ordinance was purported to have been given originally by a revelation and was never to be changed.]
- 10) **More from the Mouths of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young.**

Joseph Smith

"God made Aaron to be the mouthpiece for the children of Israel, and **He will make me to be God to you** in His stead, and the elders to be mouth for me; and if you don't like it, you must lump it" (*Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 6, pp 319-320).

"I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, **nor Jesus** ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as **I**" (D.H.C., vol. 6, p. 408-409).

"The whole Earth shall bear me witness that I, like the towering rock in the midst of the ocean, **which has withstood the mighty surges of the warring waves for centuries, am impregnable ...** I combat the errors of ages; I meet the violence of mobs; I cope with illegal proceedings from executive authority; I cut the gordian knot of powers, and I solve mathematical problems of universities, with truth -- diamond truth; and **God is my right hand man.**" (D.H.C., Vol. 6, p. 78).

"And I prophesy in the name of the Lord God of Israel, unless the United States redress the wrongs committed upon the Saints in Missouri and punish the crimes committed by her officers that **in a few years the government will be utterly overthrown and wasted and there will not be so much as a potsherd left, ...**" (D.H.C., vol. 5, p. 394). [This prophecy was made in May of 1843, and the United States government has not been overthrown and wasted.]

"Here then is eternal life -- to know the only wise **and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves,** and to be kings and priests to God, the **same as all Gods have done before you...**" (*Teachings of the Prophet, Joseph Smith*, p. 346).

"In the beginning, **the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they** came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it" (Ibid., p. 349).

"The **greatest responsibility** in this world that **God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead**" [Our God of the Bible has forbidden us to have anything to do with the dead (Deut. 18:10,11)].

Brigham Young

"I have never yet preached a serton and sent it out to the children of men, that they **may not call Scripture.** Let me have the privilege of correcting a sermon, and **it is as good a scripture**" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13, p. 95; also see vol. 13, p. 264).

"I say, rather than the **apostates** should flourish here, **I will unsheath my Bowie knife, and conquer or die.** [Great commotion in the congregation, and a

simultaneous burst of feeling, assenting to the declaration.] **Now, you nasty apostates, clear out,** or judgment will be put on the line ... If you say it is right, raise your hands [All hands up], let us call upon the Lord to assist us in this, and **every good work.**" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 83)

"I could refer you to **plenty of instances where men have been righteously slain, in order to atone for their sins** ... This is loving our neighbor as ourselves, if he needs help, help him, and if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be **saved, spill it.**" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, p. 220). [Many were killed under what is called the "Blood Atonement Doctrine" Leaving Mormonism was one of the sins that the blood of Jesus could not atone for, and a person's own blood must be shed by Mormon priests as an atonement for sin.]

"I intend to meet them on their own grounds. ... **and if any miserable scoundrel comes here, cut their throats.**" [And they obeyed; a wagon train of innocent men, women, and children were massacred at Mountain Meadows under the orders of Brigham Young. They were passing through Utah, and Brigham thought they were from Illinois where Joseph Smith had been killed. Many more were "atoned."]

"**Gold and silver grow,** and so does every other kind of metal, **the same as the hair upon my head or** the wheat in the field; ..." (JOD., vol. 1, p. 219).

"Who can tell us of the **inhabitants of this little planet** that shines of an evening, **called the Moon?** ... So it is with regard to the **inhabitants of the Sun.** Do you not think it is inhabited? I rather think it is. **Do you think there is any life there? No Question of it;** it was not made in vain." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 219).

"Do you think **we shall ever be admitted as a State into the Union without denying the principal of polygamy?** If we are not admitted until then, **we shall never be admitted.**" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, p. 269). [The Edmunds Act was passed in 1882 forbidding polygamy in the territory, and only then was Utah allowed to enter the Union. At that point the LDS church officially gave up polygamy. Another false prophecy from the Mormon prophet!]

"I think these preliminaries will satisfy me, and I feel prepared to take my text. It is the words of Jesus Christ, **but where they are in the Bible I cannot tell you now,** for I have not taken pains to look at them. I have had so much to do, that **I have not read the Bible for many years.** I used to read and study it, **but did not understand the spirit and meaning of it ...**" (1854 Conference discourse, October 8). [Brigham Young obviously did not understand the Bible, and neither do any of the other Mormon prophets!]

Endnotes

1 The Bible lists six identifying marks of false prophets, any one of which is sufficient for identification: (1) through signs and wonders they lead astray after false gods (Dt. 13:1-4); (2) their prophecies don't come to pass (Dt. 18:20-22); (3) they contradict God's Word (Isa. 8:20); (4) they bear bad fruit (Mt. 7:18-20); (5) men speak well of them (Lk. 6:26); and (6) they deny that Jesus, the one and only Christ, has come once and for all in the flesh (1 Jn. 4:3), thereby denying His sufficiency in all matters of life and godliness

(2 Pe. 1:3). Most cults are founded upon false prophecies, which, if pointed out, offer an effective way to open blind eyes and rescue cultists. Mormonism boasts of its prophets -- but they have all been false. In the course of 18 years, founding prophet Joseph Smith made 64 specific prophecies. Only six of them were fulfilled -- fewer than 10 percent. Many of his proclamations dealt with the future of his church. For example, in August of 1831 he stated that God had told him, "The faithful among you shall be preserved and rejoice together in the land of Missouri." In September of 1832, he stated that the city of Independence would become the "New Jerusalem ... even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation." Six years later the Mormons were driven out of Independence. No temple was built there. Eventually they were driven from Missouri and settled in Utah. In 1833, Smith prophesied that the United States would suffer unparalleled multiple disasters ("pestilence, hail, famine, and earthquake") which would sweep the wicked (non-Mormons) off the land, leaving Mormons safe in their Zion haven in Missouri. Instead, they fled to Utah. Among Smith's many other false prophecies was the declaration in 1835 that Christ would return within 56 years and many living then would "not taste of death till Christ comes" (*History of the Church* [Vol. 2], p. 182; [Vol. 5], p. 336). Smith's successor, Brigham Young, prophesied that the Civil War would not free the slaves.

2 The *Book of Mormon*, purported by Joseph Smith Jr. to be "inspired by God," is the most famous of specifically Mormon "scriptures." Smith concocted the preposterous yarn that an angel named Moroni (pronounced ma-roe-nee) appeared to him in 1827 and told him of some golden plates hidden in a hillside near Palmyra, New York. From these plates, Smith supposedly translated the *Book of Mormon*. [Published in 1830, this was to become the first of many scriptures for the Mormon Church. By this time, Smith had also officially organized the LDS Church and was gaining a following. Over the next ten years, the church headquarters would move to Kirtland, Ohio; Independence, Missouri, and Far West, Missouri. Finally it would find a resting place in Nauvoo, Illinois.] In actuality, the *Book of Mormon* is a fraud, having been plagiarized from the Bible, from Shakespeare, from the pope's *Essays on Man*, from the Westminster Confession of Faith, and from other leading authors of the last few hundred years prior to Smith's death. Despite its plagiarisms, the *Book of Mormon* contradicts the Bible in hundreds of places (9/95, *Maranatha Baptist Watchman*).

3 Joseph Smith explained, "I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see. He was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ Himself did" (*LDS History of the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 305). "The Father has promised us that through our faithfulness we shall be blessed with the fullness of his kingdom. In other words we will have the privilege of becoming like him. To become like him we must have all the powers of godhood; thus a man and his wife when glorified will have spirit children who eventually will go on an earth like this one we are on and pass through the same kind of experiences, being subject to mortal conditions, and if faithful, then they also will receive the fullness of exaltation and partake of the same blessings. There is no end to this development; it will go on forever. We will become gods and have jurisdiction over the world, and the world will be peopled by our own offspring. We will have an endless eternity for this" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 2, p. 48).

4 Brigham Young stated, "The birth of the Saviour was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of natural action. He partook of flesh and blood, was

begotten of his Father, as we were of our father" (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, p. 115). Mormon Apostle McConkie explained, "And Christ was born into the world as a literal Son this Holy Being; he was born in the same personal, real, and literal sense that any mortal son is born to a mortal father. He was begotten, conceived and born in the normal and natural course of events (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 742). Jesus, according to Milton Hunter of the LDS First Council of the Seventy, is the brother of Lucifer: "The appointment of Jesus to be the Savior of the world was contested by one of the other sons of God. He was called Lucifer, son of the morning. Haughty, ambitious, and covetous of power and glory, this spirit-brother of Jesus desperately tried to become the Savior of mankind" (*The Gospel Through the Ages*, p. 15).

5 On June 8, 1873, speaking from the Salt Lake City Tabernacle, Brigham Young said, "The Devil told the truth ... I do not blame Mother Eve. I would not have had her miss eating the forbidden fruit for anything. ..." Another Mormon president declared, "The fall of man came as a blessing in disguise... We can hardly look upon anything resulting in such benefits [i.e., godhood] as a sin." Incredibly, Mormonism is based upon the belief that Satan's central lie is the gospel truth!

6 See: (1) *Book of Mormon*: 3 Nephi 27:13-27; Moroni 10:32-33; Mosiah 15:26-27; Alma 12:14-28; 34:32-35; 1 Nephi 3:7; (2) *Doctrine & Covenants*: 14:7; 58:42-43; and (3) *Miracle of Forgiveness* (Kimball): pp. 206-210, 313-315, 321-322, 354-355.

7 Mormons believe that everyone who lives and dies on this earth goes to a place called the Spirit Prison, except faithful Mormons, who go to Paradise. Mormon Spirit Missionaries go down from Paradise to the Spirit Prison and teach the Gospel of Joseph Smith to the lost Christians and others there. Those who accept Mormonism must remain in prison until a worthy Mormon performs certain essential rituals, called "Ordinances," for them in one of the Mormon Temples. Then they are released from Spirit Prison to join the Mormons in Paradise. Since these rituals or Ordinances require a physical body to be washed, anointed, baptized, etc., they can only be performed by a living person in the place and manner prescribed by Deity, acting under Universal (Mormon) cosmic laws.

The Other Mormon Church¹¹ (RLDS) (Community of Christ)

We are often asked about the "other Mormon church" that is headquartered in Independence, Missouri. The questions vary from: "are they a cult?" to "what is the difference between them and the Utah Mormons?"

The answer to the first is easy. YES, they are a cult.

The answer to the second is a bit more complicated. The RLDS (Reorganized Latter Day Saints) actually had its start after the assassination of Joseph Smith Jr., the founder and prophet of all LDS churches. After his death in 1844, there were many men who rose up and declared themselves to be the true prophet to replace Smith. Many of these new "prophets" began their own version of the "only true church." In fact, there have been over 100 distinct groups claiming to be the church that would end all controversy about the "restored" gospel. The RLDS is the largest of these spin-off groups.

When Brigham Young led most of the "saints" to the Salt Lake Valley in Utah, several leaders, who did not accept Smith's revelation on polygamy, branched off and formed the RLDS church. One of these men, Jason Briggs, who had been an elder in the LDS church in Nauvoo, Illinois, had his own revelation that Joseph Smith III (Joseph Jr.'s son) was the one to rightfully assume the mantle of "prophet." He, along with about 300 others, followed Emma Smith (Joseph Jr.'s first and only non-polygamous wife), to Independence, Missouri. At first, Joseph Smith III refused to take on the job of prophet, but he later relented and became the official head of the RLDS church on April 6, 1860. Its official publications are the monthly magazine *Saints Herald* and the bimonthly *Restoration Witness*.

Similar to most other churches which claim Joseph Smith Jr. as their founder, the RLDS Church is led by a Prophet and his counselors. These men are known collectively as the First Presidency. In addition, the RLDS Church has a Council of Twelve Apostles. There are lesser offices in the RLDS Church such as Bishops, Elders, etc. An RLDS *Fundamentalist* or *Restorationist* is one who believes the *Book of Mormon* is historically and theologically accurate. They also believe the RLDS Church, as defined by Joseph Smith III, is the only true church.

Since its founding, each RLDS prophet had to be a descendent of Joseph Smith Jr. This was not a problem until Prophet Wallace B. Smith failed to produce a male heir. But, the god of the RLDS was not to be foiled by this unfortunate turn of events; he "revealed" to Wallace in 1984 that it was now acceptable for women to hold the Mormon priesthood. Since Wallace does have daughters, it seemed likely that the next prophet of the RLDS church would be a prophetess. However, Wallace B. Smith retired several

¹¹ This article ("The Other Mormon Church -- RLDS") has been excerpted and/or adapted from an article in the January 1997 Mount Carmel Outreach newsletter; and from "Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints," Craig Branch (Watchman Fellowship Profile, 1996[?]). On April 7, 2000, members of the RLDS voted at its world conference to go by a new name: **Community of Christ**. The new name took effect April 6, 2001.

years ago, and for the first time in the church's history, a person not in direct lineage of Joseph Smith was appointed to be president -- Grant McMurray.

Strange as it may seem, the RLDS church has built its doctrinal statement on points of disagreement with the doctrine of the Utah Mormons. Unlike the Utah Mormons, they do not accept polygamy, marriage for time and eternity, that men can become gods, and blood atonement as taught by Joseph Smith Jr. Rather, they blame all these errors on Brigham Young. Here they had to change history, because both Young and Smith practiced and taught those things, semi-secretly until Smith's death. Later, Young taught all this in public without blushing. But, the RLDSs have plenty of heresies of their own.

Historically, the RLDS has taught the following doctrines:

- ❖ The RLDS versions of the *Book of Mormon* and the *Doctrine and Covenants* are considered to be scripture. They also accept Joseph Smith's rewritten version of the Bible, the Inspired Version [I.V.], as scripture.
- ❖ Complete apostasy of the early Christian church (*Fundamentals*, F. Henry Edwards, pp. 175-210).
- ❖ Joseph Smith Jr. was a prophet who restored God's church (*D&C* 1:4a and 1:5d-e).
- ❖ Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods were restored (*History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vol. 1, pp. 34-35).
- ❖ Baptism for the remission of sins (*D&C* 39:2a-b, 16:4e).
- ❖ Zion will be established in, and Jesus will return to, Independence, Missouri (I.V. of Gen. 7:20-25, *D&C* 57, *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, p. 710).
- ❖ Heaven has three levels (*D&C* 76:5-7).
- ❖ Those who do not hear the RLDS gospel in this life will have another opportunity in the next (*D&C* 76:6c).

Of the Holy Spirit, Kurt Goedelman of Personal Freedom Outreach, writes, "While it is easy to find stated that the Father and Son are regarded as persons in RLDS literature, it is difficult to find references to the Holy Spirit (or Holy Ghost) as a person. Rather, He is mainly regarded as 'the living power and presence of God'" (*Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 7).

Unlike the Mormon Church, most RLDS members view the *Book of Mormon* as a 19th century product (*Position Papers*, pp. 103-112). The RLDS version of the *Doctrine and Covenants* also contains additional and different revelations than will be found in the Mormon version. In addition, they do not use the *Pearl of Great Price* as do the Utah Mormons.

In recent years, the RLDS Church has avoided viewing the Restoration of the Church as an actual historical event. In a speech given at the First Presidency Meetings in 1979, it was stated, "When we are honest about our own personal and corporate history, we realize that the apostasy and the Restoration were not events that happened one time in history but rather are processes continually at work among us" (*Presidential Papers*, p. 28). Thus, by denying the Restoration was an actual historical event, the RLDS Church has undermined the very foundation upon which all of Joseph Smith Jr.'s later work depends and, thereby, undermining their own foundation.

Even these RLDS' doctrines that had been cast in stone are giving way to modern day

liberalism and New Age thinking. Paul Edwards, the dean of the Park College Graduate School of Religion and Temple School Center director, has stated that each member must look to his or her own **existential experience** for a basis of truth. They should not base their beliefs on the *Bible* or even the *Book of Mormon*, for each individual must form his own belief founded on his experiences. The Bible is considered a springboard for each person to form his or her own theology without help from any authority. Here is a quote from Edwards: "One of the most important needs for RLDS people today is to look existentially at *primary experiences* as the starting point for their theological activity." (Emphasis ours.)

Simply stated, Edwards is advocating that each individual view theological truths from a personal, subjective perspective, rather than from an historical, objective perspective. Instead of beginning with the Bible, or even RLDS scripture, such as the *Book of Mormon* and/or *Doctrine and Covenants*, the RLDS dean of theology recommends that each believer looks to his or her own existential experience for a basis of truth. Based on this idea, it would be difficult for the RLDS hierarchy to adopt any single Statement of Faith; for each individual would interpret those beliefs in his own existential way.

Echoing Edwards' views, Anthony Chvala-Smith, who received his Ph.D. from Marquette University, "explained there can be no 'perennial theology, only a theology of wayfarers'" (Ibid., p. 9). Thus, each believer in the RLDS religion is left to stumble in darkness, making their own way through the maze, with no help from higher authorities.

Finally, Robert Mesle, professor of religion at Graceland, in speaking about the place of the Bible in RLDS theology, stated, "We need to be teaching our young people to be responsible, discriminating readers of scripture (who) use scripture as a springboard not a trap" (Ibid.). In RLDS theology, the Bible is simply a beginning point for the individual's personal theology. The important source for theological truth is not God's word, but rather that subjective, existential experience. It is felt by many cult researchers that this ambiguity of doctrine may be due, in part, to both the on-going controversy between Fundamentalists and Liberals within the RLDS Church and the church's tendency to reflect the latest social trends.

New Age Movement

New Age or Old Occult?¹²

The New Age Movement (NAM) is both a religious and a social movement. In fact, Western culture is currently experiencing a phenomenal, spiritual, ideological, and sociological shift. It is a religious world view that is alien and hostile to Christianity. It's a multi-focused, multi-faceted synthesis, in varying degrees, of the Far Eastern, mystical religions, mainly Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Western Occultism, adapted to and influenced by Western, materialistic culture. It sometimes appears in secularized forms.

Prominent expressions of the NAM were carried on into more modern times in Europe and America by Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), transcendentalists like Thoreau, Emerson, and Wordsworth (early 1800s), and Theosophy introduced by Madame Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891) (*The New Age Rage*, pp. 22-24). The decade of the sixties witnessed a revival of Eastern mysticism as traditional values were being challenged. Zen, Carlos Castañeda, the Beatles, Transcendental Meditation, and yoga all became popular.

The New Age Movement consists of an incredibly huge and well organized network consisting of thousands of groups, trusts, foundations, clubs, lodges, and religious groups whose goal and purpose is to prepare the world to enter the coming "Age Of Aquarius." A small sampling of only a few of the organizations involved would include: Amnesty International, Zero Population Growth, California New Age Caucus, New World Alliance, World Goodwill, The Church Universal and Triumphant, The Theosophical Society, the Forum, Planetary Initiative for the World We Choose, the Club of Rome, Church Universal & Triumphant, Christian Science, and the Unity School of Christianity. This list, by no means all inclusive, demonstrates the diversity of organizations operating in economic, political, and religious spheres of influence.

The New Age movement is not a unified, traditional cult system of beliefs and practices, even though its roots derive from Eastern religions and the occult. It has no official leader, headquarters, nor membership list, but instead is a network of groups working toward specific goals. One of its main goals is to bring to the forefront a one-world leader who is called "The Christ" or "Maitreya." Nevertheless, it is estimated that there are millions of worldwide followers of various New Age practices and/or holders of one or more of the major beliefs of the New Age.

The NAM has gained significant influence, affecting almost every area of the culture -- sociology, psychology, medicine, the government, ecology, science, arts, education, the business community, the media, entertainment, sports, and even the church. The movement expresses itself in widely divergent and various mutated forms, from the blatantly obvious to the subtle. It is expressed in organized religious forms such as

¹² Unless otherwise cited, five primary sources were used for this report: (1) Grolier's 1995 Multimedia Encyclopedia, (2) Funk & Wagnall's Encyclopedia, and (3) What They Believe, Harold J. Berry [HJB], BTTB:1990, pp. 117-138; (4) "The New Age Movement," Craig Branch (Watchman Fellowship Profile, 1996); and (5) *Examining & Exposing Cultic & Occultic Movements*, Jack Sin, "The New Age Movement," April 2000, pp. 51-62

Christian Science, Unity, and even forms of Witchcraft. Yet, it shows up in secular forms as well, in various human potential seminars, and much in between, i.e., transcendental meditation, some alternative holistic health practices, and certain curriculum in public (and private) schools.

The book *Networking* lists over 1,200 organizations, centers, cooperatives, groups, communities, and networks in fields ranging from health care and spiritual growth, through politics, economics, and ecology, to education, communications, personal growth, and intercultural relations. There is hardly any area of human interest that does not have some people somewhere exploring it from a New Age point of view. Due to the lack of a central organization and the diversity of emphasis adhered to by the various New Age groups, there are literally hundreds of publications. Some popular publications and journals are *New Age Journal*, *Body Mind Spirit*, *Yoga Journal*, *Gnosis*, *East West*, *Noetic Sciences*, and *Omega*.

The major goal of the New Age Movement is to bring peace to the world upon entering the Age of Aquarius. This will be accomplished primarily through the leadership of "the Christ" (also known as "Lord Maitreya"), who will supposedly come to teach us to live at peace with each other. Some of the other stated goals of the movement are to establish a World Food Authority, World Water Authority, World Economic Order, and an entirely New World Order. It should be noted here that one of the requirements for a person to enter the New Age is that he or she will have to take what is known as a "Luciferic Initiation," a kind of pledge of allegiance to the Christ of the New Age and to the New World Order. The primary goals of the movement then, are to prepare the world to receive the Christ and to enter the Age of Aquarius, thus establishing the New World Order.

The New Age Movement professes a broad-minded openness to all religions, but its basic underlying philosophy represents a carefully calculated undermining of Judeo-Christian beliefs with various combinations of gnosticism and occultism. [Gnosticism is an ancient world-view stating that Divine essence is the only true or highest reality, and that the unconscious Self of man is actually this essence. It is through intuitional discovery, "visionary experience or initiation into secret doctrine" (not the plenary revelation of propositional truth in the Bible), that man becomes conscious of this true Self (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 10, 1968, p. 506; *New Bible Dictionary*, J.D. Douglas, ed., pp. 473-474).] It bears a remarkable resemblance to the apostate world religion that H.G. Wells claimed as his own and predicted would one day take over the world. It also fits the description of "The Plan" for establishing the new world government that is described in various psychic communications from alleged E.T.'s and ascended masters. There is one more connection: the New Age Movement fits the description of the Antichrist's religion -- a rejection of the Judeo-Christian God and the declaration that Self is God. (Source: *The Seduction of Christianity*.)

Douglas R. Groothuis, author of *Unmasking the New Age* and *Confronting the New Age*, identifies six distinctives of New Age thinking: (1) all is one; (2) all is God; (3) humanity is God; (4) a change in consciousness; (5) all religions are one; and (6) cosmic evolutionary optimism. Norman Geisler details 14 primary "doctrines" of New Age religions: (1) an impersonal god (force); (2) an eternal universe; (3) an illusory nature of matter; (4) a cyclical nature of life; (5) the necessity of reincarnations; (6) the evolution of man into Godhood; (7) continuing revelations from beings beyond the world; (8) the identity of man with God; (9) the need for meditation (or other consciousness-changing

techniques); (10) occult practices (astrology, mediums, etc.); (11) vegetarianism and holistic health; (12) pacifism (or anti-war activities); (13) one world (global) order; and (14) syncretism (unity of all religions). [HJB]

The New Age also encompasses a wide array of notions: spiritualism, astrology, bioenergy, *Chi* energy, chakras, nirvana, Christ-consciousness, Native American Spirituality, Prajna, out-of-body/near-death experiences, reincarnation, and the occult disciplines, as well as unorthodox psychotherapeutic techniques and pseudoscientific applications of the "healing powers" of crystals and pyramids. Some commonly used New Age terms are: guided imagery, reincarnation; positive thinking; human potential; holistic; holographic; synergistic; unity; oneness; transformation; awakening; networking; communal sharing; one-world/globalism/new world order (i.e., one language, one government, one currency, one religion); cosmic consciousness; etc. (See New Age Dictionary below.)

It is important for Christians to recognize even the most disguised forms of the New Age Movement. Some New Age practices are: rebirthing; inner healing; biofeedback; yoga; I Ching; reflexology; black and white magic; fire-walking; trance-channeling; therapeutic touch; transpersonal psychology; witchcraft; parapsychology; Magick; Tai Chi; Shamanism; hypnotherapy; acupuncture/acupressure; TM; martial arts; Zen; Relaxation; Erhard Seminar Training (est); Silva Method (formerly Silva Mind Control); visualization; etc. Some prominent New Agers are: Alice Bailey, Alvin Toffler, Dr. Barbara Ray, Benjamin Creme, Levi Dowling, George Trevelyan, Fritjof Capra, Abraham Maslow, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Ruth Montgomery, Shirley MacLaine, J.Z. Knight, Marilyn Ferguson, David Spangler, Jeremy Rifkin, Norman Cousins, Elizabeth Clare Prophet, John Denver, George Lucas, and Norman Lear.

Many New Agers attach great importance to artifacts, relics, and sacred objects, all of which can be profitably offered for sale: Tibetan bells, exotic herbal teas, Viking runes, solar energizers, colored candles for "chromotherapy," and a plethora of occult books, pamphlets, instructions, and tape recordings. Crystals are the favorite New Age object. These are not only thought to have mysterious healing powers, but are considered programmable, like a computer, if one just concentrates hard enough. Other New Age objects would include the rainbow; butterfly; pyramid; triangle; eye in triangle/pyramid; unicorn; Pegasus (winged-horse); swastika; yin-yang; goathead on pentagram; concentric circles; rays of light; crescent moon; etc.

New Age music is a term applied to the works of various composers and musicians who strive to create soothing audio environments rather than follow song structures. Born of an interest in spirituality and healing in the late 1970s, it is often used as an aid in meditation. The defining features of New Age music are harmonic consonance, contemplative melodies, nonlinear song forms, and uplifting themes. New Age performers may use traditional ethnic, acoustic, electric, or electronic instruments, or even sounds from nature. New Age music is meditative, almost invariably instrumental style with roots in Oriental, jazz, and classical music; often derivative, New Age compositions can sound like minimalist music or like lush evocations of the natural environment. Prominent New Age musicians include electronic-music pioneer Brian Eno, multi-instrumentalist Kitaro; solo-piano artist George Winston, vocalist Liz Story; harpist Andreas Vollenweider, and electric violinist Jean-Luc Ponty.

Athletes are using guided imagery. Graduate schools of business are invoking Zen,

yoga, and tarot cards in teaching courses on creativity in business (e.g., Stanford Graduate School of Business). Stock market gurus employ Fibonacci numbers and "wave theory" in their forecasting, both based upon astrology. Even some churches teach that the best way to get to know God is to visualize Christ, ignoring that visualization is a powerful occult device. (Visualizing an entity, even God or Christ, ultimately puts one in touch with a masquerading demon.)

In summary, the term "New Age" is an informal term derived from astrology, which indicates that this earth, if not the cosmos, is on the verge of an evolutionary transition from the Piscean Age (rationality) to the Aquarian Age of spirituality, bliss, and harmony of all things. Even though it is undergoing a significant revival, the "New Age" is hardly new. In fact, it is very old. A better term would be the "Old Occult."

Keeping in mind that the myriads of New Age groups are quite eclectic, drawing from several religious traditions mentioned earlier, the following is a general description of the more prominent unifying themes of the NAM. i.e., the highlights of what New Agers believe concerning their source of authority, God, Christ, sin and salvation, good and evil, Satan, and future life:

- 1) **Source of Authority.** New Agers claim no external source of authority -- only an internal one ("the god within"). They believe the individual is the standard of truth, saying that "truth as an objective reality simply does not exist" (Shirley MacLaine, *It's All in the Playing*) (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21; Matt. 5:18). [HJB]
- 2) **God.** New Agers confuse the Creator with His creation and think that God is part of creation, not separate from it. They borrow from Eastern religions the belief in monism -- that "all is One" -- only one essence in the universe, everyone and everything being a part of that essence. Everything is a different form of that essence (energy, consciousness, power, love, force). But the belief in monism is *really* Hinduistic pantheism (all is God). New Agers view God as an impersonal life force, consciousness, or energy (M. Ferguson, *Aquarian Conspiracy*, p. 382; S. Gawain, *Living In the Light*, pp. 7-8) (e.g., the "Star Wars Force"), rather than a Person. They believe that every person and thing is "intertwined" with God (evolving spiritually to the state of "the Christ" being), and use Luke 17:21 ("the kingdom of God is within you") to support this idea (despite the fact that "within you" in this passage means "in your midst"). They claim every human has a divine spark within him because of being part of the divine essence. The state of God is called by various terms among different New Age groups, i.e., God-consciousness, Universal Love, Self-Realization, the I AM, Higher Self, Brahman, Nirvana, etc. New Agers are obviously part of a religion of idolatry and self-worship. [HJB]
- 3) **Jesus Christ.** A major idea in New Age thinking is that of the "Christ Consciousness." In other words, Christ is an office rather than an individual, such as Jesus, whom Christians know to be THE CHRIST. This idea of "Christ Consciousness" asserts that Jesus was not the only Christ, but that He equipped Himself to receive the "Christ Consciousness" (i.e., He was a great "spiritual master" who attained Christ Consciousness), as supposedly also did Buddha, Krishna, and Mohammed. [This is an old occult Gnostic teaching which stems from the ancient Babylonian mystery religions. New Agers also reinvent the historical Jesus by claiming that he spent 18 years in India (during His "silent years") absorbing Hinduism and the teachings of Buddha.] New Agers believe that Jesus

received the Christ Consciousness at His baptism, and that it left Him at His crucifixion.

- 4) **Sin and Salvation.** There is no place for the concept of sin in the New Age. There can be no sin because there is no transcendent God to rebel against. There are no rules or absolute moral imperatives. New Agers have a "New Thought" view of sin, which knows nothing of a representative man (Adam) by whose sin all men sinned. Nor does New Thought teach that there is any original sin, but that man's true essence is divine and perfect. Indeed, it finds nothing which is of the nature of sin. Instead, it speaks of "troublesome desires" which appear to be natural human impulses which direct men from consciousness to their identity with God, and, therefore, are troublesome but hardly sinful. Since New Agers believe that each person is god, thereby having endless potential for self-improvement, sin is denied as the Bible defines it (man being inherently sinful and utterly depraved -- Rom. 5:12). Sin is merely ignorance of one's "inner divinity." Because sin does not exist, there is no need for repentance or forgiveness, and Jesus did not die for our sins. They think that any perceived lack that man might have is merely a lack of enlightenment, thereby eliminating the need of salvation or a Savior. [In fact, salvation is not even an issue for New Agers. The soul is part of the universe and never dies. It is reborn or reincarnated in different physical bodies in a succession of future lives. The good or bad "karma" earned in the present lifetime determines one's subsequent incarnation. Humans should seek to progress to higher states of consciousness and higher planes of existence. There are many different paths to the goal of spiritual perfection. No one path is the only correct path. The assumed cycle of reincarnation and karma presupposes a salvation by works, contrary to the principle of salvation by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9).]
- 5) **Man's Destiny.** The salvation of the world depends upon human beings. When enough people harmonize their positive energy and turn their thoughts to peace, the world will be cleansed of negative elements and New Age ideals will be realized in an era of spiritual enlightenment. Since man is intrinsically divine and perfect, his only real problem is ignorance of that fact. Man has a perception of finiteness which is, in reality, an illusion (Ken Keyes, Jr., *Handbook to Higher Consciousness*, pp. 125-29). Salvation in the New Age is for man to become enlightened through experiential knowledge (gnosis). New Age groups offer various occultic techniques to enable individuals, and ultimately the world, to evolve into this oneness (unitive) consciousness (James Redfield, *The Celestine Prophecy: An Experimental Guide*, pp. 243-60). These techniques may include altered states of consciousness (often transcendental meditation), yoga, crystals, channeling (spirit guides), psychics, past-life therapy, acupuncture, etc.
- 6) **Good and Evil.** Mimicking the Eastern religions, New Agers distort the distinction between good and evil. They believe that because "all is One," ultimately there is neither good nor evil. They think that a person can transcend his consciousness and go beyond the bounds of moral distinctions, so that even murder sometimes becomes an acceptable way of serving one's gods (e.g., Charles Manson). **[HJB]**
- 7) **Satan.** The traditional view of Lucifer as the devil or Satan is clearly absent in New Age literature. Rather, he is described as a mighty being of light and the "Ruler of Humanity," as Alice Bailey, foundational apostle and leading writer of the New Age Movement, puts it. As to the history and achievements of Lucifer, Benjamin Creme,

a leading lecturer and proponent of the New Age, says, "Lucifer came from the planet Venus 18.5 million years ago; he's the director of our planetary evolution, he is the sacrificial lamb, and the prodigal son. Lucifer made an incredible sacrifice, a supreme sacrifice for our planet."

- 8) **Future Life (Reincarnation).** New Agers believe in the ancient [Hindu] Eastern religious concept of reincarnation -- that through a long process of rebirths, man can eventually reach spiritual perfection (cf. Heb. 9:27). New Agers often place animal rights above human rights, because many New Agers believe animals are reincarnated souls. They also teach the Hindu principle of "karma" -- that what a person sows in this life, he will reap in the next life in his reincarnated state. This belief in reincarnation has led to believing in the power of "spirit guides" or "channels" -- those who allow spirits from another dimension to speak through their bodies. [HJB] These entities always seem to repeat the three-fold error: (1) There is no death, (2) man is god, (3) knowledge of self is salvation and power (Brooks Alexander, *Spiritual Counterfeits Project*). New Agers misrepresent church history, the doctrines of Christianity, and often twist Scripture to support the idea that original Christianity taught reincarnation. They wrongly argue that the early church suppressed the doctrine and censored its teaching (Kenneth Ring, *Heading Toward Omega*, p. 158).
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Endnotes

"Old Occult" -- The New Age Movement is a modern revival of very ancient, divergent, religious traditions and practices. The actual original root is squarely centered in Genesis 3:1-5, and reverberates throughout the movement's continued historical expressions. In the original lie, Satan questions God's word, His authority and benevolent rule (v. 1), disputes that death results from disobedience (v. 4), and claims that through the acquisition of secret or Gnostic wisdom man can be enlightened and can be "like God" (v. 5).

Many of the occult practices and beliefs revived by the modern NAM were a part of very early pagan cultures. Many practices common to the NAM, such as witchcraft/sorcery, spiritism, divination, (clairvoyance; seeing the future), necromancy (consulting the dead), and astrology, are clearly and strongly condemned in Scripture (Deuteronomy 18: 9-17; Isaiah 47: 9-15). These and other occultic practices were spread through the ancient magic and mystery religions of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and most notably, the Assyrian-Babylonian culture (*Ancient Empires of the New Age*, pp. 15-62). Noting the scope of its continuing presence, the Bible informs Christians of Babylon's eschatological implications. The lie of Genesis 3 is significantly developed in Babylon (Isaiah 47) and continues to its ultimate state of development, revealed as Satan's one-world system at the end of the age (Revelation 17-18).

Three major world religions whose beliefs and practices are entwined with the NAM are Hinduism, a product of 5,000 years of development, Buddhism, circa 560 B.C., and Taoism, circa 500 B.C. (*Erdman's Handbook to the World's Religions*, pp. 170, 221, 252). Another prominent occultic influence in Europe was Druidism, the religion of the Celts, which extended from 300 B.C. into the middle ages (*Ibid.*, pp. 114-19).

Reincarnation -- Christians should be able to demonstrate that the Bible does NOT

teach reincarnation. When Jesus calls John the Baptist "Elijah," He is clearly speaking metaphorically. Luke 1:17 demonstrates that John was filling the office of Elijah, fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6. In fact, Elijah was seen with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-3. The meaning of the resurrection is the opposite of reincarnation (Hebrews 9:27; 1 Cor. 15:12-28). Point out that if God is an impersonal force, then love and forgiveness are not possible. These are personal attributes as opposed to impersonal karmic law. Fundamentally, intercessory prayer is absolutely necessary. The battle for the souls of men is won through God's grace, intervening and drawing them to Himself.

A Brief Dictionary of New Age Terminology

(Unless otherwise cited, adapted and/or excerpted from David L. Brown, Th.M. -- Investigative Researcher with Logos Communication; and from "The Vocabulary of the 'New Agers,'" Sept/Oct 2001, *The Perilous Times*.)

The average Christian has little idea what the concepts and ideals of the New Age really are. Then when they encounter New Age vocabulary, confusion really sets in. New Agers often play semantic word games, using the same words Christians do, yet the definitions used bear no resemblance to the Christian definitions. This brief dictionary is designed to help you understand New Age terminology as they define their terms. -- David L. Brown

Age of Aquarius -- Astrologers believe that evolution goes through cycles corresponding to the signs of the zodiac, each lasting from 2,000 to 2,400 years. New Age advocates say we are now moving from the cycle associated with Pisces into the one associated with Aquarius. The Aquarian Age will supposedly be characterized by a heightened degree of spiritual or cosmic consciousness.

Agent -- A person sending a telepathic message.

Akashic Record -- Imperishable records of every person's every word, thought, or act [allegedly from "outer space"] inscribed in the earth or spirit realms, allegedly from "outer space" (known as "ether").

Alpha -- The physical body.

Angstrom -- a ten-billionth of a "meter." This is connected with "wave lengths."

Animism -- The belief that inanimate things (such as plants) possess a soul or spirit. New Age advocates see animism as a way of rededicating the earth.

Anthroposophy -- An esoteric cult founded by German mystic Rudolf Steiner. The term literally means "wisdom of man." It teaches that we possess the truth within ourselves. The system of thought is occultic and spiritistic.

Ascended Masters -- Refers to those who have supposedly reached the highest level of spiritual consciousness and have become guides of the spiritual evolution of mankind.

Ascension of Christ -- This is reinterpreted in a mystical way to refer to the rise of the "Christ-consciousness" in mankind. It describes the awareness that man is divine.

Astral -- The word is from "*star*" (as in "ASTRONaut" and "ASTRONomy"). Here, it refers to an "after-death, out-of-the-body" experience. In Humanism, demonism, Satanism, and Theosophy, the extended umbilical cord holds the "astral" and the "physical" together. The experience is an "astral flight." Literally: "STAR FLIGHT," known on TV as "*Star Trek*."

Astral Body -- A spiritual body capable of projection from the physical body. The astral body survives death.

Astral Flight -- Soul travel occurring particularly during sleep or deep meditation.

Attunement -- A New Age counterpart to prayer. Also referred to as at-one-ment, the term relates primarily to the New Age idea that complete oneness with God can be experienced by human beings. One attains a hypnotic consciousness of an amoral, neuter "state of being" through meditation: Krishna consciousness, Nirvana, Prajna, Samadhi, etc. Various consciousness techniques are used to cause this "oneness": meditation; guided imagery; yoga; hypnosis; chanting of a mantra; ecstatic dancing; channeling of spirit guides; New Age music; and positive thinking or Alpha Mind techniques.

Aura -- Radiated glow or halo surrounding living beings.

Automatic Writing -- Writing produced without conscious thought of a living person; written message given through a spirit guide with a pencil or typewriter.

Avatar -- A person who "descends" into human form from above as a manifestation of divinity and who reveals divine truth to people. Such a one has supposedly progressed beyond the need to be reincarnated in another body (i.e., there is no further "bad karma" to work off).

Bhagavad Gita -- Hindu sacred scripture.

Biofeedback -- A technique in which brain waves are monitored to bring normally unconscious, involuntary bodily functions under conscious, voluntary control. Biofeedback can lead to altered states of consciousness and mystical experiences.

Blood of Christ -- This is understood by some New Agers to refer to the "life-energy" of the Cosmic Christ. This "blood" supposedly flowed from the cross into the etheric (or spiritual) realms of the earth. From these realms, the Christ seeks to guide the spiritual evolution of mankind.

Bodhisattva -- A being who has supposedly earned the right to enter into Nirvana or into illumination, but instead voluntarily turns back from that state in order to aid humanity in attaining the same goal. The "Christ" is said to be a Bodhisattva.

Buddha -- "The Enlightened One." An avatar or messenger.

Chakras -- The seven "energy points" on the body. Yoga is practiced through the Chakras; the "crown" Chakra is, naturally, on top of the skull.

Channeling -- A New Age form of mediumship or spiritism. The channeled yields control of his/her perceptual and cognitive capacities to a spiritual entity with the intent of receiving paranormal information.

Chela -- A "Guru's" pupil.

Chinook Learning Community -- A New Age educational community located in the Pacific Northwest. This group sponsors both long and short-term educational programs

on personal and social transformation, New Age spirituality, and how to live with an ecological perspective.

Clairaudience -- Ability to hear mentally without using the ears.

Clairvoyance -- Ability to see mentally without using the eyes, beyond ordinary time and space limits; also called "Second Sight."

Consciousness Revolution -- New Age advocates call for a "consciousness revolution," a new way of looking at and experiencing life. The primary focus of the new consciousness is oneness with God, all mankind, the earth, and with the entire universe.

Control -- The Spirit that sends messages through a medium in trance.

Cosmic Christ -- In esoteric schools of thought, the Christ is considered to be a universal spirit or a cosmic force. The primary goal of this impersonal spirit or force is to guide the spiritual evolution of mankind.

Cosmic Consciousness -- A spiritual and mystical perception that all in the universe is "one." To attain cosmic consciousness is to see the universe as God and God as the universe.

Cosmic Humanism -- In contrast to normative humanism that sees man as the measure of all things, cosmic humanism sees man as having virtually unlimited potential because of his inner divinity.

Crystals -- New Age advocates believe that crystals contain incredible healing and energizing powers. Crystals are often touted as being able to restore the "flow of energy" in the human body.

Deja Vu -- A French expression, meaning to relive life over again after another "incarnation." Transmigration of souls is also connected with this. The feeling of having already experienced an event or place that is being encountered for the very first time.

Discarnate -- The soul or personality of a living creature who has died.

Dowser -- A sensitive who uses a forked stick that points to hidden water, oil, buried money, lost articles, or people.

Earth Logos -- Some New Age advocates believe that the Earth Logos is a great spiritual being who is the ensouling life of planet earth. The earth is considered a physical manifestation (or body) of this spiritual intelligence. This pagan religion is called "Animism."

Ectoplasm -- A white filmy substance pouring from a medium's bodily openings, supposedly denoting the presence of a disembodied spirit.

Esalen Institute -- A "growth center" that offers a wide variety of workshops for mind, body, and spirit. It is located in Big Sur, California.

Esoteric -- A word used to describe knowledge that is possessed or understood only by a few.

Esoteric Christianity -- A mystical form of professing Christianity that sees its "core truth" as identical to the "core truth" of every other religion (i.e., man is divine). This form of Christianity is at home with Aldous Huxley's "perennial philosophy." (See: Perennial Philosophy.)

ESP -- Extrasensory perception encompassing paranormal abilities such as telepathy, precognition, and clairvoyance.

ESP Cards -- A pack of twenty-five cards bearing five symbols, including stars, squares, circles, crosses, and waves.

Exoteric Christianity -- A form of Christianity identified with historic or orthodox Christianity that New Agers would describe as being devoid of all spiritual authenticity.

Fall of Man -- Refers to the fall of man's consciousness. A fallen consciousness is one that recognizes the existence of only the material realm. The Christ is believed to have "redeemed" man in the sense that He enabled man to perceive the spiritual world behind the material world.

Findhorn Community -- A legendary New Age community located in the North of Scotland. This group offers an ongoing educational program in the principles of New Age spirituality.

Gaia -- A Greek name for the goddess of the earth. It also refers to a scientific hypothesis formulated by James Lovelock whereby all living matter on the earth is believed to be a single living organism. In such a scheme, humanity is considered the nervous system of the living earth.

Globalism -- A modern-day term referring to the need for a transformation from the present nation-state divisions into a one-world community.

Gnosticism -- A tradition going back to the second century which holds that salvation comes through intuitive "gnosis" or knowledge of one's supposed divinity.

God -- A being who has "many faces." He (it) is considered a radically immanent being who is often referred to as a "universal consciousness," "universal life," or "universal energy." The New Age god is more or less an impersonal force that pervades the universe.

Graphology -- Character analysis and foretelling based on handwriting.

Great Invocation -- A New Age prayer that has been translated into over eighty languages. The purpose of this prayer is to invoke the presence of the Cosmic Christ on earth, thus leading to the oneness and brotherhood of all mankind.

Group Guru -- A slang New Age term referring to the idea that the Cosmic Christ is incarnate in all of humanity. All mankind is seen as a single "guru."

Guru -- Teacher or master (sometimes "Gura."). The opposite of "Chela." The Guru is the Buddhist "Master." The "Chela" is his pupil.

Harmonic Convergence -- The assembly of New Age meditators gathered at the same

propitious astrological time in different locations to usher in peace on earth and one-world government.

Holism -- The theory that all reality is organically one. Everything in the universe is viewed as interrelated and interdependent. It is the basis of Hinduism and Buddhism, now taught in all colleges and universities in America that followed Einstein's "theory of relativity." It is called "Yin and Yang" in Chinese and will be found on the national flag of Korea, as a symbol.

Holistic Health -- Holistic health sees the body as an inter-related organism. Its goal is to treat the whole person (body, mind, and spirit) as opposed to merely treating a particular sickness.

Hologram -- A three-dimensional projection resulting from the interaction of laser beams. Scientists have discovered that the image of an entire hologram can be reproduced from any one of its many component parts. New Agers use this to illustrate the oneness of all reality.

Homeopathy -- A system of medicine rooted in occult ideas that was developed by Samuel Hahnemann. It claims to manipulate the "vital force" of the human body by transferring the power of homeopathic medicines that have been potentized by a process of dilutions and succession (vigorous shaking with impact).

Human Potential Movement -- A movement with roots in humanistic psychology that stresses man's essential goodness and unlimited potential.

I Ching -- A Chinese textbook, used in Red China, showing how to "divine" (a counterfeit way to tell the future) by throwing sticks into six-sided figures as in "666" (cf. Rev. 13).

Initiation -- This occult term is generally used in reference to the expansion or transformation of a person's consciousness. An "initiate" is one whose consciousness has been transformed so that he now perceives inner realities. There are varying "degrees" of initiation (i.e., "first degree initiates," "second-degree initiates," etc.).

Inner Self or Higher Self -- Refers to the inner divine nature possessed by human beings. All people are said to possess an inner self, though not all are aware of it.

Interdependence or Interconnectedness -- These words are used by New Agers to describe the oneness and essential unity of everything in the universe. All of reality is viewed as interdependent and interconnected.

Jesus -- An avatar who attained a high level of attunement to the Cosmic Christ. This enabled him to become a bodily vehicle for the Christ for a period of three years. (See: Avatar)

Kabala (Cabbala, Qaballah) -- Hebrew mystery lore based on mystical interpretation of the Bible; magical, occult practices stemming largely from the Middle Ages.

Karma -- Refers to the "debt" accumulated against a soul as a result of good or bad actions committed during one's life (or lives). If one accumulates good karma, he will supposedly be reincarnated in a desirable state. If one accumulates bad karma, he will

be reincarnated in a less desirable state.

Kirlian -- The source of energy in people; it is supposed to be lying at the base of the spine, slightly lower than the navel; it lies "coiled" there, as a serpent (cf. Isa. 27:1; Rev. 12:1-6; Gen. 3:1).

Kirlian Photography -- A photographic process that measures living auras.

Kundalini -- The elemental energy of the human body which, like a serpent, rests coiled at the base of the spine.

Levitation -- Raising of objects or people off the ground without using physical energy.

Lucis Trust -- Originally incorporated as the Lucifer Publishing Company, the Lucis Trust oversees the Lucis Publishing Company, World Goodwill, and Arcane School. Lucis Trust owns all the copyrights of the Alice Bailey books.

Magic Circle Ring -- Drawn by occultists to protect them from the spirits and demons they call up by incantations and rituals.

Maitreya -- The name has its roots in a legendary Buddha figure. Some New Age advocates believe that the "second coming of Christ" occurred in 1977 in the person of Maitreya.

Mandala -- A design, usually concentric, that focuses attention to a single point.

Mantra -- A word or phrase that is to be chanted repetitively in an effort to empty the mind and attain "cosmic consciousness" (oneness with God and the universe).

Mass Incarnation -- An incarnation of the Christ in all of humanity. New Age advocates say that this incarnation is presently taking place on a planetary scale, and is not unlike the incarnation of the Cosmic Christ in the body of Jesus 2,000 years ago.

Medium -- A psychic or sensitive living person whose body is used as a vehicle for communicating with spirits.

Metaphysics -- The science of the supernatural, although the word used in Philosophy (1600-1900, along with Axiology and Epistemology) never meant that at all. Metaphysics was the study of Causality, Cosmology, the nature of the Universe, etc. Literally, it deals with the problem of "What is real?" In the New Age, where lunacy is the "norm," it deals with "Om," "Rome," and "Mahabone": three magic words used in Oriental religions, the Catholic religion, and in Masonry. (OM symbolizes "Brahma.")

Monism -- A metaphysical theory that sees all of reality as a unified whole. Everything in the universe is seen as being made of the same stuff.

Network -- An informal, decentralized organization created by like-minded individuals who are interested in addressing specific problems and offering possible solutions. All of this takes place outside of conventional institutions.

New Age Movement -- A loose organization of people, many of them "Yuppies," who believe the world has entered the Aquarian Age when peace on earth and one-world

government will rule. They see themselves as advanced in consciousness, rejecting Judeo-Christian values and the Bible in favor of Oriental philosophies and religion. Among them may be found environmentalists, nuclear-freeze proponents, Marxist-socialist utopians, mind-control advocates, ESP cultists, spiritists, witchcraft practitioners, and others using magical rites.

Nirvana -- Liberation from earthly things; paradise.

Numerology -- The analysis of hidden or prophetic meanings of numbers.

Occultism -- Belief in supernatural forces and beings. Available only to the initiate; secret.

Om -- A word symbolizing Brahma, the Creator God.

One Worlders -- Those who advocate the abolition of nations, working to hand over power to a single-world government similar in structure to the present United Nations; off-shoots of the United World Federalists founded in the 1930s.

Ouji Board -- Game board containing all the letters of the alphabet plus numbers from 0 to 9 and "Yes/No." A sliding pointer (planchette) spells out words in answer to questions asked by players.

Out-of-Body Experience -- Leaving the physical body while at rest, asleep, near death, or temporarily dead.

Pantheism -- Doctrine that identifies God with the whole universe, every particle, tree, table, animal, and person being part of Him.

Paradigm Shift -- Refers to a shift in world views. The so-called "new paradigm" (new model or form) is pantheistic (all is God) and monistic (all is one). Practically, it means that toleration of sin becomes progress, while virtue, morality, and purity become defects. In addition, lunacy becomes normal behavior while common sense becomes a "hindrance to change."

Paranormal -- Beyond or above normal human powers or senses.

Parapsychology -- Study of psychic phenomena using scientific methods.

Pendulum -- Heavy object on a string, used for dowsing or fortune telling.

Pentagram -- Five-pointed star used in magical ceremonies. While sometimes used by Satanists, it is not strictly a Satanic symbol. (Also, Satanists use the Pentagram only in its inverted orientation, while other occultists use it almost exclusively in the upright orientation.)

Percipient -- Person who receives telepathic messages.

Perennial Philosophy -- A term made popular by Aldous Huxley (coined by Leibniz) that sees all religious truth or experience as one and the same. This philosophy proposes that even though the externals of the various religions may differ, the essence or core truth is the same in each.

Plan, The -- A phrase that occurs often in the writings of Alice Bailey. It refers to specific preparations in the world for a New Age and a New Age Christ. These preparations are carried out by the "Masters of the Hierarchy," a group of exalted beings who supposedly guide the spiritual evolution of people on earth. Though this teaching of the Plan does actually exist, the term has been sensationalized by some "Christian" writers. These writers have mistakenly hypothesized that New Agers are completely unified in a "behind-the-scenes manipulation" of world events in order to conquer the world for its true god, Lucifer.

Planetary Citizens -- A New Age activist group committed to engendering a "planetary consciousness" among both New Agers and the general public.

Planetization -- New Age advocates believe that the various threats facing the human race require a global solution. This solution is "planetization." The word refers to the unifying of the world into a corporate brotherhood.

Poltergeist -- German word for a noisy, mischievous, destructive spirit (a demon).

Precognition -- Advance knowledge of future events.

PSI -- Term used in place of psychic or parapsychical; ESP.

Psychic Birth -- A quickening of spiritual or cosmic consciousness and power. This new consciousness is one that recognizes oneness with God and the universe. Psychic birth is an occult counterpart to the Christian new birth.

Psychic Energy -- Extrasensory energy that enables people to do miracles.

Psychic Healer -- A person who cures mental or physical illness from the cosmic energy emanating through the healer's hands.

Psychoanalysis -- Tracing mental and physical ills back to hurtful childhood experiences; based on Sigmund Freud's theories.

Psychometry -- Reading information from an object about events involving the person who owns it, usually by handling it.

Psychotechnologies -- Refers to the various approaches or systems aimed at deliberately altering one's consciousness.

Reincarnation -- Refers to the cyclical evolution of a person's soul as it repeatedly passes from one body to another at death. This process continues until the soul reaches a state of perfection.

Retrocognition -- Knowledge of past events learned paranormally.

Right Brain Learning -- The right hemisphere of the brain is believed to be the center of intuitive and creative thought (as opposed to the rational nature of the left hemisphere). New Agers have seized on this as a justification to bring "right brain learning techniques" into the classroom. These techniques include meditation, yoga, and guided imagery.

Rolfing -- Seeks to relieve energy blockages in the body by applying deep pressure or massage.

Séance -- A gathering of people seeking communication with deceased loved ones or famous historical figures through a medium.

Second Coming of Christ -- Understood by some as the coming of the Cosmic Christ in all of humanity, related to the New Age concept of the "mass incarnation." The Second Coming is supposedly now occurring in the hearts and minds of people all over the earth. Others associate it specifically with the appearance of Maitreya as the avatar of the coming age.

Self-realization -- New Agers use this as a synonym for God-realization. It refers to a personal recognition of one's divinity.

Sensitive -- A person who frequently demonstrates extrasensory gifts such as clairvoyance, telepathy, or precognition.

Shaman -- A medicine man/woman or witchdoctor, who uses hypnotism, charms, drugs, chants (mantras), "Chi" energy, etc., to open his victims to demon possession and controlled responses.

Solar Logos -- Believed by some to be a mighty spiritual being who is the ensouling life of the solar system. The material solar system is simply a physical manifestation (or body) of this living intelligence.

Spirit Control -- A disembodied spirit who relays messages from dead people to the living through a trance medium.

Spirit Guide -- A spiritual entity who provides information of "guidance," often through a medium or channeled. The spirit provides guidance only after the channeled relinquishes his perceptual and cognitive capacities into its control.

Spiritual Hierarchy of Masters -- New Age advocates believe these spiritual "masters" are highly evolved men who, having already perfected themselves, are now guiding the rest of humanity to this same end.

Spiritualist or Spiritist -- Person who believes in the ability to contact departed souls through a medium.

Subject -- Person used for experiments in ESP studies.

Sufism -- Persian mystical religion based on Islam.

Syncretism -- The attempt to combine or unify differing religious systems. New Age gurus often claim that all the world religions teach the same core truth: all people possess an inner divinity.

Synergy -- A principle which states that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Tantra -- A word invented to describe the Hindu and Buddhist "scriptures" (which are actually called Sutras and Vedas) which show people "shortcuts" to getting Prajna

("enlightenment").

Taoism -- A Chinese religion and philosophy that sees the universe as engaged in ceaseless motion and activity. All is considered to be in continual flux. The universe is intrinsically dynamic. This continual cosmic process is called the "Tao" by the Chinese. (The process is described in terms of Yin and Yang -- see: Yin/Yang). Tao is that which is formless, yet the mother of all forms, and that which is timeless, yet prior to all manifestations, and that which does nothing, yet leaves nothing undone. The most outrageous Taoist doctrine for Bible believers would be Lao Tzu's adage "Forget right and wrong, and it will be better for everyone."

Tarot Cards -- Deck of seventy-eight cards that supposedly reveal the secrets of man and the universe.

Telekinesis -- The ability to move physical objects by force of will or mental energy alone; also called psychokinesis.

Telepathy -- Communication between minds by extrasensory means.

Tetragram -- A magic diagram shaped as a four-pointed star.

Theosophy -- A school of thought founded by Helena P. Blavatsky. The term literally means "divine wisdom." The goals of Theosophy are to (1) form a universal brotherhood; (2) do comparative study of world religions, science, and philosophy; and (3) investigate the psychic and spiritual powers latent in man. Theosophy is the forerunner of much New Age thought.

Therapeutic Touch -- A "therapy" in which the practitioner "channels" the universal life energy for the patient and then helps the patient to assimilate this energy.

Third Eye -- An imaginary eye in the forehead believed to be the center of psychic vision.

Trance -- A mental state resembling sleep during which the conscious mind rests while the spirit entity takes over the medium's body.

Trance Channeler -- The newest term for "trance medium." (See: Medium.)

Transformation -- New Age advocates promote both personal and planetary transformation. Personal transformation involves the changes wrought in one's life by increasing Self-realization. As more and more people are personally transformed, the planet too will be transformed into a global brotherhood.

Trumpet Medium -- A psychic or "sensitive" who brings forth "spirit voices" through a trumpet at séances.

UFO -- Unidentified flying object; flying saucer.

Unity-in-Diversity Council -- A New Age "meta-network" of over 100 networks and groups rallying for global cooperation and interdependence.

Veda -- The most ancient of the Hindu scriptures.

Visualization -- Also known as "guided imagery," visualization basically refers to "mind over matter." It involves the attempt to bring about change in the material realm by the power of the mind.

Warlock -- A wizard or sorcerer; a male witch. (Some male witches claim that "warlock" does not refer to a male witch at all, but merely means "oath-breaker.")

World Goodwill -- A New Age political lobby that aims to unfold "The Plan" as spelled out in the writings of Alice Bailey.

Yin/Yang -- Chinese names referring to the active and passive principles of the universe. Yin refers to the female or [inactive] negative force; Yang to the male or active force. These two polar forces continually interplay with each other. Briefly, it means that "good and evil" and "right and wrong" are actually the SAME; they simply appear as opposites. Get rid of all the Opposites (seen and unseen, hot and cold, up and down, back and forth, day and night, high and low, etc.), and you can attain perfection (Nirvana, Samadhi, Prajna, etc.).

Yoga -- A means of becoming united with the supreme being, or with the universal soul.

Yogi -- Someone who practices yoga.

Zodiac -- The band of twelve constellations along the plane of the ecliptic through which pass the sun, moon, and planets across the sky. Each constellation, or sign, is attributed symbolic significance and associations that affect various aspects of life on Earth.

Scientology

Science or New Age Cult?¹³

Scientology, officially known as *The Church of Scientology*, was founded in 1953 by L. Ron Hubbard (1912-1986), and popularized through his 1950 book, *DIANETICS: The Modern Science of Mental Health* (over ten million copies sold). Dianetics was originally intended to be Hubbard's psychotherapeutic answer to the techniques of modern psychiatry. (The word "Dianetics" means "through the soul," and promises to reveal "the single source of all man's insanities, psychosomatic illnesses, and neuroses.") In addition to *Dianetics*, Scientology produces scores of other publications. A short list includes *Source*, *The Delphian*, *Advance!*, and *The Auditor*.

The history of Scientology actually begins much earlier than 1953. Hubbard had become a well known science fiction writer in the 1930s. In fact, some of his ideas which are "common to Scientology first appeared in his 1938 manuscript titled *Excalibur*" (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 345), more than a decade before its official founding. Wild claims have been made about Hubbard's earlier life by Scientology publications. For example, they have claimed that he "graduated in civil engineering from George Washington University as a nuclear physicist, although the university records show that he attended for two short years, during the second of which he was on academic probation, and failed physics. Hubbard's Ph.D. was said to be from a Sequoia University in California, although there is no proof of the existence of any accredited institution in California by that name that grants doctorates" (*Podiatry Today*, March 1990).

Gerry Armstrong, a devout Scientologist assigned by the Church to write an authorized biography of Hubbard, discovered other inconsistencies in Hubbard's history. Armstrong, who has now left Scientology, states: "Nor was Hubbard a World War II hero who miraculously cured himself of nearly fatal combat wounds, as he claimed. Hubbard never saw combat. After his discharge from the Navy in 1946, he was granted 40% disability pay for arthritis, bursitis and conjunctivitis. He continued to collect this pay long after he claimed to have discovered the secret of how to cure such ailments" (*Another Gospel*, Ruth Tucker, p. 301). Hubbard's reputation as an explorer, prolific science fiction writer, and parobotanist (he was one of the first to expound the idea of "communicating" with plants) enlarged to make him the worldwide spokesman for this fast-growing cult.

¹³ Unless otherwise cited, this report has been excerpted and/or adapted from the following sources: (1) "Church of Scientology," Rick Branch (Watchman Fellowship Profile, 1996); (2) "Scientology: Science or Science Fiction," G. Richard Fisher, PFO *Quarterly Journal*, Vol.17 No.3; (3) "Lafayette Ronald Hubbard and the Theology of the Church of Scientology," *The Discerner*, and (4) "Church of Scientology: A Religious Mafia?," *The Watchman Expositor* (Vol. 15, No. 1, 1998, p. 5). [Christian books on the cults also have chapters or sections on Scientology. For example, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, 1997; Ruth A. Tucker, *Another Gospel*, 1989; William Watson, *A Concise Dictionary of Cults and Religions*, 1991; and J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America*, 1986. Two works by secular writers are Bent Coryden's *L. Ron Hubbard: Messiah or Madman?*, 1992; and Russell Miller's *Bare-Faced Messiah: The True Story of L. Ron Hubbard*, 1987. One is advised that in both of these works Hubbard frequently is quoted verbatim and any Christian will find his words vulgar, obscene, and offensive.]

Biographers have also uncovered Hubbard's involvement with the Occult, which probably influenced his writings. Hubbard claimed to have had a near-death experience where he learned everything that ever puzzled the mind of man. The notorious Satanist, Aleister Crowley, was Hubbard's mentor and he lived with Crowley protégé John Parsons, engaging in sex magic at their black magic mansion hospice (*Los Angeles Times*, 24 June 1990, p. A1).

Despite the inconsistencies in his history, Hubbard would become one of the wealthiest and most well known leaders of a religious movement in only a few years. Scientology currently holds assets of nearly \$500 million, including a 440-foot cruise ship used as a "seagoing religious retreat." Assets also include two publishing houses, a 2,845-acre California ranch used as a school for the children of church staffers, and more than 45 buildings on 500 acres in Riverside County, California. Other assets include reinforced vaults designed to preserve the church's teachings in case of earthquake or nuclear attack. (These teachings include 500,000 pages of Hubbard's writings, 6,500 reels of tape, and 42 films.)

Scientology's methodology and beliefs have also led some members into a long history of criminal and civil actions and convictions. Both the U.S. Federal and Canadian courts have found top Scientology officials and the church guilty of charges such as burglarizing, wiretapping, and conspiracy against government agencies (*Time*, 6 May 1991, p. 50). In 1980, for example, eleven of Scientology's top leaders, including Hubbard's wife, were jailed for bugging and burglarizing the U.S. Justice Department and other federal agencies in the 1970s.

Within the church, there have been widespread purges and defections. Some former members have filed lawsuits accusing the church of intimidating its critics, breaking up families, and using high-pressure sales techniques to separate large sums of money from its followers. In 1986, Scientology paid an estimated \$5 million to settle more than 20 of the suits, without admitting wrongdoing. In exchange, the plaintiffs agreed never again to criticize Scientology or Hubbard and to have their lawsuits forever sealed from public view.

Hubbard formalized his theories into a religion in order to obtain tax-exempt status and freedom from governmental interference for some of his organizations. Scientology currently claims to have more than eight million members in more than 3,000 "churches, mission-related organizations, and groups" in more than 133 countries. (Source: 11/2001, Scientology official Internet web site.) Closer to the truth is that there are only about 50,000 active members.

The cult claims "Celebrity Centers" (a chain of clubhouses that offer expensive counseling and career guidance) in more than 100 cities in more than 15 countries. The cult appeals strongly to intellectuals and the "gifted," relying extensively on endorsements from celebrities and corporations that employ Dianetics. Various world locations for Scientology include Washington, D.C.; Clearwater, Florida (a Scientology Training Center); Sussex, England (where it operates a thirty-room mansion and a fifty-seven acre estate); and Los Angeles (claiming such movie stars and entertainers as John Travolta, Tom Cruise, Karen Black, Jennifer Aspen, Isaac Hayes, Priscilla Presley, Kristie Alley, and the late Sonny Bono -- Scientology's "representative" in the U.S. Congress).

There are numerous front organizations in the Church of Scientology used as vehicles for their objectives. Some of the more prominent would include Advanced Organization of Los Angeles, Religious Technology Center, and FLAG. Some of the more clandestine vehicles for recruitment and dissemination of Scientology are its affiliated agencies and business programs, most of which are part of W.I.S.E. (Worldwide Institute of Scientology Enterprises). There are groups like Sterling Management Systems; Steller Management; Singer Consultants; Uptrends; Owl Management; Applied Scholastics; Citizens Commission on Human Rights; Citizens Against Taxes; The Way to Happiness Foundation; Hollander Consultants; Irons, Marcus & Valko; and Uptrends (*Podiatry Today*, March 1990; *Watchman Expositor*, 1997). They also work through Concerned Businessmen of America, and through The Way to Happiness and Set a Good Example Contest, the latter two aimed at school children, and through Narconon (meaning "non-narcosis" or "no drugs"), an alleged drug rehab program consisting of 50 alcohol and drug rehabilitation centers in 21 countries, operating in 750 prisons under the name "Criminon" (Criminon, meaning "no crime," is a volunteer criminal rehabilitation program which utilizes technologies developed by Hubbard to help convicts recover pride and self-esteem). Narconon is a classic vehicle for drawing addicts into the cult.

Hubbard was a best-selling author for more than 50 years, with over 589 published works to his credit. His fiction sales total over 25 million copies, and his non-fiction works have sold more than 23 million. Many may have first come in contact with Scientology through a clean-cut young man or woman at the door offering a "free personality analysis." But the 200 questions posed are part of the recruiting program for the Church of Scientology, which is nothing but an applied religious philosophy offering "a clear, bright insight to help you blaze toward your mind's full potential."

In a nutshell, Scientology teaches that all humans descended from a race of uncreated, omnipotent gods called *Thetans*, who gave up their powers to enter the Material-Energy-Space-Time (MEST) world of Earth. [Hubbard's *Dianetics and Scientology: Technical Dictionary* explains, "The Thetan is immortal and is possessed of capabilities well in excess of those hitherto predicted for man. In the final analysis what is this thing called Thetan? It is simply you before you mocked yourself up and that is the handiest definition I know of" (p. 432). The Thetan is thus that part of each individual which is immortal and which has become contaminated or debased by the influences of MEST.] Gradually, they evolved upward by reincarnation to become humans who could not remember their deified state. Scientologists are encouraged to awaken their dormant Thetan potential by removing all mental blocks called *engrams*. By doing so, they can realize their true personhood, achieving total power and control over MEST. Scientology offers a psychotherapeutic process for breaking through the engrams "picked up from traumas in prior lives," to "realize" once again one's true identity as an "operating Thetan" (God) beyond the limitations of MEST.

Scientology, thereby, does nothing more than incorporate certain aspects of New Age pseudoscience, psychotherapy, and various occult practices into the ancient lie of promised godhood. Below are the highlights of what Scientology believes and practices concerning its source of authority, roots, tactics, sin and salvation, Christ, and spiritual practice:

- 1) **Source of Authority.** The official Scientology Internet web site says: "The writings and recorded spoken words of L. Ron Hubbard on the subject of Scientology collectively constitute the Scripture of the religion. He set forth the Scientology

philosophy and technologies in more than 500,000 pages of writings, including dozens of books, and more than 2,000 tape-recorded lectures." Principally, Hubbard and his 1950 book, *Dianetics*, is the authority for Scientology. [The Church of Scientology's current Church president is Heber T. Jentzsch, but the real authority is David Miscavige.] Scientology has even found it necessary to publish a dictionary with 7,000 definitions for the use of over 3,000 Dianetic words. In 1951, Hubbard released his findings on the spirit of Man, which served as the foundation of the religion of Scientology, dealing with what Hubbard considered the fundamental truths concerning the essence of life, what came before, and the hereafter. This was later followed by another basic book, *SCIENTOLOGY: The Fundamentals of Thought*. Hubbard's own definition of Scientology is "Knowing how to know ... Know thyself ... and the truth shall set you free" -- an obvious twisting of the words of Jesus Christ in John 8:32 -- "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

- 2) **Its Roots.** Even though Hubbard himself declared Dianetics to be "the spiritual heir of Buddhism in the Western world," there is evidence of even darker roots. Hubbard was at one time closely linked with British Satanist and New Ager Aleister Crowley, and there are strong indications that the word *Dianetics* had its origins in the worship of the goddess Diana.
- 3) **Its Tactics.** Scientology attempts to give the appearance that it is both a science and a religion. Fifty hours of Scientology counseling can cost \$2,350. Some former members say they invested up to \$80,000, which may explain some claims that the organization's total take is over \$3 million per day. ["Auditing" is by far Scientology's most expensive service. Auditing is purchased in 12 1/2-hour chunks, costing the Scientologist anywhere between \$3,000 and \$11,000 each, depending on where it is bought.] Members are usually well-scrubbed, respectable, middle-class types. Church "ministers" wear the conventional black priest-suit and white collar, and even sport crosses, though they point out it isn't representative of Christ's crucifix. When their teachings and tactics are questioned, Scientologists are not prone to turn the other cheek. Hubbard says, "you only get hurt when you duck." Scientology's alleged tactics of harassment, intimidation, and defamation of critics are well-known -- once an FBI raid on church quarters revealed a "hit list" of enemies. [The elite of Scientology's workers, at least 5,000 of them, belong to a zealous faction known as the Sea Organization and are given room, board, and a small weekly allowance. (Scientology web site: "Today, more than 5,000 members of this religious order occupy staff positions in upper level Scientology church organizations around the world.") They sign contracts to serve Scientology in this and future lifetimes -- for a billion years. Their motto is: "We come back." Dressed in mock navy uniforms adorned with ribbons, they bark orders with a clipped, military cadence. They hold ranks such as captain, lieutenant, and ensign. Officers, including women, are addressed as "Sir."]
- 4) **Sin and Salvation.** A major creed of L. Ron Hubbard states that "man is good," an immortal Thetan, able to create MEST. This tenet is consistent with the Dianetic belief that man is descended from the gods and may someday evolve to reclaim his Thetan potential. "Salvation" involves a process of working through levels of self-knowledge and knowledge of past lives (reincarnation) to awaken the pre-existent deity within and regain total godhood. As would be expected, the existence of an eternal heaven and hell is denied.

- 5) **Christ.** Christ is deemed merely a "cleared" individual (see #6 below), i.e., "just a man."
- 6) **Spiritual Practice.** Other doctrines and practices of Scientology include astral travel, regression to past lives, and the "urge toward existence as spirits." Through the use of a Scientology "E-meter" (something like a lie detector) in an "auditing" session, members undergo exercises and counseling to eliminate negative mental images from past lives and achieve a state of "clear." (Hubbard believed all illnesses were psychosomatic and could be cured by eliminating these past experiences from the brain.) Scientology promises members higher intelligence and greater business success through Scientology courses that cost thousands of dollars. "Upper-level" or "OT6" ("OT" stands for "Operating Thetan") teachings of Scientology are available only to members who graduate through preliminary Church of Scientology programs. Scientologists tell their members that if they get into Level 6 before going through the preliminary levels, they could "dematerialize or develop [fatal] illnesses." Scientology is creating a powerful group of brainwashed robots who believe they have found a solution for their own problems as well as a master plan for every person and nation in the world, now and forever.
- 7) **Summary of Scientology Theology.** In the beginning were the Thetans. These were to eventually create the MEST, which in actuality would not be the best thing they could have done. For when the Thetan, who inhabits the MEST, comes into conflict with other MEST, an engram is recorded in the reactive mind. This engram, whether it be remembered or not, due to unconsciousness which accompanies every engram, is stored in the reactive mind and causes the Thetan to believe false data [erroneous ideas]. It is the purpose of Scientology, through its auditing efforts, to rid the Thetan of all engrams so that in turn that Thetan, who now possesses a new educational perspective on reality, as a result of the auditing, may advance to a higher state of being or Clear. Once one reaches "Clear" (a 38-step process), there are 20 more steps before one reaches "OT," when one supposedly doesn't need a body to exist and is clear of all "engrams."

Endnotes

MEST -- As Scientology endeavors to render this MEST mess intelligible they write, "An engram comes about when the individual organism suffers an intense impact with MEST. Every moment of physical pain contains with it a partial or major shutdown of the analytical function of the mind" (*Science of Survival*, Book Two, p. 28). Thus, an engram is a memory which is caused when any accidental event (be it major or minor) is experienced. However, at the instant that the engram is formed, often the person is unaware of the event. How is this possible?

In a series of lectures given during August and September 1950, Hubbard explained the process: "An engram is a moment of pain and unconsciousness which contains perceptics. Actually there are thousands of moments of pain with just a little unconsciousness. Even a little thing such as someone burning his finger still causes a flick of attenuation of the analytical mind. The engram has one common denominator above all else, unconsciousness. But unconsciousness is common to every single engram, because unconsciousness does just one thing; it closes down the analytical mind. So, we have coined the word *anaten*. It is a contraction of the two words

analytical attenuation (Attenuation means shutting or closing down)" (*Research and Discovery Series: A Running Record of Research into the Mind and Life*, Vol. 3, pp. 114-115).

This engram is thus that "mental picture" which "contains, as part of its content, unconsciousness and physical pain" and is stored in the individual's mind (*Dianetics and Scientology: Technical Dictionary*, p. 114). But which mind?

As Hubbard explained, every person has two minds -- the analytical mind and the reactive mind. Both have very specific functions, though not necessarily beneficial functions. In the booklet, *Basic Dictionary of Dianetics and Scientology*, the two minds are defined in the following ways: "analytical mind: In Dianetics and Scientology the analytical mind is the one which is alert and aware and the reactive mind simply reacts without analysis." It continues with, "reactive mind: the portion of the mind which works on a stimulus-response basis. It consists of locks, secondaries, engrams and chains of them and is the single source of human aberrations and psychosomatic ills" (pp. 2, 23).

Thus, Man in his true nature is an immortal Thetan. However, the Thetan is responsible for the creation of MEST. Though the Thetan created the MEST, sometimes the MEST collides with the Thetan resulting in the acquisition of an engram. Because every engram is accompanied by unconsciousness to a greater or lesser degree, not all engrams are known to exist by the Thetan's analytical mind. As a result of the build-up of thousands of known and unknown engrams, stored in his reactive mind, man seems to experience problems throughout his life. These engrams have accumulated not only in this life but in many past lives as well through reincarnation. Thus, it is Scientology's purpose to rid the Thetan of these unwanted engrams. How is this accomplished? By becoming Clear.

Clear State -- In defining Clear, Hubbard used an interesting analogy. Clear is "The name of a button on an adding machine. When you push it, all the hidden answers in the machine clear and the machine can be used for a proper computation. So long as the button is not pressed the machine adds all old answers to all new efforts to compute and wrong answers result. Really, that's all a Clear is. Clears are beings who have been Cleared of wrong answers or useless answers which keep them from living or thinking." The Clear "can create energy at will, and can handle and control, erase or re-create an analytical mind or reactive mind. The Clear has no engrams which can be restimulated to throw out the correctness of computations by entering hidden and false data in it" (*Dianetics and Scientology: Technical Dictionary*, pp. 75-76).

Hence, the Thetan who has reached the desired state of Clear has, in actuality, become a blank slate simply waiting for new data to be entered. As Hubbard explained in a lecture series, "you have to have a new education if you are going to change a Clear's viewpoint" (*Research and Discovery Series*, Vol. 2, p. 408). Thus, the new data given by Scientology is not merely a rearrangement of already existing beliefs and ideas. Rather, it is completely "new" material, which is precisely what is needed for the "new education." The "Clear" is now free to start working towards immortality again by practicing higher disciplines that will re-educate him about his archaic origins in space. (As he learns more and more about his past, he will become an "Operating Thetan," or OT. There are six levels ranging from OT-1 to OT-6, the highest of Scientology disciplines. Hubbard, however, was said to be working on OT-7 or OT-8 a few years

before his disappearance.) Without this new education it is impossible to reach the state of Clear. But if Clear is a higher state of being to which all should desire to evolve, then how is this to be accomplished? By the Scientology practice of Auditing.

Auditing -- Since the reactive mind consists of "locks" and chains of engrams, in order for the Thetan to be declared Clear, the reactive mind with its engrams must be removed by auditing. "The reactive mind is removed by 'returning' the pre-clear to the engram, and laying its contents before the scrutiny of the analytical mind" (*Dianetics: The Original Thesis*, p. 54).

Once the engram is openly expressed by the pre-clear [Scientology student], then "Auditing gets rid of unwanted barriers that inhibit, stop or blunt a person's natural abilities as well as gradiently increasing the abilities a person has so that he becomes more able and his survival, happiness and intelligence increase enormously. An activity of an auditor taking over the control of and shepherding the attention of a pc [pre-clear] so as to bring about a higher level of confront ability" (*Dianetics and Scientology: Technical Dictionary*, p. 28). After the Thetan has remembered the engram, it is then removed from the reactive mind during the auditing session with the aid of the Scientology E-Meter. This device, similar in function to a lie-detector, is said to be "An electronic instrument for measuring mental state and change of state in individuals, as an aid to precision and speed in auditing" (*Basic Dictionary of Dianetics and Scientology*, p. 11).

Note on Science Fiction: Hubbard first gained notoriety in the minds of Americans as the author of numerous science fiction novels. He would later use his skills to tightly weave the web of science fiction and religion. His theology, which is today accepted by millions, eventually leads to tales of preincarnate souls trapped in ice cubes from the planet Mars: "One preclear (student of Scientology) said that this Thetan (somewhat similar to 'soul' or 'spirit') had inhabited the body of a doll on the planet Mars 469,476,600 years ago. Martians seized the doll and took it to a temple, where it was zapped by a bishop's gun while the congregation chanted 'God is Love.' The Thetan was then put in an ice cube, placed aboard a flying saucer, and dropped off at Planet ZX 432, where it was given a robot body, then put to work unloading flying saucers. Being a bit unruly, it zapped another robot to death and was shipped off in a flying saucer to be punished. But the flying saucer exploded, and the Thetan fell into space" (story as reprinted in *Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 346, 1985 ed.). While this may be where the theology of the Church of Scientology eventually leads, it is not explained to the initiate in these precise words. Rather, it is touted to the world as the cure for all man's problems and a way to gain every desire.

Note on Religion: In 1967, the Church of Scientology of California was stripped of its tax-exempt status by the IRS (deeming Scientology a for-profit business that enriched church officials), an action the church considered unlawful and thus ignored. (The church also replied with more than 2,000 lawsuits against the IRS.) The IRS, in turn, undertook a mammoth audit of the church for the years 1970 through 1974. A federal court ruled in 1971 that Hubbard's medical claims were bogus and that E-meter auditing could no longer be called a scientific treatment. Hubbard responded by going fully religious, seeking First Amendment protection for Scientology's strange rites. Scientology ministers (formerly "counselors") started to wear white collars, dark suits, and silver crosses. Sunday services were mandated, chapels were erected in Scientology

buildings, franchises became "missions," fees became "fixed donations," and Hubbard's comic-book cosmology became "sacred scriptures." It was made a punishable offense for a staffer to omit from church literature the notation that Scientology is a "religious philosophy." Many of the changes flowed from a flurry of "religious image" directives issued by high-level Scientology executives. One policy put it bluntly: "Visual evidences that Scientology is a religion are mandatory."

IRS-conducted audits proved that Hubbard was skimming millions of dollars from the church, laundering the money through dummy corporations in Panama, and stashing it in Swiss bank accounts. Moreover, church members stole IRS documents, filed false tax returns, and harassed the agency's employees. By late 1985, with high-level defectors accusing Hubbard of having stolen as much as \$200 million from the church, the IRS was seeking an indictment of Hubbard for tax fraud. Scientology members "worked day and night" shredding documents the IRS sought, according to a defector who took part in the scheme. (Hubbard, who had been in hiding for five years, died before the criminal case could be prosecuted.) None of this, however, convinced the IRS, which assessed the church more than \$1 million in back taxes for the years 1970 through 1972. Scientology appealed to the U.S. Tax Court, where, in 1984, it was handed one of the worst financial and public relations disasters in its history. The battle with the Internal Revenue Service was finally resolved on October 1, 1993. On that day, despite all the evidence to the contrary, the IRS issued letters recognizing the Church of Scientology and its related churches and organizations as tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. In return, the Church of Scientology paid the IRS \$12.5 million to settle any tax assessments prior to 1993, and dropped all its lawsuits against the IRS. The IRS also agreed to drop any outstanding audits of Scientology organizations and declared several related Scientology organizations as tax-exempt, including a trust that oversees the church's 440-foot cruise ship, Freewinds. Also, church members were permitted to henceforth deduct from their personal income taxes the fees they pay for "auditing."

Note on Tactics: Frequently, a person's first contact with Scientology comes when he is approached by a staff member on the street and offered a free personality test, or receives a lengthy questionnaire in the mail. Using charts and graphs, the idea is to convince a person that he has some problem, or "ruin," that Scientology can fix, while assuaging concerns he may have about the church. According to Hubbard, "if the job has been done well, the person should be worried." With that accomplished, the customer is pushed to buy services he is told will improve his sorry condition and perhaps give him such powers as being able to spiritually travel outside his body -- or, in Scientology jargon, to "exteriorize." Church members are then required to write testimonials -- "success stories" -- as they progress from one level to the next.

The Scientology organization uses sophisticated sales tactics to sell a seemingly endless progression of expensive courses, each serving as a prerequisite for the next. Known collectively as "The Bridge," the courses promise salvation, higher intelligence, superhuman powers, and even possible survival from nuclear fallout -- for those who can pay. Church tenets mandate that parishioners purchase Scientology goods and services under Hubbard's "doctrine of exchange." A person must learn to give, he said, as well as receive. For its programs and books, the church charges "fixed donations" that range from \$50 for an elementary course in improving communication skills to more than \$13,000 for Hubbard's secret teachings on the origins of the universe and the

genesis of mankind's ills.

From time to time, the church offers "limited time only" deals on a select package of Hubbard courses, which represent a small portion of The Bridge. One such offer packaged courses that if bought individually would supposedly cost \$55,455; the sale price was \$33,399.50. To complete Hubbard's progression of courses, a Scientologist could conceivably spend a lifetime and more than \$400,000. The Scientology Bridge is always under construction, keeping the Supreme Answer one step away from church members -- a potent sales strategy devised by Hubbard to keep the money flowing, critics contend.

New courses continually are added, each of which is said to be crucial for spiritual progress, each heavily promoted. Church members are warned that unless they keep purchasing Scientology services, misery and sickness may befall them. For the true believer, this is a powerful incentive to keep buying whatever the group is selling. Through the mail, Scientologists are bombarded with glossy, colorful brochures announcing the latest courses and discounts. Letters and postcards sound the dire warning, "Urgent! Urgent! Your future is at risk! ... It is time to ACT! NOW! ... You must buy now!"

Scientology staffers who sell Hubbard's courses are called "registrars." They earn commissions on their sales and are skilled at eliciting every facet of an individual's finances, including bank accounts, stocks, cars, houses, whatever can be converted to cash. Like all Scientology staffers, a registrar's productivity is evaluated each week. Performance is judged by how much money he or she brings in by each Thursday afternoon. And, in Scientology, declining or stagnant productivity is not viewed favorably. (Source: "The Scientology Story, Pt.2," *L.A. Times*, 6/25/90.)

Note on David Miscavige: To the public, Heber Jentzsch, president of the Church of Scientology International, is portrayed as Scientology's top official. He appears regularly at news conferences and on talk shows, appearing to be chiefly responsible for church public relations. The real power is consolidated among a handful of Scientologists who keep low public profiles. The Church of Scientology serves as the mother church and is responsible for the overall ecclesiastical management, dissemination, and propagation of Scientology and the various churches of Scientology, but the Religious Technology Center (RTC) serves as "protector of the *religion*." And, more importantly, RTC is Scientology's final arbiter of orthodoxy.

David Miscavige (41) (a high school drop out) has served as RTC's Chairman of the Board, its most senior position, since 1987. Miscavige has been an active Scientologist for most of his life, and has been involved with nearly every aspect of the Church's activities, closely working with Hubbard. Miscavige wields power with the iron-fisted approach of his mentor. RTC owns the trademarks that Scientology churches need to operate, including the words Scientology and Dianetics. RTC licenses the churches to use the trademarks and can revoke permission if a church fails to perform properly. Therein rests much, but not all, of Miscavige's power. He is the man in control, charting a direction for the organization that is at once expansionist and combative -- in keeping with the dictates and personality of Hubbard, his role model.

More Detail on Scientology's Wide Array of Front Groups and Financial

Scams (Source: 5/6/91, *Time Magazine*):

CONSULTING. Sterling Management Systems, formed in 1983, has been ranked in recent years by *Inc.* magazine as one of America's fastest-growing private companies (estimated 1988 revenues of \$20 million). Sterling regularly mails a free newsletter to more than 300,000 health-care professionals, mostly dentists, promising to increase their incomes dramatically. The firm offers seminars and courses that typically cost \$10,000. But Sterling's true aim is to hook customers for Scientology. Sterling's founder, dentist Gregory Hughes, is now under investigation by California's Board of Dental Examiners for incompetence. Nine lawsuits are pending against him for malpractice (seven others have been settled), mostly for orthodontic work on children.

PUBLIC INFLUENCE. One front, the Way to Happiness Foundation, has distributed to children in thousands of the nation's public schools more than 3.5 million copies of a booklet Hubbard wrote on morality. The church calls the scheme "the largest dissemination project in Scientology history." Applied Scholastics is the name of still another front, which is attempting to install a Hubbard tutorial program in public schools, primarily those populated by minorities. The group also plans a 1,000-acre campus, where it will train educators to teach various Hubbard methods. The disingenuously named Citizens Commission on Human Rights is a Scientology group at war with psychiatry, its primary competitor. The commission typically issues reports aimed at discrediting particular psychiatrists and the field in general [not a bad goal]. The CCHR is also behind an all-out war against Eli Lilly, the maker of Prozac, the nation's top-selling anti-depression drug, claiming that Prozac drives people to murder or suicide. Another Scientology-linked group, the Concerned Businessmen's Association of America, holds anti-drug contests and awards \$5,000 grants to schools as a way to recruit students and curry favor with education officials.

HEALTH CARE. HealthMed, a chain of clinics run by Scientologists, promotes a grueling and excessive system of saunas, exercise, and vitamins designed by Hubbard to purify the body. Experts denounce the regime as quackery and potentially harmful, yet HealthMed solicits unions and public agencies for contracts. The chain is plugged heavily in a book, *Diet for a Poisoned Planet*, by journalist David Steinman, who concludes that scores of common foods (among them: peanuts, bluefish, peaches and cottage cheese) are dangerous. Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop labeled the book "trash," and the Food and Drug Administration issued a paper in October [of 1990] that claims Steinman distorts his facts. "HealthMed is a gateway to Scientology, and Steinman's book is a sorting mechanism," says physician William Jarvis, who is head of the National Council Against Health Fraud.

DRUG TREATMENT. Hubbard's purification treatments are the mainstay of Narconon, a Scientology-run chain of [50] alcohol and drug rehabilitation centers -- some in prisons under the name "Criminon."

FINANCIAL SCAMS. Three Florida Scientologists, including Ronald Bernstein, a big contributor to the church's international "war chest," pleaded guilty in March of 1991 to using their rare-coin dealership as a money laundry. Other notorious activities by Scientologists include making the shady Vancouver stock exchange even shadier, and plotting to plant operatives in the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Export-Import Bank. The alleged purpose of this scheme: to gain inside information on which countries are going to be denied credit so that Scientology-linked traders can

make illicit profits by taking "short" positions in those countries' currencies.

BOOK PUBLISHING. Scientology mischief-making has even moved to the book industry. Since 1985, at least a dozen Hubbard books, printed by a church company, have made best-seller lists. They range from a 5,000-page sci-fi decology (*Black Genesis, The Enemy Within, An Alien Affair*; etc.) to the [50]-year-old *Dianetics*. Critics pan most of Hubbard's books as unreadable, while defectors claim that church insiders are sometimes the real authors. Even so, Scientology has sent out armies of its followers to buy the group's books at such major chains as B. Dalton's and Waldenbooks to sustain the illusion of a best-selling author. A former Dalton's manager says that some books arrived in his store with the chain's price stickers already on them, suggesting that copies are being recycled. Scientology claims that sales of Hubbard books now top [100] million worldwide.

Seventh-Day Adventism

Orthodox or Cult?¹⁴

Seventh-Day Adventism (SDA) arose from the aftermath of the Adventist movement of the mid-1800s. "Seventh-day" refers to the focus on sabbath, or Saturday worship. "Adventist" refers to the SDA belief that they are the fulfillment of prophecies pertaining to the latter days remnant and the coming of Christ. The world was predicted to end in 1844 with the Second Coming of Christ, by William Miller, a New England Baptist itinerant preacher. Miller's followers condemned all the churches of the day as apostate and "Babylon," and warned Christians to come out of them. A great many did, and the "adventist" movement was born and grew rapidly (Melton, J. Gordon, *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, Vol. 2, pp. 21–22).

Christ did not appear in 1844. After this "Great Disappointment," one "little flock" still insisted the date of their original predictions had been correct. They decided the event marked by 1844 was not the Second Coming, but the entrance of Christ into the Holy of Holies in the Heavenly Sanctuary. There, they said, He began the "Investigative Judgment." (See #6 below.) This doctrine was received and endorsed by Ellen G. White (*Ibid.*, p. 680).

From 1844 to 1851, the group taught the "shut door" doctrine, based on Jesus' parable of the ten virgins. Anyone who had not accepted the Adventist message by the time Jesus entered the Holy of Holies was to be shut out permanently, as were the five foolish virgins. Cut off from the Bridegroom, they could not join the Adventists or have any hope of eternal life. Ellen White not only approved and taught this doctrine, but her first vision experience (she claimed over 2,000 visions) was largely responsible for its being received by the Adventist group (Brinsmead, Robert, D., *Judged by the Gospel: A Review of Adventism*, pp. 130–133).

By 1846, the group had adopted the Seventh-Day Baptists' view that the Saturday Sabbath must be observed by Christians. A highly elevated form of this doctrine, together with the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment, became the hallmarks of Seventh-Day Adventism. In 1850, James and Ellen White began publishing a magazine, *The Review & Herald*, to disseminate Adventist and Sabbatarian doctrines. This helped many of the remaining "Millerites" to coalesce into a distinctive body, which adopted the name of Seventh-Day Adventist Church in 1860, and formally incorporated in 1863, with approximately 3,500 members in 125 congregations (*Encyclopedia of American Religion*, Vol. 2, p. 681).

Ellen G. White (1827-1915) never held official title as the head of the SDA church, but was one of its founders and acknowledged spiritual leader. She rather disingenuously declined to claim the title of "prophet," calling herself a "messenger" instead (P.G. Damsteegt, et al., *Seventh-day Adventists Believe ... A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*, 1988, p. 224). But she claimed to have the "spirit of prophecy,"

¹⁴ Besides relying heavily on the work of Dr. Whitcomb (1988 Syllabus notes), some of the material in this report has also been excerpted and or adapted from: "Seventh-day Adventist Church Profile," Timothy Oliver (Watchman Fellowship Profile, 1996).

and that her messages were direct from God for the guidance and instruction of the church. With her knowledge and consent, others called her a prophet and an inspired commentator of Scripture¹, and even "the Spirit of Prophecy" (Maurice Barnett, *Ellen G. White & Inspiration*, pp. 5–17). Having only a third grade education, Ellen White said for years she was unable to read, bolstering the claim that her beautiful prose was inspired by God. However, it has been discovered that she not only read, but plagiarized other Christian authors throughout virtually all her writings. The sad facts of this matter have been thoroughly and indisputably established in several books. (e.g., see Walter Rea, *The White Lie*; and *Judged by the Gospel*, pp. 361–383).

As of year-end 1999, the SDA church claimed more than 10.9 million members worldwide in 46,700 churches; there are more than 900,000 Adventists in the U.S. and Canada (making the SDA one of the fastest growing "churches" in the world -- membership up over 10% in 1999). While headquartered in Washington, D.C., SDA employment worldwide totals nearly 166,000, not including 13,815 ordained ministers. (Contributions in 1999 totaled \$1.6 billion.) SDAs claim to be working in 725 languages and over 1,000 dialects. They have a large investment in publishing and education -- they operate 56 publishing houses and support 549 medical units (696 including 117 nursing homes and retirement centers and 30 orphanages); and 5,846 primary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities (with total enrollment of over a million students). They also broadcast over Adventist World Radio more than 1,000 hours per week of programming in more than 40 languages from 18 transmitters in seven international locations, and have almost 13 million students enrolled in its more than 110,000 "Sabbath Schools" (11/2001, SDA Internet web site). (The SDA church also publishes two of their own Bible "translations": *The Study Bible* and *The Clear Word Bible*.)

SDA is organized as a representative democracy. Lower echelons elect representatives to higher units; determination and administration of policy and enforcement of doctrinal orthodoxy is imposed from the top down. President and Executive Committee of General Conference are standing chief administrative offices. Lower administrative units are the General Conference, Divisions (over continents), Union Conferences, local Conferences, and congregations.

In the late 1950s, cult expert Walter Martin, founder of the Christian Research Institute, in collaboration with neo-evangelical Donald Barnhouse, made an extensive investigation of the teachings (doctrines) of Seventh-Day Adventism. Their purpose was to determine whether to classify SDA as part of the evangelical community, or to go along with the majority of evangelicals and treat SDAs as cult members (thereby requiring evangelicals to exercise Biblical separation). (In the 1955 edition of *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Martin originally *did* classify SDA as cultic.) Martin and Barnhouse concluded that SDA *was within* the bounds of Christian orthodoxy. Walter Martin, in his article in the 12/19/60 *Christianity Today*, said: "That Adventists should be recognized as Christians and that fellowship should be extended to them we do not deny" (p. 15).

Among those adamantly opposing that conclusion was Biblical scholar Dr. John Whitcomb, Jr., then of Grace Theological Seminary. Detailed below is Whitcomb's reasoning* for his classification of SDA as a [anti-assurance, Sabbath-keeping, Law-enslaving] cult:²

- 1) **Source of Authority.** Ellen G. White claimed to be, "a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light." The official SDA *Questions on Doctrine* (Q.D.) states that, "the Holy Spirit opened to her mind important events and called her to give certain instructions for these last days, and inasmuch as these instructions, in our understanding, are in harmony with the Word of God, which Word alone is able to make us wise unto salvation, we as a denomination accept them as inspired counsels from the Lord" (Q.D., p. 93). (Emphasis added.) Mrs. White claimed to have received more than 3,000 "inspired counsels from the Lord" (i.e., visions) between 1844 and 1868. (From these "visions," she produced over 100,000 handwritten manuscript pages from which were published 54 books!) Therefore, SDAs have a new source of authority in their lives -- according to SDA's dogma, if an SDA does not accept Mrs. White as *infallible*, they have no salvation!

- 2) **Mankind.** Seventh-Day Adventists do not believe that the whole man or any part of him is inherently "immortal" (Q.D., p. 518). SDAs believe in "soul sleep" for the saved (i.e., no conscious existence from the time of death until the resurrection), and annihilation for the wicked (i.e., the body and soul are destroyed at death rather than experiencing everlasting torment). How, then, can one get to heaven?: SDAs believe that one can have immortality only on the condition that he comes to Christ through Ellen G. White; i.e., a works program, following salvation by grace with light of revelation through Ellen G. White as the infallible guide to Holy Scripture, apart from which one cannot have immortality.³ Then, at resurrection day, the body will be *re-created* (necessary because of soul sleep) for all those who believe in White's guidance and teachings (while non-SDAs will remain in "soul sleep" forever; i.e., will cease to exist [annihilated] and will *not* suffer everlasting torment).

- 3) **Christ.** Mrs. White: "Christ took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature ... Christ took human nature and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He took our nature and its deteriorating condition" (Q.D., pp. 654-656) (cf. Jn. 14:30). According to SDA, then, Christ acquired a sinful nature! Of course, if this could have been so, there could have been no sinless sacrifice, no hope for sinners, and no Savior.

- 4) **Atonement.** "Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ" (E.G. White, *The Great Controversy [TGC]*, 1911, p. 623; *TGC* has since been retitled and published as *America in Prophecy*, 1988). SDA teaches that, though saved by grace, we are *kept* by the Law (i.e., "partial atonement"). Therefore, one must keep Old Testament dietary and ceremonial laws, paying particular attention to keep the Saturday Sabbath and the Ten Commandments, and most importantly, making sure to faithfully pay the tithe.

Even when speaking of being saved by the righteousness of Christ, Adventist writers refer to *imparted* righteousness, seldom to the Biblical concept of *imputed* righteousness. Calling it "Christ's righteousness," while insisting on the believer's perfection of character as a prerequisite to salvation, is at worst a thinly veiled works salvation, or at best an attempt to mix grace and works, something the Bible says is impossible to do (Rom. 11:6). Mrs. White's words are crystal clear -- one will not be forgiven until all sins are eradicated from one's life and one's character is perfected. Precisely the same heresy is found (besides many others) in Mormonism. It is not the salvation by grace alone through faith alone offered in the Bible.

- 5) **Baptism.** "... Christ made it clear that He required baptism of those who wished to

become part of His church, His spiritual kingdom"; "In baptism believers enter into the passion experience of our Lord"; "... [B]aptism also marks [a] person's entrance into Christ's spiritual kingdom. ... it unites the new believer to Christ.... Through baptism the Lord adds the new disciples to the body of believers -- His body, the church.... Then they are members of God's family" (*SDAs Believe ...*, pp. 182, 184, 187).

- 6) **The Investigative Judgment.** According to SDA theology, beginning on October 22, 1844, Christ entered upon the "judgment phase" of His ministry, whereby He blots out sin: [The SDA doctrine of the "Investigative Judgment" rests on Ellen G. White's claimed revelation that Christ entered the heavenly Holy of Holies, not at His ascension, but in 1844, wherein He then began to investigate the records of human works (*TGC*, pp. 362-373) (cf. Heb. 9).] "When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty" (*TGC*, p. 422). Satan, thereby, becomes the scapegoat of Leviticus 16. This lack of clear distinction between the forgiveness of sins and the blotting out of sins, makes it impossible for anyone to know, even in the hour of his death, whether he is saved or not. (SDAs are not "allowed" to experience assurance of salvation, because then there would be no pressure on them to keep the Old Testament law, as interpreted by Ellen G. White, and especially no pressure to pay the tithe.) Moreover, the concept that the sins of all men are to be laid on Satan, assigns to Satan an indispensable role in the blotting out of sin, thus nullifying the all-sufficiency of the finished work of Christ. [When Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished," i.e. *completed, paid in full*, it cannot be that there is yet another salvation event more than 1,800 years later, just as essential to salvation as Christ's death on the cross, in which one must believe in order to be saved. This is clearly "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6-9).]⁴

The "Investigative Judgment" and the "Scapegoat Theory of the Atonement" are, by themselves, so non-Biblical as to contradict Galatians 1:8-9. It is "another gospel," about which the Apostle Paul wrote, "let such be *anathema*" (i.e., cursed/condemned). Yet according to Ellen White, one must believe this doctrine to be saved:

"Those who would share the benefits of the Savior's mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God ... The subject of the sanctuary and the Investigative Judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position [in the Holy of Holies] and work [Investigative Judgment] of their great High Priest. *Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time* or to occupy the position which God designs for them to fill. Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God ... All who have received the light on these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them. The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men ... It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects ... The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon a cross. By His death He *began* that work which after his resurrection He ascended to *complete* in Heaven" (*TGC*, pp. 488-89; emphasis added).

- 7) **The Sabbath.** "In the last days, the Sabbath test will be made plain. When this time comes, anyone who does not keep the Sabbath will receive the mark of the beast and will be kept from heaven" (*TGC*, p. 449); "... [T]he divine institution of the Sabbath is to be restored ... The delivering of this message will precipitate a conflict that will involve the whole world. The central issue will be obedience to God's law and the observance of the Sabbath. ... Those who reject it will eventually receive the mark of the beast" (*TGC*, pp. 262–63). In one of her most revered works, Ellen White wrote that Sabbath observance would be the "line of distinction" in the "final test" that will separate God's end-time people who "receive the seal of God" and are saved, from those who "receive the mark of the beast" (*The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*, p. 605). Describing a supposed vision direct from God, Ellen White wrote, "I saw that the Holy Sabbath is, and will be, the *separating wall* between the true Israel of God and *unbelievers*" (*Early Writings*, p. 33; emphasis added). She also wrote of some Adventists failing to understand that "Sabbath ... observance was of sufficient importance to draw a line between the people of God and unbelievers" (*Ibid.*, p. 85).

SDAs have, thereby, made Sabbath-keeping a criterion for a personal relationship with the Lord -- even to the extent of one's salvation! Why? Because, according to SDAs, we are all to be under strict adherence to Old Testament Law, including the Ten Commandments, of which the fourth one says, "keep the Sabbath." (This Sabbath-keeping requirement was supposedly confirmed in a vision received by Ellen G. White, rather than by study of the Bible.) SDAs believe that "Sunday-keeping" will be the mark of the beast in the future.

- 8) **Ellen G. White, the Prophet.** Many rank-and-file SDA members deny that their organization any longer decrees Ellen G. White a God-inspired prophet. Yet in SDA official publications, the SDA church continues to defend Ellen White legends, and maintain there was no difference in the degree of inspiration she received from that received by Bible writers (*Review & Herald*, 4 October 1928, p. 11; "Source of Final Appeal," *Adventist Review*, 3 June 1971, pp. 4–6; G. A. Irwin, *Mark of the Beast*, p. 1; "The Inspiration and Authority of the Ellen G. White Writings," *Adventist Review*, 15 July 1982, p. 3; *Ministry*, October 1981, p. 8 (5); see also, *Judged by the Gospel*, pp. 125–130). And in the SDA June 2000, General Conference, the church voted to more aggressively affirm and support the "Spirit of Prophecy through the ministry of Ellen White" (*Adventist Today*, [online: July 2000]).

Endnotes

1 The Bible lists six identifying marks of false prophets, any one of which is sufficient for identification: (1) through signs and wonders they lead astray after false gods (Dt. 13:1-4); (2) their prophecies don't come to pass (Dt. 18:20-22); (3) they contradict God's Word (Isa. 8:20); (4) they bear bad fruit (Mt. 7:18-20); (5) men speak well of them (Lk. 6:26); and (6) they deny that Jesus, the one and only Christ, has come once and for all in the flesh (1 Jn. 4:3), thereby denying His sufficiency in all matters of life and godliness (2 Pe. 1:3). Most cults are founded upon false prophecies, which, if pointed out, offer an effective way to open blind eyes and rescue cultists. SDA originated with similar false prophecies about Christ's coming. It began with William Miller's prediction that Christ would return in 1843 (revised to October 22, 1844). Miller admitted his error. However,

SDA prophetess Ellen G. White (EGW), who had repeatedly endorsed Miller's prophecy, insisted that Christ had indeed come, but not to earth. Instead, He had entered "the holy of holies" in heaven "to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 480).

Number 17 of the "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-Day Adventists" states: "The Gift of Prophecy: One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction." Yet EGW made numerous false prophecies: that "Old Jerusalem never would be built up" (*Early Writings*, p. 75), that she would be alive at the Rapture (*Early Writings*, pp. 15-16), that Christ would return before slavery was abolished (*Early Writings*, pp. 35, 276), that Adventists living in 1856 would be alive at the Rapture (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, pp. 131-132), and many more. Nevertheless, SDAs revere this false prophet's writings as if they were Scripture.

2 Nevertheless, SDAs are continuing their efforts to be identified as "evangelical Christians." As an illustration of this effort, SDAs were very prominent at the annual meetings of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) held in San Francisco, November 19-21, 1992. They presented themselves in the printed program as the Adventist Theological Society (ATS). During the meetings, they conducted at least eight workshops/seminars open to all the members of the ETS, as well as a general meeting of their own ATS on Saturday morning, November 21st. Likewise, at the 1/97 National Religious Broadcasters Convention, the SDA's "Voice of Prophecy" booth provided books and tapes of their programs, but there was no indication that this was an SDA organization. Christians need to be aware that cult groups like SDA often use the same Christian-sounding terminology, but the meanings of the words have been redefined.

3 Many quotes could be given to prove that EGW taught salvation by works. Here are a few:

(a) "Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny ... though ... forgotten by us, they [our works] will bear their testimony to justify or condemn" (*TGC*, pp. 486-490).

(b) "When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life ..." (*TGC*, p. 483).

(c) "Each one of you needs to ... [be] working with your might to redeem the failures of your past life. God has placed you in a world of suffering to prove you, to see if you will be found worthy of the gift of eternal life" (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 530).

4 This teaching of the "Investigative Judgment" is the foundational doctrine and major heresy of Seventh-Day Adventism: that the atonement was not complete on the cross, but was begun in heaven in 1844 and depends upon our works. According to Ellen G. White (EGW), the blood of Christ, instead of making "an atonement for the soul" (Lv. 17:11) and "cleans[ing] us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7), brought sin into heaven: "[O]ur sins are, in fact, transferred to the heavenly sanctuary by the blood of Christ" (*Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 266). Thus, Christ had to begin the work of cleansing the heavenly

sanctuary (of sins His blood had brought there!) through the "Investigative Judgment." EGW declared that "Ministers who would not accept this saving message" were hindering God's work and "The blood of souls is upon them" (*Early Writings*, p. 234). Millerites who adopted this delusion became Seventh-Day Adventists. The whole concept of the Investigative Judgment is antithetical to the Gospel. Jesus did not wait until 1844 to enter the Holy of Holies in heaven (Heb. 1:3; 6:19–20; 8:1; 9:6–12, 24; 12:2). Neither is He still making an atonement in heaven (Heb. 9:25–26; 10:11–14). The Investigative Judgment proposes to "vindicate the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus," by showing they were "loyal," "penitent," and "faithful" commandment keepers. This is an outrage. God's justice in saving sinners is vindicated by Christ's death on the cross, period (Rom. 3:24–26).

5 The SDA Church made this statement in their *Ministry* magazine of October 1981, and have never retracted it -- "We believe the **revelation and inspiration of both the Bible and Ellen White's writings to be of equal quality**. The superintendence of **the Holy Spirit was just as careful and thorough in one case as in the other**" (June 1997, *The Baptist Challenge*). (Bold added.) This sounds like SDAs also believe that Mrs. White is *inerrant*.

Why Walter Martin Considered Seventh-Day Adventism Evangelical¹⁵

In the book *Kingdom of the Cults*, the late Dr. Walter Martin [founder of the Christian Research Institute (CRI) who died in 1989] defended the Seventh-Day Adventist Church as orthodox and refused to label this group as a cult. Martin's position in this influential book has resulted in widespread confusion on this subject. Martin's approach to Seventh-Day Adventism is contrasted with that of those who view this group as a dangerous cult.

WALTER MARTIN ACCEPTED THE STATEMENTS OF ONE PARTICULAR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PUBLICATION, *QUESTIONS ON DOCTRINE*, AS THE BASIS FOR HIS EVALUATION

The book *Questions on Doctrine* was published by the SDA denomination especially for general public use to answer charges of heresy that had been leveled at them. Martin thought it wrong that other contenders for the faith had based their evaluation of Seventh-Day Adventism on a variety of SDA literature, arguing that these were not an official representation of SDA doctrine. He even contended that Ellen G. White's writings were not a fair representation of SDA teaching. Consider the following statement from *The Kingdom of the Cults* by Walter Martin:

"In 1957 the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists released the first definitive and comprehensive explanation of their faith, an authoritative volume entitled *Questions on Doctrine*. This book truthfully presents the theology and doctrine which the leaders of Seventh-day Adventism affirm they have always held. ... It is therefore unfair to quote any one Adventist writer or a group of writers as representing 'the position of our denomination in the area of church doctrine and prophetic interpretation ...'" (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 369).

What Is Wrong with Martin's View?

- 1) *Questions on Doctrine* was not any longer in print at the time of Martin's writing. The Seventh-Day Adventists must not have considered it too important as an authoritative statement of their doctrine or they would not have allowed to go out of print. In 1977, David Cloud visited the bookstore at the large Adventist Bible

¹⁵ The above report has been adapted from a 9/5/99 report by David Cloud (Fundamental Baptist Information Service, 1701 Harns Rd., Oak Harbor, WA 98277); the complete report is in the Cults section of the End Time Apostasy Database at the Way of Life Literature web site. The original report is from Mr. Cloud's book *Avoiding the Snare of Seventh-day Adventism*. The two major divisions of the book are: "Adventist History Proves It is Heretical" and "Adventist Doctrine Proves It Is Heretical." The book analyzes Adventist doctrines such as Sabbath-keeping, Soul-sleep, Annihilation of the wicked, Ellen White as a Prophetess, Investigative Judgment, and Misuse of the Mosaic Law. Another chapter is titled "Why Some Have Considered Seventh-day Adventism Evangelical." This analyzes Walter Martin's (author of *Kingdom of the Cults*) faulty view of Adventism. The 2nd edition (1999) includes selections from D.M. Canright's 1898 book *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*. Canright was an early leader in Adventism who left and became a Baptist pastor. The 2nd edition also includes a chapter entitled "Adventists Wanted Me to Revise This Book," describing the attempt by the Seventh-Day Adventist denomination to have Mr. Cloud change the book

College in Collegedale, Tennessee, in search of this book. He was told that the book was out of print and would not again be available.

- 2) Ellen White's writings are presented by the Adventists as inspired. The following statements are from an Adventist correspondence course offered in the mid-1970s titled "Prophetic Guidance in the Seventh-day Adventist Church." Two books were given with this course: Ellen G. White: *Messenger to the Remnant* and *The Spirit of Prophecy Treasure Chest*. All of these materials were produced by the Adventist publisher Review and Herald. These books were still available in Adventist bookstores when last checked in the early-1990s. This correspondence course exalts Ellen White as a prophetess of God and her writings as inspired revelation:

"These inspired books, such as *Desire of Ages*, *Great Controversy*, and *Patriarchs and Prophets*, are indeed divine revelations of truth upon which we may place full dependence" (*Prophetic Guidance in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, p. 20).

"The Messages for these days shall be written in books and shall stand immortalized" (*Prophetic Guidance*, p. 50).

"These messages, we believe, should be faithfully followed by every believer" (*Prophetic Guidance*, p. 60).

"Consistency calls for acceptance of the Spirit of Prophecy [Ellen White's] writings as a whole. We cannot justify accepting part and rejecting part" (*Prophetic Guidance*, p. 70).

"We recognize that the principles set forth in the *Spirit of Prophecy* writings do not change with the passage of the years ... and are of equal value to the church in all lands" (*Spirit of Prophecy Treasure Chest*, p. 125).

"The Messages [Ellen White's writings] themselves are worthy of a different kind of consideration from that given to other modern writings. They are messages from God and must always be treated as such" (*Treasure Chest*, p. 142).

Ellen White's books are sold by Adventist ministries, bookstores, and colporteurs worldwide and are advertised as inspired counsel of God. Since Ellen White's writings are thus regarded by the Adventist denomination, why would they protest the evaluation of her writings as representative of SDA doctrine? Their own books continually site Ellen White's writings as authoritative, and it certainly not wrong for an outside researcher to do the same. If Ellen White's writings are not accurate representations of Adventist doctrine, their entire foundation is washed away.

- 3) The Seventh-day Adventists have themselves stated that their authorized publications are reliable:

"Denominationally-authorized productions carry the official imprint of the issuing organization, and may be relied upon" (*Prophetic Guidance*, p. 82).

In light of this statement, it certainly would be proper to study any of the publications of the major Adventist presses in order to know Adventist beliefs. They have told us these materials are reliable. We are not, therefore, confined to any one publication for official SDA doctrine. All of the publications used in *Avoiding the*

Snare of Seventh-day Adventism are either Ellen White's writings or are publications of the official Adventist publishing houses. It is very strange for the Adventist Church to publish books and then to protest because we use those books to evaluate their beliefs. There is something that appears very deceitful here.

- 4) Dr. Martin did not treat other groups like he demanded the Seventh-day Adventists be treated. In his research of other groups, such as the Mormons, Martin did not draw back from using any authoritative material necessary to draw an accurate conclusion about the doctrinal position of the group. He did not base his research of other groups strictly upon one volume provided by those groups. He is, thus, being extremely inconsistent in this matter.
- 5) Dr. Martin failed to apply his knowledge of cultic deceitfulness to the Seventh-Day Adventist denomination. He well knew the chameleon nature of false teachers. Frequently in critiques of various false groups, Walter Martin warned that they tend to be less than honest in their presentation of doctrine, especially in their materials designed for general public consumption.

One entire chapter of Dr. Martin's booklet *Jehovah's Witnesses* deals with this reality. The chapter is entitled "The Watchtower Chameleon." Martin shows how the Witnesses have a history of attempting to hide their heretical nature. They say one thing on one hand and something completely different on the other hand. The wise investigator must learn to dig through this deception in order to arrive at the truth.

It is not difficult to see this trait in Seventh-Day Adventism. In an attempt to appear orthodox they sometimes dilute, even alter their beliefs. Sometimes, for example, they proudly and boldly teach that Ellen White's writings are inspired revelation from God and that they should be accepted as authoritative by all Christians. They do this in the aforementioned correspondence course, *Prophetic Guidance in the Adventist Movement*. On other occasions, they will deny the charge that they revere Ellen White's writings as divine revelation.

Dr. Martin also admitted that there is confusion and "conflicting statements" among SDA publications:

"There can be no doubt of the fact that there are conflicting statements in Adventist publications and diverse opinions about certain areas of Adventist theology and interpretation, some of which is quite the opposite of classical orthodox Christianity" (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 369).

It is very sad that Dr. Martin did not discern this as apostate deceitfulness instead of overlooking it. Consider some of the contradictions between quotations Dr. Martin uses from *Questions on Doctrine* and quotes from other books produced by the same official Adventist publishers:

Example #1: Inspiration of Ellen White's Writings

Dr. Martin's Statements: "If Seventh-day Adventists did indeed claim for Mrs. White inspiration in every area of her writings, then we might well be cautious about having fellowship with them. However, this they do not do, as I have amply demonstrated from official sources" (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 383).

Contradicting Adventist Statements: "These inspired books, such as *Desire of Ages*, *The Great Controversy*, and *Patriarchs and Prophets*, are indeed divine revelations of truth upon which we may place full dependence" (*Prophetic Guidance in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, p. 20); "The Messages for these days shall be written in books and shall stand immortalized" (*Prophetic Guidance*, p. 50); "Consistency calls for acceptance of the Spirit of Prophecy [Ellen White's] writings as a whole. We cannot justify accepting part and rejecting part" (*Prophetic Guidance*, p. 70); "The Messages [Ellen White's writings] themselves are worthy of a different kind of consideration from that given to other modern writings. They are messages from God and must always be treated as such" (*Treasure Chest*, p. 142).

Example #2: Universality of Ellen White's Writings

Dr. Martin's Statements: "These counsels are primarily for the Seventh-day Adventist denominations" (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 380); "We do not think of them [Ellen White's writings] as of universal application, as is the Bible ..." (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 380).

Contradicting Adventist Statements: "She was ever mindful that she was writing for the world as well as for the church" (*Prophetic Guidance*, p. 50); "These messages, we believe, should be faithfully followed by every believer" (*Prophetic Guidance*, p. 60); "We recognize that the principles set forth in the *Spirit of Prophecy* writings do not change with the passage of the years ... and are of equal value to the church in all lands" (*Spirit of Prophecy Treasure Chest*, p. 125).

Example #3: Ellen White's Role in the Development of Adventist Doctrine

Dr. Martin's Statements: "If they interpreted the Bible in the light of her writings, and not the reverse, if they willingly admitted this and owned it as their position, then his criticism would be justified, but they do not do so" (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 378).

Contradicting Adventist Statements: "When they came to the point in their study where they said, 'We can do nothing more,' the Spirit of the Lord would come to me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me. ... Thus light was given that helped us to understand the Scriptures ... they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given [to Ellen White]" (*Ellen G. White Messenger to the Remnant*, pp. 34,38,39).

It is true that Adventist leaders often deny that their doctrine was developed through Ellen White's visions, but in the above statement Ellen White herself admitted that her visions played a definitive role in how the early leaders understood Bible doctrine. A cult researcher like Walter Martin should have known that it would be impossible to develop from the Bible alone Adventist doctrines such as Investigative Judgment, Satan as sin bearer, Sunday worship the mark of the beast, Seventh-Day Adventism as the fulfillment of Revelation 14:6, and Satan bound on earth for 1,000 years. He should have realized, therefore, that there would have to be duplicity involved in any such claim. Again, for some reason he failed to apply his knowledge of cultic deception to Seventh-Day Adventism. When the Jehovah's Witnesses play games with theological terms and appear in different colors according to different situations, Dr. Martin judged them as heretical chameleons. When the Seventh-day Adventists play similar games, he

alleged that it is only because they "are handicapped by the lack of a comprehensive volume which adequately defines their doctrinal position."

Could it have been that Dr. Martin had developed close relationships with Adventist leaders in California, and therefore, became blinded to the reality of Adventism? We believe this is exactly what happened. He admitted such friendships in his writings (*Calvary Contender*, October 1, 1995).

"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Example #4: Salvation by Grace Alone

Dr. Martin's Statements: "Literally scores of times in their book *Questions on Doctrine* and in various other publications the Adventists affirm that salvation comes only by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ's sacrifice upon the cross" (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 378).

Contradicting Adventist Statements: "So we have clearly outlined the steps that we need to take in order to become a Christian: to believe in God, to repent of and to confess our sins, to be baptized, and to obey all the commandments of the Lord" (*New Life Voice of Prophecy Guide #12*); "Christ says to every man in this world what He said to the rich young ruler: 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments' ... In other words, the standards for admission into heaven is a character built according to the ten specifications, or commandments, of God's law" (Charles Everson, *Saved by Grace*, Review and Herald Publishing, pp. 45,46).

These are quotes from two Adventist publications written specifically to explain to the public their doctrine of salvation. Dr. Martin quoted only one publication, *Questions on Doctrine*. On the one hand, they do claim to believe that salvation is by grace alone without works; but on the other hand, they redefine grace to include works and the deeds of the law. Their New Life correspondence course plainly states that to be saved one must believe in God, repent of sins, be baptized, and obey all the commandments of the Lord. This is what every cult does. They claim to believe in salvation by grace, but they cleverly redefine grace to include works.

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS ARE THE ONES WHO SEPARATED FROM AND DERIDED OTHER CHURCHES. IT IS STRANGE THAT THEY NOW APPEAR HURT BECAUSE THESE SAME CHURCHES CONSIDER THEM HERETICAL

Consider the following statements from SDA publications attacking the orthodox doctrines of the Christian faith:

The Doctrine of Conscious Existence after Death Is Called the Devil's Lie: "And today from pulpits all across the nation we hear the devil's great lie upheld each time a minister assures us that the soul of man lives on after death ..." (*These Times*, November 1976, p. 5).

The Doctrine of Eternal Torment Is Called Blasphemy Against God: "It is beyond the power of the human mind to estimate the evil which has been wrought by the heresy of eternal torment. The appalling views of God which have spread over the world from the

teachings of the pulpit have made thousands, yes, millions, of skeptics and infidels" (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 470).

Sunday Worship Will Be the Mark of the Beast: "While the observance of the false Sabbath in compliance to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God" (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 531).

Churches That Observe Sunday Worship Are Part of the Great Religious Whore of Revelation 17: "In amazement they hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from heaven [this refers to Adventist doctrines of Sabbath worship, soul sleep, etc.]. As the people go to their former teachers with the eager inquiry, are these things so? The ministers present fables, prophesy smooth things, to soothe their fears and quiet the awakened conscience" (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 531,532).

Quotes such as these demonstrate that it is the Seventh-Day Adventist denomination itself that has stood apart from other churches and caused divisions by its heretical views. Is it not strange now that they want to be accepted as orthodox Bible-believers by the very churches from which they willfully separated and which they have condemned? These are the subtle games that false teachers play.

ONE OF DR. MARTIN'S PRIMARY REASONS FOR ACCEPTING SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM AS NON-HERETICAL IS THAT THEY HOLD MANY MAJOR DOCTRINAL TRUTHS, SUCH AS THE TRINITY, THE DEITY OF CHRIST, AND THE INFALLIBILITY OF SCRIPTURE

"It is puzzling to me, as a student of non-Christian cult systems, how any group can hold the above doctrines in their proper Biblical context which Dr. Howkema admits the Adventists do and still be a non-Christian cult -- suffice it to say that the Adventists do have a clean bill of health where the major doctrines of Christian theology are involved" (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 370). (Emphasis added.)

One error here is in Martin's use of the man-made term "cult." It can be defined in numerous ways. By Martin's definition, perhaps, Seventh-Day Adventism was not a cult. By Dr. Howkema's definition, Seventh-Day Adventism is a cult. Whether or not Seventh-day Adventism is a cult, though, is not as important as whether or not Seventh-day Adventism is faithful to the Bible and the New Testament faith.

The Apostle Paul, in his condemnation of the Galatian heretics, mentions only one error: the perversion of the gospel. The Galatian legalizers were apparently sound in such major doctrines as God, Christ, and the Scriptures. In fact, they were almost sound in their doctrine of salvation, yet they were under God's curse! They Seventh-Day Adventists are modern-day Galatian heretics. They believe the cross leads the believer to the law, not to perfect, once-for-all and eternal liberty in Christ entirely outside the law of Moses.

The warning of Romans 16:17 is to mark and separate from those "which cause

divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned." Paul does not say to mark and avoid those which cause divisions contrary to only *some* of the doctrines we have learned. The Seventh-Day Adventist denomination teaches many doctrines that are contrary to those taught by the Apostles. God's Word commands that we mark them as false teachers and separate from them. That is not what Walter Martin did, though:

The Doctrine We Have Learned: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28).

Seventh-Day Adventist Doctrinal Offences: "Christ says to every man in this world what He said to the rich young ruler: 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments'" (*Saved By Grace*, pp. 45,46).

The Doctrine We Have Learned: "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:9).

Seventh-Day Adventist Doctrinal Offences: "Ellen White ... she was a fellow Seventh-day Adventist with no assurance of salvation except as she was faithful and trusted in the merits of her risen Savior" (*Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 127).

The Doctrine We Have Learned: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:24,25); "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Romans 11:6).

Seventh-Day Adventist Doctrinal Offences: "The fact that all who are redeemed are saved by grace does not dispense with the law of God any more in the one dispensation than in the other. The law is not against grace, and grace is not against the law. It is very evident, then, that in the new covenant we do not see the law as a thing of no consequence, but we find it occupying the center of the covenant" (*Saved by Grace*, pp. 11,36).

The Doctrine We Have Learned: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16,17).

Seventh-Day Adventist Doctrinal Offences: "... it is evident that all ten commandments are binding in the Christian dispensation ... One of these commands is the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath" (*Bible Footlights*, p. 37).

The Doctrine We Have Learned: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

Seventh-Day Adventist Doctrinal Offences: "As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come into review before God ... every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected" (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 425).

The Doctrine We Have Learned: "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be

absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Seventh-Day Adventist Doctrinal Offences: "To be dead does not mean to go to heaven; it does not mean to go to hell ... Indeed, it does not mean to go anywhere at all. It means simply an end of life" (*When a Man Dies*, p. 20).

The Doctrine We Have Learned: "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:14,15).

Seventh-Day Adventist Doctrinal Offences: "When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance" (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 425).

The Doctrine We Have Learned: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. ... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:10,15).

Seventh-Day Adventist Doctrinal Offences: "The plain doctrine of the Bible is that the devil and all his works will be destroyed, utterly destroyed. ... How repugnant to every emotion of love and mercy, and even to our sense of justice, is the doctrine that the wicked dead are tormented with fire and brimstone in an eternally burning hell" (*When a Man Dies*, p. 58; *The Great Controversy*, p. 469).

The Doctrine We Have Learned: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:11,12).

Seventh-Day Adventist Doctrinal Offences: "Mrs. White's pre-eminent mission was to help build the dynamics of a Biblical faith into a Christian movement. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is indebted to her as a spiritual leader and a pioneer builder and guide" (*Ellen G. White and the S.D.A. Church*, p. 2).

These quotes show how the Seventh-day Adventist denomination contradicts many clear apostolic doctrines. There are many other Adventist doctrinal heresies, of course. Upon the command and authority of Romans 16:17, and contrary to Walter Martin's misguided advice, Bible-believing Christians must mark the Adventist Church as false and avoid associations with the group.

The same idea is in Jude 3. We are commanded to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." The faith is that body of truth delivered to us by divine inspiration through the Apostles. If we obey this verse and earnestly contend for the New Testament faith with Seventh-Day Adventists, it will quickly be evident that there can be no close fellowship. The doctrinal differences are too great and too serious.

Another relevant passage is 2 Timothy 2:16-18. Here two men are condemned as heretics, yet only one error is mentioned -- their view of the resurrection. If Paul warned Timothy to avoid these men because of their false doctrine of the resurrection, should we not more warn Christians today to avoid the Seventh-Day Adventist Church based on their *many* heresies?

The truth is that the Bible does not give Christians the liberty of basing fellowship merely upon two or three major doctrines. The New Testament requires separation based on such things as a false gospel (Galatians 1), a false view of death or resurrection (2 Timothy 2:16-18), a denial of true holiness (1 Timothy 6:3-5), and a denial of the supernatural power of Christianity (2 Timothy 3:5). We are to separate even from true Christians if they refuse to follow the teachings of the apostles (2 Thess. 3:6).

Walter Martin's chief error about Seventh-Day Adventism was his refusal to practice Biblical separation. He had a New Evangelical type ministry that focused on unity based on a lowest-common denominator of doctrine. This is why he also did not separate from the Roman Catholic Church, but instead taught that it had some aberrant doctrine, but was still orthodox.

WALTER MARTIN CONTENDED THAT MODERN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM IS DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF ITS EARLIER DAYS

"For over a century Adventism has borne a stigma of being called a non-Christian cult system. Whether or not this was justified in the early development of Adventism, I have already discussed at length in my earlier book, but it should be carefully remembered that the Adventism of 1965 is different in not a few places from Adventism of 1845, and with that change the necessity of re-evaluation comes naturally" (Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 360).

Though we have no doubt that there have been changes in the Seventh-Day Adventist denomination during the past 150 years, we must ask whether these changes have affected the basic doctrinal position -- the answer is NO. "Prophetess" Ellen White believed the Adventist system of doctrine was finalized in the early days of her ministry and that this particular system was to be used from then on as the test of truth worldwide. It was not to be changed. Carefully consider the words of Mrs. White herself concerning the possibility of future changes in Adventist doctrine:

"When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No after suppositions, contrary to the light God has given, are to be entertained. ... The truth for this time God has given us as the foundation for our faith. He Himself has taught us what is truth. One will arise, and still another, with new light which contradicts the light that God has given under the demonstration of His Holy Spirit. We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith. They gather together a mass of Scripture, and pile it as proof around the past fifty years. And while the Scriptures are God's Word, and are to be respected, the application of them, if such application moves one pillar from the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, is a great mistake ..." (Ellen G. White Letter 329, 1905, quoted in *Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 40).

The truth is that Seventh-Day Adventism today does not differ in any significant doctrinal way from the Seventh-Day Adventism of Ellen White's day, except that it presents its doctrines in a more subtle manner today. If the Seventh-day Adventist leaders were to change their major distinctive doctrines as outlined by Ellen White, they would be denying their prophetess and pulling the pillars from under themselves. The Adventist Church admits this in the following statement from one of their recent publications:

"Great lines of truth were gradually unfolding before them [Ellen White and early Adventist leaders]. Now the time had come for the convergence of these truths into one body of doctrine. This was brought about in 1848, through a series of Sabbath conferences. Five in all were held. At the earlier of these, the doctrines were clarified and bound together as a unity of truth; the later conferences served largely as teaching and unifying agencies.

"A careful study of documents of the time reveals what was denominated 'present truth' in this formative period ... made up of vital 'essentials,' 'pillars,' 'foundations.' These may be listed as: 1. The second advent of Christ. 2. The binding claims of the seventh-day Sabbath. 3. The third angel's message in its fullness, in correct relationship to the first and second angel's messages. 4. The ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, which ministry would cease not long before the second advent (with emphasis on the work beginning the tenth day of the seventh month, 1844). 5. The non-immortality of the soul.

"These structural doctrines formed the 'firm platform' which, in 1858, was described by Ellen White, upon which 'nearly all stood firm' ... These constituted the 'landmarks' enumerated by Ellen White thirty years later..." (*Messenger to the Remnant*, pp. 39,40).

Since Mrs. White and the Adventist Church teach that their major doctrinal platform was finalized in their early days (and since the Adventist Church tells us that Mrs. White was an inspired prophetess), there is no need for re-evaluation of this group as Walter Martin required. A study of recent Seventh-Day Adventist publications confirms this judgment, since they continue to teach the same heresies promulgated by Ellen White and other early Adventist leaders.

As a group, the Seventh-Day Adventists today are the same divisive heretics they have been from their origin. To deserve a re-evaluation and re-labeling, they would have to denounce and turn away from every one of their heresies, including the foundational heresy that Ellen White was a prophetess of God.

Note: Between 1976 and 1981, David Cloud completed four official correspondence courses on Seventh-day Adventism produced by the Adventist Church itself. These courses promote the very same doctrinal platform that was laid down by Ellen White and the early Adventist leaders. Until such time as the Adventist Church denounces its heresies, Christians who follow the faith of the New Testament must mark avoid this group in obedience to Romans 16:17.

The Adventist denomination is the same heretical entity that was so plainly and firmly condemned by Bible-believing churches in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is the once Bible-believing churches that have changed. Popular evangelicalism today has become too blind to discern truth from error and too weak to condemn error when it is found. Just a few decades ago men such as A. Hoekema, John R. Rice, and M.R. DeHaan, who considered Seventh-Day Adventism a dangerous false group, were in the overwhelming majority among those who professed to be evangelical Bible-believing preachers. This is not so today. Most major evangelical publishing houses, for example, will no longer publish material derogatory toward Adventism or Catholicism.

It is not that the Adventist Church has moved closer to the Bible in the past 50 years, it

is that the evangelicals have moved farther away from the Bible in that period.

Silva Mind Control (Silva Method)¹⁶

Christian or New Age Mind Cult?

Silva Method (formerly Silva Mind Control [SMC]) was developed by José Silva. Over six million students in 71 countries have taken the Silva International courses (formerly Silva Mind Control International). (One of Silva's goals is to have the Silva Method course taught to all school children, both in grade school and in college.) He claims that any person who will take his 48-hour (four day) course will develop psychic powers. A student is shown how to enter an altered state of consciousness, and in that state is taught how to tap into "higher intelligence in the universe." The student is taught how to function psychically and clairvoyantly, and how to invite counselors, or psychic guides, into his mind to help him with his problems. By the third day of the course, students are supposed to be able to operate psychically enough so that they can project their awareness outside of their bodies; i.e., have out-of-body experiences. Their minds are supposed to be able to tap into any source in the universe for the information, including the minds of other men, alive or dead.

Silva Method uses visualization and guided imagery quite heavily; both have long been recognized by sorcerers of all kinds as the most powerful and effective methodology for contacting the spirit world in order to acquire supernatural power, knowledge, and healing. This sort of thing has been going on down through history. It's known as "shamanism," or witchcraft. Yet, Silva claims that God sent Jesus to teach us all of this!

Obviously, the Silva Method is little more than a New Age psychological mind control technique, rather than a cultic system of teaching with readily identifiable followers. Nevertheless, it does have spiritual underpinnings (see Silva's book *Keys to the Kingdom*), and it does, in many ways, consider itself Christian. Below are the highlights of what Silva Mind Control/Silva Method teaches concerning its source of authority, Christ, sin, salvation, the Holy Spirit, and prayer:

- 1) **Source of Authority.** Authority for the Silva Method student is José Silva and his official publication *THE SILVA METHOD*.
- 2) **Jesus Christ.** The Silva Method teaches that Jesus did miracles in the same way that the Silva Method teaches its students. The Bible teaches that Jesus was *not* doing miracles by mind over matter. He did them by the power of His Father. Silva Method fails to differentiate between the miraculous, genuine supernatural power of God and that which man attributes to his own mind, which is nothing more than the usurping of the authority of God and trying to be little gods themselves.

Silva Method also teaches that "Rabbi Jesus was assigned by Almighty God of the Universe to Planet Earth to teach humanity, in a step-by-step procedure, how to look for and find what is called the kingdom of God within us all. ... Jesus came to give us a message to correct the problem of human development on this planet because Moses didn't do it and Noah didn't do it, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob didn't ... Zoroaster,

¹⁶ Most of the material in this report came from a panel discussion on the subject on a 1988 John Ankerberg Show

Krishna, Buddha, Mohammed didn't do it. So Jesus finally came to straighten out their mess and problem ..." Silva says that Jesus said that we are to go into an alpha state (an altered state of consciousness) with our spirit guides, thus gaining the psychic powers necessary to correct the human situation. (Silva also says, "Jesus is *not* coming back, so we've got to do it. But He gave us the keys; He gave us the message. Look inside; find this power; you've got the power and you can make earth 'paradise earth.'")

- 3) **Sin.** Silva denies original sin and sees only "problems to be solved." Silva teaches that the present is a process of materializing thoughts, while the future is composed of conceived thoughts not yet materialized. He talks about being able to prophesy, a process of projecting into thought patterns to see if we can detect information that can help us solve problems. According to the Silva Method, this information is for no other thing than for solving problems -- "to make this planet a better world to live in. ... if you get information to solve problems, where people are suffering, and you do alleviate that suffering and you correct the problem, who cares where the information comes from? The idea is get it anyway you can to stop a problem and forget everything else." Silva's done away with the blood of Jesus Christ; he's done away with the sacrificial death of Christ for our sins. According to the Silva Method, it's not a sin problem anymore, it's ignorance!
- 4) **Salvation.** Since Silva believes that we have been sent to the planet to solve problems (i.e., "to convert this planet into a paradise"), salvation is earned by one's success in problem solving. The emphasis is one of total pragmatism. But just the fact that one is solving problems does not answer the question of whether or not an activity itself is right or pleasing to God. "Positive" results can occur through the occult world or the psychic world.

Being "born again" also has a unique meaning for Silva Method practitioners: "When we enter the kingdom of heaven, once there we become centered and have access to the use of the right brain hemisphere ... This would truly be the concept of being born again ... being 'born again' means 'Go back and retrace your steps and pick up the use of the right brain hemisphere like you did when you were born originally.' ... when you get to use both brain hemispheres, that is *really* being born again." Silva sums up what salvation is *not* in the Silva Method: "Somebody who died 1,900 years ago or 2,000 years ago, his blood cleansing us from sin and so forth, that doesn't help solve problems today." Salvation for Silva leads the lost away from the sacrifice of Christ for their sins upon the cross. They don't need that anymore. All they need is alpha in the right brain.

The message of the Silva Method is one of complete rejection of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ upon the cross, i.e., a claim that we have the *power within us*. Silva overlooks the major problem of evil in the human heart, the sin nature of man, to which Jesus specifically said, "I come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." One hears no repentance from Silva, no acknowledgement of any real guilt. Instead, it's just something that's a state of mind that you can get rid of by going into your alpha level.

- 5) **Holy Spirit.** In the Silva Method, the Holy Spirit is a "dimension that we can create -- a state of mind to enter it and make use of it for problem-solving situations. ... We were sent to do a work for God -- help God with creation in thinking of His

creatures."

Rather than the Holy Spirit as Counselor, on the third day of Silva Method training, students are asked to pick two counselors. The lecturer explains how to invoke them. And in the last session, during meditation, two counselors appear in the laboratory of the mind of the student and they are available from that point on, whenever the student needs them. Silva says that anytime that you find yourself with a problem and you do not know what to do next, you consult your counselors: "They are here to do the work for you; they are here to help you evolve ... become ... as good as they are, whoever they are." This, of course, is spiritism; and the nature of spiritism is ultimately demonic. One can hear the same things from mediums and spiritists who talk to their advisors or their spirit guides or counselors, all of which is prohibited by Scripture (cf. Deut. 18).

- 6) **Prayer.** For Silva, praying is psychic -- the use of mind: "... we're praying; we're using psychic systems to pray, to visualize ... imagine what's to happen, and believe that you already have it and you shall receive it." (Sounds like the "name-it-and-claim-it" teaching of the Positive Confession movement.)

Unification Church¹⁷

Christian or Cult?

The official title of the Unification Church is *The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity*. It was officially founded in 1954 by Sun Myung Moon (which has led to the referring of his followers as "Moonies") and moved to America in 1959, where he established his international headquarters. Born in Korea in 1920, Moon claims that in 1936, when he was 16, Jesus Christ appeared to him on Easter morning on a mountainside in Northwestern Korea and told him that God had chosen him for the mission of establishing the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, a mission that Christ had only begun. Christ supposedly told Moon that he would be "the completer of man's salvation by being the Second Coming of Christ" (*Sun Myung Moon and The Unification Church*, James Bjornstad, p. 9). After World War II, Moon returned to Pyongyang, the capital of communist North Korea, where he set up his first church (1945).

There, according to reports, Moon involved his congregation in an unusual ritual known as "blood separation," during which female members of the church were required to have sex with him to cleanse themselves of Satan's influence. In 1948, North Korean authorities arrested and jailed Moon (he spent two years in a labor camp), accusing him of bigotry and adultery. Moon was finally liberated by United Nations' troops during the Korean War (1950). (Still today, Moon's sermons focus on sex and the idea of female submissiveness. In 1995, on "True Parents Day," he observed, "Woman was born to connect in love with man's sexual organ. Man and woman's sexual organs are the place of the true love palace.") After the Korean War, Moon fled to South Korea and established the Unification Church, which now claims three million members in more than 120 countries (about 40-45 thousand U.S.), but both these figures are believed by many to be grossly exaggerated. (The largest concentration of Moonies reside in Korea and Japan.) In 1956, Moon published the English version of the *Divine Principle* as the authoritative work of the Unification Church. (The Korean Version: "Wolli Haesol" or "Explanation of the Principle" was published on August 15th, 1957.)

This "church" has been the subject of much negative U.S. publicity, primarily due to alleged unethical recruitment and fund-raising tactics and Moon's authoritative leadership style. In 1982, Moon was convicted of federal income tax fraud, for which he served 11 months (of an 18-month sentence) in federal prison (beginning in the summer of 1984). The Unification Church of America was founded in 1972 and is headquartered in New York City. To train those interested in joining the movement, a "seminary" was established in 1975 at Barrytown, New York (the Unification Theological Seminary), with the goal of unifying all theological beliefs. Its faculty is drawn from Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox backgrounds, as well as from the Unification Church. Its mission statement reads, "to inspire Christian denomination and all the

¹⁷ Unless otherwise cited, five primary sources were used for this report: (1) Grolier's 1995 Multimedia Encyclopedia; (2) Funk & Wagnall's Encyclopedia; (3) What They Believe, Harold J. Berry [HJB], BTTB:1990, pp. 243-267; (4) "Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity," Rick Branch (Watchman Fellowship Profile, 1993); and (5) *Examining & Exposing Cultic & Occultic Movements*, Jack Sin, "Unification Church," April 2000, pp. 32-33

world's religions to supersede their separateness and cooperate for the attainment of God's will."

Moon has also launched numerous business ventures, and with the free labor of his followers, has built a multi-million dollar empire that includes pharmaceutical companies, manufacturing, banking, publishing, and other industries. (*The Unification News* is a monthly newspaper owned by the Church. They also publish a monthly magazine called *Insight*. While not an official publication of the Unification Church, the Church does own and operate the *Washington Times*, located in Washington, D.C. *Today's World* is a monthly magazine.) Moon is a permanent resident of the U.S. (since 1973), and believes that the U.S. will be the future base of operations for the "Lord of the Second Advent" (a title to which Moon himself has laid claim!).

Moon is particularly fond of drawing former U.S. intelligence and military officers into his organizations. Moon has masterfully used his hard line anti-communist campaigns, multi-million dollar business deals, and substantial political donations to blur his ultimate objective of a one-world government originating from a centralized religious power -- ruled by Moon -- under which his followers will purchase goods and services only from church sponsored manufacturers.

The Unification Church has also been linked to a variety of associated organizations. Some of these include The American Freedom Coalition, Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP), CAUSA USA, American Leadership Conferences, American Constitution Committee, National Committee Against Religions Bigotry and Racism, Conservative Action Foundation, National Council for Church and Social Action, The Washington Times Corporation, World Media Association, U.S. Property Development Corporation, Atlanta Video, Happy World Inc., as well as numerous others (*Washington Post*, 15 October 1989).

In 1976, *The New York Times* made the following astute observation about Moon and the Unification Church: "While church members accept Moon's theology as revealed truth, non-members generally find it a mind-boggling mixture of Pentecostal Christianity, Eastern mysticism, anti-Communism, pop psychology, and metaphysics." Below are the highlights of what the Moonies believe concerning their source of authority, Biblical interpretation, the fall of man, the occult, sin, Christ, salvation, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, marriage, eschatology, and heaven and hell:

- 1) **Source of Authority.** The Moonies teach that the Bible is "not the truth itself, but a textbook teaching the truth." Moon's 536-page spiritual manifesto, *Divine Principle* (1957), is considered to be their scriptures (supposedly revealed directly to Moon by Jesus Christ), along with the Bible. (*Divine Principle* is considered to be the "third testament" of the Bible, and superior to the Bible.) They also believe in continuing revelation. (Moon claims to have received new revelations from God; i.e., "I spoke with Jesus Christ in the spirit world. And I also spoke with John the Baptist. This is my authority.") [HJB] Even *Divine Principle* is not the complete truth. "The Divine Principle revealed in this book is only part of the new truth. ... as time goes on, deeper parts of the truth will be continually revealed" (*Unification Theology*, p. 16).

Ultimately, Moon's interpretations and teachings are considered to be the final and absolute source of authority. Moon's teachings warn church members that life on earth is a continuous battle between good and evil -- where they are the Chosen

People -- and everyone outside of the "True Family," including their biological parents, may be agents of Satan. Any person harboring doubts about Moon is deemed to be allowing himself to be part of the work of Satan.

- 2) **Method of Interpretation.** The Moonies interpret much of the Bible allegorically; they teach that the thieves on the cross represent democracy (the "right") and Communism (the "left"). They claim that "resurrection" does not refer to raising the dead, but to accepting the "word of God" (cf. 1 Cor. 15:12-20). They say that the expression "end of the world" only means that "evil is going to end." [HJB] Moon also believes the Bible teaches that Christianity is not the one and only divinely revealed and saving faith. He says that "God has established many religions. ... God cannot be found where there is conflict. Catholicism and Protestantism must become one."
- 3) **Dualism and the Fall.** Moonies believe that everything in existence has a dual aspect, including God. They claim that God originally intended for Adam and Eve to have a brother/sister relationship until they reached perfection, and that Adam and Eve were supposed to establish God's kingdom on earth through marriage and childbearing. Therefore, the Fall was the result of sexual sin; i.e., that Eve had sexual relations with Satan (the *spiritual* fall) and then with Adam (the *physical* fall). [HJB]
- 4) **The Occult.** Moon admits communicating with familiar spirits by means of séances. [It is a well-known fact that Moon has participated in séances conducted by a spirit transmedium named Arthur Ford (a famous Philadelphian necromancer). Ford's "spirit guide" first spoke of Moon on 11/1/64, again on 3/18/65, and on 4/21/65 (*Unknown But Known*, p. 121). Moon was present at this last séance and his comments were tape recorded and later transcribed.] Though the Christian ordinances of baptism and communion are avoided by the Unification Church, it readily accepts clairvoyance, automatic handwriting, and mediumistic trances.
- 5) **Sin.** Unification theology teaches that Adam and Eve's fall came not from disobedience in eating fruit from the tree of knowledge, but was sexual in nature. Eve's sin, the church holds, was engaging in an act of sex with Satan, and Adam's was in turn "a premature act of love" with Eve, thus leading to mankind's physical corruption. Adam and Eve thus failed to fulfill God's plan for them to be the "true parents" of mankind. According to Moon, then, sin is a matter of genetics (physical children of Lucifer), not moral choice. Salvation, therefore, requires a physical redemption; i.e. it is a matter of being born of Moon's physical bond or entering a marriage union chosen and blessed by Moon himself. [Originally, "Blood cleansing" as defined by Moon was accomplished for any male by having sexual relations with a woman that had been "cleansed" by Moon (i.e., had sexual relations with Moon). Now, those who totally submit to Moon's authority (e.g., defined as turning over all financial assets to the Unification Church, allowing Moon to choose one's mate, etc.) may consider their devotion to be a spiritual kind of purification not requiring sexual cohabitation.]
- 6) **God the Father.** "Unification theology asserts that God has both masculine and feminine qualities based on the universal fact of polarity ..." There are similarities between the Unification Church theology of God the Father and the deity concept of I Ching, Confucianism, Taoism, and even the Hindu worship of a Mother Goddess:

"... God must exist in polarity. That is, He must possess within Himself the dual characteristics of masculinity and femininity which are perfectly expressed and fully harmonized in His nature. The doctrine of divine polarity taught by Unification theology should be seen not as an eccentric novelty but rather as a reaffirmation of a valid theological insight" (*Unification Theology*, p. 56).

- 7) **Jesus Christ.** Moonies deny the deity of Jesus Christ; instead they claim He was just a man, not God. ("God is just like you and me. All human traits originate in God." -- Moon, *Christianity in Crisis*, p. 4; and "He can by no means be God Himself." -- *Divine Principle*, pp. 210-211). They teach that Jesus was *not* virgin born, but was the bastard offspring of Zechariah and Mary! They also claim that Jesus failed in His earthly mission (*Divine Principle*, pp. 143-145), and that Christ's purpose in coming was to marry and to produce perfect children. However, He was killed before He could fulfill His mission (i.e., "The Cross is the symbol of *defeat* of Christianity," Moon, 1973). Moonies believe that John the Baptist was responsible for the death of Jesus (by failing to convert his audience into a power bloc for Jesus) (*Divine Principle*, pp. 156-162), and that Christ's death on the cross was not an original or essential part of God's plan of redemption ("... however devout a man of faith may be, he cannot fulfill physical salvation by redemption through Jesus crucifixion alone." -- *Divine Principle*, p. 148), but that God merely used it to provide an *incomplete, spiritual* salvation. They do not believe that Jesus was *physically* resurrected (cf. 1 Cor. 15:12-20), but that He returned as a spirit, and that a "third Adam" must come to fulfill God's plan for *physical* salvation by marrying and producing the sinless race. The Unification Church has given titles to Moon that indicate it considers him to be this "third Adam." **[HJB]**
- 8) **Salvation** . Moonies teach the "Law of Indemnity" -- that God's children must pay for at least a part of their debt of sin before God will forgive them. They believe a person earns his salvation through fasting, fund-raising, recruitment, and other such works. They claim that both a spiritual and a physical salvation are needed -- and that the "third Adam" will provide physical salvation by marrying and producing sinless children (*Divine Principle*, p. 148). They teach that once the "third Adam" comes, those who have paid indemnity will also be able to marry and bear sinless children. **[HJB]** Moonies view Moon as that "third Adam" who provides physical salvation through a perfect family (indeed, his twelve children are considered sinless!), and extends this perfection to his followers through their obedience to him.
- 9) **Holy Spirit.** "In Unification theology the main point is that the Holy Spirit is not a separate entity, a being different from God the Father. The Holy Spirit simply refers to God's redemptive activity." Further, the Holy Spirit, "... appears feminine, masculine and impersonal. ... Like God Himself, the Spirit is invisible and incorporeal -- a bright light or a field of magnetic energy" (*Unification Theology*, pp. 201-202). Moonies also teach that the Holy Spirit is a "female spirit" -- the "True Mother" and spiritual wife of Jesus (*Divine Principle*, p. 215). "She" also cleanses the sins of the people in order to restore them, thus indemnifying the sin committed by Eve.
- 10) **Trinity** . Moonies deny the Biblical concept of the Trinity. They teach that the "third Adam," his bride, and God constituted the first "trinity," and that mankind will be restored by forming trinities with God through marriage. **[HJB]** Young Oon Kim, professor of systematic theology at the Unification Theological Seminary, stated,

"Unification theology starts with the fact of polarity as the main clue for understanding the essential nature of God. Hence it is not primarily interested in defending the Trinitarian doctrine of the fourth century creeds" (*Unification Theology*, p. 53).

- 11) **Marriage** . Moonies claim that marriage is the most important means of establishing God's kingdom on earth. Moon teaches that "God-centered families are the building blocks of a world of peace, stability, and love," and that only those who are married will be saved, or qualified, for the kingdom. Hence, Moon's fondness for mass marriage ceremonies, wherein 35,000 to 50,000 couples are married at a time, most whom have never met before! [Moon and his wife, Hak-ja Han Moon (wife #4 -- he divorced the first three), charge each couple an arrangement fee for these mass marriages, which has brought the church more than two billion dollars throughout the years.] A ceremony marrying 3.6 million couples (most by satellite) occurred in 1997, and another 120 million couples in 2000. (These numbers are, of course, highly suspect.)

Moonism transcends biology. Church members are considered the "True Family" and Moon and his wife are the world's "True Parents" -- "my wife and I are cleansing everything that was polluted by false love, false life, and false lineage. Our marriage has achieved the True Parents position; the large international marriage ceremonies which we conduct are to sow the seed of true love, true life, and true lineage, which results from the unity of God's love and man's love" (1995). Members celebrate as birthdays the day they joined the Unification Church.

- 12) **Second Coming** . Moonies use Biblical terms to refer to the Second Coming, but have changed their meanings. They deny that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will return, but say that God will send another man as the "third Adam." They deny that the "Christ" will come in the clouds, but instead that he will be born just as Jesus was in the First Advent. They teach that the Kingdom of God on earth and in heaven will be established by the "third Adam" through marriage. The bottom line is that they believe that Moon is this "third Adam" and that he has begun to establish God's kingdom -- "He [God] is living in me. I am the incarnation of Himself." [HJB] [Moon says that Jesus failed at the First Coming, but he (Moon) will not! (speech on 8/24/92).]

- 13) **Heaven and Hell**. Moonies teach that heaven is a realm of the spirit world and that hell is inconsequential because it will "pass away as heaven expands," and all mankind is redeemed. Also, one's destination after death depends on his spirit's "quality of life on earth; by the degree of goodness we build into them through actions." Rather than immortal perfection, Moon teaches that in the afterlife his followers will experience the same "desires, dislikes, and aspirations as before death."

Summary: According to Moon, it was God's plan for Jesus to find a perfect mate and produce sinless children, bringing about the world's physical and spiritual salvation. But Jesus failed because He couldn't get the Jews to accept Him as Messiah. The Crucifixion was a "mistake" which thwarted God's plans and made it necessary for a new Messiah to come during this present age. This new "messiah," called the "Lord of the Second Advent" by Moon, was born in Korea in 1920 (which, coincidentally, is the place and time of his own birth).

By the year 2000, Moon claimed, the Messiah would be revealed (cf. Duet. 18:22). Therefore, Moon does not want us to think of the Second Coming in terms of a literal interpretation of Scripture, which states that Jesus will come in the clouds with great glory. Moon insists that the second messiah will be a Korean man born of the flesh -- and those who do not accept him will face God's wrath.

Accordingly, everyone must be born again by new parents in order to fulfill God's original plan of redemption. Translated into Moon's theology, this means: acceptance of Moon and his wife as spiritual parents is necessary for salvation.

Quotes from Moon Illustrating Essential Theological Points

- "He [God] is living in me and I am the incarnation of Himself. ... The whole world is in my hand, and I will conquer and subjugate the world."
 - "God is now throwing Christianity away and is now establishing a new religion, and this new religion is the Unification Church."
 - "All the Christians in the world are destined to be absorbed by our movement."
 - "There have been saints, prophets, many religious leaders in past human history. Master here [Moon] is more than any of those people and greater than Jesus himself."
 - "I [Moon] am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."
 - "God and man are one. Man is incarnate God."
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Endnotes

Note on Séances: In 1965, one of the most interesting events in Moon's life took place. He had a sitting with famed Spirit Medium Arthur Ford. At this séance, Moon was given information by Fletcher, Ford's spirit guide, concerning his destiny as a spiritual leader. Present at this occultic ceremony were Ford, Moon, Bo Hi Pak (a leader in the Unification Church), as well as Miss Kim, Moon's interpreter. After Ford had gone into a trance, Pak asked, "Could you ask him in connection with the New Age, more specifically, the mission of Our Leader here today?" Fletcher answered, "He is one of those who will be the human instrument through whom the World Teacher will be able to speak. ... The Jesus of Galilee will not return, it is not necessary. The Christ who manifested through him is the Eternal, he will manifest again. ... But the important thing to remember is that when God wants to make a revelation he has to choose a human instrument.... Sun Myung Moon is the one I have been talking about. I have been speaking for a group of people here. This group seems to surround him. And the power that flows through him, the intelligence, is not just one it is a great group of people. And they seem all to draw their inspiration and their knowledge from One Source and then they seem to pour it symbolically into a pool and in some strange symbolical way that pool becomes Sun Myung Moon." Fletcher, having mentioned revelation, was then asked by Pak, "You are speaking of New Revelation; that means you are speaking of the Divine Principle brought by Sun Myung Moon?" Fletcher answered, "That's part of it, yes, but even Sun Myung Moon has not exhausted the possibilities of the Divine

Mind. He is, and as long as he lives will continue to be, a channel for revelation" (*Unknown But Known*, pp. 131-139).

Note on Mass Marriages: The term "Mass Marriage" is actually a misnomer, but that is what they are popularly known as. In reality, no one is being married in these mass wedding spectacles. Instead, the "Blessing," as Moonies refer to this event, is a religious ceremony and not actual weddings. Though they are dressed as brides and grooms and repeat marriage vows at these events, the ones that intend to be husband and wife will have to obtain marriage licenses from whatever jurisdiction they reside in. In former years, only those couples that Sun Myung Moon had matched (Moon chose usually complete strangers who would then become husband and wife based on Moon's selection) or those who had passed very stringent qualifications (including from 3 to 7 years of celibacy before marriage) would be allowed to be 'blessed' by Moon. In recent years, these events are often billed as a 'recommitment of marriage' to unsuspecting participants.

Unitarian Universalists

Christian or Cult?¹⁸

Unitarian Universalism (UU), known officially as the *Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations in North America* (with headquarters in Boston, Mass.), was officially formed in 1961 with the merger of two separate religious groups whose roots date back to the early 1500s -- the American Unitarian Association (1825) and the Universalist Church of America (1793). Unitarian Universalism is one of the most liberal of the denominations, being more akin to a society of free thinkers than a traditional "Christian" denomination.

In America, the religious liberalism that came to be known as Unitarianism appeared within the congregational churches in Massachusetts as a reaction against the revivalism of the Great Awakening (1740-43). Unitarianism prospered in the late-18th century among the Harvard elite, and emerged full bloom in the early-19th century as a rational, mystical, liberal religion that rejected the divinity of Christ as well as the Calvinist view of man as totally depraved. The Unitarians believed that man was not only morally perfectible, but that education was the only true way to salvation. Since they believed that evil was caused by ignorance, poverty, and social injustice, they were convinced that only a good liberal education, provided by the government at no charge, would solve society's problems (1/96, *The Blumenfeld Education Letter*, p. 2).

Universalism is the theological doctrine that all souls will ultimately be saved and that there are no torments of hell. Universalism has been asserted at various times in different contexts throughout the history of the "Christian church" -- e.g., Origen in the 3rd century. The Universalists also denied the miraculous element in Scripture, and rejected such important Bible doctrines as the total depravity of man and the Trinity.

There are currently about 205,000 Unitarian Universalist members in 1,040 congregations in North America. The beliefs of Unitarian Universalism appeal greatly to the "yuppie" generation of today -- no penalty for sin, no hell, salvation for all, ecumenism with all other religions, and extreme theological liberalism with no official creeds. Many in this "church" do not believe in Biblical Christianity, and some do not even want to be known as Christians. According to the Unitarian-Universalist 1985 revised statement, no minister, member, or congregation "shall be required to subscribe to any particular interpretation of religion, or to any particular religious belief or creed." Four of their seven Principles and Purposes are these: The inherent worth and dignity of every person; a free and responsible search for truth; the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

In their attempt to be "free thinking" and "non-creedal," the UUs have become so liberal that they deny almost every doctrine of the Christian faith, replacing the worship of God with a worship of self, teaching that human reason and experience take precedence over

¹⁸ Unless otherwise cited, three primary sources were used for this report: (1) Grolier's 1995 Multimedia Encyclopedia, (2) Funk & Wagnall's Encyclopedia, and (3) What They Believe, Harold J. Berry [HJB], BTTB:1990, pp. 269-287

the Word of God. Below are the highlights of what the Unitarian Universalists "believe" concerning their source of authority, the Trinity, God, Christ, salvation, and heaven and hell:

- 1) **Source of Authority.** The UUs deny the divine inspiration and absolute authority of the Scriptures. They claim the Bible was merely the creation of men, and therefore, the Bible contains many "inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and errors." They substitute human reason for revelation as their source of authority, and believe there are no absolute or infallible guides, including reason. **[HJB]** In fact, UUs desire a world religion that "draws from and honors the teachings of all of the great religious traditions."
- 2) **Trinity.** The UUs deny that one God exists in three Persons. Instead, they claim that Trinitarian doctrine was added by the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325. **[HJB]**
- 3) **God.** The UUs hold a variety of liberal views about God: Some do not believe that He is a Person, but instead claim He is an impersonal spirit, a natural force, or a principle. Some even claim that He is a created being, not supernatural. Others even deny His existence completely.
- 4) **Jesus Christ.** The UUs deny the deity of Christ -- that He is not God and Savior, but only a good man and teacher. They claim that the apostles and other Christian writers added to the Scriptures the teachings concerning Christ's atonement for sin.
- 5) **Salvation.** The UUs teach that the essence of salvation is character development ("deeds not creeds"), rather than faith in Jesus Christ alone -- the "social gospel" reigns supreme in UU. This belief allows every person to do whatever is right in his own eyes as long as he is sincere about it (including homosexual behavior -- UU became the first denomination to call for the legal recognition of same-sex marriages [Associated Press:6/25/96]; as early as 1970, UUs called for an end to discrimination against homosexuals and bisexuals, and in 1980, UUs resolved that homosexuals should be ordained.).
- 6) **Hell.** The UUs hold the "universalist" belief that *no one* will be eternally condemned. They, therefore, deny the existence of hell, claiming it is unreasonable for a loving God to send people to a place of eternal torment. They believe that we suffer the consequences of sin in this life only. **[HJB]**

Unity School of Christianity¹⁹

Christian or Cult?

Unity School of Christianity, also known as *Unity* (with headquarters on a 1,400-acre campus in Unity Village, Missouri -- near Lee's Summit, Missouri, a suburb of Kansas City), was "founded" in 1889 (with the publishing of a national monthly magazine called *Modern Thought* -- renamed *Unity Magazine* in 1894) by Charles S. Fillmore (1854-1948), a spiritist with no Christian background, and Myrtle (Paige) Fillmore (1845-1931), a Methodist; this was after Myrtle said she was healed of tuberculosis by repeating an occultic mind-over-matter affirmation, "*I am a child of God, and therefore I do not inherent sickness*" (she had been dabbling heavily in Christian Science). It was later incorporated as a church in 1903 by the Unity Society of Practical Christianity. In 1948, the control of Unity was assumed by the Fillmore's two sons, Lowell and W. Rickert Fillmore, and has since experienced tremendous growth. Unity currently claims about 200,000 U.S. members and 1.5 million members worldwide.

Unity's leader is now Connie Fillmore Bazy, a great-granddaughter of the founders. She controls everything from publishing Unity's magazines to the 24-hour *Silent Unity Prayer* ministry that generates the majority of the organization's approximately \$30 million in annual income. Charles R. Fillmore is the grandson of the founder and acts as Chairman of the Board for Unity.

Unity's roots are to be found in the ministry of Dr. Franz Anton Mesmer, who practiced what was called "animal magnetism." His work involved manipulating the "subconscious" mind, and he was the first modern user of hypnotism (hence, the term "mesmerism"). Some years later, Unity joined the International New Thought Alliance (along with Christian Science and New Thought) from which many of their doctrines have emanated.¹

The Fillmores studied Spiritualism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Brahmanism, Rosicrucianism, Theosophy, New Thought, Christian Science, and other Mind Science religions, believing that there was some good in every religion. (They did disagree, however; with the Christian Science doctrine that matter is not real.) Charles Fillmore admits that he and Myrtle had taken "more than forty courses (in metaphysical subjects)" (*The Story of Unity*, James Dillet Freeman, Unity Books publishing, pp. 35, 41-42). The Fillmores also took "several courses" from Emma Curtis Hopkins to further their understanding of New Thought. Hopkins had been an editor on the *Christian Science Journal*, Mary Baker Eddy's publication (*The Story of Unity*, pp. 43-45).

Charles Fillmore chose the ancient Egyptian *winged disc*, an occult symbol, as the symbol to represent Unity. Steeped in Hinduism, Fillmore felt that he had been

¹⁹ Some of the material in this report has been excerpted and/or adapted from seven sources: (1) the 4/93 issue of *The Discerner*; (2) the 10/96 issue of the Mount Carmel Outreach; (3) *Evaluating & Exposing Cultic & Occultic Movements*, Jack Sin, "Unity," April 2000, pp. 34-35; (4) "Unity School of Christianity," Rick Branch (Watchman Fellowship Profile, 1993); (5) Grolier's 1995 Multimedia Encyclopedia; (6) Funk & Wagnall's Encyclopedia; and (7) *What They Believe*, Harold J. Berry [HJB], BTTB:1990, pp. 289-304

associated with the symbol in previous lives. (He believed he was the reincarnation of the Apostle Paul!) A Unity video states that this symbol is a representation of the "Earth being lifted in consciousness." *Unity Magazine* says it is "a soul giving wings to the body." These are thoroughly pagan ideas. (Frank Yurco, an Egyptologist at the University of Chicago, says the "winged disc" symbol represents "a fear of demons and evil gods. ... It represents the sun-god, Ra, as he flees across the sky.")

This occultic fixation eventually led to the formation of a group which would pray, or meditate, for the healing of others. This became the Society of Silent Help, later changed to Silent Unity, that extolled the virtues of creative thinking and the power of the human mind to cure any ailment. The Fillmores never thought of starting a church, so they took the name "Unity School of Practical Christianity." "Practical" was dropped from the name in 1914, at which time the Unity Tract Society and Silent Unity incorporated under the name of Unity School of Christianity. Fillmore, during a time of silent prayer, is said to have received the name Unity. Fillmore explained he heard the name "just as the voice of Jesus was heard by Paul" (*The Story of Unity*, p. 61).

Today the "school" is a centralized group with churches in many areas. They distribute millions of pieces of literature a year; their most popular publications (with a total circulation of about three million) are *Unity Magazine* (articles on metaphysical topics) and *Daily Word* (their daily devotional magazine). There are many "authoritative" Unity writings, two of which are *Mysteries in Genesis* and *Christian Healing*, both by Charles Fillmore. They also air a number of radio broadcasts. They have over 500 churches and/or study groups in America, with an additional 100 or so congregations and study groups in 15 foreign countries.

Unity's doctrines are a mish-mash of borrowed teachings from different religions and philosophies -- Hinduism, Spiritism, Theosophy, Christian Science, and Christianity. At the heart of Unity's teachings is a "health and wealth" philosophy so popular to many in the professing Christian church today. But according to a Unity booklet by Elizabeth Sand Turner, *What Unity Teaches*, Unity has no dogmatic statement of faith to which the people must adhere. Instead, the follower is to "accept what he finds helpful to lift his consciousness to a higher level." Nevertheless, Charles R. Fillmore, grandson of Charles S. and Myrtle, wrote *The Adventure Called Unity* in 1963, which clearly delineates Unity's teachings.

Below are the highlights of what Unity believes concerning its source of authority, the Godhead, Christ, sin and salvation, hell, sickness, and reincarnation:

- 1) **Source of Authority.** Because of Unity's philosophy that all religions teach truth, the Bible is simply another book of Scripture. Charles Fillmore wrote, "It is not necessary that you despise the scriptures of the Jews, of the Hindus, or of any people, but you are to take them for what they are: the records of men as to what their experiences have been in communing with the omnipresent God" (*The Twelve Powers of Man*, p. 115). Unity does not believe that the Scriptures are the complete and absolute authority, but that they are merely the "testimonials of men." They do not even consider their own teachings to be permanently binding, but believe that such teachings are always open to new revelation. They teach that the Bible is an "allegory" -- i.e., that experience, if you are 'in tune' with God, is more accurate and reliable than the Bible. They give metaphysical interpretations to many obvious truths in the Bible so that the normal meaning is twisted and the passage then fits

their theology. (In other words, Unity says the Bible doesn't mean what it says.) They consider reason and "logic of the mind" to be their final authority. [HJB]

- 2) **Trinity.** Unity has given a metaphysical meaning to the word "trinity"; they say the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit refer to "mind, idea, and expression." They believe that God is Universal Law or divine Principle, not a person. [HJB] They teach the New Age/Pantheistic idea that God is All and All is God. They explain, "God is Spirit, or the creative energy which is the cause of all visible things. God is not a being or person having life, intelligence, love, power. God is that invisible, intangible, but very real, something we call life. Each rock, tree, animal, everything visible, is a manifestation of the one Spirit -- God -- differing only in degree of manifestation; and each of the numberless modes of manifestation, or individualities, however insignificant, contains the whole" (*Lessons In Truth*, H. Emilie Cady, pp. 6, 8).
- 3) **God.** Under the heading "spirit," Unity's *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* states, "A name for God. Spirit and Mind are synonymous; therefore we know God-Spirit as Mind, the one Mind, or Intelligence, of the universe." The *Dictionary* continues with "The Father is Principle. Thus, we might also say, Father is Being in the absolute, the unlimited, the unrelated" (p. 629). "Childlike, untrained minds say God is a personal being. The statement that God is principle chills them, and in terror they cry out. God is the name we give to that unchangeable, inexorable principle at the source of all existence. To the individual consciousness God takes on personality, but as the creative underlying cause of all things, He is principle, impersonal; as expressed in each individual, He becomes personal to that one -- a personal, loving, all-forgiving Father-Mother" (*Lessons In Truth*, p. 11).
- 4) **Jesus Christ.** Unity teaches that Christ is an idea, the essence of "divine Mind." They claim that Jesus was merely a perfect man who fully possessed the Christ principle, which He obtained by advancing "through many reincarnations" (*What Unity Teaches*). They say that every person is potentially perfect, and that Jesus expressed that perfection, and while we are still only working toward it, we are part of the divine universal consciousness, and therefore, divine by nature. They believe that we can do anything Jesus did, in effect raising mankind to the level of the divine, and making us equal with Jesus Christ. [HJB] Unity tells us that studying about God and Jesus Christ is not enough. We must discover the Christ principles of successful living and then be ready to apply them to our own daily living. In summary, rather than viewing Jesus as the Savior from our sins, Unity views Him as merely the "Way Shower."²

Unity believes in the Second Coming of Christ, not in the flesh, but as the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit to all who are prepared to receive it. The Holy Spirit is a latent power within every man. This, they believe, is the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus to his disciples (e.g., Unity says, "In this day of great spiritual awakening, when the hearts and minds of many are turning to God, the Second Coming of Christ is taking place for them.").

- 5) **Holy Spirit.** Charles Fillmore, again in harmony with the Pantheistic ideology of his day, stated that the Holy Spirit was not a personal being, but rather only an impersonal force. He wrote, "The Holy Spirit in Divine Mind corresponds to our thought in our minds. So we can ideate the unlimited Divine Mind, but when this

Mind is brought into our world or consciousness it is limited to our conception of it" (*Atom-Smashing Power of Mind*, p. 99).

- 6) **Sin and Salvation.** Unity denies the reality of sin and evil. They do not recognize man as being sinful or in need of salvation, because they believe that every person is part of God. They teach that we can overcome weaknesses and mistakes through wisdom and right thinking, not by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. **[HJB]** Instead, Unity tells us that man's mind is his connecting link with God, and that if man is to control his spiritual growth and fulfillment, he must control his thinking. They teach that the atonement is the reconciliation of our minds with the Divine Mind.

In *Talks on Truth*, Unity says: "Salvation is finally attained when the cycle of rebirth is broken and man comes to birth no more. The true spiritual body is to replace the physical body and the man becomes like Christ. This is to be done on earth ... eternal life means conscious existence in the body." For Unity, then, salvation and true religious growth are "do-it-yourself projects" (*The Adventure Called Unity*, pp. 6-7).

- 7) **Hell.** With the Unity concept of the power of positive thinking, there is no talk about sin, and therefore, no eternal hell and no eternal punishment. They deny that hell is a real place, but claim that both heaven and hell are "states of mind," not geographical locations, that people experience as a result of their thoughts, words, and deeds. **[HJB]** Unity, thereby, is one of the most dangerous cults, because it lulls followers into thinking that they will never have to face the living God of the Bible.
- 8) **Sickness.** Unity claims that pain, sickness, old age, and death are not real. Instead, they teach a process of healing that uses "denial" and mental power: "Unity believes in the creative power of thoughts and words. We can have neither good nor ill unless we think and speak it into manifestation. ... what we think and speak will act to lift the consciousness to a higher level" (*What Unity Teaches*).
- 9) **Reincarnation.** Unity goes a step beyond Christian Science in its teaching of "transmigration of souls." Unity believes in reincarnation, i.e., that through a long process of rebirths we eventually reach perfection and immortality. (Unity teaches that Christ had been David, Moses, and Elijah in previous lives.) This was borrowed directly from Hinduism, in effect, lifted right out of Hindu's sacred writings. (However, unlike Hinduism, Unity's reincarnation is only to a new *human body*, never to an animal body.) They claim that God never intended for man to die, but that reincarnation was His merciful provision (cf. Heb. 9:27). They teach that once we reach perfection, we become part of the "Divine Mind," an eternal state of peace and tranquility **[HJB]**. Fulfillment, for the Unity adherent, is to come to the end of countless reincarnations, because one has then finally arrived at his Christ-like perfection state -- "The second birth is that in which we 'put on Christ.' It is a process of mental adjustment and body transmutation that takes place right here on earth." [From Unity's Statement of Faith, Article 22: "We believe that the dissolution of spirit, soul and body caused by death, is annulled by rebirth of the same spirit and soul in another body here on earth. We believe the repeated incarnations of man to be a merciful provision of our loving Father to the end that all may have opportunity to attain immortality through regeneration, as did Jesus."]

10) **Summary.** Following are quotes from Charles Fillmore's book *Christian Healing* (Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, MO). They are found at the end of the chapters in his book and are meant as summarizations and points of meditation:

- ❖ "God is the name of my good" (p. 17);
- ❖ "God is the name of the everywhere Principle, in whom I live, move, and have my being" (p. 17);
- ❖ "I am the son of God, and the Spirit of the Most High dwells in me" (p. 29);
- ❖ "I am the only begotten son, dwelling in the bosom of the Father" (p. 29);
- ❖ "I am the Christ of God" (p. 29);
- ❖ "I and my Father are one" (p. 29);
- ❖ "I am one with Almightyness" (p. 29);
- ❖ "God is good, and God is all, therefore I refuse to believe in the reality of evil in any of its forms" (p. 60);
- ❖ "My perfection is now established in Divine Mind" (p. 83);
- ❖ "Holding continuously to the reality of things spiritual establishes them in mind -- they become mental substance" (p. 84);
- ❖ "I see the light of Christ consciousness always" (p. 106).

11) **Biblical Response.**

- ❖ God is not all and all is not God. Rather, God is the creator of all things. (Genesis 1:1; Isa 44:24; John 1:2-3; Col. 1:16);
- ❖ The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have personal attributes. They speak (Ex. 24:12, Acts 13:2); They reason (Isa. 1:18); They feel compassion. (Luke 13:34, John 3:16-18);
- ❖ Jesus was not possessed of a Christ consciousness, He is the Christ. (Matt. 1:18; Luke 2:11);
- ❖ All religions are not true. (Matt. 7:21, 24:24; John 14:6; Acts 4:12);
- ❖ Poverty, sin, sickness, and death are real. (Matt. 4:24; Mark 14:7; Rom. 3:23, 6:23; 1 John 1:7-10);
- ❖ Reincarnation is not Biblical (Heb. 9:27).

Endnotes

1 A religious movement that began in the United States in the late 19th century, New Thought stresses the power of the mind to heal disease and to improve life. Its individualistic orientation has hindered the development of centralized institutions. New Thought, however, has influenced many who claim no allegiance to its organizations. Phineas P. Quimby, a mental healer and metaphysician, is considered the founder of New Thought, even though the movement incorporates ideas of other thinkers, including those of the American transcendentalists. Warren F. Evans (1817-89) and Julius A. Dresser (1838-93) spread Quimby's teachings. The magazine *New Thought*, which is still published today as *Unity Magazine*, was begun in 1894. The National New Thought Alliance was formed in 1908, and the International New Thought Alliance

(INTA) in 1914. The Unity School of Christianity, although not part of INTA, is a prominent New Thought movement.

New Thought was a philosophical school of thought that believed in the ability of the human mind to solve all of the problems one might encounter. According to New Thought, the tremendous power of mind is explained by the divinity of humankind. Unlike Christian Science, which New Thought resembles in some respects, New Thought does not accept any final revelation and is not opposed in principle to material medicine. New Thought's optimistic influence can be seen in such works as Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952). New Thought has also paved the way for recent interest in faith healing and in non-Western religions. (Source: 1995 *Grolier Electronic Multimedia Encyclopedia*.)

2 As with other New Age/pantheistic groups, Unity distinguishes between Jesus, the man, and Christ, the divine consciousness. This view of Christ is also shared by the Christian Science church of Mary Baker Eddy. Unity states: "Jesus represents God's idea of man in expression; Christ is that idea in the absolute." Unity draws a similar concept of the birth of Jesus as many other New Age cults. *The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, pp. 345-346, states: "In the individual consciousness, the meaning of Jesus' being born in Bethlehem of Judea is that the principles of truth have laid hold of the intelligent substance of Spirit (Bethlehem), and through praise (Judea) have brought the Christ into manifestation. It is wise to protect the newborn spiritual consciousness from contact with Herod, the personal ego; Herod seeks 'the young child to destroy him,' but under the guidance of Spirit, no harm comes to the child. He is taken into Egypt (down into the protected places of the subconsciousness), to remain until the personal ego destroys itself; then the Christ child is free to come forth and express."

Worldwide Church of God, The (Armstrongism)

Christian or Cult?²⁰

The Worldwide Church of God (WCG), with headquarters in Pasadena, California, was officially begun in Oregon in late-1933/early-1934 by Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986) (originally called "The Radio Church of God" -- changed to WCG in 1968). (The "original" WCG should not be confused with the organization "The Church of God International" in Tyler, Texas, founded in 1978 by Herbert Armstrong's "disfellowshipped" son, Garner Ted Armstrong.) Once a very large organization with a huge media impact, Armstrongism has waned in recent years. At its peak, Armstrong's radio/television broadcast, "The World Tomorrow," aired on more than 446 television and radio stations, but was eliminated in 1994 and replaced with spot ads and a two-minute time-slot radio program. Armstrong's grossly misnamed magazine, *The Plain Truth*, peaked at a monthly distribution of more than eight million, but has since fallen to less than 100,000 (and will probably decrease even further with its 1997 change from a free to a paid subscription basis).

In *The Plain Truth* magazine of January 1959, Armstrong claimed that "on the first Sunday of 1934" his radio ministry "was the initial start-off event of the fulfilling of some 90% of all the prophecies in the Bible!" (*The Plain Truth*, 1/59, p. 3). Furthermore, when Armstrong's broadcast "leaped to Europe" in 1953, he claimed that the Gospel "went to Europe for the first time in 18-1/2 centuries" (*The Philadelphia Trumpet*, 2/64, p. 46). By the mid-seventies, Armstrong was widely proclaiming himself God's apostle for the last days. (In 1979, the state of California placed the church in receivership under allegations of financial abuses by church leaders. After lengthy court battles, the courts removed the church from receivership.) Thus, Armstrong viewed himself to be the "endtime Elijah," the "restorer" of "truths lost to the Church," and "God's apostle" for the "Philadelphia era." (See Armstrong's summarial history in his *Mystery of the Ages* volume, which he published at age 94 and regarded as virtually inspired. He said, "I feel I myself did not write it. Rather, I believe God used me in writing it.")

The WCG's membership peaked at about 145,000 during Armstrong's lifetime. The group still claims about 67,000 members in about 100 countries in more than 950 congregations served by more than 1,400 pastors, but its active membership is closer to 40,000. At one time, income for the group totaled more than \$200 million a year, but fell to about \$70 million in 1984 after the loss of a \$1.3 million defamation suit; income is currently down to an annualized \$28 million (for the first eight months of 2001 -- also, expenses exceeded revenues by \$4 million during this period). In 1988, the WCG claimed to have mailed 127 million pieces of literature; in 1991, it reported only 11.4

²⁰ Unless otherwise cited, four primary sources were used for this report: (1) "The Worldwide Church of God," Phillip Arnn (Watchman Fellowship Profile, 1996); (2) "The Philadelphia Church of God," Tim Martin (Watchman Fellowship, 2001); (3) "The Worldwide Church of God's Orthodox Bandwagon," 3Q98, *PFO Quarterly Journal*; and (4) "Transforming the Truth – The Worldwide Church of God Continues to 'Make History'," 3Q98, *PFO Quarterly Journal*;

million, an 80% reduction! It is estimated that 2001 mailings will be less than five million. (In addition to *The Plain Truth*, the WCG also publishes *The Worldwide News* in the U.S., the *British Plain Truth* in Great Britain, and *Northern Light* in Canada.)

The WCG still owns 51 acres of land in Pasadena, along with 72 buildings, but the entire property is up for sale. (Employees at Pasadena headquarters have fallen from 1,000 to 150. Even some pastors have been terminated and lay pastors appointed for small congregations.) The WCG also sold Ambassador College/University, an accredited, coeducational, liberal-arts undergraduate institution founded in 1947 (which had an enrollment of about 1,200 in its heyday), located in Big Sandy, Texas (about 100 miles east of Dallas) -- the WCG closed the facility at the end of the 1996-1997 school year (5/97), and sold all the properties. At that time, the WCG brought the Ambassador students into a working relationship with Azusa Pacific University along with Fuller Theological Seminary (two theologically liberal institutions) (1/21/97, *The Worldwide News*, p. 1).

Just prior to Armstrong's death in 1986, Joseph W. Tkach, Sr., assumed the title of "Pastor General" of the WCG. (Tkach died in September, 1995, at the age of 68. He was succeeded by his son, Joseph Tkach, Jr.) Since the 1986 leadership change, observers of the cult's affairs can list some 40 changes in WCG's doctrines, as well as a withdrawal from circulation of a number of Armstrong's written works. The leadership of the WCG has issued a new statement of faith which, on the surface, appears to accept traditional Bible doctrine in many areas. The major changes are toward a more orthodox position on the Trinity and salvation through the grace of God alone and not through good deeds. The WCG has also declared that tithing and observing the Sabbath are no longer mandatory. [Of the Sabbath, it says, "Though physical Sabbath keeping is not required for Christians, it is the tradition and practice of the Worldwide Church of God to hold its weekly worship service on the seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday)."] And though the WCG continues to hold annual festivals based on the Old Testament feasts, they no longer claim that these are binding upon Christians. (Despite the doctrinal changes, many still question the sincerity of the WCG leadership in making them -- see note below.)

Due to the doctrinal and practical changes brought in by the new leadership, Joseph Tkach Jr. lists 104 organizations that have splintered from the Worldwide Church of God to form separate entities. (There were approximately 350 pastors in the Worldwide Church of God as of 2/95, but more than 40% of these ministers had resigned or been terminated because they could not accept the church's movement toward so-called mainstream Christianity; with new additions, however, as of 11/01 there were 334 WCG pastors in the U.S.) These dissident-formed breakaway churches include the Global Church of God; the Philadelphia Church of God; the United Church of God; Triumph Prophetic Ministries (Church of God); and Christian Churches of God. To various degrees, all these continue to promote Armstrongism. (See Notes below on the Philadelphia Church of God and the United Church of God.)

Without doubt, under the new leadership, the legalism of this cult has been moderated. Gone are the prohibitions against the use of cosmetics, celebrating birthdays and holidays, seeking medical treatment, and interracial marriage. However, when examining the WCG's new doctrinal statement, one has trouble considering it to be an Evangelical, much less Fundamentalist statement on basic doctrines -- namely, the Scriptures. For example, the WCG depicts the Bible as "the fully reliable record of God's revelation to humanity." One can ask if the Bible *is* "God's revelation to

humanity" or is it just a "record" of it? *A reliable record to tell us about God's revelation is not the same as God's revelation.* A Fundamentalist would declare that "the Bible is God's revelation of His Person, His works, and His will for humanity." Since there are other cases like this, it is still uncertain as to exactly what the membership of the new and reconstituted WCG truly believes, and how the defections will affect the continued existence of the original group. (Glancing at some of the articles in recent issues of *The Worldwide News*, one's hopes for the WCG's doctrinal correctness are not bolstered -- articles ranged from praise of Martin Luther King, Jr., to an account of the encouragement of self-love and self-esteem at a WCG woman's conference, to a psychologically-oriented article on how to cope with the pain from childhood abuse.)

In the August 25, 1986 issue of *The Worldwide News*, appeared the article, "God Restored These 18 Truths: How Thankful Are You For Them?" The article stated that, "The Editorial Services staff has compiled here, for the first time in any of the Church's publications, 18 essential, basic truths that God restored to His Church through Herbert W. Armstrong." In less than a decade after that article was written, most of those "Truths" have been abandoned by the church under the leadership of Joseph W. Tkach. The doctrinal foundation of the Worldwide Church of God was adopted from the Seventh-Day Adventists through the Church of God-7th Day. Armstrong added the Identity of Modern Israel theory which he obtained from J. H. Allen and the Jewish Feast Days, church eras, and the "true name" of God's church which he picked up from G.G. Rupert (Address at a local elders' conference at Big Sandy, Texas by Tkach, Jr., June 1994).

Therefore, what is presented below are the highlights of *what the Worldwide Church of God officially believed, pre-1994* (and what most of the breakaway groups continue to believe), compared with the WCG under Tkach, concerning the Godhead, salvation, heaven and hell, and prophecy. [See the following articles for an up-to-date analysis of the WCG's doctrinal positions: (1) David Cloud article, "What is Happening With the Worldwide Church of God; (2) "The Two Faces of the Worldwide Church of God," 1Q97, *PFO Quarterly Journal*; and (3) "Transforming the Truth – The Worldwide Church of God Continues to 'Make' History," 3Q98, *PFO Quarterly Journal*.]:

- 1) **God/Holy Spirit/The Trinity.** (under Armstrong) -- "The Hebrew for God is *Elohim*, a uniplural noun, such as the words *family, church, group* ... And so, in truth, God is not merely one personage or even limited to a 'Trinity,' but is a family" (*The Good News*, February, 1979, p. 1). "The doctrine of the Trinity is false ... *Elohim* is the divine family -- only one family, but more than one divine Person ... So the eternal Father is a Person, and is God. Jesus Christ is a different *Person* -- and is God. They are two separate and individual Persons ..." (*The Missing Dimension In Sex*, p. 32). Also, the Holy Spirit is not a person, but an active force emanating from God. Armstrong taught that the Bible reveals "two Personages coexisted and nothing else did. No third Person is mentioned -- no 'Ghost'" (*Mystery of the Ages*, p. 37). One argument for why the Holy Spirit is not a person comes from an interpretation of Acts 2:18 and 10:45. These verses say that the Holy Spirit is poured out. Armstrong reasons that a person cannot be poured out, "The Holy Spirit, like water or a fluid, can be 'poured out.' Can you pour out a person from one into another -- as from God into those assembled there?" (*Ibid.*, p. 47).

God/Holy Spirit/The Trinity. (under Tkach) -- "Do let me summarize, and I hope to make this crystal clear. Our old literature taught that there are two god beings in

one God Family, each composed of Holy Spirit. That teaching, which implied that there are two Gods, is not biblical. The Bible teaches that there is one God, not two. "The Bible does not teach that God is a family name, with two God Beings in that family right now, and billions to come later. The Bible teaches that the one and same God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (*Pastor General's Report*, July 27, 1993, p. 4).

- 2) **Christ.** (under Armstrong) -- Claims that before Jesus was conceived by Mary, He was *not* the Son of God, and therefore, is not equal with God the Father -- Jesus only *became* a Son of God by His resurrection. It is also claimed that the Blood of Christ does not *finally* save anyone, but it saves merely from the death penalty of sin. "Christ is the Yahweh of the Old Testament" (*The Plain Truth*, Jan., 1955, p. 7). "Hence, we see that He was not the 'Son' of God until He was born of the virgin Mary" (*The Plain Truth*, July/August, 1955, p. 4). "The Satan inspired doctrine that Jesus was not human, that He did not inherit the sinful nature of Adam, that He did not have all the normal human passions and weaknesses against which all of us have to struggle ... *this is the doctrine of the antichrist*" (*Ibid.*). "Now notice carefully God the Father did not cause Jesus Christ to get back into the body which had died" (*The Plain Truth*, April, 1963, p. 10).

Christ. (under Tkach) -- "Was Jesus the God of the Old Testament? Since God is one, what is the point of asking who the God of the Old Testament was? The answer ... has to be 'The one and only true God. Who else?'" (*Review on the Nature of God*, p. 5). "The Son of God is one of the three hypostases of the one God. Therefore, the Son of God hypostasis is eternal" (*Pastor General Report*, Oct. 1993). "From God's standpoint, there was no possibility that Christ might sin, ..." (*Pastor General Report*, Jan. 22, 1991). "Jesus Christ clearly showed to his disciples that after his resurrection, He still had the body He had before His death" (*The Plain Truth*, April 1994, p. 19).

- 3) **Salvation.** (under Armstrong) -- Claims that salvation is by faith, but that it also requires works, and as such, water baptism is essential for salvation. Actually, there are as many as six steps necessary for salvation: repentance, faith, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, obedience, and resurrection (the "new birth"). Since "obedience" is one of the required steps for salvation, a disciple of Armstrongism can never be secure in this life -- one can be converted in this life, but salvation will have to await a future resurrection (cf. Acts 16:31; Eph. 4:30; 1 John 5:13). [Armstrong claimed that the true Gospel had been lost to the world from A.D. 70 until it was restored by God through Herbert W. Armstrong in 1934.] "We are saved by GRACE, and through faith -- make no mistake about that; but -- *there are conditions!* ... People have been taught, falsely, that 'Christ completed the Plan of Salvation on the Cross' -- when actually it was only *begun* there. The popular denominations have taught, 'Just BELIEVE -- that's all there is to it; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you are that instant *saved!* That teaching is false!" (*All About Water Baptism*, p. 2, 1954 edition). "... Jesus gave them the final GOSPEL COMMISSION ... He commanded baptism as an obligatory ordinance for this Gospel dispensation: ... it is 'he that is baptized' that shall be saved. It's part of the divine Commission -- a required ordinance for salvation!" (*Ibid.*, p. 5). "Now water baptism is a required CONDITION to receive the Holy Spirit" (*Ibid.*, p. 8). "But now see how God's Spirit entering and dwelling in one compares to the physical sperm impregnating the ovum -- the imparting of eternal SPIRIT life, later to produce ... a SPIRIT PERSON! ... Life from the Father has been imparted to it ... but

neither embryo nor fetus is YET a born person. In the same manner the Spirit-begotten human is not, yet, a SPIRIT PERSON ..." (*Just What Do You Mean ... BORN AGAIN*, p. 17, 1972 ed.). Armstrong taught that a believer could lose salvation by disobeying what Armstrong declared to be "God's command through His chosen Apostle." He wrote, "Do you want to let resentment against God's government over you NOW disqualify you -- snatch you from God's GRACE and PURPOSE for you, and cast you into a lake of fire?" (*Dear Brethren Letter*, May 2, 1974, p. 7).

Salvation. (under Tkach) -- "The gospel of the Kingdom of God *is* the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ" (*The Worldwide News*, August 11, 1992, p. 4). "Our hope of the future, the time when we will receive the fullness of our inheritance, is made all the *more real* to us as we truly enter into and participate in the new life to which God has called us in Christ *right now*" (*The Worldwide News*, October 6, 1992, p. 1). "... forgiveness is not a result of baptism. Jesus forgave sins without having to perform a baptism. So when does a believer receive the Holy Spirit? When a person believes, he or she is 'in Christ,' sealed with the Holy Spirit" (*Reviews You Can Use*, November/December, 1993, pp. 21, 22). Yet Tkach has also taught that believers can lose their salvation by not being overcomers: "Salvation is one thing but overcoming is another. And if we are not interested in overcoming, you can rest assured that salvation is not going to be there. Salvation is a present possession. However, it does not mean once saved always saved in any way, shape or form. You have to overcome and endure to the end" (Joseph Tkach Sr., "Feast of Tabernacles," Sept. 30, 1993). "If the Christian remains faithful and does not turn away from God, his salvation remains firm and secure. In that sense, 'once saved always saved' is right" (*Pastor General Report*, May 15, 1990).

- 4) **Sabbath.** (under Armstrong) -- The Jewish Sabbath must be observed to maintain one's salvation. Also required is the keeping of the feasts and other aspects of the Old Testament Law (cf. Col. 2:16,17).

Sabbath. (under Tkach) -- Sabbath-keeping is no longer required for salvation. Also, it is now alright to work on the Sabbath for a brief period of time. The Sabbath (Saturday) is still the WCG day of corporate worship.

- 5) **Being Born Again.** Claims that the term "born again" refers to a *physical* resurrection, not to *spiritual* birth -- "receiving" Christ merely means to be "conceived." Claims also that Jesus Christ had to be born again.
- 6) **Second Chance for Salvation.** (under Armstrong) -- Those who "missed the chance" to believe in this life will be given a second chance in the next life -- that they will be resurrected at the close of the Millennium and given another opportunity to believe the Gospel (cf. Rom. 2:12-15; 2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:11-15).

Second Chance for Salvation. (under Tkach) -- The WCG still teaches a variation of the "second chance" principle -- the unbiblical concept of "postmortem evangelization": "It is the belief of the Worldwide Church of God that the Lord has made righteous provision in the Judgment for the unevangelized dead, and that many will respond to their risen and glorified Savior in faith and be saved, while the rest will be condemned" (11/2001, WCG Internet web site).

- 7) **Heaven and Hell.** (under Armstrong) -- Denies the Biblical promise of heaven for believers. Instead, believers will spend eternity with Christ on earth. Likewise, hell is reserved for Satan and his demons only, while the wicked are annihilated; i.e., they do not suffer eternal torment in the lake of fire (cf. Rev. 19:20; 20:10; Matt. 25:46).

Heaven and Hell. (under Tkach) -- The new WCG still rejects the Biblical concept of eternal punishment.

- 8) **Soul Sleep.** Claims that the soul is mortal; i.e., it will die, and that there is no conscious existence between death and resurrection. (This is the same teaching as the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh-Day Adventists -- cf. Lk. 16:19-31; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:23,24; 1 Thes. 4:14.)
- 9) **Forced Tithing.** (under Armstrong) -- Tithing is required, and on special occasions, giving a tithe of the tithe of the tithe (i.e., a three-tithe, 30% system).

Tithing. (under Tkach) -- Tithing is not part of the New Covenant and Christians are not obligated to obey tithing laws. But when income dropped, the WCG was quick to explain that the new doctrine means members are not restricted to giving *only* 10 percent of their income (i.e., they should now be giving more). This amounts to no real change because the WCG under Armstrong also told members to not *only* pay their tithes, but to give generous offerings besides. Further, the new WCG has returned to the old manipulative techniques of telling members that God will bless them for giving, God commands them to give, and the WCG, with its unique ministry, is in financial need.

- 10) **British Israelism/Anglo-Israelism.** (under Armstrong) -- Views the "lost ten tribes" of Israel as the key to prophecy. Claims that "Judah" and "Israel" always refer to the two separate nations, and that inhabitants of Great Britain are of the tribe of Ephraim, while the inhabitants of America are of the tribe of Manasseh. (Armstrong never did explain how a Britisher, by immigrating to the U.S., moves from the tribe of Ephraim to the tribe of Manasseh.) Claims that white Anglo-Saxons are the chosen people of God.

British Israelism/Anglo-Israelism. (under Tkach) -- Late-1995, the church officially rejected the doctrine that the Anglo-Saxons descended from the tribes of Israel

Note on the Sincerity of WCG Doctrinal Changes: Throughout the WCG "transformation," an issue that needs careful consideration is: Are the changes mere external representations or true internal persuasions? Robert L. Sumner astutely noted that the Worldwide Church of God's "changes seem more convenience than conviction!" In his 1997 article, "Is Armstrong's Cult Now Orthodox?," he writes:

"While going through their alleged metamorphous from a worm to a butterfly, the leaders repeatedly changed and modified their statements to please their 'guides.' For example, in the matter of the Trinity, especially as it related to the Holy Spirit, they would agree among themselves as to a position, then go to those whom they were trying to please, saying, 'How is this?' The latter would reply, 'It doesn't go far enough.' So

they would go back to the drawing board and make suggested changes, then return to ask, 'Now what do you think?' That kind of 'doctoring doctrine' is not the stuff of which true Bible believers are made, nor the stuff that may be called orthodox conviction" (*The Biblical Evangelist*, Nov.-Dec. 1997, p. 7; and reprinted in a 2000 Biblical Evangelism Press booklet, pp. 10-11).

Two more disturbing issues further give pause: The church's continued kinship to its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong, and its conviction that its past doctrine and practice did not separate it from the Body of Christ.

- ❖ Concerning the former, much is being made by the church's hierarchy that critics will not be satisfied until the bones of Herbert W. Armstrong are exhumed and burned. This is a grave overstatement, to say the least. All should be deeply concerned by the continued claims and allusions to Armstrong "as a minister of Jesus Christ." It is inconceivable to us as to the amount of false doctrine, false prophecy, and abusive practices of this man which has had to be altered and/or camouflaged, and for this organization to continue to promote him with such reverence.
- ❖ The most important reason for caution is Matthew 7:15-20. Jesus identified cultic and aberrational groups as "false prophets." He said we would know them by their fruit (v. 16) and that a rotten tree does not produce good fruit (v. 18). Yet the WCG's leadership today is telling us that the "church" is capable of producing good fruit. It has had to rework and relegate its "bad tree" history into a "good tree" image, which just needs a little care and some pruning and fertilizer. Yet Jesus said, "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (v. 19). He did not tell us to coddle, prune, and nurture it.

Source: Excerpted and/or adapted from "The Worldwide Church of God's Orthodox Bandwagon," 3Q98, *PFO Quarterly Journal*.

Note on the Philadelphia Church of God: Simon-pure Armstrongism is being perpetuated in a very effective and broad manner by the "Philadelphia Church of God" splinter founded in 1989 and headquartered in Edmond, Oklahoma. The Oklahoma "splinter" is headed by Gerald Flurry, a devotee of Herbert Armstrong, who was "fired" by the Pasadena group "for disagreement with the new direction" taken by Armstrong's appointed successor, Joseph W. Tkach, Sr. (*The Philadelphia Trumpet*, 1/97, p. 17). Flurry and about a dozen others launched the Philadelphia Church of God "on the Sabbath [Sat.] of December 16, 1989 in a home," and has since risen to 6,000 members in 115 countries, presumably including many long-time followers of Armstrong who also rejected the "changes" of the Pasadena headquarters.

The Philadelphia group publishes the monthly *The Philadelphia Trumpet* (circulation of about 80,000), which replicates Armstrong's *The Plain Truth*, and *True Education*, a quarterly magazine for youth. Flurry regards the late founder as being the "endtime Elijah" of "Bible prophecy." Flurry is not only totally dedicated to the claims and teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong, his speaking manner is very much imitative of the alleged "endtime Elijah." He alleges that the original Worldwide Church of God has now made "40 major doctrinal changes" from the "truths restored to the church through Mr. Armstrong" (*TPT*, 1/97, p. 18). A booklet entitled *WCG Doctrinal Changes and the*

Tragic Results is published by the Flurry-led sect, and is being used to "recall" old Armstrongites who accept the "restored truths lost to the Church over the centuries ... restored to the Church during Mr. Armstrong's ministry" (*TPT*, 12/96, p. 24).

Gerald Flurry has imitated the ministry of Armstrong in other ways. Similar to the old *The World Tomorrow* television program, Flurry airs a weekly television program called *The Key of David*. "The program is broadcast to over 400 million worldwide." The Key of David program offers numerous free books on their web site. Most of these books are written by Flurry, but several are from Armstrong and Steven Flurry (Gerald Flurry's son). Flurry began republishing Armstrong's books, but was challenged in court by the WCG. A Federal court ordered Flurry to cease publication of the Armstrong material in September, 2000.

Flurry follows Armstrong's theories as closely as any of the dead leader's followers. British-Israelism, Sabbath keeping, "keeping the Ten Commandments" as a condition of salvation, baptism as a condition of salvation, and similar departures from "orthodoxy" are as much a part of "Flurryism" as "Armstrongism." Flurry remarks, "If Mr. Armstrong was right in that statement [declaring himself the "endtime Elijah"], then those words flowed right out of the mind of the living, all-powerful GOD!" (*TPT*, 2/97, p. 1). Flurry's own "Malachi's Message" has been used to "warn" the apostatized Armstrongites of what he calls the "Philadelphia era." (Source: Bob Ross, *Pilgrim Publications*, 2/97.)

Since Armstrong's death, Flurry has taught that the Bible prophesied that the WCG would change direction as it did. However, this is not to say that the truth would be lost. "If God's Church goes astray, Christ rebukes it. If they fail to repent, then He removes the lamp and raises up another Church or Work." Obviously, Flurry believes that "other church" is the Philadelphia Church of God.

In a public address, Flurry stated that Armstrong fulfilled the role depicted in Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world ..." And that the subsequent verse describes the successor to the WCG, Joseph Tkach Sr.: "so when you see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation ..." Tkach is standing in the holy place because he became the Pastor General of the WCG after Armstrong died. He is the abomination of desolation because he changed the doctrines that Armstrong restored.

According to Flurry, the time between Armstrong's death and Flurry's reestablishing the truth is depicted in Daniel 8. Verse 14 indicates that 2,300 evenings and mornings will pass before the sanctuary would be cleansed. After explaining that 2,300 actually refers to 1,150 days, Flurry reveals that this was the time period in between Armstrong's death and the writing of his book, *Malachi's Message To God's Church Today*. Finally, God is testing his people with the changes in the WCG: "God's church has been flooded with His precious truth. Now God is going to see if we JUST TALK about faith -- or REALLY LIVE BY FAITH -- by His word. Do we *remember* what we were taught and live by it?"

Note on the United Church of God: In June of 1995, a group of the WCG's highest-ranking pastors, with 12,000 members, organized a new denomination called the United Church of God. This new church -- announced at the close of a four-day conference in

Indianapolis -- is headed by David Hulmes of Pasadena, who resigned from the WCG after 23 years as an evangelist and director of its Ambassador Performing Arts Foundation. The new United Church of God now has more than 360 churches in 43 countries (230 in the U.S.), and claims approximately 20,000 members. It also airs a weekly radio broadcast in 11 media markets ("Good News Radio"), and publishes *Good News Magazine*, a bimonthly magazine.

What is Happening With the Worldwide Church of God?²¹

Many well-known evangelical leaders and cult watch organizations have accepted the leadership of the new Worldwide Church of God as brothers in Christ and have called for acceptance of the organization. Hank Hanegraaff, President of the Christian Research Institute, has been glowing in his praise of the changes which have occurred in the WCG. An article in the 10/2/95 *Christianity Today* was very positive toward the "post-Armstrong Worldwide Church of God." The article noted that the reformed WCG has been accepted by faculty from Regent College, Fuller Seminary, and Azusa Pacific University [all liberal institutions]. David Neff, an editor of *Christianity Today*, bewailed the fact that many Christians have been slow to receive the WCG with open arms: "Sadly, Christians outside the WCG have been suspicious and slow to extend the right hand of fellowship." [The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) has also accepted the new WCG with full membership status.]

Though the leadership of the WCG has officially restated their doctrine in a more Biblical fashion, it is impossible to know how many of its members still cling to Armstrongism. A 1995 report by Phillip Arnn in *The Watchman Expositor* noted that Tkach's call for WCG ministers to preach the new doctrinal position on the Trinity has been met by hostility: "One of those changes was a bombshell dropped in July of 1993 with the adoption of 'a form of the Trinity' as the official statement on the nature of God. Although the change has been in effect for over a year, many field ministers have failed to explain the new position to their church members. ... Armstrong taught that the Trinity doctrine was false, and God was a family. Ministers and members were taught that God was reproducing Himself and they had the potential to become Gods themselves. THE CHANGE HAS BEEN MET WITH HOSTILITY FROM MINISTERS AND MEMBERS ALIKE. ... Many are unwilling to give up the 'Truth' they received from Armstrong. *Watchman* has received numerous reports from members and ministers who are saying that they can not understand the New Covenant being preached by Tkach."

This fact must be taken into consideration when determining what position to take toward the reformed Worldwide Church of God. While at least some of the leaders today have rejected Armstrongism, many within its rank and file have not. It is a mixed multitude in every sense of the term.

WHAT ABOUT SALVATION?

Many things about the reformation occurring in the Worldwide Church of God are confusing. The first area of concern pertains to salvation. When were the members of

²¹ The above article ("What is Happening With the Worldwide Church of God") has been excerpted and/or adapted from an article (by the same name) in the 6/96, *O Timothy*, pp. 9-15 (David Cloud, editor).]

the Worldwide Church of God born again? Since Armstrong plainly denied that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, and that works are a necessary part of salvation, they could not have been saved under Armstrong -- no person can be saved through a false doctrine of salvation.

If WCG members claim that they have always been saved, then they are not to be believed. That judgment is not mine. It is based on the testimony of the Word of God. Those who openly deny the testimony of Scripture, as Armstrong and his followers have done, prove that they are not taught of the Spirit (1 John 2:19,20). Now some Worldwide Church of God leaders are attempting to follow Bible doctrine. That is wonderful, but we still ask "When were they saved?" The Bible says they could not have been saved under Armstrongism. Doubtless, some members did not accept all of the tenants of Armstrongism, but it is also doubtless that most of the members did accept Armstrong's doctrines OR THEY WOULD NOT HAVE JOINED SUCH AN UNSCRIPTURAL MOVEMENT.

WHEN DID THIS STRANGE ENTITY, WITH ITS BLASPHEMOUS HERETICAL HISTORY, BECOME A TRUE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH?

A second area of concern we have pertains to the Worldwide Church of God as a church. One has to wonder -- when did this strange entity, with its blasphemous heretical history, become a true New Testament church? The fact is that it was not a true church under Armstrong, and it is not a true church today. It is a religious organization, but it is not a New Testament church. We can understand how denominational structures can tentatively accept the WCG as a church, because the denominations themselves are unscriptural. It is not surprising that denominationally-minded men can accept the Worldwide Church of God as a "church," but we cannot. It is not a New Testament church. If the leaders of the WCG want to obey the Word of God, let them disband their unscriptural organization and exhort their members to get saved and to join sound churches. By attempting to reform an unscriptural organization which has such a wretched and apostate history, the leaders of the WCG are creating tremendous confusion.

MORE ECUMENICAL CONFUSION

As the WCG tries to evolve from its cultic position to one that is more orthodox, we soon find that they are being drawn in by the ecumenical/charismatic crowd. In the closing paragraphs of an article, Tkach says that, "We are grateful for those fellow Christians -- Hank Hanegraaff (Christian Research Institute, successor to Walter Martin), Ruth Tucker (a participant of Christians for Biblical Equality, an organization that puts women on the same par with men in the ministry), David Neff (Executive Editor of *Christianity Today*), William G. Brafford, and friends at Azusa Pacific University, Fuller Theological Seminary, Regent College and elsewhere -- who have extended the hand of fellowship to us as we sincerely seek to follow Jesus Christ." We will not question the sincerity of Tkach and the WCG, but we do question those with whom they have aligned themselves.

Christianity Today editor David Neff, after commending the WCG leadership for its courage in pursuit of truth, concluded his article on the WCG with the following words: "Can we now welcome their people into this transdenominational fellowship we call evangelicalism?" (Neff, "The Road to Orthodoxy," *Christianity Today*, Oct. 2, 1995).

Therein lies the problem! Ecumenism in a nutshell, if you will. Neff's description of evangelicalism as "this transdenominational fellowship" is precisely what evangelicalism has become, and it is an utterly unscriptural concept.

Modern evangelicalism represented by *Christianity Today* and its sister publications and institutions is not following the Bible. It is following a philosophy called "New Evangelicalism" which was formulated 50 years ago by men who had rejected Biblical Christianity for a worldly-minded, positive-emphasis Christianity. Modern evangelicalism is proud of its intellectual accomplishments, but is spiritually blind. This same *Christianity Today* examined the teachings of Robert Schuller a few years ago and declared that he is not a heretic. This same *Christianity Today* has argued that the Roman Catholic Church should not be called a cult and that there is such a thing today as an "evangelical Catholic." This is an incredible lack of spiritual discernment. Modern evangelicalism will accept the reformed Worldwide Church of God as a genuine church, but that is not surprising.

It appears that the reformed Worldwide Church of God is going to fit right into the ecumenical movement of these last hours. The ecumenists will receive them and not be overly concerned about when or if they were born again, and the WCG will add just a little more confusion to an already confused ecumenical stew.

CONCLUSION

We conclude by repeating our earlier statement: If the leaders of the Worldwide Church of God want to obey the Word of God, let them disband their unscriptural organization and exhort their members to get saved by trusting the finished atonement of Jesus Christ and to join sound New Testament churches. By attempting to reform an unscriptural organization which has such a wretched and apostate history, the leaders of the WCG are creating tremendous confusion.

A Personal Note from a Former Worldwide Church of God Member²²

David Covington was a member of the WCG for 25 years and was in the full-time ministry for five of those years. He was pastor of the Roanoke and Lynchburg, Virginia, congregations and was a contributing writer to the WCG's *Plain Truth* magazine. In May 1996, Covington resigned because, "after 19 months of addressing these issues with [the WCG's] administration, it became apparent that I was actually enabling a sick system that does not desire genuine change for Jesus."

Referring to pastor General Joe Tkach Jr., Mike Feazell, director of Church Administration, and Greg Albrecht, editor of *The Plain Truth*, Covington writes:

"... I am convinced you aren't even capable of seeing, much less addressing the genuine problems. I compare the 1996 WCG to a husband who used to beat his wife seven days a week and now has cut back to four. And, the wife is supposed to be satisfied with his progress! Worse still, he's holding seminars on domestic violence!"

²² This personal note has been excerpted and/or adapted from an article in the 1Q97, *PFO Quarterly Journal*: "The Two Faces of the Worldwide Church of God"

Addressing why outside observers are reporting that genuine repentance has taken place in the WCG, Covington points out, "These observers cannot possibly understand what it is like to be a member of this church. They miss the dynamics of this system which remains abusive."

Covington also points out continuing doctrinal problems: "The WCG still rejects the doctrine of eternal punishment, holds observances on the Jewish Sabbath and festivals ... and teaches as doctrine the debatable matter of post-mortem evangelization [i.e., those who are not saved in this life still have a chance to be saved in a future resurrection]. I would add that the abusive heretic, Herbert W. Armstrong, continues to be regarded as a minister of Jesus Christ." Covington also disputes the WCG's profit motive:

"I have long said that the WCG exists to perpetuate itself and profit its leaders. Observers might argue that this is not true of the new WCG as evidenced by the loss of members and income due to its doctrinal correction. But while employed by the WCG, I was told that the charges were being made to shed the cult image and to shift *Plain Truth* readership to a market more likely to donate. ... I know you [Tkach] say that you have lost members and income by the changes you have made. However, your power and prestige have not been abated. In fact, you have now had opportunity to speak before hundreds of denominational leaders, be interviewed on radio with James Kennedy and Hank Hanegraaff, obtain several book contracts, and that in addition to your planned radio program (and aforementioned pay increase). You did not possess anywhere near this kind of prominence before."

Covington concludes that he "... hope[s] that observers of the WCG will begin to see the complexity of the issue of an abusive cult becoming a healthy, orthodox church. It is not as simple as changing a few doctrines and mouthing some evangelical sounding phrases."