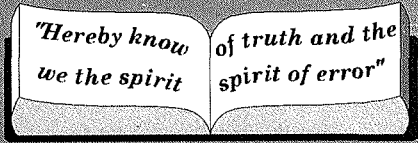


The Discerner



Volume 16, Number 3

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AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL HERESY-EXPOSING QUARTERLY

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EDITORIAL

By William A. BeVier

Even in our current times when so many things seem to be changing so fast, it is also true that many things seem to remain the same. Of course among those things that do not change are the eternal God (Mal. 3:6) and our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Heb. 13:8). But even in the human realm some things do not appear to have much change. Read the article titled "Fifty Years of History (Part 3)" about the ministry of R.A.S. Personnel changes, but the issues and problems seem much the same.

Another area in which there doesn't seem to be much change is the continuing influence of cults on people, especially young people. We repeatedly have calls and letters from parents and pastors seeking help because a young person has become involved in one way or another with a cult or cultic group. When this happens it is rightly a concern for parents and friends. We do all we can to help. Sometimes the effort is successful and sometimes it is not. Regardless, we will not give up trying to help by providing information, literature, referrals, and prayer.

However, our situation today with people leaving even evangelical churches and backgrounds reminds me of the story I heard as a boy of the

farmer who closed the barn door after his horse was gone. We are not taking precautions to keep this from happening. In the medical field we are told repeatedly to practice preventative medicine to ward off problems. We need to practice this in the spiritual realm.

People, young and old, need to be taught about and forewarned against the cults and false religions. We are not forearming ourselves against the enemies of our souls. As I see it, the primary responsibility to prepare our young people to withstand these spiritual attacks (see Eph. 6:10-20) belongs to Christian parents, pastors, and other church leaders. R.A.S. was raised up to provide resources for these individuals. Please make use of us.

I am grateful to share with you that R.A.S. now has a new computer and monitor, thanks to the generous gifts of several friends. Tim Buege, one of our Board members, has set up and installed the new system (now all I need to do is learn to use it to the fullest extent). We also are having contacts from our new World Wide Web. Our URL is: [HTTP://WWW.ISL.NET/WWYWEB/RASINDEX.HTML](http://WWW.ISL.NET/WWYWEB/RASINDEX.HTML). This was set up for us by Pastor Dennis Finnan of St.

Charles, Minnesota. Some are using our Fax to communicate with us. The new fax number is: 612-537-5825. Of course the telephone, the mail service and personal contacts at the office are still available. On our part, we still respond by voice and mail and by use of our catalog, The Discerner, and our semi-annual newsletter.

This brings me to another point. As all of us know, postage and handling of mail is an expensive activity. We have been reviewing our subscription list for The Discerner and our mailing list for our newsletter and catalog because we are being pushed for reasons of economy to go to a seven-digit zip code and bar code system for our mailings. We have learned that we have many subscriptions listed as "PERM" (permanent) on our Discerner list. Some individuals may no longer desire to receive our publications. If that is you, please inform us (by telephone would be fine). Some of our "PERM"s on our mailing list we have changed to "XX-4," which means Volume XX, issue No. 4 (December 2000). You might want to check your mailing label. If it reads "XVI-3" (Jul-Sept 1996), this would be your last issue without renewing your subscription. We encourage everyone to renew. The Discerner is almost one of a kind in the field of anti-cult ministry today.

Elsewhere in this issue attention is called to the homegoing of our former president, Dr. John E. Dahlin. As many of you know, he was the author of several books and booklets. Through the courtesy of Mrs. Dahlin, copies of two of his publications have been made available to us in some quantity. These are: An Overview of My 70 Years in the Ministry (55 pp, hardback, 1994) and "A Review of the Seven Great Inventions of the Last

Two Centuries" (22 pp, n.d.). We are making these available for our postage and handling costs (\$1.50 for the book, \$.75 for the booklet). If you can come by the office in Robbinsdale, you can pick up copies.

We are featuring in this issue of The Discerner an article written by Professor Dahlin in 1967 relative to the Ecumenical Movement. Again, we can see some things don't change much.

A short article in this issue is an update on happenings in the Holshouser family since leaving the old Worldwide Church of God when it was still controlled by Herbert W. Armstrong. It is a touching story of "good news, bad news."

Another article is the completion of Dr. Douglas R. McLachlan's presentation contrasting Fundamentalism and Neo-evangelicalism. Again, I suggest you carefully read his article.

We have two book reviews to share with you in this issue. Reading the reviews is one way to keep current with what is being written and published.

We have taken the opportunity to again present some of the responses recently received about the ministry of R.A.S. Not all responses are as positive as these (I Cor. 16:9 is still true, "...there are many adversaries."), but these serve to encourage us. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and yes, even criticisms. But do keep praying for the ministry and outreach of R.A.S. and for those of us who volunteer each week in the office.

As with many ministries, during the summer months there is a decline in financial support. If you are persuaded to send a gift at this time, we would appreciate it.

FIFTY YEARS OF HISTORY (PART 3) INTO THE SECOND DECADE AND BEYOND

By Jo Ann BeVier

In the minutes of the years 1957-1977 we can see a distinct resemblance to the current status of R.A.S. The work of the office was done solely on a volunteer basis without remuneration, primarily at this time by Mr. and Mrs. Roy Divers. A newsletter was put out to approximately 3,000, and a price list (which corresponds to our present catalog). Dr. John Dahlin represented R.A.S. in many services and conferences and worked tirelessly to make known the ministry of R.A.S. in informing and warning people of the dangers of cults and false doctrines. Many well-known servants of the Lord served on the Board or took an active part in R.A.S. Among these were: Rev. George Darby, Dr. Stanley Toussaint, Rev. Laurel Hanely, Dr. J. Edwin Hartill, Rev. Roy Knuteson, Dr. Ernest Pickering and many others.

Advertising in various publications was added to the outreach of the organization. Ads were placed in: The Evangelical Beacon, The Voice, The Sword of the Lord, and Moody Monthly.

Under Dr. Dahlin's leadership the organization became more financially stable. In one of his "President's Reports" Dr. Dahlin stated:

Truly God has been in our work ever since its inception some 14 years ago. Perhaps there is no other agency in our land doing identically the kind of work with which we are engaged. Never has the need been greater for such

specialized services as those we are rendering. The delusions of the latter-days are upon us. It is imperative that we go on in this vital ministry.

At this point in our article we want to digress to give tribute to the memory of Dr. John Dahlin, who went to be with his Lord on June 16, 1996 on his 96th birthday. As you can see, his dedication and vision is still just as pertinent today and by God's grace will continue to serve the same purpose now as it did during the 60's and 70's with even greater fervor.

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Divers served R.A.S. extremely faithfully for over 19 years. Both of them being in their eighties at the time. A concerted effort was made for a number of years to find an Office Manager on a permanent basis. Men like Dr. David Larsen, Rev. Dalton Myers, Rev. John Bellshaw, and Rev. Fred McCormick served on the Board during the years of the 60's.

In 1968, the Lord answered "effectual, fervent prayer" and Rev. Loren Pugsley was called to be Office Manager and Field Director at \$200 per month, plus hospitalization, housing and some expenses. Rev. Pugsley had been a pastor for over 30 years and was experienced and qualified. He served very effectively keeping up with many orders to fill, letters to answer, records to be kept, among his many duties. There was a spirit of optimism in the ensuing years. Presentation of a vision for

enlargement was made which included: more personnel and promotion; approach to Christian businessmen; expansion of advertising and circulation; a training program to insure the Service's ongoing; and addition of addressograph equipment.

In 1972 Mrs. Divers went to be with the Lord and Mr. Roy Divers left the Board at age 91, after nearly 20 years of tireless dedication. He was made an honorary member. It was men and women such as the Divers who made R.A.S. what it is today. Their voluntary giving of their lives has kept R.A.S. in constant operation. R.A.S. continued to operate with the capacity of personnel and funds they had available and the Lord honored this commitment. An interesting note which appeared in the Spring Board Minutes of 1972 is: "It was suggested that the reprint of an article about the need for information militating against the cults that was originally written by Dr. Harry A. Ironside in the Religion Analysis Service office be approved."

Two things of interest were noted in the minutes: The Fall Newsletter of 1973 brought the best response ever, and that Armstrongism was the current leading cult from the standpoint of requests for material. The Catalog consisted of 20 pages and 10,000 copies were ordered that year.

Cult activity, especially the occult, was definitely on the rise and the requests for literature on this issue increased. There was a great need for information and assistance to combat non-Biblical teaching which was making great inroads in our nation.

The status of R.A.S. was that 1974 was a "banner year," especially

financially, but also in outreach. In answer to specific prayer for the lack of giving response at the close of 1973, the Lord sent in the needed funds and the burden was lifted. Help was also supplied in the Office by Mrs. Kay Anderson.

The costs of operation soared because of increases in printing literature and also the need to relocate. By this time, 1975, R.A.S. was in its 29th year and the Lord continued to supply the needs. After being located on Hennepin Avenue for nearly three decades, the office was moved to Lake Street in Minneapolis. The move was made by September 1st.

Rev. Pugsley who had served so faithfully began to decline physically and was diagnosed as having arteriosclerosis and was ordered to "slow down." With all the demands of the Office such as mailings and responses this order seemed impossible. He was past 65 years of age at this time and his salary was minimal. To add to the difficulties, Mrs. Pugsley had broken both her wrists which kept her from working and increased the duties at home.

The trials come with the blessings and the Lord promised He "...will never leave us or forsake us" and He has certainly shown His faithfulness in this ministry of Religion Analysis Service. Through the faithful and dedicated servants of the Lord their labors have borne fruit in many hundreds or thousands of people needing assistance and deliverance from the myriad of cults, false religion, and disturbing trends of the day.

Concluded in the next DISCERN-ER.

ECUMENICAL PRESSURES OF OUR TIME

Prof. John E. Dahlin

The expanding ecumenical program of our day is a new historical phenomenon. Never in the annals of church history has anything comparable been witnessed. Indeed, the ecumenical movement has developed with an astonishing rapidity. Prior to 1948, or during decades since the turn of the century, the program lacked decisive leadership and direction. All this has changed since the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948. External church unity has expanded greatly between each of the three great conclaves of the World Council of Churches. It is certain that the Fourth Assembly which will convene in 1968, at Stockholm, Sweden, will further strengthen the program of ecumenicity. Already the World Council of Churches has within its fold most of the Protestant denominations. And in addition, the Greek Orthodox Church as well as the Russian Orthodox Church (both of which are more [Roman] Catholic than Protestant) are an integral part of this external church union. As of 1967 the full count of individual groups holding membership in the World Council of Churches stands at 223. Along with this massive membership record are the continuous overtures which are being made to the Roman Catholic Church with the hope that eventually unification will be achieved with the largest religious system on earth. At both the Third

Assembly of the World Council of Churches and at the Second Vatican Council, Protestant and Catholics experienced a togetherness never witnessed since the days of the Reformation. This gigantic religious octopus is reaching out to encompass all peoples, nations, and tongues. Without a doubt, the ongoing acceleration of the present ecumenical drive will lead to the emergence of the super church, and this is precisely what the New Testament prophecy sets forth. It is clearly portrayed in the Book of Revelation Chapters 17 and 18. There you have identified the great "whore" or "harlot" of the end-time. It is an apostate system, completely false, and masquerading under the popular banner of Christianity. Prophetically considered, the extension of its influence is universal. In Chapter 17, verse 1, it is spoken of as "the great whore that sitteth on many waters." Later in the same Chapter the interpretation of that statement is provided in the words: "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues" (Rev. 17:15). This obviously means that the influence of this great counterfeit system will cover every area of the earth. Moreover, the universal apostasy of the latter days is referred to as "Babylon the Great." From the whole context it is clearly revealed that this religious system will develop extra-ordinary influence

and power in the days of Antichrist. The prophetic statement also indicates that judgment and utter destruction will come to this false system and it will cause astonishment to the peoples of the earth. Dr. Vance Havner has an excellent paragraph, in his book, It is Time on page 94, "There is fast forming today an apostate world church and we who believe the Word of God cannot expect to remain faithful and avoid division. There may be some questions as to when and how we are to separate, but separate we eventually must or be put out or else be compromisers. There are worse things than Schisms and division. Unity and harmony and catholicity at the price of principle are a thousand times worse. It was catholicity that killed Jesus, a united front today that is crucifying Him afresh. True unity is found through the fellowship of those who have come out of that united front to go unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach." Indeed, it is true that we are confronted with a universal system of religion which is exercising an enormous ecumenical pressure in order to gain external unity of the church. This, then, is a quick resume of the super church as outlined in Bible prophecy.

PRESSURE ON NON-CONFORMISTS

It is obvious that such a massive system of ecclesiasticalism, as the one which we have described, should attempt to exert a great pressure on non-conformists and evangelicals. It is a dominant characteristic of both the National Council and the World Council of Churches. Through its pronouncements, the National Council of Churches gives the impression that it

speaks for all of Protestantism. This is completely false as there are millions of Protestants who are outside the system altogether. Ecumenists are famous, however, for labeling those who disagree with them as either rightists or radicals. The purpose in all of this is obviously to isolate and discredit the minority in being guilty of promoting division and fragmentation within the sphere of Christendom. Evangelicals are being continually stigmatized as schismatics who are uninterested in the welfare of the church as a whole. We have every reason to expect that the ecumenical pressure in this regard will be intensified as the National and World Council of Churches gather up additional momentum. In other words, we will witness a stepped-up drive in smearing Bible-believing Christians as being obstinate and obstructionists by operating outside the so-called mainstream of Christianity. Somehow, this technique is very effective, and certain new evangelicals are taken in by this kind of propaganda and hence are now advocating dialogues and a better understanding with those who belong to the National and the World Council of Churches. This kind of ecumenical pressure is very subtle and it often causes conservatives to yield here and there. Present-day ecumenists are frequently viewing the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century as a mistake, and they continually harp on the sin and the evil of the existing fragmentation of the church.

TODAY'S POLITICAL ECUMENICAL PRESSURE

The ecumenical movement as expressed by the National and the

World Council of Churches is engaged in a powerful pressure on political institutions. With regard to the war in Viet Nam the National Council of Churches has on the whole taken an anti-government position by viewing the war as immoral and indefensible. And, leading spokesmen of the ecumenical movement have given encouragement to draft dodgers as well as those who are engaged in open demonstrations against the policy of the national government. In the civil rights area, and in the matter of integration of races, oftentimes many of these leaders have manifested defiance of city ordinances. Father James E. Groppi of Milwaukee has received support and encouragement in his defiant program against the government of his city. Such political pressures and opposition to governmental policies contradict the clear teaching of the New Testament, particularly Romans, Chapter 13. The purpose of such pressures is to alter our whole political, economic and social order with the goal of achieving conformity to the concepts of those who guide the ecumenical movement.

PRESSURES ON CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Again and again we have seen how spokesmen of the ecumenical movement have sought to gain exclusive recognition by the Federal Communications Commission and limit the opportunity of the minority of the non-conformists in utilizing the same channels. In other words, the National Council of Churches continually seeks to be recognized as the only official voice of the American churches. Even local church federations have used pressure on city zoning boards in seeking to determine

which local church may or may not be built in various communities within the city. Independents and minority groups need to have an awareness of this situation and use all legitimate means available to them in opposing the kind of dominance sought by the vigorous spokesmen for the majority represented by the National Council of Churches. Unless the independents maintain a continued vigilance in this regard and manifest resourcefulness the radio, press, and other channels of communication may be granted exclusive recognition by governmental rulings in these areas. This is possible if the leaders of the ecumenical movement are able to successfully brand the independents as divisive dissenters who represent only insignificant splintered groups. Governmental rulings may be imposed which conform to the wish of the majority due to the pressures used in these areas.

These ecumenical pressures of today, and the serious implications involved, should be recognized by all minority groups as very important matters. Should the position of the independent and the evangelical groups be isolated and discredited beyond that of the present situation, it is possible that those who seek to witness effectively for God may be greatly curtailed and circumscribed by the dominant majority. These are sobering thoughts, and we must not sweep these potential threats under the rug, as it were, and trust that the ecumenists will be generous or guided by a policy of fairness. This is not the time for compromise or capitulation; rather it behooves us to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

SEQUEL TO A LETTER OF "FREEDOM"

By Jo Ann BeVier

It isn't often you can write an added chapter to a story after it is printed, but in this case we felt it was in order.

In our Vol. 15, No. 1, January-February-March 1995 issue of The Discerner we wrote a "Letter of Freedom" which was a letter written by a former member of the Worldwide Church of God (Armstrongism) to his sister. We changed the names in order to protect the writer and his family and their privacy. It was a joyful letter with humor that made one laugh.

Now, both with sadness and rejoicing, we write this sequel using their real names.

Tom Holshouser and his wife, Lavonne, left the Worldwide Church of God after some thirty years. Both of their families were still involved with the group with few exceptions. When they left they became active in a Worldwide Church of God Exit and Support Network and wanted to see that others, including family, were aware of the deception and brainwashing that goes on within that church. The following paragraphs are taken from a newspaper account and are from a secular point of view but a definite tribute to a saint of God.

"In 37 Years, Tommy Holshouser tasted deeply of Life." Tom Holshouser liked to ride his blue Schwinn Super Sport bike to work because he was seriously training for his first 100-mile bicycle marathon and also the amount not spent on car maintenance was a welcome benefit to his savings account. He rode 15 miles each way to FORCAM, Inc. where he was a senior software engineer. He had graduated from N.C. State University and UNC Charlotte, magna cum laude, with degrees in math and mechanical engineering

which earned him a job he had held the past seven years.

It was the bright sun that blinded the driver who hit Tom as he pedaled to work on Wednesday, December 27, 1995. The injuries were fatal to Thomas Edward Holshouser, 37, husband, father, athlete and more.

He had a reputation as a child of being frugal with his money. But he was generous when it came to helping others. He also showed his love especially to his family.

He liked to test the limits of his endurance. It was said he had a passion for life and a curiosity. He loved to scuba dive, camp out in zero degree weather, photograph nature, and travel with his family. He took them to Czechoslovakia, Austria, Germany, the Fiji Islands, Barbados, and Granada. After his oldest son, Ethan, arrived he took him when he went to Italy.

It was also said of Tom that "He made a lot of his short life, accomplished a lot, always aimed high and usually exceeded his aim."

When we received word of his sudden death from his sister, who is a believer and the one who had sent us his original letter, we felt sorrow and disbelief. But knowing about his life and what he had done in a short time and knowing that the Lord had used him in such a definite way, we felt privileged to have been a part of this transformed life and its influence.

Now, as his wife, Lavonne and their two children, Ethan and Jesse, are left to carry on his heritage, we can say as he did at the end of his letter: "Freedom at last!"

Psalm 116:15. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

MAINTAINING THE FOUNDATION-REBUILDING THE SUPERSTRUCTURE (PART 2)

By Dr. Douglas R. McLachlan

EXAMINING FUNDAMENTALISM

A Troubled Superstructure

There is no doubt that there are some very disintegrative elements in the superstructure of Fundamentalism.

First, among these would be a tendency to exalt polemics over apologetics. Simply stated this means that fundamentalists have a reputation for being better fighters than they are builders.

They sometimes find it easier to attack another's point of view than to defend their own. Caustic criticisms of perceived error (what polemics often degenerate to) tend to push the undecided over the brink toward a less Biblical position—they are almost always counter productive. Careful defenses of believed truth (what apologetics are intended to be) tend to prohibit the undecided from going over the brink—they are constructively productive.

It seems to me that we would be wise to take very seriously the Biblical standards imposed upon spiritual leadership by the apostle Paul in I Tim. 3:3. In particular I have in mind three specific marks of a spiritual leader:

1. "No striker" (me plekten). Paul's word is derived from plesso which describes someone who is pugnacious and quicktempered, someone who explodes with his fists and is anxious to exchange blows in the face of provocation. This is

precisely what the godly man is not to do. He must not assault others and neither is he to be a "bully."

2. "Patient" (epiekes). Matthew Arnold called it "sweet reasonableness." It is the word which describes gentle mercifulness, unselfish yieldedness or patient forgiveness. It is a portrait of tempering justice with mercy, or refusing to insist upon "my rights," of forgiving when one has a perfect right to condemn. It is too often a rare virtue in Christian circles and if it were more often present a world of hostilities could be avoided.
3. "Not a brawler" (amachon). This is the word which means quite literally, "peaceable" (A & G), "tolerant" or "disinclined to fight." Vine suggests that it means "not fighting" and "not contentious." On the surface this is puzzling. We all know that no man can embrace the Christian faith without integrating into his life a dimension of militancy. He must always be prepared to defend the faith and the refusal to do so on some bogus ground of pacifism is the highest form of false pietism. So what does Paul have in mind? He means that God's man never views confrontation as the first step in resolving a problem but the last step, coming only after all other means have been exhausted.

However, when all such means have failed and the preservation of truth is at stake this "peaceable" man who is "disinclined to fight" is prepared to stand and engage in the "good fight," i.e., the noble battle which defends truth in a fallen world. To be sure he is "not a brawler," but neither is a compromiser.

There is a valuable insight in this scenario. When a violent man fights, no one really pays much attention because that is what he always does. We don't expect anything different. But when a "peaceable" man fights, there is moral weight. It gains the attention of perceptive observers for this is "not like him." It means that the battle must be vital and is therefore worthy of our support!

Second, among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be a tendency to confuse brazenness or abrasiveness with boldness. There is a perception among some that we have not spoken Biblically or boldly unless we have spoken meanly or harshly, but this is clearly contradicted by Scripture. Paul in Ephesians 4:13-16 deals with the theme of the pursuit of Christian maturity. At the very heart of this emphasis we find these words: "speaking the truth in love" (4:15). One of the supreme evidences of spiritual maturity is not only the proclamation of the right message (truth), but the projection of the right mood (love). This is a very needful balance which one commentator has addressed powerfully.

Thank God there are those in the contemporary church who are determined at all costs to defend and uphold God's revealed truth. But sometimes they are conspicu-

ously lacking in love. When they think they smell heresy, their nose begins to twitch, their muscles ripple, and the light of battle enters their eye. They seem to enjoy nothing more than a fight. Others make the opposite mistake. They are determined at all costs to maintain and exhibit brotherly love, but in order to do so are prepared even to sacrifice the central truths of revelation. Both these tendencies are unbalanced and unbiblical. Truth becomes hard if it is not softened by love; love becomes soft if it is not strengthened by truth. The apostle calls us to hold the two together, which should not be difficult for Spirit-filled believers, since the Holy Spirit is himself "the spirit of truth," and His first fruit is "love." There is no other route than this to a fully mature Christian unity. (Stott, God's New Society, IVP).

"Boldness" in Scripture never means "harshness." Instead it always means possessing the courage to tell the whole truth compassionately and comprehensively. We are never at liberty to make the Gospel more "acceptable" by either watering it down or eliminating those elements of it which seem to be the most "objectionable." We must always be prepared to tell the whole story, and the courage to do that is what the Bible calls "boldness." There is nothing in it which is incompatible with "speaking the truth in love."

Third among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be the tendency to confuse traditional forms with Biblical substance. This problem is

not new. Even Jesus was made to say: "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:7-9). There develops a rigidity when it comes to maintaining certain norms, structures or rules; a hostility to the very thought of change. We fail to see that while the message is inflexible, the methodology is not—within Biblical parameters it can change without compromise. Failure to see this means that we begin to make non-absolutes absolute, with the result that "God's commandments" are set aside and our "own tradition" prevails.

At the heart of this problem is the inability to look at life principally instead of mechanically. Biblical Fundamentalism always recognizes, for example, the priority of "principles" over "rules" in the development of the Christian life. A rule is a temporal regulation which changes with the evolution of culture and the passing of time. A principle, on the other hand, is a foundational truth which is eternal and immutable, and which transcends all cultures and all times. Rules, structures and forms will and must change—principles never can. Our task is to take the eternal principles of Scripture and apply them to the real-life situations of our culture and times, allowing those principles to dictate the forms and structures through which we carry out our ministries and the rules and guidelines by which we live out our lives. This will provide for adaptations of our ministry to our culture without contamination of our ministry by our culture, for only the form, never the substance, will be changed.

Fourth among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist

superstructure would be the Failure to preach expositionally while at the same moment adhering to the highest possible view of inspiration. Perhaps the greatest contradiction in Fundamentalism is this dialectic of embracing the highest view of inspiration and practicing the lowest level of communication. Were Scripture only a compilation of human thoughts about God composed by religious men, such an approach to preaching would be pardonable. But since Scripture is a revelation of divine truth from God unveiled to sinful men, such an approach to preaching is unpardonable. More than ever before, we who cherish and defend the doctrine of inspiration must commit ourselves to the act of expositional communication. The blessing of God is not for either the demagogue or the orator, who can sway audiences and hold them spellbound, but the expositor, who spends his life discerning accurately and delivering passionately, relevantly and clearly the content of God's Word to his people. God's blessing rests supremely on those who take quite literally Paul's mandate: "Preach the Word."

Fifth among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be the tendency to confuse Biblical holiness with mechanical codes of conduct. I do not mean to suggest that codes of conduct are wrong, only that they fall far short of producing true spirituality. It has always been true that mere outward conformity can never produce sincere inward reality.

One of the grave problems associated with a focus on externals is the development of a preoccupation with

the trivial. And the greatest danger of concentrating on the trivial is the overlooking of the vital (Matt. 23:23). In the verse we have cited, Jesus indicts the Pharisees for tithing on the herbs of the kitchen garden (the trivial), while simultaneously neglecting justice, mercy and fidelity (the vital).

To put it in modern terms a man might dress modestly, groom conservatively, give liberally, pray correctly, attend faithfully and still be a “jerk” spiritually. Why? Because he is at the very same moment unjust in his business, unmerciful in human relationships and unfaithful to his oaths, pledges and promises. “There is nothing easier in all the world than to observe all the outward actions of religion and yet be completely irreligious in the critical matters of life.” So while we are holding on to high personal standards which are based on holy Biblical principles, we must never confuse Biblical holiness with mechanical codes of conduct.

Sixth among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be our failure to simultaneously express holiness and love. If ever there were a balance desperately needed within our ranks this is it. Somehow we need to develop the skill of expressing compassion without giving way to compromise. This is not easy. That is why we avoid it. It is much easier to opt for one or the other (holiness or love rather than holiness and love). But this unbiblical imbalance has been destructive to Christian ministry. Neo-evangelicals have opted for unholy love, and some Fundamentalists have opted for unloving holiness. But neither of

these options will do. The imbalance in Neo-evangelicalism has tended to produce “sloppy agapē,” while the imbalance in Fundamentalism has tended to produce “high-minded holiness.” Both are distortions of the image of God in which we are made and of which we are to be reflectors.

So then God is our example, for He is both holy and love; He is both the Judge who must penalize sin and the Lover who wishes to pardon sinners. In his great book, The Cross of Christ, John Stott has a powerful insight regarding this so-called “strife of attributes”:

This vision of God’s holy love will deliver us from caricatures of Him. We must picture Him neither as an indulgent God who compromises His holiness in order to spare and spoil us, nor as a harsh vindictive God who suppresses His love in order to crush and destroy us. How then can God express His holiness without consuming us, and His love without condoning our sins? How can God satisfy His holy love? How can He save us and satisfy Himself simultaneously? We reply...in order to satisfy Himself, He sacrificed—indeed substituted—Himself for us.

This can only mean that in our personal lives and ministries failure to express holiness and love simultaneously will turn us into eccentric caricatures instead of authentic pictures of the Christ we represent. And this can only mean that in order to express holiness and love simultaneously we shall have to do so sacrificially (even as God in Christ sacrificed Himself). Both harshness

(unloving holiness) and softness (unholy love) will have to go, and for all of us this will require sacrifice. It is perhaps for this reason that so few Christians make the dedicated investment which is necessary to maintain this delicate balance of holiness and love simultaneously expressed in their lives. But without such an investment we can never be the authentic Christians we are called to be, nor can we have the authentic ministries we are called to render.

Seventh among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure is the tendency to be affirmational without first being exegetical. It is sometimes true that we talk before we think. On occasion there have been those among us who have blurted out their demands without feeling the necessity to justify them. Only God has such a right. All the rest of us are obligated to explain "why." And if we don't, before long human affirmations begin to eclipse divine affirmations so that men end up speaking with the same authority as God.

To be sure, it is not intrinsically wrong to be affirmational. No true Fundamentalist is timid about affirming his beliefs, but he is always certain that before he opens his mouth to the world in public he has opened his mind to the Word in private. He is prepared to endure the tedium of careful exegesis and diligent study so that he can speak with authority out of God's Word. As a matter of fact, our loyalty to Scripture demands that we defer to it by changing our minds if we judge that our previous affirmations have not been exegetically sound or precisely accurate. And once we have

done so, then we must be prepared to courageously affirm our thoroughly Biblical views.

Eighth among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be the tendency to condemn sins of the flesh while overlooking sins of the spirit. But Scripture will not allow for this unwarranted dichotomy: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1). Sins of the "flesh" are overt, like David's sin with Bathsheba out of motivations of lust; sins of the "spirit" are covert, like David's sin of numbering the people (I Chron. 21) out of motivations of pride. As someone has suggested: There are both prodigal sons (flesh) and older brothers (spirit). The prodigal son wasted his life groveling in the world; the elder brother wasted his life grumbling at home.

Our failure has been in refusing to see that sins of the spirit are just as destructive to God's work as sins of the flesh. While we have taken strong stands against gross immorality, we have actually engaged in the "finer sins" of Jesuit ethics, power-politics, prideful boasting, malicious gossip and diabolical slander. Sometimes we have actually employed those tactics in the "defense of the faith." But such carnal weaponry will no longer do (II Cor. 10:3-5). It will do neither us nor the cause of Christ any good to feign the defense of Biblicalism while we are at the same moment denying the Bible (by violating its ethical principles). We must renew our commitment to the utilization of God's divine weaponry and our loyalty to transparent Biblical ethics in all that we do.

Ninth among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be the tendency to limit the application of Christian truth to personal life-styles while failing to see its application to the great cultural issues of our day. In this point I find myself agreeing with one of Charles Colson's statements:

History is but "the visible effects of invisible changes in human thought." Ideas affect history a great deal more than armies. That is why we need to bring the Christian message into the market-place of ideas. How well we permeate our national consciousness with Christ's truth will determine the values our culture lives by (Who Speaks for God?, pp. 87, 88).

There are occasions when we will have to turn our attention away from such things as hem lines and hair lengths (and there is a place for dealing with such matters) and focus on such issues as encroaching secularism, avaricious materialism, pervasive evolutionism and defiant feminism. God's Word speaks profoundly to all of these issues, and there is no doubt that each one of them has made a radical impact on the values of our culture, and in some cases on the values embraced by our own people. They are wanting to know: "Is there any word from God?" on such matters.

The Christian mind is firmly anchored to four unchangeable truths, four great realities, which are found in God's Word and which enable it to think straightly in the midst of incredible complexity. This is an advantage which no other religionist or philosopher possesses, and

Christians would be foolish not to capitalize upon it. John Stott has given a powerful word regarding these four unchangeable truths which help us to think straight about our culture:

Here, then are four events which correspond to four realities—first the Creation ("the good"), secondly the Fall ("the evil"), thirdly the Redemption ("the new"), and fourthly the Consummation ("the perfect"). This fourfold Biblical reality enables Christians to survey the historical landscape within its proper horizons. It supplies the true perspective from which to view the unfolding process between two eternities, the vision of God working out His purpose. It gives us a framework in which to fit everything, a way of integrating our understanding, the possibility of thinking straight, even about the most complex issues (Involvement: Being a Responsible Christian in a Non-Christian Society, Revell, p. 61).

So then, only Christians, who look at life through the lens of these four realities, can understand realistically what is happening in their culture and prescribe meaningfully the solutions to the complexities which we face. If it is true that, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34), then God's righteous people must confront the sin which is all around them with His unchangeable and powerful truth.

For my part, I believe this should be done not through sociopolitical

activism, but through a dynamic network of independent, fundamental local churches. I believe we have vastly underestimated the power of a Spirit-controlled, God-honoring expositor of Scripture. We need prophetic voices thundering out from Fundamentalist pulpits the eternal principles of the divine Word which will both touch and transform not only our individual lives but our cultural ills. When this kind of pungent salt is rubbed into the cultural decadence and this kind of brilliant light penetrates into the cultural darkness, we can be sure that lasting individual and cultural impacts will be made.

Tenth among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be our failure to recognize that invisible spiritual growth cannot be gauged by mechanical measuring devices. For more than a quarter of a century we have labored under the false assumption that bigness equals greatness and that success can be measured numerically. In many cases the result has been the development of a philosophy of ministry which revolves around a celebrity focus (the star of the show who attracts the crowd) who functions as a corporation executive manipulating and then discarding his people in his relentless advance toward statistical superiority. All too often evangelism in this context has been reduced to humanism as the Spirit and the Word are set aside while the Gospel is "packaged" and "marketed" almost as though it were a plastic toy.

The passing of time, however, has revealed that artificial methodology can never produce authentic ministry. Churches, and in some cases

whole movements, have begun to cave-in and collapse. Such abuse of God's offices and God's people has produced a "waste land," a "desert of the spirit," as a result of which many souls, who were once aflame with joyful enthusiasm, have now been reduced to dead ashes. Both pastors and people have become eviscerated, emptied and "burned out."

Quite frankly, I believe that we have gotten the "cart before the horse." Emaciated women cannot give birth to nor nurture healthy children. Neither can emaciated Christians. Perhaps Gene Getz was right when he said 15 years ago that the marks of a mature church are faith, hope and love (I Cor. 13:13; Eph. 1:15, 16, 18; Col. 1:3-6; I Thess 1: 2, 3; II Thess 1:3, 4), and that whatever else we judge to be a sign of maturity or success, all else is meaningless apart from these more fundamental and Scriptural indicators. Perhaps it would be more Biblically accurate when computing statistics to list how many husbands are lovingly leading their families, how many wives are humbly following their husbands and how many children are cheerfully obeying their parents. Faith, hope, love-authentic husbands, wives and children—these are the measuring devices by which we should be gauging the "success" of our ministries. And when such qualities become a reality in our churches, all the rest will follow quite naturally. It may take a good long while before many of us will be able to root out of our own thinking these false systems of computing "success," but it is an effort we must all make, if we ever hope to return to authentic New Testament Christianity.

A Sure Foundation

There is no doubt that Fundamentalism has been built on solid and significant pillars. For our purposes here I will only list them as I see them:

1. Bibliology — The Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scripture.
2. Theology Proper — The Eternality, Personality, Purity, Potency and Proximity of God.
3. Christology — The Deity, Incarnation, Resurrection and Return of the Son.
4. Pneumatology — The Deity, Personality, Presence and Power of the Holy Spirit.
5. Soteriology — God's grace its Fount, Christ's Death its Ground, Man's faith its demand and a Life of Holy-love its Fruit.
6. Ecclesiology — The Uniqueness of Christ's Body; the Primacy of the Local Church.
7. Anthropology — Man a Creature of God; Man an Image-bearer of God; Man, Fallen, but Redeemable.
8. Cosmology — God by direct fiat created the material and spiritual universe—The world of physics and the realm of angels.

CONCLUSION

So what are we going to do in view of what we now know? It is true that Neo-evangelicalism possesses a significant superstructure, but it is equally true that she possesses a troubled (in some ways even crumbling) foundation. It is true that Fundamentalism possesses a troubled superstructure (we have sought to be transparently honest about this), but it is equally true that she possesses a sure foundation. Which, then, of these two options shall we choose? In my mind there is a sense in which we have no choice at all, because the choice has already been made for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. He has already told us that whoever builds upon sand will fall, and great will be his fall, and whoever builds upon the rock will not fall for he is "founded upon a rock" (Matt. 7:24-27). It remains only for us to obey.

And this is not a counsel of despair because we are not "saddled" with the disintegrative elements of our superstructure. It is possible for those in the emerging generation of fundamentalists to take the necessary Biblical steps to return to authentic Fundamentalism. Those who are prepared to make the sacrificial commitment which is necessary to see this happen can expect glory to God, good to others and fulfillment to themselves.

BOOK REVIEW

When The Trumpet Sounds

By Timothy Demy & Thomas Ice

Reviewed by Rev. Ervin D. Ingebretson

Biblical Eschatology is the doctrine of "last things" — what the Bible has to say about the future. Since approximately one fourth of the Bible is prophecy there should be more than a superficial examination of this subject in the teaching ministry of our churches. God has allowed the readers of Scripture to peer through the veil into the future with vital information to enhance faith and hope.

Unfortunately, too many people are reporting that Biblical Eschatology is presented seldom, if

at all, in many churches. There is an enigma here. Normally people have "itching ears" to learn about the future. Sadly, the opportunities are not there as they should be.

Perhaps the variety of interpretations of the timing of these future events has moved people to ignore this doctrine simply to avoid dissonance. One group of interested persons who support the Pre-Trib Rapture of the Church refuse to be silent on their biblical views of prophecy.

When the Trumpet Sounds is a series of essays compiled by Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy gathered from biblical scholars, pastors, and communicators participating in a Pre-Trib Study Group. The Group, under the leadership of Timothy LeHaye and Thomas Ice, first met in 1992 and agreed to meet annually.

Thomas Ice established the ground rule for logical interpretation

of biblical prophecy. Timing of events is important. To place some event in the past (preterist) or in the present (church age) will only cause confusion. The rule is "keep the future in the future."

Some of the prominent essayists among the twenty contributors are John F. Walvood, J. Dwight Pentecost, John S. Feinberg, Paul D. Feinberg, Grant R. Jeffrey, and Timothy LeHaye.

The essayists, each writing on different aspects of their view of prophecy, affirm the Pre-Trib Rapture by examining historical statements by the Apostolic Fathers, the Early Medieval Church, and succeeding periods of church history. Terms such as "wrath," "tribulation," "latter days," "abomination of desolation," etc. are presented from the Old Testament. With this foundation the New Testament unveils more clearly the Pre-Trib Rapture, Tribulation, the Second Coming, and the Millennium. Primarily, the essays deal with New Testament references - Matthew, chapter 24; First and Second Thessalonians; Revelation, chapters three through nineteen.

Varying interpretations of the time of the Rapture such as PreTrib, Mid-Trib, Post-Trib are discussed by several essayists.

Dr. John Feinberg carefully evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective. A new perspective called PreWrath Rapture pro-

posed by Marvin Rosenthal, formerly affiliated with the Friends of Israel, places the rapture of the Church sometime just prior to the opening of the sixth seal described in Revelation 8:1. This is strongly refuted by several essayists.

Proponents of the Pre-Trib Rapture consider immanency of Christ's return to be a prominent biblical doctrine. All essayists have concluded that the Pre-Trib Rapture is most logically supported by the Scriptures. Any other variation of the timing of the Rapture would

erode the essential belief and consequently affect the behavior of believers. Timothy LeHaye in the final essay amplifies this theme with strong encouragement for believers to prepare for this significant event.

When reading this series of essays one should have the Scriptures open for the contributors have used copious references to support their theses. This is an intensive and edifying study of great interest to believers. It will invoke blessed hope as it instructs on the Lord's soon return.

BOOK REVIEW

The Church With No Name

By Lynn Cooper

Reviewed by William A. BeVier

This book was published by the author in Wellington, New Zealand, 1996, 48pp. The author spent 30 years in the "Church with no name," a.k.a. The Cooneyites, a.k.a. "Two by Twos," etc. She was a third generation follower.

The group meets in homes, barns, rented buildings, but not in "churches." They claim their headquarters is "in heaven" and they are followers of "Jesus." They distort Scriptures and take them out of context (p. 4). They claim they are the only "true" church. While they do not print any literature of their teachings, they do have hymn books.

The author states she wrote the book to:

1. Inform others what the group believes compared with Scripture.

2. That the reader may be able to understand and minister to this group.

3. To show those in the group their beliefs compared to Scripture.

A bibliography is given at the end of the book for more in depth information. Lynn Cooper states she is not writing to condemn the group, but "...that they may come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to know who He is."

Group members are encouraged to read nothing but newspapers. TV, stereos, and radio are forbidden. This tends to isolate members from the rest of the world, which Cooper writes, is the desire of the leadership.

The vocabulary of the Cooneyites is so different from that of Scripture and traditional Christians that Cooper appends a list of their "Code

Words" and their meanings to her book.

Cooper presents the historical background of the movement, including that Eddie Cooney was excommunicated in 1928, which probably is one reason why the group denies the name "Cooneyites."

The leaders are called "workers," and are to be held in high respect. Not to do so can lead to excommunication. To question a "worker" is to "have a bad spirit" (p. 16).

Cooper presents numerous examples of where the Cooneyites contradict or clearly ignore the New Testament Scripture.

In this group the "workers" (those who do the preaching and teaching) are forbidden to marry, which Mrs. Cooper points out clearly violates Scripture. However, women are accepted as "workers," and the group has far more women than men "workers."

Cooper believes most "converts" into the group comes from children born to existing group members.

As in many groups, the attempt to avoid "worldliness" has led to a clear legalism, with many "thou shall

nots." But Cooper points out some of the inconsistencies here.

She presents both what the "workers" preach and what they don't preach. They concentrate on their interpretation of Matthew 10 and tend to ignore or not present most of the rest of Scripture.

Cooper in her conclusion writes: "...there is however, sufficient evidence to suggest that this group is a cult" (p. 35).

Lynn Cooper closes her book by giving an account of her personal conversion to Christ, and an invitation for others to do the same, but also presents how and why this can be difficult for a person involved in a cult.

In her bibliography and endnotes she refers to several of the books R.A.S. has in stock. However, because some earlier works on this group are no longer available, we plan to stock Lynn Cooper's book as a replacement.

For a person interested in a brief, well-written overview of the "Cooneyites," I recommend Lynn Cooper's book.

RESPONSES

In the past few months we have received many notes/letters of encouragement. We thought it might be of interest and encouragement to you as it has been to us. We thank each of you who has written — continue to let us hear from you.

Dear Friends: Keep doing what you have been doing.. With so many proclaimers today, little or no attention is paid to hermeneutics hence many consciences are salved. What a challenging day for Truth.

W. & N.H.

Dear Brethren, Thank you for sending me the extra Discerner issues I requested. May the Lord of the harvest increase our efforts to His glory. Tho' we've never met, I'm always encouraged that I have family, strong and secure in all of you at R.A.S. who have a true burden to witness for Christ Jesus, and reflect His love by exposing the deceptive and twisted teachings of religions.

L.F.S.

I would like to thank you for sending the "Boston Church of Christ" article to my friend. I have learned a lot. I didn't realize that I was in such an extreme "church group." Thanks again, for taking the time to send the article. It is greatly appreciated.

J.B.

I thank you much for your help to me and my good friend and her mother when we needed you so much. They have broken all ties to the

International Church of Christ.. This type of thing is so wrong.... We are indebted to you.

B.A.

Dear Children of the Lord, Fight the good fight — finish the course, put on the full armour of the soldiers of Christ and carry forward the fight to the camp of the enemies of Christ, our blessed and all gracious Savior in this world. I offer fervent and effectual prayer for your continued exposing of all those hate God.... Never ever surrender.

M.D.P.

Enclosed is our renewal to the Discerner. We thank you for your publication. It has been a great help and a great eye opener. Thanks again. Happy 50th anniversary.

B. & J.H.

Having just finished reading the Apr.-May-June Discerner, I want to comment on the excellent quality.... The format is excellent with your explanation of content and the author's identity. The article by Dr. McLachlan's analogy made these terms come alive and useful. Rev. Ballantine's article gives such a clear description of "liberal." The book reviews are most helpful as well as the History of R.A.S. and bringing valuable writings from the past. Thank you.

E.S.N.

I was converted in 1936. I am now 86 years old. I live on Social Security so do not have much money

left. I help where I can. I do a lot of reading. I believe in being alert and well informed. So far this year I have read 38 books. Time is running out for this wicked world.

E.K.

Just finished the April-May-June Discerner and it was so good i.e., all the articles! I thought the one by Herbert V. Caneday was the best I've ever read about the Laodicean Apostasy.

H.L.M.

My "tract drawer" is full of return envelopes but none from R.A.S. I'm renewing a subscription for my niece.

I thought that perhaps the AUTHORITY of your magazine will give her some sense of what being a Christian means. Please pray for her.

M.

Always appreciate and thank our Lord Jesus Christ for your service.

K.S.

I find your ministry invaluable!

C.C.M.

Thank you for sending the Discerner. Congratulations on your 50th Anniversary! Yours for souls.

B.P.

Switching to AmeriVision-Lifeline Helps R.A.S.

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