

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

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# The DISCERNER

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## THE POSITION ON SEPARATION BY BIBLE-BELIEVING GROUPS AND THE OPPOSITION TO THE CULTS

*Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor*

Objective students of trends today are aware that the position of many churches, including even separatistic groups, has changed significantly during recent decades—and, liberal bodies have changed even more during the same period. The weakening of the position of many people is detected by careful observers of present trends. We need to be concerned about a changing attitude in wide circles. First, it might be well to ascertain, if possible, the reasons why a departure is made from a firmer position held during earlier decades. Without a doubt, the expansion of the ecumenical movement has contributed to the weakening of the position of many people on the important matter of separation. The ecumenical movement has encouraged a willingness to compromise and to make certain accommodations in order to achieve unity. The merger of denominations has been ongoing continually in recent decades. Within the coming year, several large bodies of Lutheran denominations are scheduled for a massive merger. It will bring about a union of nearly six-million church people. Such a major consolidation will make a strong impact on people with regard to the matter of spiritual relationships. It is

clear that these present-day developments will cause the line of separation to disappear rapidly.

Moreover, the matter of ecumenical evangelism, including the large city-wide crusades, has stimulated the spirit of togetherness among religious groups. This program is inclusive, and the attempt at separation is not practiced.

In addition, the getting together of community churches, during the advent and Easter season, has witnessed a substantial expansion in recent years. The union of many churches on Thanksgiving has been popularized. Very little concern about the spiritual status of the participating churches has been manifested. The procedure is ecumenical.

Adding to all this, the popularization of Bible study groups on a nation-wide pattern, must be included in our evaluation. This program is all-inclusive in that Protestant and Catholic, as well as other groups, are welcome to participate in these projects. Controversial subjects are omitted in order to achieve expansion and harmony. Certain doctrinal matters are avoided in order to maintain a harmonious relationship within the various groups. Togetherness and unity are given the priority.

Actually, it involves an ecumenical arrangement. Without a doubt these studies have been commendable, and they have been helpful in the Bible study program. However, one should not pass over lightly Paul's statement: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

### **A Firm Opposition To Error Is Needed**

The cults, in particular, are disseminating dangerous heresies in practically every community in the land. They should be completely rejected by Bible-believing groups. I am not aware of any retreat by any of these groups from their false teachings over a long period of time. Let me illustrate to you a few of the most prominent among them, and the unscriptural teachings they are spreading across our land, and in many other areas of the world. For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses have rejected the doctrine of the Trinity. Christianity has accepted this doctrine ever since the early period of the Church. The Jehovah's Witnesses have also failed to uphold the doctrine of the Deity of Christ. To them, Christ is only the highest among the created beings. In John's Gospel, chapter one, the exalted position of our Lord is stated in a clear language. The Jehovah's Witnesses have rejected the personality of the Holy Spirit. They believe that He represents only an influence or divine energy—and, salvation through works, not grace, constitute the centrality of their teaching. The Jehovah's Witnesses also reject the doctrine of eternal punishment of the wicked. They part company with Jesus Christ who fully upheld this

doctrine. Practically all the Biblical doctrines of Christianity, held through the centuries, are rejected by this cult. The Mormon Church also rejects a number of doctrines accepted within Christianity. To this cult, salvation is found in the Mormon Church, and through baptism it is accomplished. The entire system of teaching by the Mormon Church is through works, and not through grace. The Old Testament priesthood is incorporated in their theological system. They have down-graded the position of Jesus Christ. He is not co-equal with God, the Father. (This is a uniform position among practically all the cults.) The cult also regards the Book of Mormon authoritative in all matters. They also state that the Bible is mistranslated so loosely and that it cannot serve as the final authority in doctrine. This is the largest among all the cults in our land. It has achieved a national influence.

The Seventh Day Adventists have built their teaching around the writings of their founder, Ellen White, whom they believe had received special revelation from God in her writings. This has been an ongoing belief for more than a century. A few years ago, several Adventist scholars studied her writings carefully. They discovered that Ellen White had incorporated large sections of material from other writers, and no credit was given to them in this literary thievery. This pattern is known as **plagiarism** in literature. When this information was made known, the leaders in Adventism dismissed them quickly from their organization even without a hearing. In other words, they were expelled from their organization for challeng-

ing the highest authority in Adventism. Now, briefly concerning their doctrine: The cult believes in soul-sleeping, or total unawareness of those who have died. Their doctrine is taken mainly from the speculations of Solomon while he was searching for information "under the sun," as he has stated about his pursuit. It is altogether right that the record is true, but that which he said may not be true. Even the record of what Satan has said is true, but the content of his statements are not true. Why don't the Seventh Day Adventists proceed to the New Testament where they may find an abundance of light on those who have departed this life? Paul makes it completely clear that the state of the departed righteous is far better where they are now. The Adventists are committed to the keeping of the Jewish Sabbath Day. This lies in the very center of their teaching. The Sabbath was arranged under the dispensation of the law given to the Jewish nation. It was never given to the Gentiles, nor to the world. When this matter comes up in conversation, I usually ask the Adventists, "What tribe of Israel do you come from?" I imply that they must be Jews, in order to keep their Sabbath Day under the law dispensation. Any unbiased reader of Romans and Galatians will understand that Sabbath-keeping is not valid in the Church Age—and, we are not under the law as Paul so thoroughly points out. The greatest doctrinal error of the Adventists is to ascribe to Satan a kind of partnership in the atonement. They teach that the sin question is not yet finalized. They state that at the final end of the ages, the sins of mankind through the millenniums will be gathered up and

placed on Satan, who, like the Old Testament scapegoat, bore them away when the creature was sent into the wilderness to die. The author to Hebrews writes, "But now once in the end hath He (Christ) put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26). The sin question was settled at Calvary. This teaching borders on blasphemy in the denial of the present finished work of Christ. Space does not permit me to comment on the teachings of other cults. In passing, I might point out Christian Science, Armstrong's World Wide Church of God, and Mooney's Unification Church are completely out of step with historic Christianity. Material, on practically all the cults, is available at our headquarters.

#### **The Lessening Of The Opposition To The Cults**

The sad fact is that a number of churches and organizations today do not consider the cults as heretics. They are rather considered to be misguided zealots in some areas of their systems. A few decades ago, a nationally known and respected Christian leader extended his hand of fellowship with the Adventists, considering them evangelical on the whole. He had met a small group of their leaders and believed that a change in their position had taken place. Most Bible teachers disagreed with this leader, even though he was perhaps sincere in his judgment. We know that the Liberal National Council of Churches received The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon) into the National Organization; likewise, the well-known Swedenborg Cult was received into that organization. Quite often, certain congrega-

tions have invited representatives of leading cults to appear in their churches to present their viewpoints. I have found that not so few churches have followed this pattern. They believe information by the cults directly is an advantage. I have vigorously urged such churches to cancel these illogical arrangements. This is a part of the narrowing of the wall that separates Bible-believing people from the cultists. Even the largest Protestant church in Canada has carried out such a program as I have mentioned. The retreat to a weaker position against false teaching is a sign of the end-time "falling away" referred to in Scripture. Accommodation is a spirit of our age, but no group of believers should weaken their position against false teaching.

### Conclusion

There is a vigorous on-going discussion these days on the subject of separation. Different positions are taken on this subject in our time. Often those who hold a "second degree" of separation are ridiculed and considered to be out of step with reality, and that they should be classified as extremists. The fact of the matter, however, is that the Bible teaches separation, from Genesis to Revelation. To the Hebrew people, separation was consistently emphasized—and, in the New Testament separation is a subject discussed by practically all the inspired writers. The Bible knows nothing about a so-called "second degree" of separation. Separation is continually taught in every area of the Scriptures. A division in terminology should not be used in the discussion of the subject. It is my judgment that separation is a matter for Christians to be concern-

ed about in every generation. It is a part of the matter of consecration, and it is needed in the daily walk of believers. In Romans, chapter 12, we are exhorted to complete obedience to Jesus Christ. Separation may not always be a visible line, yet it ought to be a reality in Christian living. The subject should not be used as a football to be thrown around by supporters and opponents.

Cooperation by like-minded believers has merit and it should be practiced. In this article, I have not referred to artificial barriers arranged by bigots. We need to use discretion in applying this principle in our daily lives. In my first pastorate over 60 years ago, there came a carnival to our town of about one-thousand inhabitants. The carnival people and the local promoters offered the four churches in town to hold a united Sunday morning service in their large tent. Our churches were able to share the offering to be received at this service. I represented the only church in town to turn it down. A leading pastor criticized me for attempting to establish a rule for people's conscience. I was widely supported, however, by some of the best element in town for the courage to take a stand on that type of cooperation. That carnival was unlike it was in earlier generations. In fact, the program as printed for the week, indicated a very shabby type of activity. I found that the best element of people in town supported me in the stand that I took. I do not like to be obstinate, and in some areas I am in accord with those who cooperate when it has merit. I feel, however, that our generation has weakened in its proper position on many issues. The spirit of ecumenicity seems to have become dominant.

## CULTS ON THE MISSION FIELD

*By Robert C. Dillon, Executive Director Overseas Missions  
The Evangelical Free Church of America*

### EUROPE

Cultic activity is on the rise in Europe. The Existentialist Movement of the 1930s and 1940s directed man's thinking away from the church and to himself. He then began to question the essential teachings of the church and doubted its reason for existence. World War II reinforced this movement. God was no longer seen as the provider and protector of physical life. The church was viewed as offering assurance of life after death; but survival now depended upon man. With the post World War II Industrial Revolution, the church became less prominent, while industry and banking were on the rise. The Vatican II Council of the Catholic Church caused people to be more vulnerable to cultic activities suggesting the church was no longer the sole possessor of the keys to the kingdom.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Europe drifted into a state of materialism. Many European countries prospered and the standard of living rose rapidly. Beginning in the 70s and continuing to the present, we have a period where man seems to be questioning everything. This creates a growing and active movement among the sects and a renewed interest in spiritism and cultic practices. The mindset of the average Catholic in Europe is salvation by works. Since both Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons teach a similar doctrine, they are readily accepted. To follow a rigid legalism to atone for sin is very acceptable. In Belgium, there are more Jehovah's

Witnesses than there are evangelical Christians.

With all these new movements in Europe the evangelical church has not despaired, but is stronger and more courageous. People are more open to spiritual things than at any other time. Unless we in the evangelical church take advantage of our opportunities to witness, heresies and false doctrines will easily be propagated.

### LATIN AMERICA

In Peru, as well as many other Latin American countries, anyone who is non-Catholic is classified as "evangelical" including the cults. Such a mixture has made it much more difficult for the evangelical missionary from North America.

There are at least 200 Mormon missionaries in Peru, more than all the Protestant missionaries in North America. Although they do not know the language and little about the culture, their hard work results in many followers. Money from North America is readily available to build large temples at no cost to the Peruvians. This, of course, is very attractive to those who have left the Catholic church.

There are reports of bribing people with money to be baptized into the Mormon Church. The Book of Mormon mentions that Christ came to Peru to set up a civilization. Such a theory only boosts the authenticity of their presence.

The visit by the Pope two years ago actually helped our Protestant missionaries as he stated that

evangelicals were Christians, but followers of the cults were not.

## AFRICA

It is estimated there are 6,000 cults in black Africa. New ones continue to spring up. Many of these cults are African adaptations of movements born in North America including Jehovah's Witnesses and Apostello. Other groups are Nativistic and usually focus on a charismatic African preacher or healer such as Simon Kimbangu.

One such group is called the "Bima Church" conceived by a spiritist of Zaire whose animistic world view overshadows all Biblical concepts.

Followers are preoccupied with evil spirits that they believe are everywhere. They use white handkerchiefs to cope with spirits as if they had magical power. They suspend them from the tops of the entrances of their huts to keep evil spirits away. The guest enters the yard of a follower of the Bima Church, the host waves the handkerchief over the chair and repeats the word "Bima" (Go away). This supposedly removes the evil spirits that were occupying the chair.

Another cult with many followers is the "Jesus Only" Church. They believe the church ordinances and training schools are non-Biblical creations. They use Acts 8:16 as a proof text for asserting that true baptism is done in the name of Jesus only. Evangelicals, because of their emphasis on the Trinity, are accused of being idolaters by the Jesus Only group.

## HONG KONG

In Hong Kong, the "Children of God" have received wide prominence

due to a locally produced television documentary. That program emphasized how the cult promotes free sex and virtually enslaves its members to its leader, Moses David Berg. The story was based on a young man who was lured into the group. Their headquarters was raided by the police and the adherents charged with promoting prostitution. Being forced out of that area, they moved to the area close to the Portuguese territory of Macau.

Such activities have caused much suspicion toward all Christian groups. Although it is not a major problem for the churches, it has hindered evangelistic outreach. Many of the evangelical churches have united against the threat of cults moving into the area.

Both Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses are well-known in Hong Kong. Many Mormon missionaries are conducting evangelistic activities in large meeting halls. The World Christian Encyclopedia reports 2,000 Mormons in Hong Kong.

These groups began in Hong Kong immediately after World War II indicating a phenomenal growth. They report an average of 12 baptized converts each week.

## JAPAN

Church growth is beginning to accelerate in Japan. The July 11 edition of *Christianity Today* reports an annual growth rate between 6.5% and 9.9%. The Evangelical Free Church of Japan experienced a 432% growth between 1968 and 1983. During that same 15-year period, the Jehovah's Witnesses grew at an alarming 1,290%, the Mormons 674%, and the Unification Church 575%.

The Mormons have used their pretentious buildings and temples to overwhelm the Japanese who are impressed by size and greatness. Their missionaries are often seen with small children in their presence which readily gains an entrance for them into the Japanese home.

## PHILIPPINES

Cults thrive in the Philippines. The prevailing animism accompanying official Roman Catholic beliefs is what is commonly known as "Folk Catholicism" pre-disposes the Filipino to mystery, ritual and religious experience. Roman Catholicism emphasizes these qualities in the doctrine of Transubstantiation and the Mass. The typical Filipino Catholic does not attempt to sort out what is official Catholic doctrine of the church and what is of animistic origin. Each is complimentary, not contradictory. The two are so closely associated that both are assumed to be Catholic doctrine. He wears a crucifix as an amulet to ward off evil. On Good Friday, he takes home a piece of palm branch blessed by the priest which may be used as medicine during the year. During the religious procession, he touches the image of Christ or Mary with his towel so that it may be placed on his ailing loved one in hopes of a cure. Nationalistic faith healers are consulted instead of medical doctors. They have more confidence in their magic cures and the cost is always less.

Only when the patient grows worse is a medical doctor consulted. The supernatural is not remote at all, but very real and present to the average Filipino.

The tendency to look to an

authoritative figure is another mark of cults in the Philippines. Catholicism has its pope who is supreme and can speak *Ex Cathedra* with "infallible" pronouncements. So the cults have authoritative figures whose word is taken as fact. Felix Manalo, the founder of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, claimed to be the "angel from the east" and 75 years later has many adherents. He is viewed as a special prophet from God.

The large number of Filipinos who speak and read English opens a great opportunity for the American cults to appeal to the Filipinos. *The Plain Truth* magazine is widely circulated, as is Jehovah's Witnesses literature in both English and the dialects. The Book of Mormon is distributed by the hundreds of Mormon missionaries throughout the Philippines.

## SINGAPORE

The government of Singapore prohibits door-to-door visitation. Because of this limitation, the Mormons do not have a large following. They do have a rather large meeting place, however.

Jehovah's Witnesses have been a bit more successful than the Mormons. They are also more persistent. They have now been asked to leave the country. Legally they are not allowed to promote their cause in Singapore.

## MALAYSIA

In the neighboring country of Malaysia, Jehovah's Witnesses have an official meeting place. There they can be very aggressive in their door-to-door evangelism. Although they are small in number, they are a very real minority.

With the rise of spiritism and



demonism around the world, we are training our missionaries for the power encounter they may well face. Such activities are experienced in this country and on our mission fields around the world. Hopefully, this ar-

ticle will encourage you to pray for the missionaries you know who have entered the very strongholds of Satan as they carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

## CREATIONISM'S RAPID GROWTH

LOOKING BACK 25 YEARS

By Henry M. Morris

The year 1986 marks the 25th anniversary of the publication of a book that a number of historians of science (e.g., Dr. Ronald Numbers, "Creationism in 20th Century America," *Science*, Nov. 5, 1982, p. 542) identify as the catalyst of the modern revival of creationism. The *Genesis Flood* [co-authored by John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris] was published in 1961 and is currently in its 30th printing (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company). Most earlier creationist authors had advocated compromising with the supposed evolutionary ages of geology, either by the gap theory (geological ages before the six days of creation) or the day/age theory (geological ages during the six days), but *The Genesis Flood* rejected the idea of these ages altogether, insisting that the biblical record of six-day creation and the global deluge must be taken literally. Abundant documentation from evolutionist literature was cited to show that the rocks and fossils could be better explained by the great flood than by long ages of evolution. This straightforward approach to God's Word struck a responsive chord in the minds and hearts of many believers, scientists and laymen alike, and soon a strong nucleus of strict creationists began to emerge.

Two years later, in 1963, both the Creation Research Society, primarily composed of scientists, and the Bible-Science Association, oriented mainly toward laymen, were organized and began publishing regular journals. Since that time, the revival of creationism has spread widely, and there are now more than 100 functioning creationist associations, including at least one in more than 20 different countries, with most of them publishing their own journals.

The organization of widest influence is probably the institute for Creation Research, which originated in San Diego in 1970 and currently has a full-time staff of nine scientists and a unique science graduate school. Its scientists have produced more than 70 creationist books and participated in hundreds of debates, seminars, summer institutes and other meetings. Its free monthly newsletter *Acts and Facts* and quarterly devotional Bible study guide *Days of Praise* go out regularly to about 75,000 people, all by request.

These, and other developments, have, in turn, stimulated a strong anticreationist reaction among the scientific, educational and liberal religious establishments. The atheistic scientist, Isaac Asimov, cur-

rent president of the American Humanist Association (AHA), in a January, 1986, AHA fund-raising letter said concerning the creation/evolution conflict: "The AHA has been in this battle from the beginning and will stay with it as long as necessary." At least 35 anticreationist books and many hundreds of anticreationist articles have been published in recent years, so it is obvious the modern revival of creationism is making an impact of broad and lasting influence. Readers in-

terested in more details should consult the book *History of Modern Creationism* [Henry M. Morris, Master Books 1984, 382 pp].

There are now thousands of scientists who have become Bible-believing Christian creationists, plus scores of thousands of young people in the nation's schools and colleges. "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes" (Ps. 118:23).

—From *Confident Living*, Dec. 1986  
Used with permission from the author.

## DESTRUCTIVE CULTS IN AMERICA

*(A statement of the problem)*

CAN/CFF

WHAT IS A DESTRUCTIVE CULT? A destructive cult uses systematic, manipulative techniques of thought reform or mind control to obtain followers and constrict their thoughts and actions. These techniques are imposed without the person's foreknowledge or volition and produce observable changes in the individual's autonomy, thoughts and actions. A destructive cult may promise enlightenment and positive growth and hide its true intent to exploit and enslave its members through an all-powerful leadership and a totalistic ideology. A destructive cult has no real concern for the welfare, freedom or individuality of its members and sets itself above society by creating its own values with no regard for society's laws, ethics or morals.

HAS ANYONE BEEN HARMED? Society, families, members, and former members have been harmed. Adverse psychological

effects on members and former members from destructive cult techniques, have been widely reported. In addition, destructive cults engage in ILLEGAL and UNETHICAL practices: Child abuse, neglect and death; illegal and fraudulent immigration; drug dealing; smuggling money, cars, guns, gems; fraud and deceit in recruiting, business and fund-raising; theft; harassment of families and former members with threats, lawsuits and foul play; stockpiling and smuggling weapons and ammunition; beatings; sexual abuse and prostitution; kidnapping; murder; and attempted murder. A destructive group's goals always get the highest priority and the ends justify the means.

HAVE MANY LIVES BEEN AFFECTED? Concern for loved ones in more than 2500 different groups in the U.S. has prompted relatives and friends to request information from the Cult Awareness Network of

Citizens Freedom Foundation—750,000 to 1,000,000 is a very conservative estimate of number of members in destructive cults. Most destructive cult members come from close families. More than THREE MILLION relatives and friends have been directly impacted.

**ARE CULTS JUST RELIGIOUS?**  
No! FOUR basic types of destructive cults are known to the Cult Awareness Network of Citizens Freedom Foundation: (1) RELIGIOUS, (2) THERAPY or PSEUDOTHERAPY, (3) POLITICAL, and (4) COMMERCIAL.

**WHERE ARE CULTS LOCATED?** Destructive cults operate in all 50 states and most countries of the world. Concentration is highest in wealthy, industrialized countries. Russia jailed leaders for subverting members' families and work.

**YOU CAN BE DECEIVED:** Cults frequently hide behind "front"

groups with innocent-sounding names. Scientists, clergymen, educators, journalists, politicians and others have been deceived into lending support to "help poor children" or "feed the hungry" or accepting all-expense-paid trips to conferences. YOU may learn YOU are touted as a supporter. PLEASE BE A QUESTIONER. PLEASE LEARN WHAT GROUPS ARE ACTIVE IN YOUR AREA AND HOW THEY OPERATE. PLEASE EDUCATE OTHERS TO BE QUESTIONERS.

The Cult Awareness Network of Citizens Freedom Foundation is a national, non-profit organization with 58 affiliates in 33 states which confines its concern to illegal and unethical practices and does not judge doctrines or beliefs.

The national office of this organization can be reached through P.O. Box 462, Arlington Heights, IL 60006, or by phone at their National Cult Hot Line: 312/577-CULT or 312/267-7777.

## REASONING WITH JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

*By Kevin R. Quick*

In the Preface of his new book *Reasoning with Jehovah's Witnesses*, Kevin Quick relates the unusual circumstances that caused him to write it while he was still an active Jehovah's Witness attending Kingdom Hall. With his permission, we reproduce here these excerpts from the Preface:

Let me explain briefly how *Reasoning with Jehovah's Witnesses* came about. I was raised with no religious background. My brother had been contacted [by Jehovah's Witnesses] in their door-to-door work and he soon had me studying with them, also. I studied with the Witnesses for 3½

years, and was baptized in the spring of 1981.

As a Witness, I attended 5 meetings at the Kingdom Hall each week, participated in the Theocratic Ministry School, and was active in the door-to-door preaching work. For the 3½ years that I was an active Jehovah's Witness, I was never "irregular" in field service. I never let a month go by without sharing in the witnessing work.

As a Witness, I also spent quite a bit of time reading the Bible. Though the only translation I could "understand" was the Watchtower Society's own *New World Transla-*

tion, I read it through four times, and read the New Testament through eight times. This Bible reading led to some serious problems.

I began to question first of all my personal relationship with Jesus Christ. From reading the New Testament, I could see that the first-century disciples had an intimacy with their Lord that I had great difficulty relating to. I was told that this was because I was of the "great cloud" of "other sheep," and that only those of the "anointed" rightly had such a relationship with Jesus, as members of the bride of Christ. In fact, I was taught that the entire New Testament was not written to me, and that I was not under the new covenant. I had no mediator between God and myself, but received blessings from Jehovah by associating with His "earthly organization."

By the summer of 1984, these questions were increasing both in frequency and in intensity. Was the "great crowd" of Revelation chapter 7 really on earth, or was it in heaven? Did Christ really return invisibly in 1914? Was the Watchtower Society really "God's organization?"

As I went from door to door, I would occasionally meet persons who identified themselves as "born again" Christians. Though my "superior" Bible knowledge told me that only 144,000 Christians were to be born again, and that the 9000 present-day members of the "anointed remnant" were all Jehovah's Witnesses, still these "born agains," as we called them, were an interesting sort of people. I can recall twelve instances when they actually took the initiative in witnessing to me. They would ask me

whether or not I was "saved." They would say that the shed blood of Christ was wholly sufficient for the justification of every believer. They would tell me that I did not need to add to the work of Christ by performing all sorts of good works. They would say that if I would accept Jesus Christ by faith as my all-sufficient Lord and Savior, He would come into my heart and I would know that I had been saved.

But to my way of thinking, these "born again" Christians were probably either emotionally deranged or demon possessed . . .

But still I could not escape the gnawing questions that kept surfacing in my own faith. So in August of 1984, I took a radical step. I decided to undergo a thorough, systematic, and objective Bible study of my own, without the use of Watchtower Society publications. My conviction was that if the Watchtower Society was in fact God's organization, Jehovah God Himself would show this to me plainly and clearly through an honest study of His Word. Jesus had promised that the Spirit of truth would lead Christians into all the truth (John 16:13). I believed this promise, and set out to prove to myself once and for all who God was, and who His people were, and what His will was for me.

What I decided to do initially was to read through an independent translation of the New Testament and write down every Scripture that didn't seem to fit my present understanding of the Bible. I did this, using the New American Standard version, and came up with about 200 Scripture verses. I then compiled these Scriptures into approximately

50 different topics.

After reading through what I had compiled, the gravity of what I had just done hit me like a ton of bricks. I had now totally destroyed my dearly-held convictions concerning God, His people, the outworking of His plan of salvation, and my place in this whole affair! I was now completely and utterly lost!

Three things I knew, however. I knew that God had inspired the Bible. I knew that he had people on this earth who worshiped Him in Spirit and in truth, in accordance with an accurate understanding of the Bible. And I knew that God cared for us, and that He sent His beloved Son to die for us. This was enough to convince me that God would hold true to His promise to lead me into all the truth.

I reread the New Testament, this time using the Revised Standard Version. As I read, I wrote down every Scripture that was applicable to each of the 50 Bible subjects, regardless of the view it seemed to uphold. I then repeated this procedure twice more, using the New International Version and again the New American Standard version. By this time, I had amassed approximately 800 Scripture verses, and felt satisfied that I had accumulated enough information on which to base conclusions on each of the subjects in question.

The conclusions came very slowly at first. But one by one the humanized doctrines of Jehovah's Witnesses were replaced in my mind and heart by the true knowledge of God.

Though all of my close friends, including my brother, had now fully disowned me, and though I had to endure some severe mental and emo-

tional stress for a short while, all of these trials are as nothing when compared with the joy and freedom that comes with knowing the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit dwelt in my heart continually, and I knew that I was at long last a real Christian. Eternal life was no longer something to grope or work for, but was something that I possessed right then (I John 5:13). Both from the Word of God, and from my own day-to-day personal experience, I have the full assurance that I belong to Jesus Christ my Lord, and that I will live with Him forever and ever to the glory of God our Father.

Though *Reasoning from the Scriptures* was originally compiled for my own personal use, I believe the information contained therein could be of considerable help to all those who have become involved with Jehovah's Witnesses in one way or another.

(Editor's Note: The *Preface* to *Reasoning with Jehovah's Witnesses* also describes Kevin Quick's final weeks at Kingdom Hall, his meetings with the local J. W. elders, and his spiritual rebirth as a child of God—(John 1:13, 3:1-8; Galatians 4:6).

The book as a whole is a collection of Scripture verses and notes, beautifully organized in outline form, complete with Scripture Index and Subject Index. Kevin used his own money to print a thousand copies, 76 pages, 8½" x 11" spiral-bound.

It should prove to be a useful tool for Jehovah's Witnesses who want to re-examine their beliefs in the light of Scripture, as Kevin Quick did. The book should also prove valuable to anyone seeking Scriptural support for Christian doctrines in discussions with Jehovah's Witnesses.)

—Order from our office—\$5.95

## THE INVASION OF THE CULTS

By Prof. John E. Dahlin

During the period from 1870 to 1920 the major cults in our country were recognized as an unimportant minority, and no serious threat to the established religious denominations. At that time the cults bore the stigma of having deviated from the beliefs of the regular church organizations in the land. *Their position of the past has been generally reversed during recent decades.*

These off-center or fringe groups, have expanded phenomenally during the past generation. They simply cannot be ignored any longer, or dismissed lightly. Their expansion is extra ordinary. They have invaded every part of our land. They are infecting the world.

While no accurate statistics are available at this time with regard to their number, it is estimated that numerically they may add up to a thousand, or possibly two thousand separate groups. I personally believe that one thousand and five-hundred is a more realistic figure. This obviously does not include certain small, splintered groups which exist, but there is no reliable literature which spell out their religious beliefs and activities. Approximately twenty million people are involved in all the cultic groups. This is a formidable number within the religious organizations of the country.

### The Reason For The Massive Cultic Invasion

It is clear that they have found a path which has been well cut out for their operation.

#### *Denominational Inactivity*

In the first place, many of the

denominations have become static and lacking in zeal for expansion. The fact is that most of the larger religious denominations have made very little gain numerically during recent years. This provides a fertile field and a challenge for the vigorous cults to gain new followers.

#### *Doctrinal Substitutes*

Moreover, the large religious bodies have generally failed to emphasize the cardinal doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. They have substituted the major gospel truths for social actions, good works, and other new-fangled panaceas. This situation has made the work of the cults relatively easy. In other words, it is not difficult for the cultic groups to penetrate these wide areas which are open for their program and propaganda.

Even some evangelicals are not immune from their invasion.

Recently a man from a fine church said to me, "I feel that Herbert W. Armstrong's writings make a lot of sense." This indicates how ill-informed and naive the person was on the subject. And, in speaking of the Mormons being committed to keeping the *Sabbath*, another person said, "What difference is it, if one group keeps the Sabbath Day instead of the First Day of the week?" The lack of discrimination by many Christian people is deplorable. And, the general ignorance regarding what the Bible teaches is nothing less than astonishing. The cultists are ready to exploit the general weakness of many people in Biblical matters.

#### *Dedicated Zeal*

Then, too, the aggressiveness and

zeal of the cultists often make a strong impression on people who are associated with the mainstream of Christian denominations. The leaders of the false systems are distributing their own literature continually, and, of course, it is sugar-coated and slanted for its maximum effect.

The best recent example of this was seen when Sun Myung Moon was released from the penitentiary. Cleverly he chose to send books and printed material which cost millions, to thousands of clergymen and church leaders, to influence them to cooperate with his organization. He proposed an ecumenical arrangement, a kind of umbrella program in unifying people. And, he insisted that there was no significant difference in essential doctrinal matters. This was a smoke screen by him to conceal his true motives.

#### *Diverted Message*

Another example of cultic techniques in gaining proselytes is to side-track the message of salvation and repentance, with the emphasis on works and doing good to all within reach. The country is flooded with cultic literature. The Jehovah's Witnesses, in each issue of the *WATCHTOWER* magazine, and the companion publication, *AWAKE*, print nearly twenty million copies altogether. This was confirmed by their office. It represents a massive invasion by satan-inspired literature.

Moreover, in the significant absence of a national revival and the diminished preaching of salvation and repentance, it opens the way for the cults to expand their activities. Of course, we have crusades and evangelistic preaching in many places, but no objective observers

find evidence of a national turning to God in recent years. More than threescore years ago, we witnessed the remarkable ministry of Billy Sunday. In this period of my youth, whole cities, such as Des Moines, Iowa and Omaha, Nebraska were completely changed. Saloonkeepers by the scores were saved, evil activities diminished, and the churches were filled with people. It was a revival of great strength. I am citing only one area of America. Nearly every denomination had revival meetings, and protracted services every year. It was true evangelism in those days.

I saw a great evangelical church in my native state of Iowa, after a 100 years of Bible-centered preaching, veered off into liberalism. The cults with their determination are taking advantage of the present-day apostasy.

#### **WHAT DOES THE SCRIPTURE SAY WITH REGARD TO THE LATTER DAYS?**

In his writings, the Apostle Paul says, "*Perilous times shall come*" (II Timothy 3:1). Christ stated it solemnly "*Iniquity shall abound*" (Matthew 24:24). Again quoting the Apostle, "*Evil men shall become worse and worse, and many shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons*" (II Timothy 4:1). Our Lord verified this further: "*False Christs and false prophets shall show great signs and wonders, that if it were possible they shall deceive the elect. Behold, I have told you before*" (Matthew 24:12, 13).

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### PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*John E. Dahlin, Editor*

**QUESTION . . .** What are the consequences of the present weakening in the Scriptural position of spiritual separation?

**ANSWER . . .** First, the present-day manifestation of an unwillingness to practice the position of many churches have weakened the impact on various groups which are witnessing such a situation.

Secondly, when the line of demarcation is being erased, with reference to believers versus the worldly-minded people, it necessitates further concession on a wide front. In other words, it reduces the effectiveness of the believers' testimony before the non-spiritual groups.

Thirdly, such a lack of separation brings about a contradiction of many Scriptural exhortations on the matter of separation—see Rom. 12:42; II Cor. 6:14-18.

**QUESTION . . .** What is the unfailing remedy in counteracting the present laxity on the matter of separation versus worldliness in many churches?

**ANSWER . . .** The preaching of the whole counsel of God is the primary step in the correction of this situation—see Acts 20:27. Teaching separation is a ministry needed. Such an emphasis should have the continual attention of God's people. This will help to crystalize the right viewpoint of the people on the subject—II Tim. 3:14-17. Compromises usually develop gradually. An awareness of this situation is necessary, and attention to this matter, especially in earnest prayer, is needed.