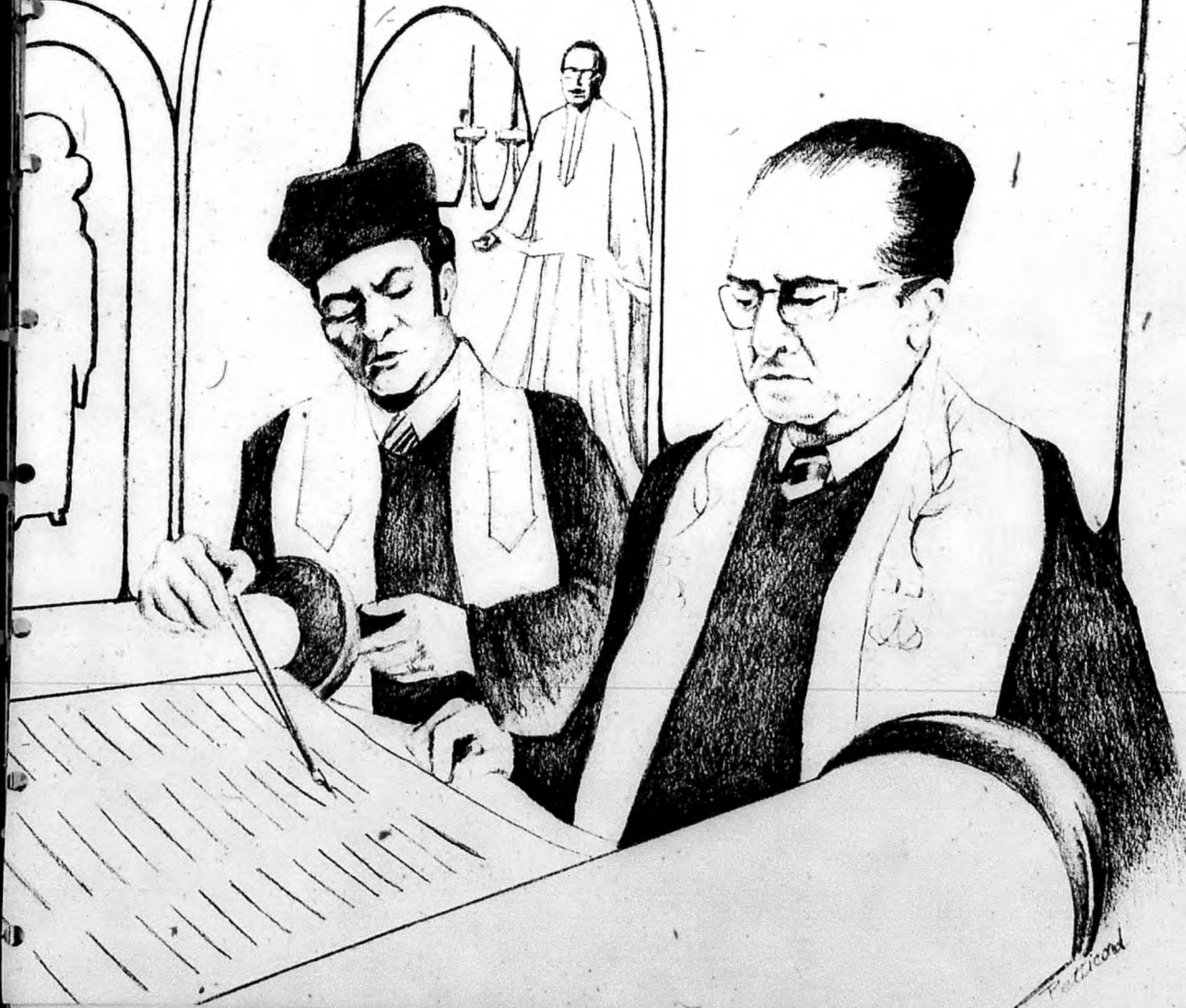


MARCH 1975

home missions

**Special Bonus Issue :
Beliefs of Other Kinds**



Walker Knight, editor

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PREVIEW by M. Thomas Starkes

Witnessing to people of other faiths

The crowd gathered under the glittering lights. Diane, baptized the previous day, came unexpectedly, inquiring where the course on Judaism would be taught. A. Jase Jones, who has spent 20 years in Jewish-Christian relations, greeted her. Within seconds they were discussing the beautiful land of Israel. Words like *Kibutz* and *teslim* filled the air.

Minutes later Diane stood inside before the 50 people gathered for an Interfaith Witness Outreach Seminar at the First Baptist Church in Norwalk. In a voice ringing with joy, she told of the Christian concern and persistence which led to her decision to become a "completed Jew." Near the end of her testimony, she broke into singing "He Touched Me," her voice clear and melodic until interrupted by a tear or two.

To bring other Dianas and other Jones' together for similar experiences, succinctly stated, is the purpose of this magazine. But no "Jones" is prepared to encounter any "Diane" until he has:

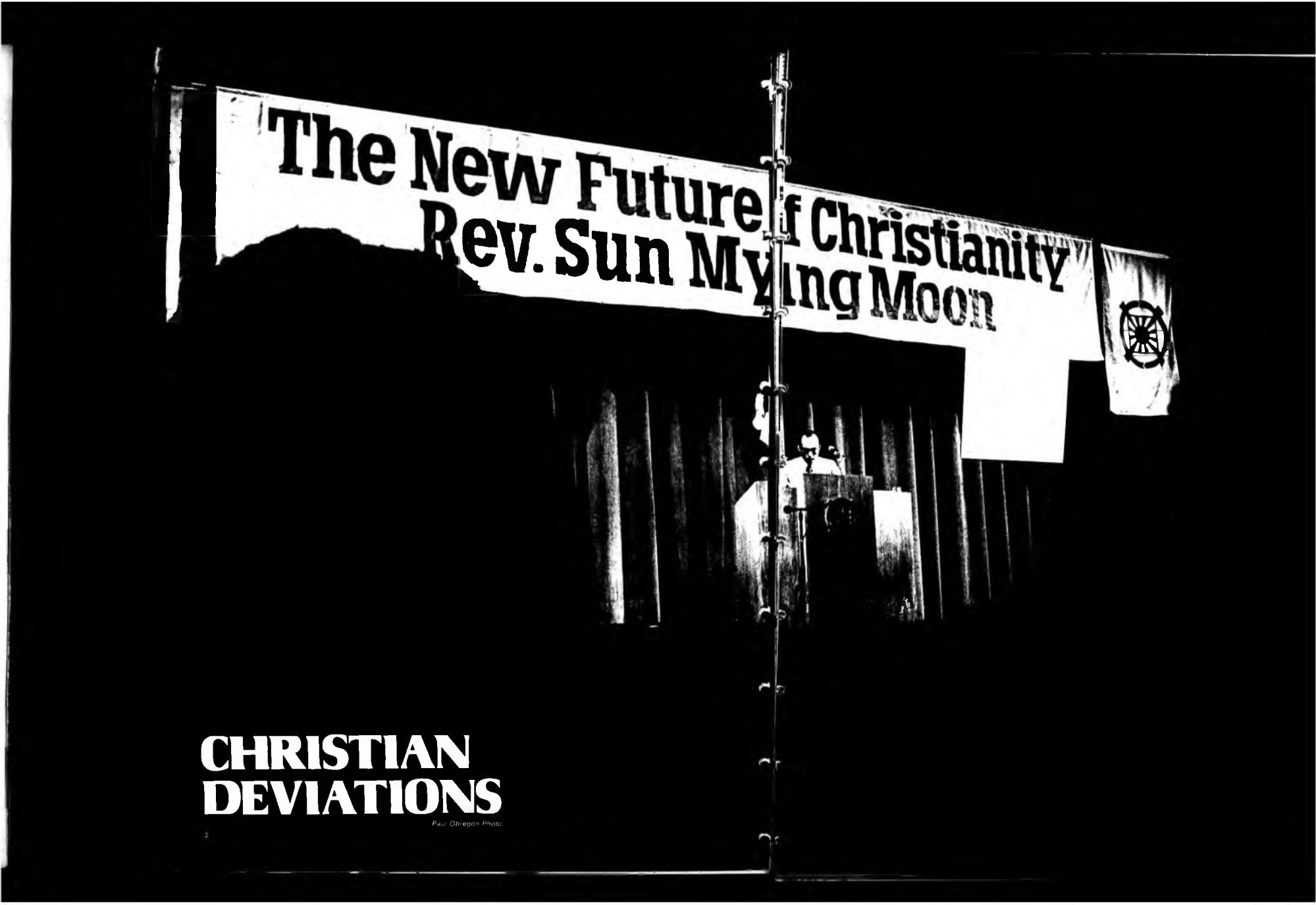
- An understanding of his own faith, based on the secure comparison of evangelical Christian faith and life-style with that of another believer;
- A growing knowledge of the faith of another, to the degree that emphatic statement of the other's belief system can be approved by that other. First-hand knowledge of believers of other kinds is imperative;
- A thorough analysis of the implication of conversion from one religious group to another, avoiding cliches or simplistic statements of absolutes;
- A "feeling" of what other groups are like, as well as the individuals within them. Human beings respond on more than a dogmatic or doctrinal stance. The one-dimensional approach is defunct;
- A willingness and freedom to affirm the positive qualities within another believer. This freedom facilitates conversation and allows honesty;
- A sharpening of the equipping tools for aggressive but not offensive witness.

Letters are awaiting on my desk now as I write this page. A sender from Oklahoma asks for information on Eckankar and Theosophy. A believer in Kentucky wants 50 copies of a popular pamphlet on Jehovah's witness. A missionary to the Japanese in New York requests help on Nichiren Shoshu. A young woman in Illinois has started dating a Mormon and wants to know how to witness to him. A student in North Carolina wants to study witnessing to Moslems.

These letters indicate a new era in religious pluralism. The era of the Protestant south or Catholic north or Jewish east coast is over.

Friends with nonevangelical faith systems are all around us—and they are our friends. Perhaps one day we will be so busy witnessing and relating to them that we will not have time—or need—for materials such as this.

Captions identifying all photos used in this issue can be found beginning on page 124.



**CHRISTIAN
DEVIATIONS**

Paul Obregon Photo

Armageddon's Army: The Jehovah's Witnesses

by M. Thomas Starkes

Very few Southern Baptists have escaped being approached on the street or in their homes by a representative of Armageddon's Army: the Jehovah's witnesses. Who are these people who will not salute the flag, who deny the bodily resurrection of Christ, and who are one of the world's two fastest growing sects? More important, what can Southern Baptists learn from them?

History of the Movement

Though adherents of the Jehovah's witness doctrine insist that their beginning was in the mind and heart of God, the outside observer might well contend that the movement began in the person of Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916). Russell was an orthodox Congregationalist until one day in a poolroom he sought to defend logically the doctrine of hell. Unable to do so, he began to question other Christian beliefs.

In 1880 Russell wrote *Food for Thinking Christians* and began a seven-volume work, *Studies in the Scriptures*. In the latter, a type of commentary, Russell sought to apply reason to the Bible. A year earlier he had started publication of *The Watch Tower*, which he edited until his death. Five years later he started the legal body of the international organization, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, and served as its president until he died in 1916.

The second leader of the movement was "Judge" Joseph F. Rutherford (1869-1942), who continued the growth of the movement. Rutherford wrote 22 full-length books and dozens of pamphlets, circulating over 450 million pieces of literature. During his tenure, the number of missionaries also increased. Rutherford initiated the idea of involving the whole congregation in door-to-door witnessing. He also began using billboards to publicize his pet phrase, "Millions Now Living Will Never Die."

Rutherford was not among that number and was succeeded, upon his death, by Nathan Knorr, the present leader and founder of the Watch Tower Bible School which trains full-time missionaries. During the first 11 years of Knorr's presi-

dency of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, the number of official foreign missionaries grew from zero to over 1,600. Knorr has been instrumental in changing the image of Witnesses by urging his door-to-door "salesmen" not to agitate against other faiths but to be jovially tactful.

The future of the group is difficult to predict; but, due to their zeal for witnessing on a personal level, one Catholic author has estimated that the Jehovah's witnesses may number over five million across the world.¹

Organization

Witnesses reach over 100 million homes every year in their attempt to tell throughout the world the "news" that Jehovah's kingdom arrived in 1918 through King Jesus' defeat of the enemy Satan. This phenomenal number of people reached annually is due to the effective organization for witnessing. Each member of the group is considered a minister of the gospel, and he is given impetus, resources, and encouragement for this endeavor by three corporations: the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, which is the worldwide supervisory agency for the Witnesses; the International Bible Students' Association, which is the foreign missionary agency; and the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, publisher of most of the Witness literature for the United States.

This exposure is made more effective by the voluminous amount of literature produced by the group. One and one-half million copies of *Awake!* magazine are distributed twice a month; it is second in circulation among the world's religious journals only because the Witnesses also publish *The Watch Tower*, with a circulation of over two million copies every two weeks.

Basic Doctrines

The Jehovah's witnesses rely heavily on their own brand of eschatology, the study of last things. For them the kingdom of heaven is at hand and the end of the age is near. In *Let God Be True*, the Bible study handbook of the Witnesses, arranged

in twenty-six topics, their eschatology is partially explained. Jehovah has not reigned over the whole earth since man's rebellion in Eden. Jehovah used Israel to form a prophetic moving picture of the government which will one day exercise dominion over all the earth, God's Kingdom by Christ Jesus. Through unfaithfulness Israel lost her sovereignty and was carried into captivity to Babylon in the year 607 B.C.²

Using Ezekiel 4:6 and Revelation 12:6, 14, the group reasons that the reference is to 2520 days or years and by adding 2520 to 607 B.C., the conclusion is that God's rule was re-established in A.D. 1914. That year is chosen also because of increased total wars, widespread famine, pestilences and earthquakes. According to Witnesses, Jesus Christ returned to the temple of God in 1914 and, by 1918, had cleansed it to prepare for judgment upon Satan and his followers. Jesus will not return again physically because he is already here. Nevertheless, Satan is preparing for the impending battle of Armageddon. Jehovah will go against "all who hold to demonism" in this greatest of all battles. Following the battle, the great mass of humankind will find life here on earth amid paradise conditions.³

Not all of Jehovah's witnesses expect to go to heaven. Citing Luke 12:32 and Revelation 7:4, they hold that God has limited to 144,000 the number of the "body of the Christ." For the Witnesses, eventually everyone will end up in one of three categories: those who will enter a life in heaven with Jesus; those who will live forever in a paradise on this earth if they have been a faithful Witness of Jehovah; and the wicked who are stubbornly set against their conversion and will be annihilated and forgotten.

This final assertion brings the reader back to the beginning of the movement, when C. T. Russell repudiated the doctrine of a burning hell. Witnesses' current Bible-study help states that the doctrine of a burning hell cannot be true for four reasons: it is wholly unscriptural; it is unreasonable; it is contrary to God's love; and it is repugnant to justice.

Beside their unique brand of eschatology, the group holds other tenets of faith outside the mainstream of Christian thought. The Jehovah's witnesses reject the doctrine of the Trinity, saying that it is a creation of Satan. *The Watch Tower* recorded:

The Scriptures clearly teach that Jehovah is the only true God—that the LOGOS was the beginning of his creation—that the LOGOS was made human as the man Jesus—that God raised up Jesus divine and exalted him to heaven above every other creature.⁴

Witnesses deny the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus. They claim instead that he was raised as an "invisible spirit creature." This is a rebirth of the old heresy of "Arianism," which stated that "Christ was the first of the creatures" and was repudiated by church leaders in the fourth century after Christ.

The Witnesses also hold that death is really unconsciousness or extinction. According to *Make Sure of All Things*, death is "loss of life, termination of existence," and can be proven by such texts as Psalm 13:3 and Daniel 12:2.

The evangelical Christian answer to the meaning of death is that the apostle Paul uses "sleep" to picture physical death and that the spirits of those now in glory (Phil. 1:22) will be united with their resurrection bodies (I Cor. 15). So, physical death involves only the sleep of the body pending resurrection to immortality with Christ. The number 144,000 is not taken literally but means that God's perfect number will be in heaven.

Inherent in all Jehovah's witnesses beliefs is the concept of Jehovah being in direct control of history and allowing Satan a temporary free reign over this wicked world. The group identifies Christendom (other Christian groups) as perverters of the good news that Jesus has reigned in the



Jim Wright Photo
temple since 1918, and blames Paul for "churchifying" the teachings of Jesus.

There are few Witnesses who are overly concerned with the life here on earth. They do not vote and believe that the world is so evil it is not worth saving. They predict the downfall of every government and maintain that our whole social system is a product of Christendom and reveals its satanic nature. In 1955, the Witnesses officially proclaimed that Christendom was stumbling over the Kingdom to her doom within this generation through the United Nations.⁵ The group totally rejects almost every attempt to bring better harmony among men on this earth.

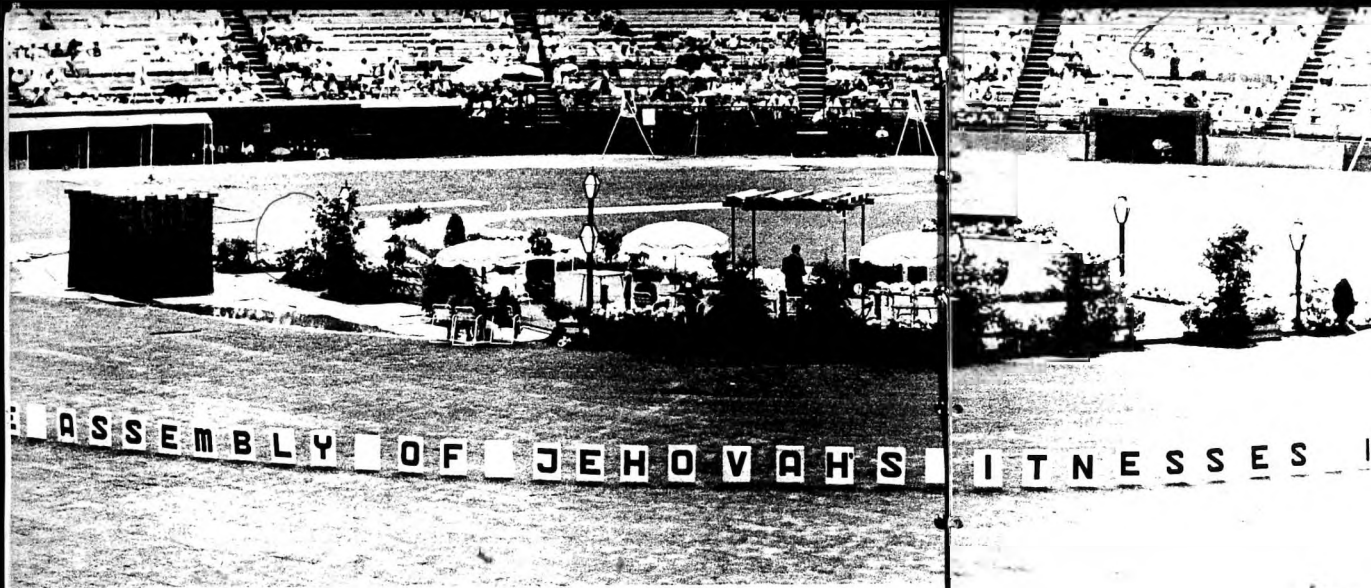
The above statements of Witness doctrines represent only the points at which they are at greatest variance with evangelical Christianity, but nonetheless seriously so.

A Critical Analysis

The biggest problem in any religious discussion is that of authority. What source can we use to determine what we should believe? And how do we use that source? Jehovah's witnesses appeal on the surface to many Bible-believing Baptists because they hold that their only source is the Word of God. The ultimate consideration, however, is *how* the Bible is used.

The method employed by the Witnesses of establishing the "truth" is to support their findings by a long array of Bible quotations taken at random from any part of the Bible with no consideration for their context, that is, the period in which it was written, who wrote it, its background or historical meaning, and the subject of the surrounding verses or chapters. The group also has translated the Scriptures for itself.

Continued



The translation covers the entire New Testament. It is titled, *The New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures and The New World Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures*. The New Testament version alone sold almost a half million copies in its first year, 1950-51. The committee relied heavily on the Greek text of Westcott and Hort.

The basic principle used seems good at first glance, but it melts under the light thrown on it by the professional linguist. The method attaches one meaning to any given word regardless of context. An example of the absurdity of this principle in action might be made by the use of the word "light." Suppose it is said that a Bible character rode a "light" camel. Nothing indicates whether the reference is to the fact that the camel weighed little, was tan-colored, or carried a torch in battle.

Further, the individual Witness is not encouraged to interpret his Bible for himself. The Watch Tower Society does this for him, passing on the "truth" without debate. In the Bible-study handbook, *Let God Be True*, for example, the writer quotes their translation to prove that Christ was not always equal to God. *The New World Translation* renders John 1:1-2, "And the word was a God."¹ So, it is clear that to the true Jehovah's witness, the Society, not the Bible, is the final authority.

If we grant the person whom we encounter in Christian discussion the right to use his own translation of the Bible and to employ the method of running proof-texts together without discrimination, and if we grant the validity of his closed system whereby his group tells him what the Bible means, there is little hope for common study of the Word and for sharing of belief. Until the question of authority is resolved, there is little hope for sharing of belief between the Southern Baptists and Jehovah's witnesses.

Having noted the difference in the use of the written Word, turn now to the living Word—our risen Savior. Our radical

surrender to a Christ who has conquered death and our awareness of his daily presence must not be sacrificed. As Paul phrased it, "if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15:13-14). We must affirm that the man Jesus was divine and will return as the first fruit of victory over death to claim his followers.

Further, Baptists must avoid the heresy of becoming otherworldly by not neglecting their neighbors, as Witnesses have done. When Jesus spoke of the marks of a true disciple, he said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). This love involves a wholesome attitude toward this world, for Jesus would never have taken time in his short ministry to preach history's greatest guide of all time to human living, the Sermon on the Mount. By considering the total biblical witness, the Christian should deem it his responsibility to keep a healthy tension between his salvation in this world and the eternal hope of the coming Lord. Paul expressed this tension in 2 Corinthians 5:8-9, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him."

How to Witness to a Witness

In spite of the attempt in the previous section to make a critical analysis of the Jehovah's witness movement in the light of the faith of evangelical Christianity, *nothing is to be gained by arrogant condemnation of the group*. If the individual Witness is to be reached with the total Christian message, we should begin by listening appreciatively to what he is saying. Much of it, in fact, effectively condemns Baptist neglect of certain biblical truths. Once he is heard, he may begin to listen to us.

Baptists should begin by trying to interest the Witness in personal Bible study, using no "truths" predetermined by the

Society. This can be done only when Baptists have studied their Bibles intelligently and deeply.

Next an effort should be made to interest the Witness in the background to the Bible and in God's use of various human writers to dispense his truth, such as in the distinct yet harmonious witness of the four Gospels.

Finally, a brief statement of the meaning, joy, peace, and challenge which Christ offers to the "born-again" Christian should follow, with reference to the 144,000 which is to be taken as a figurative symbol of God's perfect number in heaven. The typical Jehovah's witness is basically without peace in this world, but the doctrine of being "born again" brings joy to earth now through the risen Lord.

If the Witness does not listen the first time the message is presented, invite him back and show personal interest in him as a person. Merely to prove him wrong is to lose any responsible Witness. Most sociologists who study the Jehovah's witnesses agree that they are not "at home" in this world for various reasons. Concerned prayer, sharpened Bible tools used intelligently, and deep personal concern such as Jesus showed for the social outcasts of his day form the Christian's best hope for presenting the risen Christ to a sincere Jehovah's witness.

What Can They Teach Us

Like every religious cult in the United States, the Jehovah's witnesses stand as evidence of some weaknesses in Southern Baptists' practice of their faith. For one thing, the Jehovah's witnesses interest many people because so little has been done in recent years in intelligent, disciplined, in-depth Bible study. The Witnesses and other sectarians know their Bible in a limited sense. Baptists need to have an enlightened knowledge of the Bible. This knowledge would keep laymen from regarding prophetic books as "hidden" writings from which the knowledgeable Bible reader can predict every-

thing from radios to rocket ships.

Southern Baptists seriously need to discover and use hermeneutics, "the science of comparing all related biblical texts to arrive at a common teaching, with appropriate attention to content and historical background." This discovery can come only when pastors become concerned enough to use critical tools for the Bible study, disciplined by a respect for God's Word. Only then can the "credibility gap" of biblical hermeneutics between pastor and layman be erased so that Southern Baptists may cope with a narrowly literalistic interpretation of the Bible. The Bible can "come alive" to new meaning in this generation only if it is used with discretion and humility.

The presence of the Jehovah's witnesses on the religious scene in America points up a second failure by Southern Baptists in recent years. The Witnesses continue to attract, as in the past, chiefly the outcasts of our society. These are the little people of our affluent society who distrust the world situation because they have been bypassed by denominations. These are the very ones in whom Jesus took such a vital interest and the very ones Southern Baptists are beginning to neglect as we become more socially respectable. The Home Mission Board is developing programs of ministry to these people, wherever they are found; this Christian endeavor needs to be reinforced by a renewed concern for our neighbor, no matter where he lives or what kind of clothes he wears.

The third and most disturbing way in which the Jehovah's witnesses point up a weakness among our fellowship is in the matter of door-to-door witnessing (65 percent of them go out witnessing regularly every month).² Fosters, magazines, and advertisements can never replace the man "sold" on his Savior that he wants his neighborhood to know Him. Assuredly more discretion can be used in this evangelism than is used by the Jehovah's witnesses, but they have at least practiced what we preach, the priesthood of all believers. They have no idea that a paid professional staff in a local church relieves them of their Christian duty and joy of witnessing. As a result, they have grown by 800 percent in the past 25 years while we sit on our pews.

In summary, the presence of the Jehovah's witnesses should make Southern Baptists prayerfully consider their lack of disciplined Bible study, concern for the social outcast in their towns, and spiritual laziness in taking their faith in a risen Lord to the down-and-out as well as the up-and-out. The Jehovah's witnesses are in earnest about their faith. Are Southern Baptists as much in earnest about theirs?

Footnotes

¹The official spelling of the name "Witnesses" or "Witness" is used without "Jehovah's"; the word is capitalized.

²William I. Whalen, *Armageddon Around the Corner* (New York: The John Day Co., 1962), p. 24.

³Published in Brooklyn by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Inc., p. 2510.

⁴*Let God Be True*, p. 279.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁶*The Watch Tower*, December, 1913.

⁷*Make Sure of All Things* (Brooklyn: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Inc., 1952), p. 86.

⁸See *Martin's Life: Transcendent Kingdom* (New York: Criterion Books, 1957), p. 202.

⁹*Let God Be True*, p. 106.

Saints and the Baptist Witness

by M. Thomas Starkes and Kate Ellen Gruver

Part I

Latter-day Saints (LDS)

The presence of three million American members of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormons) can hardly be ignored. Their daily income, estimated by some, now exceeds \$1 million, and their total financial empire makes the church one of the wealthiest religious institutions in the world. This is a sharp contrast to the poor farm boy named Joseph Smith, Jr., who had few assets except a vision of the "true" church.

The Mormon evangelistic efforts, reaching more than three million American homes annually,¹ have resulted in an average growth in total membership since 1959 of more than 100,000 a year. This effort costs the Saints dearly. About one third of their young men between the ages of 19 and 25 go on "missions" which last two years or more. Every two weeks about 80 young people join the nearly 18,000 missionaries on the field; they spend at least 10 hours a day in home visitation. Their families pay for their upkeep, a cost collectively involving over a million dollars per month. The Mormons know the meaning of generosity in concerted mission effort.

The public image of the Latter-day Saints is aided by the visit of more than a million visitors to the Mormon Tabernacle at Salt Lake City each year. The Mormon image is also enhanced by their focus on the similarities in their belief with those of Christians and say little initially of their divergent beliefs, such as Jesus having been a polygamist.²

The modern Mormon is part of a powerful enterprise which shows promise of becoming even larger. No Christian should be unaware of the history and distinctive doctrines of the Latter-day Saints, unwilling to learn from Mormon strengths or unable to point out clearly their basic weaknesses. They must not be too ill-equipped to relate their understanding of the Christian gospel to their Mormon friends.

History

The Mormon movement owes its inception to one man: Joseph Smith, Jr., who was born in Vermont late in 1805. The Smith family found it difficult to live on the frontier; work was hard and money scarce. In 1816, the Smiths moved to

Palmyra, New York, which was their twentieth move since Joseph's birth. Joseph's father often went on treasure-hunting expeditions, taking his likeable son with him. His mother, Lucy Mack Smith, who believed in magic and had spiritual visions, opened a cake-and-beer shop.

In the first third of the nineteenth century, Western New York was a center of religious fervor with almost no emphasis on an educated clergy. One historian referred to the area as the "burned-over district" because it had experienced so many religious upheavals. A popular topic of conversation was the identification of the "true" church. Religious communities frequently retreated to a separate existence to try their ideas on realizing the American-Christian dream. Many believers were convinced that their system of faith was correct and would not hesitate to begin a new splinter-group to prove their point.

Joseph Smith, Jr., a product of all these currents, set about to solve the problems they presented to the individual believer.

In a vision, young Smith was told that, although recently converted, he was to join no church since they were all wrong. The most significant revelation came three years later when Joseph said an angel named Moroni appeared to him and gave him directions to a place where he might find some golden plates and their translating devices—the Urim and Thummim.

The translation of the plates were to solve the problems of the origin of the mound-building Indians and of the way the Jews got to America. They were also to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. But Smith was forbidden to uncover the plates until four years later in September, 1827.

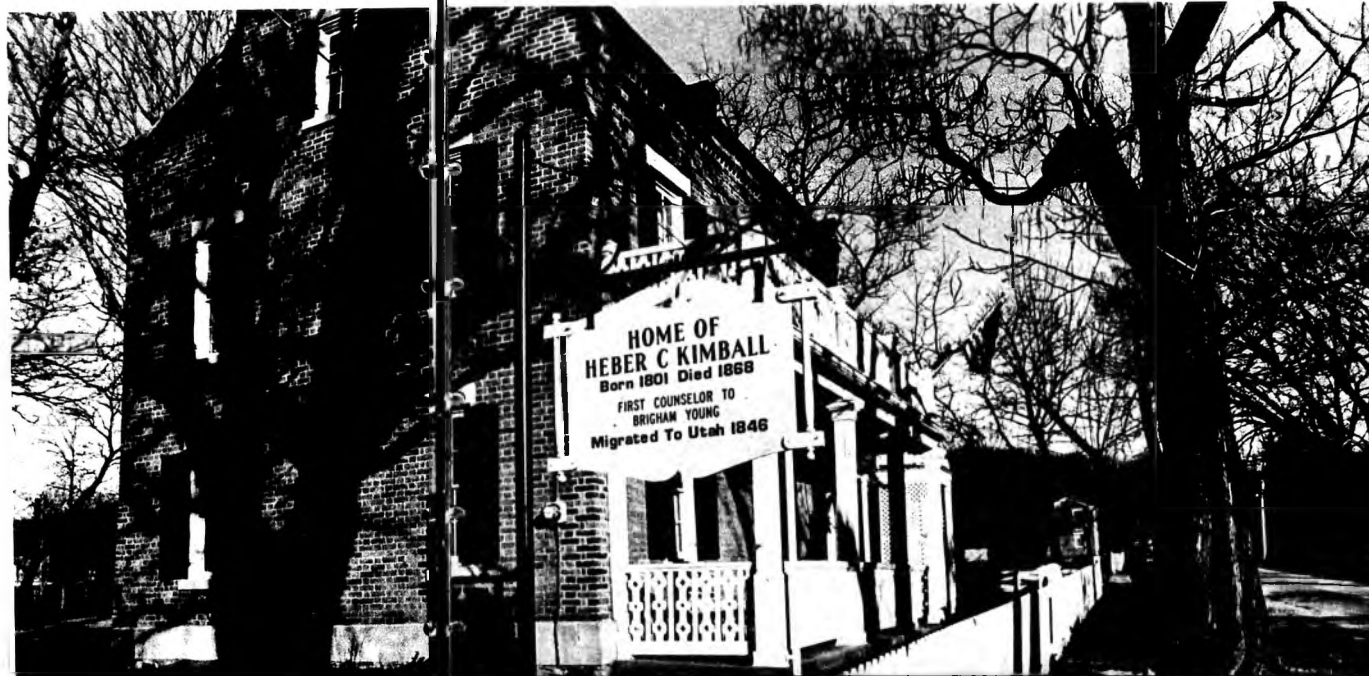
On January 18, 1827, while serving as a guide on a search for buried treasure, Smith married Emma Hale. Because Emma's father disliked the young ne'er-do-well, the couple eloped. When Joseph brought home the plates, he decided it would be best to move away from family and neighbors. The Smiths moved back to Emma's former home in Harmony, Pa., where Emma served as first scribe for the translation.

Martin Harris, a well-to-do farmer who had confidence in the young "prophet" and who was extremely interested in the origin of the Indians, financed the effort. Early in 1828, Harris moved to Harmony to take over the job of scribe. Smith and Harris worked for two months; Harris then took more than a hundred pages of transcription to his wife back in New York who destroyed or hid the work.

A revelation told Joseph that he was not to give the same translation again verbatim but to begin again with a new scribe. The work progressed much faster with a young school teacher, Oliver Cowdery, as his aide, and the book was soon finished and ready for publication. The first edition of 5,000 copies came in 1830, financed by Martin Harris' mortgaging of his farm.

Smith could now focus his attention on the formation of the new church. Less than two weeks after the publication of the *Book of Mormon*, on April 6, 1830, in Fayette, N.Y., the "Church of Christ" was started with six members. Joseph became "Seer, a translator, a Prophet, an Apostle of Jesus Christ." Within 30 days the young church had 40 members and by the end of 1831 had grown to more than a thousand. Later it changed its name to the Church of Jesus Christ and, in 1837, adopted its present name.

The group was actively missionary from the beginning.



Knotan Benfield Photo

Four missionaries including Cowdery went west to Ohio and helped to convert a former Campbellite preacher, Sidney Rigdon, who persuaded his whole congregation of 127 members to become Mormons. In New York, Joseph Smith's neighbors had belittled and antagonized him to the point that he and some 60 followers set forth early in 1831 to Kirtland, Ohio, where Rigdon's group awaited them. There the first temple was erected: the priestly organization of the church was established; mission work to Missouri was launched; and a young man named Brigham Young joined the movement.

The sojourn at Kirtland also produced Smith's important declaration, the "Words of Wisdom," which counselled church members to abstain from alcohol, hot drinks and tobacco. Another document which Smith produced at Kirtland was "The Book of Abraham," which he "translated" from Egyptian papyri which he claimed were the writings of Abraham. Egyptologists have since stated that the papyri were common Egyptian funeral documents. "The Book of Commandments" and *Doctrine and Covenants*, the collected "revelations" of Smith, were also written or begun during this productive period of Smith's prophecy.

The first major crisis in the young Mormon movement resulted from indebtedness. By late 1836 Smith and his colleagues had borrowed more than \$110,000 from several sources. Smith's solution was to establish the Kirtland Safety Society Bank Company which was to print and use as exchange media new bank notes. The Ohio legislature refusal to incorporate the bank only momentarily slowed Smith's plans. He simply stamped "Anti" and "ing" on all the new notes and changed the name of the enterprise to the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company. For a month the notes were accepted for debts as legal tender.

The Panic of 1837 doomed the valiant but illegal attempt by the Mormon leaders to pay their debts. The collapse of the Anti-Banking Company was the primary factor that led to the departure of Joseph to Missouri.

Smith led his group of followers to Far West, Mo., where more than a thousand Mormons had already settled. The Missourians feared and distrusted the Mormons and began a series of persecutions forcing Joseph and his now more than two thousand followers to flee early to Illinois in 1839. There, out of swampland along the Mississippi River, they built their city of Nauvoo.

Joseph assured his followers that "Nauvoo" meant beautiful plantation in Hebrew, and he set about to make it just that. By the end of 1840 it was the largest city in the state. A year later the state of Illinois issued Nauvoo a charter which made it an independent city-state with its own military and judicial system. The University of Nauvoo was officially started but existed practically in name only. Another temple was constructed but was later destroyed by a fire and tornado.

The Mormons lived in relative peace until 1844 when a group became disgruntled or disillusioned with Smith's pronouncements and practices. They founded a newspaper, the "Nauvoo Expositor," in which they attacked him, accusing him among other injustices of the practice of polygamy. Smith denied the charges, had the newspaper office destroyed and all available copies of the "Expositor" burned.

Illinois Governor Ford arrested Smith and several of his followers to stand trial for the charges brought by the editors of the newspaper. They were taken to Carthage, Ill., to await trial. Joseph and his brother Hyrum were jailed. On June 27, 1844, the two were killed while defending themselves from an irate mob who stormed the jail.

The Saints had lost their founder and leader. A controversy arose almost immediately concerning his successor. One group, led by Smith's widow, thought the mantle should be placed on Joseph Smith, III, then only 12 years old.³ Sidney Rigdon also claimed to be Smith's true successor but was

denied the presidency by a vote of the members who chose Brigham Young instead. It was Young who organized and led the famous trek of 2,000 members from Illinois to Utah, beginning in 1846.

Young's leadership was very important in overcoming despondency, cold, poverty and Indians. He led in transforming the Valley of the Great Salt Lake into a flourishing agricultural area. At the time of his death in 1877, there were over 140,000 Mormons.⁴

Authorization of polygamy was officially announced at the Mormon conference in 1852, and soon new polygamous settlements appeared as far away as Mexico and Canada. The Salt Lake City Tabernacle was completed in 1867.

John Taylor served as president of the church from 1880-1887. His successor was Willard Woodruff, who served from 1889 to 1898 and suspended the law of polygamy in 1890, although it remained a divine LDS doctrine. The presidents following Woodruff were Lorenzo Snow, Joseph Fielding Smith, Heber J. Grant, George Albert Smith, and David Mackay. The current president is Spencer W. Kimball who chaired the missionary executive committee of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 1965 to 1973.

A Question of Authority

The basic question in all comparative religions is that of authority: that is, where does one go to discern what he is to do or believe? The Baptist has traditionally stated that his sole written authority is the Bible. Mormons contend that the Bible is a reliable authority on religion only as translated correctly and that it is supplemented by a revelation to a latter-day prophet. This process is called "progressive revelation."

Christians agree with the principle that God reveals himself to every generation through his distinctive written source—the Bible. The difference comes in the question of whether a subsequent written revelation is needed. The built-in worth of the Bible is that God speaks with meaning through the Scripture, in every new epoch.

The Book of Mormon is the outstanding extra-scriptural written source for the Latter-day Saints. It is a prime example of a "modern" revelation which rapidly becomes outdated. For the pioneer, western New York farmer of the 1830's, a frequently discussed topic was the unknown origin of the Indian mounds and of the red men who built them. *The Book of Mormon* sought to answer that contemporary question important to the American frontiersman a century-and-a-half ago, but of little interest to men living in the last third of the twentieth century.

A parallel to the question of Indian origins is Joseph Smith's "modern" revelation on the place of the Negro in society. In 1832 Joseph translated some Egyptian papyri which he recorded in "The Book of Abraham," verses 21-26 in Chapter 1 the translation is as follows:

Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth. The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden. Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days. Noah his father, blessed him with the blessing of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood.

The prophet Joseph believed that the Egyptians of ancient days were Negroid and therefore Negroes could not hold the priesthood. This "modern" revelation might possibly have been the result of the controversy going on over slavery, especially in Missouri in the 1830's. Smith's revelation still keeps the Negro from marrying in a Mormon temple or holding the priesthood.

This "latter-day" revelation hardly coincides with Christ's



Knotan Benfield Photo

treatment of the Samaritan woman or with Paul's statement that in the Savior there are no distinctions of culture, economics or race (see Gal. 3:27-29), or even with humanitarian respect for every person as having equal worth. A recent revelation should be consistent with those which came before.

The Mormons rely heavily for their doctrine on a latter-day revelation, the *Book of Mormon*. They claim that this work is a collection of books originally written between the years 600 B.C. and A.D. 451. It allegedly deals with the history of the relation between God and his chosen people on the western hemisphere.

According to this work, one colony of Jews, composed mainly of people from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, departed from Jerusalem in the year 600 B.C. under the leadership of a prophet named Lehi. They landed in South America. Soon after their arrival two of Lehi's sons—Nephi and Laman—fought and the people chose sides. God was for Nephi, and he cursed the Lamanites with a dark skin; they became the forerunners of the American Indians. The Nephites migrated northward to Central America and were there when Christ visited them right after his crucifixion.

The two factions began to fight again in the third century A.D. and by 384 the Nephites were virtually destroyed. The Nephites were led by a prophet-priest named Mormon who, just before the last battle, wrote a history of his people on some golden plates and gave it to his son, Moroni. Moroni hid the plates in what is now New York; almost 1,500 years later he appeared to Joseph Smith to tell him of the plates.

The *Book of Mormon* is made up of 14 books and an editorial note. The style is similar to that of the King James Version of the Bible. The book is about six hundred pages long. Some passages are direct quotes from the King James, including "The Book of Mosiah" from Isaiah 53 and III Nephi 13: 1-18 which is identical to Matthew 6:1-23.

The names used are closely related to those of biblical characters. They may be exactly alike such as Laban and Lemuel or close imitations such as Laman and Nephi. The finding of a promised land recalls Moses; the daughter of Jared dances before a king; and Alma's conversion is similar to Paul's. A central theme of the book is similar to the pattern presented in the Chronicles historian of the Old Testament: "Thus do we see born quick the children of men do forget the Lord their God, yea, how quick to do iniquity, and to be led away by the evil one" (Alma 46:8).

Non-Mormon students of intellectual history have frequently pointed to the fact that the *Book of Mormon* is far from original in thought and reflects currents of thought common to the intellectual ferment of the early nineteenth century. One popular theory, that Smith borrowed from an earlier manuscript written by Solomon Spaulding, a preacher, seems to have been discounted by recent research.³ Another theory is that Joseph borrowed from a writing by Ethan Smith, a Vermont pastor, who wrote *Views of the Hebrews* in 1823 and reported: "The red men had not long since a book which they had for a long time preserved. But having lost the knowledge of reading it, they concluded it would be of no further use to them; and they buried it with an Indian chief."⁴

Major parallels between the two works are: frequent references to the destruction of Jerusalem, inspired prophets among the ancient Americans, long quotes from Isaiah, pictures of the ancient Indians as a highly civilized people, and translation of ancient documents by use of the Urim and Thummim.⁵ Joseph Smith obviously borrowed from other writings and thought patterns of his day and embellished them.

Non-Mormon textual and historical critics of Smith's chief revelation have pointed to historical and archeological anachronisms contained therein, such as the finding of horses, cows, oxen, and elephants in the western hemisphere before the birth of Christ (Ether 9:17-19).⁶



The Latter-day Saints include other works in their list of sacred literature. *The Pearl of Great Price* contains "The Book of Moses" of 1830 and "The Book of Abraham," the latter allegedly a translation of ancient Egyptian records which tell of Abraham in Egypt. The *Pearl* concludes with a portion of Matthew 24, Joseph Smith's own story of his early work; and Mormonism's "Articles of Faith."

The *Doctrine and Covenants* was first published in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835. The Utah edition (LDS) contains 135 revelations attributed to Smith and a single one to Brigham Young. The current edition also includes the declaration prohibiting polygamy, issued by 1890 by President Wilford Woodruff. Especially relevant to modern Mormons are the revelations about baptism for the dead and celestial marriage.⁹

The Mormons frequently refer to the "Words and Wisdom," which is Section 89 of *Doctrine and Covenants*. This revelation, given to Joseph in Kirtland in 1833, proclaimed: "Strong drinks are not for the belly . . . And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures . . ."¹⁰ This revelation helps to account for the fact that devout Mormons do not even drink hot tea or coffee.

The question of revelation remains: Does the Bible require further written authority for clarification and supplementation of its concepts? The modern Mormon answers in the affirmative. A Mormon study book published in 1966 says, page 1, "We appeal to the Bible to prove the truths received through the restoration of the gospel in accord with its teachings." The author continues with a typical Mormon handling of the Bible, "If we had no Bible, we would still have all the needed direction and information through the revelations of the Lord to his servants the prophets in these latter-days."¹¹

The Bible is used primarily to verify later revelations. Richards supplies us one reference to the Bible's meaning, amplified by the *Doctrine and Covenants*:

When one compares this complete explanation of the calling and duties and organization of the seventy with the meager account given in the Bible, he is convinced of the need for instruction and revelation from the Lord in these matters, since the Bible fails to give a sufficient account of the duties and calling of the seventy. Again we obtain this information and instruction by revelation from heaven, and we use the Bible to prove its truth.¹²

Here the non-Mormon finds in print the Latter-day Saints attitude toward the Bible, which becomes a secondary source for determining the thought and practice of the Christian faith. It is "supplemented" by sources which are full of contradictions within themselves and with Scripture. The new "modern" revelations are supposedly fuller explanations of the Bible which is "inadequate" on such central matters of the faith as the nature of God and man. The Mormon stance is clear: the Bible is to be used when it agrees with latter-day revelations. Many Christians find it difficult to believe that God would change his stance. Surely there must be a divine certainty about divine matters.

The key issue is whether the Holy Spirit speaks to the believer adequately in the Bible and in Christ. For the Mormons his work needs to be supplemented by further words which give added meaning to an "inadequate" Bible. The matter of the Bible's witness to Christ, for the Mormon, takes secondary precedence in "modern" revelation to such practical matters as church organization. Classical Christians have found that God reveals himself most clearly in Christ as seen through the Bible. Alleged subsequent revelations have tended to detract from following Christ in discipleship.

A clarification of the Bible's message by Latter-day written sources fails three basic tests of divine revelation: an inherent, spirit-inspired, self-consistency; a consistency with previous sacred revelations in Christian history; a failure to evoke a devotion and discipleship to the person of Christ. The Lat-

ter-day revelations of the Mormons are self-contradictory, contradict the biblical witness, and do not result in deeper devotion to Christ as Lord.

Latter-day Doctrines

Mormons believe that God intervened in American history to set up the one "true" church. They classify Christian churches in three categories: Catholics, who believe that the true church has had an uninterrupted existence since Jesus Christ; Protestants, who contend that the true church fell into apostasy and must be restored according to the Bible, but who cannot interpret without further written revelation; and a restoration movement which has the true latter-day revelation.

Mormons have combined "restorationist" views toward revelation with the American dream. They believe that the true Zion (New Jerusalem) will be built in America in what is now Independence, Mo. They contend that prophecy is being fulfilled in Salt Lake City today, such as Jeremiah's prophetic reference to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir when he spoke of "singing in Zion" (see Jer. 31:12).

The doctrinal system which the "true" church and its prophets produced was a mixture of themes based on Campbellite thought, frontier dreams, and pragmatic schemes for self-improvement, and biblical truth.

God is portrayed as a sort of superhuman with physical appearance. Scriptural reference to the contrary (see John 4:24, for example) are either ignored or reinterpreted through the Mormon's "inspired version" of the Bible. Further revelation to Joseph Smith "settles" the issue: "God himself was once a man as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens."¹³ Section 130 of *Doctrine and Covenants* (Utah version, states) "God the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as a man." In other words, God is God because he has risen to godhood by his own efforts and consequent worthiness. He stands as an example to any man who may do the same.

Jesus Christ, according to Mormon theology, was a spirit-child of God, as are all human beings, who was born the son of Adam—the god of this world—and Mary. Mormon writings trace Jesus' descent through Bathsheba, with the observation that, if David had not been a polygamist, there might not have been a Messiah.

Man is held to be an eternal being who lived before coming to earth. On the basis of what man does here, he supposedly lives and grows in the life beyond the grave. Joseph Smith promised that eternal life consists of learning how to be gods. "By going from one small degree to another . . . until you . . . are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as to those enthroned in everlasting power."¹⁴

Mormons speak out often against what they term the false doctrine of one heaven and one hell. There will be, according to them, grades and stations in heaven. *Doctrine and Covenants* speaks of three levels of salvation: celestial, terrestrial and telestial. Mormons in the celestial realm are presently in an intermediate state called Paradise and will eventually be gods. The only persons eligible for this highest realm are those sealed in celestial marriage in the temple (Negroes are ineligible).

Terrestrial heaven will be peopled with Christians and members of other religions who did not accept the Mormon message. The telestial is reserved for those currently in hell who rejected the gospel and await the final resurrection. This resurrection of all the dead will take place after Christ has reigned for a thousand years at the true Zion, near Independence, Mo.

Mormon eschatology reflects a conglomeration of biblical imagery, American idealism and an early Greek concept of the preexistence of souls. The biblical language of Paradise,

millennium, judgment and souls is combined with the idea of Christ reigning in Missouri in a manner designed to appeal to those Americans in search of God's special providence for this "land of opportunity." The American ideal of hard work with just rewards is elevated to the degree that one's remuneration for industriousness stops nothing short of godhood, provided he is true to the Mormon ordinances.

Mormons invest much time and effort in their practice of baptism for the dead. The ceremony has been performed for over thirty million persons. More than three million such rites are performed each year. The Genealogical Society employs over 500 people and has an annual budget of over \$4,000,000. The church maintains storage vaults near Salt Lake City, carved out of 600 feet of solid granite, containing 500 million record frames. This is done because the Mormons believe that the soul for whom the baptism ceremonies are performed will, of course, approve of them and be saved. All of this is in response to a revelation which came to Joseph Smith in 1830.

Despite evidence to the contrary, a Mormon writer recently made a claim for their doctrines, saying that they are, "Inspiring . . . reasonable, logical, consistent and harmonious with all other scriptures and with the known facts of science and history . . ."¹⁵

Mention has been made already of the discrepancies between Mormon history and archeological evidence. Contradictions between the *Book of Mormon* and the New Testament have been pointed out. The student of Mormon doctrine should also be aware of disharmony even within the revelations unique in LDS literature. One example among the many suffices to make it clear that the prophet Joseph was inconsistent in recording God's "revelations" to him. Using Abraham as an example of polygamy, Smith recorded in the *Utah Doctrine and Covenants*: "God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. And why did she do it? Because this was the law . . . And from Hagar sprang many people. Go ye therefore and do the works of Abraham. Enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved."¹⁶

The *Book of Mormon*, on the other hand, records God as being against polygamy: "Wherefore, I the Lord God will not suffer that this people should do like unto them of old . . . For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife and concubines he shall have none for I the Lord God delight in the chastity of women."¹⁷

Close scrutiny of Mormon doctrine reveals an amalgamation of inconsistencies, as well as promises of eventual godhood and a celestial kingdom here in America. The questions of Christian ethics and eventual personal destiny are the same as those posed in the Bible, but the answers are far from the same.

These and other weaknesses present modern day Mormonism faced with the "silent apostasy," a falling-away of young intellectuals in the church. They are faced with three basic choices: adhering to the official doctrines of the church, based on literal interpretation of their scripture; apostasy and deserting the Mormon tradition; or an open discussion of critical problems within the Mormon thought-world. A number have chosen the not-so-silent third alternative, and some of these subscribe to *Dialogue*, a quarterly publication which examines Mormon views of history and doctrine.¹⁸ Some have found that close examination of Mormon thought and practice leave them no alternative but to abandon the framework of the church.

Salvation for the Saints

When speaking of the phenomenon which most Christians call salvation, the Mormons often use the term "exaltation." This means that their goal is to become the same as God, whom they believe was also once a man, as were all the other gods. According to their doctrine of the preexistence of souls, they were first the spirit sons of God before experiencing

human birth into the world.¹⁹ Acceptance of the Mormon faith and strict obedience to its laws and ordinances will enable them to continue in this relationship.

The Articles of Faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints explains their official stance on salvation:

3. We believe that through the atonement of Christ all mankind will be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.
4. We believe that these ordinances are: 1st, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; 2nd, Repentance; 3rd, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; 4th, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit; 5th, the Lord's Supper.

Mormons believe that Christ was also a spirit son of the Eternal God and that he died on the cross to pay the price of Adam's sin in Garden of Eden. Thus men are freed from that necessity and must answer only for their own sins.

Mormons take seriously the role of man's works in the process of salvation. One is never sure of his salvation or "exaltation" until he is allowed to enter the "celestial glory," the highest of three heavens. A modern writer warns the Saints: "Only a small percentage of the church members will eternally retain their membership in the church. Permanent membership in the church is based upon worthiness. All who register do not graduate."²⁰

Latter-day Saints view as heretical any attempt at salvation through faith alone. A Mormon writer recently phrased it clearly:

One erroneous teaching of many Christian churches is: By faith alone we are saved. This false doctrine would . . . teach man that no matter how great the sin a confession would bring him complete forgiveness and salvation. What the world needs is more preaching of the necessity of abstaining from the sin to bring useful and righteous lives and less preaching of forgiveness of sin.²¹

The Mormon statement regarding salvation shows the influence of Sidney Rigdon, the former Campbellite preacher who joined the Saints in Kirtland. The ordinance of "baptism by immersion for the remission of sins" is a phrase used by most followers of Alexander Campbell, who stressed a close adherence to the practice of the early church recorded in Acts. Biblical interpretation involves a serious look at its total witness. The emerging theology of the early church, as well as its practice, should be consulted in trying to determine the relation between salvation and the keeping of ordinances. Mormons have "solved" the problem by simply having a latter-day revelation which supplements the "unclear" witness of the Bible by having God quote part of Acts 2:38.

There is an element of truth in Mormons views regarding the relation of complete forgiveness of sin to the keeping of God's commandments. There is biblical and eternal truth in the principle stated by Paul in Galatians 6:7: "Do not deceive yourselves: no one makes a fool of God. A man will reap exactly what he plants."²²

Many Christians who have experienced complete forgiveness of sin from God realize that this forgiveness does not negate God's law of retribution regarding the physical. A converted alcoholic, although forgiven, often bears the marks of intemperance in his body and in family relations.

Unfortunately, the Mormon speaks as one whose forgiveness is partially based on the keeping of certain ordinances such as baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. He speaks as one not completely reliant on the grace of God for forgiveness. The truth is to be seen in the Christian who is forgiven, being obedient to the laws of God because of his loving response to an all-loving Father as seen in Christ. Paul expressed this truth in Romans 3:

21 But now God's way of putting men right with himself has been revealed, and it has nothing to do with law. The Law and the prophets gave their witness to it:

22 God puts men right through their faith in Jesus Christ . . .

28 For we conclude that a man is put right with God only through faith and not by doing what the Law commands.

31 Does this mean that we do away with the Law by this faith? No, not at all, instead, we uphold the Law.

Mormon creeds concerning salvation clearly warn Christians who claim to be forgiven but who flippantly disregard the laws of God after their initial experience with him. However, this does not negate the biblical truth that salvation comes only through a believing trust in Jesus Christ—the clear revelation of the nature and love of God.

Mormon Morality

By many standards, Mormons are good moral people. They are industrious, resourceful, patriotic and temperate. They are, at least technically, not allowed to smoke, drink alcohol or even hot coffee or tea. These Saints must also give 10 percent of their gross income to their church.

Mormons are known as a people who care for their own members. Since 1936 they have had a church welfare program which distributes life's necessities to the poor, finds jobs for their unemployed and improves living conditions among their low-income families. The bishops have a fund for emergency money needs. No one receiving public welfare can receive aid from the Mormon church. The Latter-day Saints are certainly to be commended for their Christlike concern in caring for the social needs of their members.

A negative aspect of the Mormon ethical system is its denying the right of priesthood to Negroes. Their stance is as follows: "Negroes and other people with Negroid blood can become members of the church... enter the temple to receive baptism for the dead, become heirs to the Celestial Kingdom... but they cannot be ordained to the Priesthood, nor are they eligible for marriage in an LDS temple..."²³

In contrast, the Reorganized Latter Day Saints (RLDS) maintain that Joseph Smith, III, received a new revelation about the Negroid race in May, 1865, which has resulted in many Negroes holding important offices in the RLDS.

The first federal bill to prohibit polygamous marriages was introduced into the United States Congress in 1860. The Edmonds Law of 1881 imposed heavy fines and imprisonments on polygamists as well as denied them the right to vote. All this led to the Manifesto from Mormon President Woodruff in September, 1890, which stated the intention of the Utah group to submit to the law regarding plural marriage.

Seven of the eleven LDS presidents have been polygamists. At no time, however, did more than 15 percent of the total Mormon membership participate in polygamy. A current estimate is that about twenty thousand Mormons still practice plural marriage,²⁴ despite official warnings.

Joseph Smith's heavy reliance on the Old Testament shows most clearly in the ethical system which results from his teachings. He stressed a communal relationship with strong ties of fellowship and practical guidelines to care for the needy similar to the Hebrew commonwealth. Unfortunately, the same negative attitude toward the "stranger" prevalent in the Old Testament along with the supposed curse on certain descendants of Noah prevails in the Mormon establishment. The same "second-class" position of women evident in the Jewish life, B.C., can be seen today in the Mormon concept of marriage. The statement that Mormons are good people must be understood in light of the fact that they have failed to emphasize efficiently the New Testament ethic, especially the life and teachings of Christ in relation to women and "Samaritans."

Latter-day Saints' Organization

The Mormon church is divided into about four hundred stakes, three thousand wards and five hundred independent branches. A stake is a larger grouping or wards similar to an



association. The ward has its own building and is comparable to the local church. It ranges in size from 250 to 1,200 members, with about 750 considered an ideal size. An independent branch is similar to a mission and generally has from 50 to 250 members. The "pastor" of the ward is the bishop who exercises authority over local matters in the church. Every Mormon must belong to a specific ward.

Almost one fourth of all Mormons have been ordained to act in some official capacity for the church, mostly in the priesthood. The lower priesthood, called the Aaronic, includes deacons (males aged 12-14), teachers (15-17), and priests (18-19). At 20 the young man enters the higher or Melchizedek priesthood and is designated an elder, signifying adulthood. Elders may ordain other elders and perform all the ordinances of the church in the absence of a high priest. The rank of "70" is above the elders and refers to a traveling evangelist who works under the high priests.

Thirty-eight men form the elite of Mormon leadership. They are referred to as the "general authorities." The first presidency consists of the president of the church and his two counselors. These three high officials are elected by the Council of Twelve apostles, who are next in the line of jurisdiction. The seven presidents of the presiding quorum of the Seventy are next in order of authority. Officially these three levels are equal in authority but only theoretically and by unanimous vote.

The pattern of the early church in its ministry is followed by the Latter-day Saints in name only, with little attention given to what might have been the specific function of each position in the loose association of churches as reflected in the New Testament pattern. It derives its strength from the sense of importance almost every Mormon male feels from being given some responsibility along with a high-sounding title. The Saints' stakes and wards offer a tight-knit and effective organization for recruiting and nurturing Mormon converts.

What Mormons Can Teach Us

The Latter-day Saints have shown a great capacity for growth in the United States. There are ample reasons for their rapid spread despite largely unbiblical doctrine. A primary reason is that most Mormons are "true believers"; that is, they are willing to debate and fight, if necessary, for their beliefs. Their certainty is based on careful education and training within their wards.

Their doctrine is inherently reasonable when presented in its fashion and with its presuppositions such as man's innate capacity for godhood. Often these presuppositions are sufficiently mingled with a careful stress on the parallels between Mormonism and traditional Christianity to proselyte those who call themselves Christian. Other religious groups might well emulate the Mormon stress on training in correct doctrine but not their extrabiblical source of authority.

Mormons take advantage of a common philosophy of religion which suggests that if one, or a group of people, lives morally then his doctrines do not really matter. The Mormon welfare system and the practice of refraining from unhealthy physical habits do commend them to many outside observers who have not closely examined Mormon doctrine. Concern for those in distress and for self, demonstrated by the Mormon morality, is a part of the Christian faith which should be taken seriously by those who hope to impress upon the Mormon the importance of the correct belief concerning the eternal nature of God the Father and Christ. A reemphasis on the doctrine of the value of man in his uniqueness and "response-ability" is in order for the entire Christian camp.

The mission program, which sends young persons out to invest two years of their life, has been a very effective method of Mormon proselyting. Other religious groups, such as Southern Baptists, have similar two-year programs called

US-2 and Missionary Journeyman which stress a deeper involvement with human problems than mere house-to-house discussions. Information on these programs, and on others for even shorter periods of time, are available from the Special Ministries Department of the Home Mission Board and from the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. These periods allow one to decide if God is leading to a lifelong specialized ministry to people in spiritual and physical need.

The Mormon system of theological institutes and seminaries also deserves closer examination and possible emulation. Institutes of religion are maintained near colleges in five western states, involving over 6,000 students. The seminaries, numbering more than a hundred, are a part of a system of religious instruction in these same five states.

How to Witness to a Latter-day Saint

Most Mormons have not critically examined their history and doctrinal development. The witness to them might well suggest such an examination on their part.

There are several general hints for meaningful witness to a Mormon which the concerned Christian should keep in mind. One is to be aware that the typical Mormon is not a "hot prospect." Months of cultivative relationships will often be necessary, and patience will ordinarily be required. At least a rudimentary knowledge of Mormonism will prove helpful.

The discussion of the various denominations should be avoided in favor of presenting a positive emphasis on the love of God as shown in Christ. Many Latter-day Saints have memorized "set" answers to doctrinal matters, such as the nature and work of God. Discussion of these questions should go beyond the "proof-text" method of debate, which often creates more heat than light.

Each opportunity for witness should heavily stress on personal experience and what discipleship to Christ means to the witness in the present as well as in the beginning point of conversion. The whole set of experiences must be undergirded with prayer and the distinct leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Max Stilson²⁵ gives a helpful list of Scriptures which might be used to answer possible excuses given by Mormons as to why they will not respond to the opportunity for salvation in Christ. These include:

1. I will have to give up too much—Mark 8:34-38.
8. My relatives oppose it—Matthew 10:32-39.
10. I cannot believe what I cannot understand—I Corinthians 2:9-10.

These verses and others regarding salvation should be used after the Mormon is receptive to the authority of the Bible and to a personal relation with Christ based on forgiveness of sin.

Since its inception almost a century and a half ago, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has shown a steady rate of growth until the last decade when it more than doubled its membership.

Although they are the "Church of Jesus Christ" in name, most have not seen the Carpenter from Nazareth as the revolutionary Savior that he is. The Mormons' concentration on the distinctives of their faith has led them, for example, to see Christ as a polygamist. Their process of salvation, with dependence on obedience to church ordinances, dilutes the biblical concept of forgiveness. Christ stands waiting to be lifted up before the Mormon community in all his redemptive fullness. How long must they wait?

Part 2

Latter-day Saints (RLDS)

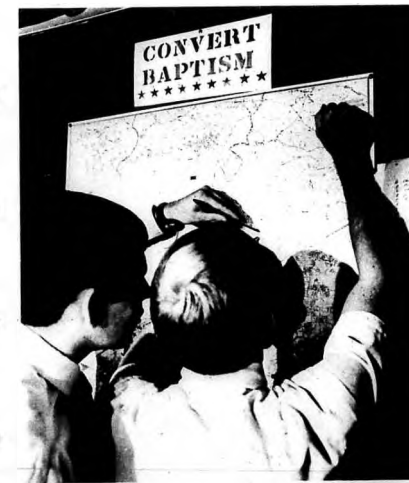
There are about ninety other groups who accept the authen-

ticity of Joseph Smith, Jr., and his *Book of Mormon*, but who reject the leadership of the Utah church as well as the name "Mormon."²⁶ The largest body of these Saints is known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with headquarters in Independence, Mo. They stem from the Saints who did not follow Brigham Young to Utah. Among these were Smith's widow, his three young sons, and other family members.

After Smith's death many of this group felt that his successor should be his eldest son, Joseph III, then only 12 years old. Obviously a child could not assume such a position, but the feeling remained. This, together with a growing dissatisfaction with Brigham Young and their rejection of the doctrines of polygamy and plural gods, which they claimed were not permitted by either Joseph Smith or the *Book of Mormon*, but which Young claimed were actually revelations to Smith, led to a complete break with the Utah Mormons in 1852.

The eastern group reorganized, and in 1860 Joseph Smith III accepted the presidency as the "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator," the rightful successor to his father. He has been succeeded in turn in the office by three of his sons: Frederic M. Smith, Israel A. Smith, and W. Wallace Smith. The latter is the current president of the RLDS, as member of the Reorganized church are called.

The church today has 1,200 or more congregations in the United States with around 250 elsewhere in the world. A new emphasis on evangelism and expansion accounts for the spread of new congregations in many areas where RLDS have not previously been known.



Ken Touchton Photo

Theologically, although they accept Joseph Smith, Jr., as the divinely chosen modern-day prophet to the world, RLDS follow closely main doctrines accepted by Baptists, relating to the Trinity, to each Persons thereof, and to salvation. Two primary differences are: (1) They accept Joseph Smith's "Inspired Version" of the Bible, with all the textual changes he made supporting his "restored religion" as of higher authority than the Bible as we know it; and (2) they believe,

according to Smith's revelations, that Independence, Mo., is the location of the Garden of Eden and the site of the future "city of Zion," New Jerusalem, the place where Christ will return.

The differences between these Latter-day Saints (RLDS) and the Latter-day Saints (Mormons or LDS) are more numerous. The RLDS' rejection of polygamy and plural gods, promoted by Brigham Young, also includes all the ramifications of those doctrines upon which the Mormon or LDS system has been developed. This accounts for the fact that in the past all the efforts and energies of the church, according to one official, have been expended in making clear the RLDS position on these points. Hence their failure to give much attention to an evangelistic outreach.

Today, however, Latter-day Saints are beginning to concentrate their efforts in a more active worldwide evangelism. Baptists may well expect to hear more about these people in the future.

Footnotes

¹See Wallace Turner, *The Mormon Establishment* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960), p. 153.

²A polygamist is one who has or advocates that a man have more than one wife.

³This group is now known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. See p.

⁴Hartzell Spence, "The Mormon Church," *Readers Digest*, April, 1958, p. 190.

⁵See Fawn M. Brodie, *Ne Man Knows My History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), p. 433. Also William J. Whalen, *The Latter-day Saints in the Modern Day World*, (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), p. 38.

⁶Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews*, Second Edition, 1825, p.223.

⁷Brodie, loc. cit., p. 47.

⁸See Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957).

⁹NOTE: The student should compare 132: 61-62 in *Doctrine and Covenants* (Utah) on polygamy with pages 150-257, which contain Woodruff's declaration, and with Jacob 2:24 in the *Book of Mormon*.

¹⁰Le Grand Richards, *A Mortal's Work and a Wonder* (Salt Lake City: Desert Book Company, 1960), p. 1.

¹¹Ibid., p. 41.

¹²Ibid., p. 150.

¹³Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 345.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 340-347.

¹⁵John J. Stewart, *The Glory of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Mercury Publishing Co., Inc., 1963), p. 239.

¹⁶See 132:34.

¹⁷Jacob 2:26-28.

¹⁸Published by: The Dialogue Foundation, 2180 East Ninth South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108.

¹⁹Whalen, *ibid.*, p. 96f.

²⁰Stewart, loc. cit., p. 242.

²¹Richards, loc. cit., p. 25.

²²All references from the New Testament are quoted from *Good News for Modern Men*, New York: American Bible Society, 1960.

²³Stewart, loc. cit., p. 132.

²⁴Ibid., p. 168.

²⁵See Max Stilson, *How to Deal with Mormons* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965), pp. 53-54.

²⁶Whalen, *ibid.*, p. 268.

The World Tomorrow (Worldwide Church of God)

by Lloyd Niles Whyte

Probably, more persons have heard Herbert W. Armstrong and his son, Garner Ted, on radio or television, or have read some of their literature, than any other twentieth-century religionist. Hundreds of radio and TV stations carry "The World Tomorrow" programs featuring the particular view of the Worldwide Church of God, formerly known as the Radio Church of God. And for the past 40 years, Armstrong has been sending his magazine, *The Plain Truth*, free of charge to anyone who requests it.

With a worldwide membership estimated between 75,000 and 200,000, Armstrong himself claims his church "serves" some 150 million persons.¹ In any case, its influence is far greater than its membership. It appeals to conservative, God-honoring, middle- and upper-class Americans, many of whom are at first unaware that Armstrong's skillfully-disguised doctrinal position and teachings are not the sound, fundamental Bible doctrines they seem to be.² Clowing letters to editor Herbert W. Armstrong, carried in *Plain Truth*, show people devoted to him and to his editorial views.

History

Born in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1892, Armstrong spent his early adult life moving from one job to another: "selling want ads, taking public opinion polls, pushing hardware, peddling soap and mud packs door-to-door"³ and engaging in other similar type work. Although a poor, often-broke businessman, according to his testimony in his *Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, during these years he learned two things which were to be the key to his success in later life: One, in writing his reports, one or two of which were published, he learned that he could change persons' attitudes by manipulating their emotions.⁴ Two, he learned the principles of effective advertising and some rules of persuasion.⁵

In the fall of 1926, angered by a neighbor's attempt to lead Mrs. Armstrong to accept the Adventist view of the sabbath, Armstrong began his first real study of the Bible and "stumbled on a succession of clues that led to his 'great enlighten-

ment,"⁶ the "discovery" of the ten lost tribes of Israel as the British and American people.

At the time he was a member of the Church of God, having previously been a member of several other religious groups. In 1931 he was ordained a minister in this church, but when this group rejected his theory of the Lost Tribes, he broke his affiliation to start his own religious group! The next year he preached his first sermon and, in 1934 from Eugene, Ore., Armstrong broadcast his first "World Tomorrow" program.

Since then Armstrong has boasted that God selected him to reveal the biblical "plain truth."⁷ Strongly influenced in his religious understanding by Adventists, Mormons, Anglo-Israelites, Jehovah's witnesses and Old Testament legalism, he has used his gifts in promotion and public relations as well as his knowledge and experience in successful advertising to appeal to persons who want "Bible answers" to perplexing questions.

While the Armstrongs, father and now son, seek to supply these, often using Scripture out of context, they are not at all reluctant to claim that they have the answers to other great issues as well. A sampling of these, dealt with in the *Plain Truth*, range over such matters as abortion, international affairs, business, world oil crisis, the biological revolution, farming, the common market, parent-child relationships, home gardening, the "good life," marriage, and others.

Perhaps a clue to what seems to many to be an out-of-proportion self-assurance and self-confidence is found in Armstrong's own statements. For example, he describes himself at 16 as "a precocious youth."⁸ Later, as his doctrinal and theological beliefs firmed, he saw himself as a man of divine proportions. In his autobiography, he parallels specific details in his own life with those in the life of Christ, claiming that he was trained and ordained by God to complete the mission Jesus left unfinished.⁹

Obviously Armstrong is not timid and is supported in his



claims for greatness by loyal followers. One, pointing out that Jesus chose Paul to spread the gospel to the Gentiles and raised up Peter Waldo to keep the truth alive during the Middle Ages, says: "In these last days when the Gospel must go around the world Jesus chose a man amply trained in the advertising and business fields to shoulder the mission—Herbert W. Armstrong."¹⁰

Although in later years the broadcasting phase of the Worldwide Church of God has been given over to Garner Ted, Armstrong's son and his second-in-command, Armstrong himself has from the beginning been responsible for the direction of the church's activities. His rule over the church which has been described as iron-fisted and dictatorial,¹¹ has nevertheless established it as a force to reckon with in Christian America.

Teachings of the Church

Armstrong leans heavily upon the Old Testament for his understanding of the character and personality of what he calls "the true God." He sees him as a strongly legalistic, judgmental God demanding exacting obedience to his will,¹² with little emphasis on the New Testament concept of God's love and mercy. At this point Armstrong's doctrine of God departs from anything known in either the Old or New Testament. He states that God is a divine Family,¹³ the members of which are the Father and the Son, who are called "God." This God Family is identified not only as the Creator Family but also as the kingdom of God. "God IS that Kingdom," Armstrong makes clear.¹⁴

Jesus is accepted as the Son "begotten" by God but "born again" into the Family of God at his resurrection.¹⁵ But he is also God, states Armstrong: "he is very God, even as God, the Father, is God," and in exactly the same kind of relationship that Garner Ted has to the senior Armstrong.¹⁶ Functionally, Armstrong has reduced Jesus to a great way-shower, or perfect teacher, of what he calls "true Christianity." "A true Christian is one who follows Jesus Christ and his teachings."¹⁷

While the Armstrongs claim to be conservative, Bible-believing Christians, they dismiss the Holy Spirit altogether as the third Person of a Trinity. To them he is not a person but a "force" from God, bestowed upon the believer at baptism to help him receive the nature and power of Christ and to obey the commandments and laws of God. This spirit-force also

gives a person the will to obey the spiritual law.

With similarities in many areas, it is in the doctrine of man that Armstrong approaches most closely Mormon (LDS) theology. "The purpose of life," he says, "is that in us God is really re-creating His own kind—reproducing Himself... for we are, upon conversion, actually begotten as sons (yet unborn) of God." At the resurrection we will be changed instantly into immortal beings and will be "born" of God. "We shall then be God!"¹⁸

David Jon Hill, one of Armstrong's editors, speaks of that transition as the moment "when we become God as God is God. God as Jesus Christ is God."¹⁹ Labeled a "central, vital Bible truth," this doctrine is not optional for Armstrongites.²⁰

Evangelicals who accept the Holy Spirit as one of the persons of the Trinity believe that he indwells their lives at the time of their spiritual birth through commitment to Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Armstrong theology, on the other hand, teaches that "the Bible reveals that NONE is yet 'saved'"²¹ and cannot be saved until the resurrection. Only then, writes C. Paul Meredith in his pamphlet "Is This the Only Day of Salvation," will God even begin to save the majority of mankind.

In a study of Armstrong theology one seldom hears or reads that Christ can be an individual's personal Savior. Armstrong followers lack the priceless ingredient of New Testament Christian faith: a genuine, personal experience of Jesus. They have coupled a reception of Jesus as a partial atonement for past sins with a day-by-day obedience to the laws of God. Therefore, a person cannot be sure of his salvation and stands in constant danger of losing the favor of God. Among other laws that must be kept is the observance of Saturday as the sabbath: a command Armstrong identifies as a sign of the real Christian today and "the one on which your very salvation and eternity depends!"²²

Armstrong rules out salvation by grace. He follows Mormon and Jehovah's witnesses teaching here and requires obedience to the teachings of Jesus and to the commandments. While he denies that his is a religion of works and insists that eternal life is a free gift from God through Christ,²³ he explains that this gift is conditioned on keeping the commandments.²⁴ One wonders what the Armstrongites do with Galatians, for in 2:15-21 the apostle Paul shakes the very foundation of the World Tomorrow system.

Another distinctive of the Armstrong belief, the view of man's after life, is much like that of the Adventists and Jehovah's witnesses. Man is enveloped in a sort of soul sleep, without consciousness or thought process. But at the resurrection there will be a raising to life, a re-creation, "not only of individuals, but also of entire nations."²⁵

Furthermore, there are three resurrections, the first occurring at Christ's second coming when the faithful will rise to new glory. A thousand years later a second resurrection will take place, called the resurrection of judgment. The dead who never had an opportunity for salvation will come at this time and will have an "opportunity to hear, accept, and live a life free from the burdens of a sinful society such as we now have."²⁶ In the third resurrection the persistently wicked will be annihilated in the "lake of fire." Thus the Worldwide Church of God has eliminated a hell of torment. The worst that can happen to the vile and unrepentant is a quick death, interpreted as the "second death" of the Bible.

The British-, or Anglo-Israelite theory, as it is now called, which captured Armstrong's imagination in the twenties has been developed by various persons since 1840. It contends that the Bible is mainly a history of the ancient Israelites. Britain is the lost tribe of Ephraim and the United States the lost tribe of Manasseh. Through a system of charts, the English-speaking people can trace their ancestry back to Adam. The throne of England is in direct descent from the

throne of David.

Sound biblical scholars for the most part discredit this theory, questioning whether the ten tribes were completely lost. Passages in Ezra 6-8 refer to the twelve tribes returning to Palestine and being represented at the dedication of the new Temple. If we accept reputable biblical scholarship, the Jews of today, not the British and American people, are the rightful descendants of the ancient Israelites. One danger in accepting the theory is the contention that only the English-speaking people can expect the best of God's blessing.

The Worldwide Church of God espouses other beliefs that run counter to evangelical Christianity. It holds, for instance, that the crucifixion was on a Wednesday, not on Friday; that the eucharistic sacrament should be celebrated only once a year; that Old Testament dietary laws should be strictly adhered to.²⁶ Because it is Old Testament oriented, Jewish fasts and festivals such as Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles are observed, but Christmas and Easter are considered pagan and are not observed.

A member who seeks the continual blessing of God, as Armstrong interprets it, will tithe his income not once, but three times. The first tithe is for general church work; the second, required annually, finances the mass meetings of special holy days and other regional meetings; and the third, invoking the Old Testament again, is required every third year and is used for widows, orphans, and the destitute.

The Armstrongs appeal to patriotic people because of their strong public stand on old fashioned virtue and integrity. At the same time, they remind the listener that since Satan is controlling our society, society is doomed. They oppose military service, public education and voting. Modern use of prescription drugs and physicians is discouraged, for the faithful should be so in tune with God that healing and good health result.

Mainline evangelical Christians are "people of the church" who urge everyone to attend their public worship. The Armstrongs, on the other hand, conduct a semi-private type of church similar to a private lodge or fraternity. However, in 1973 the church began to relax its exclusiveness, and interested persons not bent on disturbing the system and ritual may now attend.

The local church is a branch of the home organization in Pasadena, Calif. Ministers are ordained and are given their credentials by the home office. At certain times of the year they visit the local congregations and conduct water baptisms, essential for membership and for receiving the spirit-force of God. Unlike Protestant and Catholic churches, Armstrong fellowships are usually conducted in rented buildings. So far they have not advertised their church services or contributed special news items to local newspapers. Location and availability of the ministry is learned from a member or from the headquarters.

"The World Tomorrow" is the great slogan by which Armstrong points to that wonderful time when men will dwell in peace and harmony. He contends that this generation is beyond hope, controlled by Satan. He offers a full explanation in free booklets such as "The Wonderful World Tomorrow—What Will It Be Like?" He sees a new Roman empire emerging with the world entering tribulation. But those who follow his interpretation of the Bible will be spared the ordeal if they will follow him to Petra in southern Jordan. One date given for the empire to emerge is 1975; other possible dates are 1977 and 1987. Eventually Jesus will return to set up a new world government.

Methods of Propagation

Like all evangelicals, the Armstrongs, claiming to be the "one true church," are concerned about sending their "good news" to the world. To do so, they have capitalized on both



Paul Obregon Photo

verbal and written communication utilizing radio, television, literature as well as involvement at the education level.

From the one radio station in Eugene, Ore., in 1934, Armstrong has developed a religious network of radio and TV programs that is unrivaled for coverage in the annals of religious broadcasting. He claims to be the largest purchaser of radio time in the world;²⁷ and, because they pay for their time, Armstrongites are able to select prime-time hours. The "World Tomorrow" is heard on 400-plus stations around the world and is seen on at least 56 TV stations in the United States and Canada, 10 in the Caribbean area, 1 in Europe and 2 in Asia.²⁸

Vying with this impressive coverage are the numerous booklets and other printed pieces produced by Armstrong and his selected writers. These are sent free—though with strong "hints" that voluntary contributions are in order—to anyone who requests them.

The best known of these materials are the magazines: the full-color, well-prepared *Plain Truth* (also printed in French, Spanish, German and Dutch) with a circulation of nearly 2½ million and the newer *Tomorrow's World* claiming a circulation of around a half million.²⁹ These figures do not include the free copies distributed at well-travelled locations such as a display at a busy subway news-stand in London, England.

One important means of indoctrination is the privately controlled Ambassador colleges in Pasadena, Calif.; Big Sandy, Tex.; and St. Albans, England. Opened by the Armstrongs in 1947, these three schools, which are not accredited by any regional or national accrediting association and probably do not seek such standing, enroll about 1,400 students.³⁰

But no church or religion can exist without dedicated, loyal followers who comprise its best channel for spreading its message. Armstrong claims to have 125,000 "co-workers"³¹ in his task of religious promotion. According to "Letters to the Editor" page in the *Plain Truth*, there are many loyal followers who have forsaken former religious convictions to accept Armstrong teachings. However, if doubts arise even a little, he ceases to be a good purveyor of the World Tomorrow line. Complete commitment to the program is essential to the continued success of the Worldwide Church.

Armstrong's approved clergy is still another way of spreading his message. Every minister of the church must have official credentials and is entrusted with keeping the "true Christian message" vital and growing. Although there are no actual statistics to prove the point, some estimate that "pastoral" salaries and living accommodations are superior to those of the average Protestant clergyman. Since Armstrongites believe that theirs is the only right way to peace, happiness and eternal security, Armstrong clergymen are not inclined to fraternize or dialogue with other clergymen.

Witnessing to Armstrongites

The following suggestions are for sharing Christ's message with members of the Armstrong group.

- The Armstrongite may be confused as to why he was formerly a member of a mainline Protestant denomination. Ask questions to determine his level of commitment and understanding.

- Suggest a study of one of the books of the New Testament. For the Armstrong follower, Galatians is a good example.

- Suggest that the person study selected Bible passages on the great doctrines and issues. The pamphlet "Baptist Faith and Message," a good compilation of Bible references, may be secured from Baptist association offices and local churches.

- Invite the person to attend your church worship service. The openness and freedom in Bible study and the celebration-joy of the worship may impress him.

- Ask the person to tell you why he is now interested in the Armstrong system. Does he feel that one man or a small group of interpreters has all the answers to basic questions of religion and life? Armstrong and others will pass off the scene. Will other leaders be as successful as they were?

- Give a current testimony why Jesus is the ever-present answer to your spiritual need and quest. Stress the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in your life. Remember the Armstrong follower, as well as a person of other sects and cults usually has a difficult time giving a personal testimony of Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives. They have substituted a system based on the authoritative pronouncements of an individual for the indwelling presence of a living Lord.

- Point out that a wholesome Christian is also a good neighbor, a citizen, interested in community betterment. Although our society is troubled with evildoers, we try to bring Christian love and action to help people see and attain a better community. The Armstrongs and some other sectarians have written off our present society as almost hopeless.

- Pray earnestly that you will be a true representative of the gospel of Good News.

The Future

At this time the future of the Worldwide Church of God is difficult to predict. Herbert W. Armstrong is in his eighties. Presumably the leadership is intended to pass to his son, Garner Ted. But escalating dissatisfaction in the higher echelon of the church with both father and son has exploded into serious problems for the church.

Objections focus on the senior Armstrong's tight, one-man totalitarian control over the church; his authoritarian determination of its doctrines and policies, including its internal disciplines; and the exorbitant spending of funds, partly derived from the triple tithes required of the membership, on the affluent life styles and luxurious conveniences of top-ranking officials. A more recent factor concerns the propriety of Garner Ted's private life, with charges alleging immorality

that "go publicly unchallenged—and privately acknowledged."

These factors, together with two multi-million dollar law suits have brought much adverse publicity and has precipitated the formation of the church's first splinter group. In March, 1974, the Associated Church of God was established under the leadership of 34 former Worldwide Church of God ministers. Of this dissident group, *Eternity* magazine states in its May, 1974, issue:

While still espousing Armstrong's doctrines of Anglo-Israelism, denial of the Trinity, and legalism, the new Associated Church of God hopes to avoid WCC's many pitfalls. Local congregations will be autonomous and membership will be free and open. Divorce and remarriage will be permitted and no triple tithe system will be instituted. The new church's stated goal is "to educate and to serve, not to control."

It will take time to see if the Armstrongs' church, as well as their first daughter-church, will be able to survive the problems that at present threaten both.

FOOTNOTES

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³Al Stump, "Hunky punky and the Revolt in the Worldwide Church of God," *True for Men*, July 1974, p. 71.

⁴S.E. Anderson, *Armstrongism: 100 Errors Exposed*, Nashville: Church Growth Publications, 1973, pp. 14-15.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁶Joseph Martin Hopkins, "Herbert W. Armstrong," *Christianity Today*, Dec. 17, 1971, p. 6.

⁷Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

⁸*Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, v. 1, pp. 400, 407.

⁹Herman L. Hach as quoted in *Armstrongism Is Confusion* by W.R. McLin, El Monte, Calif.: Maxim Publishers, 1973, p. 9.

¹⁰"Armstrong's Cult Suffers Suits and Splits," *Eternity*, 1974.

¹¹*The Plain Truth*, March, 1973, p. 17.

¹²"The God Family Open or Closed," *Tomorrow's World*, Sept.-Oct., 1970, p. 31.

¹³Why Marriages! . . . Soon Obsolete, pp. 32, 33.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁶*Loc. cit.*

¹⁷Armstrong, *Why Were You Born*, p. 21.

¹⁸*Tomorrow's World*, Sept.-October, 1970, p. 28.

¹⁹Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

²⁰Why Were You Born, p. 11.

²¹Herbert W. Armstrong, *Which Day Is The Christian Sabbath?*, p. 58.

²²Herbert W. Armstrong, *What Do You Mean—Salvation?*

²³False Conversion," *The Plain Truth*, Nov. 1966.

²⁴*The Plain Truth*, May, 1973, pp. 34 f.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁶Bert Mann, in the *Christian Herald*, June, 1974.

²⁷Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 11, 12.

²⁹*The Plain Truth*, Nov. 1972, inside cover.

³⁰Campbell, *op. cit.*

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 11.

³²*Loc. cit.*

Unitarian Universalists and the Baptist Witness

by M. Thomas Starkes

Forty years before John Adams became the second president of the United States, he recorded in his diary that he was giving up his thoughts about becoming a minister. He wrote, "I saw a spirit of dogmatism and bigotry in clergy and laity, that, if I should be a priest, I must take my side, and pronounce as positively as any of them, or never get a parish or, getting it, must soon leave it." He then resolved that he was not made for the pulpit in such times, since such a life promised only "endless altercations" with little chance of doing good to his fellowmen!

Adams was expressing the constant dilemma of the free thinker in religious matters, that is, to what extent search for doctrinal truth interferes with social righteousness. The dilemma is still present in current religious practice.

Almost three hundred thousand persons in the United States have chosen to solve the problem by saying that creeds and doctrinal statements do not matter, since they are simply a reflection of selected religious thought at a specific time. These persons, members of the Unitarian Universalist Association (consolidated in 1961), stand in impressive company. Besides John Adams, four other presidents have been Unitarians: Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, Millard Fillmore and William Howard Taft. American literary figures who were part of this movement include Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Longfellow and Lowell. Reformers and innovators include Susan B. Anthony, Horace Mann and Samuel Morse.

Brief History

Unitarianism has its roots at least as far back as Arius, a fourth-century presbyter from the Alexandrian church, who contended that "the Son has a beginning but that God is without beginning" and that the Son is not a part of God. The controversy over Pelagianism (the denial of the taint of Adam's sin and the declaration that each man at birth has the ability to choose the good) in the early fifth century was a precursor of things to come in the later history of Unitarianism.

The movement gained momentum with *On the Errors of the*

Trinity, a book published in 1531 by Michael Servetus; for its contents he was burned at the stake. A strong Unitarian movement developed in Poland under the leadership of Faustus Socinus, a strong propagator of anti-Trinitarian doctrines. Francis David, who led the movement in Hungary, came under close scrutiny by the church and died in prison in 1579. He contended that Jesus was not God and should not be worshipped as deity. David's followers were the first to be called "Unitarians"—then a term of derision.

The founder of the Unitarian church in England was Theophilus Lindsey, who conducted a service in 1774 before large London congregation that included Benjamin Franklin and Joseph Priestly. Twenty years later Priestly gathered a congregation together in Northumberland, Penn., the first on American soil to call itself Unitarian.

The Liberals fought the Calvinists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century on several points, including the deity of Christ, predestination, human depravity and hell fire.

The religious-thought world of the first half of the nineteenth century was shocked into the realization that Unitarian thought was becoming more influential, as word spread about addresses given by three outstanding pulpites. The year was 1819 and the place was Baltimore when William Ellery Channing stood to preach the ordination sermon of a young minister. Channing's open-minded approach to religious problems had led him to help found a magazine, *The Christian Disciple*, the voice of the Boston liberals. In his Baltimore sermon, Channing said: "Revelation is addressed to us as rational being being... We believe, then, that Christ is one mind, one being, and, I add, a being distinct from the one God...." The stage was set for disharmony within Congregationalism.

As a young man at Harvard College, Ralph Waldo Emerson had Channing for his pastor and owed much of his thought patterns to him. When Emerson addressed the Divinity School there in 1838, he startled his hearers with such pronouncements as:

He (Jesus Christ) spoke of miracles; for he felt that man's life was

miracle.... But the world 'Miracle, as pronounced by Christian churches, gives a false impression; it is monster.... The Hebrew and Greek Scriptures contain immortal sentences.... But they have no epical integrity; are fragmentary; are not shown in their order to the intellect...."

Theodore Parker who heard Emerson was duly impressed. Three years later Parker himself made explicit his Unitarian views in a Boston address entitled "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity." His listeners heard that:

"Anyone who traces the history of what is called Christianity, will see that nothing changes more from day to day than the doctrines taught as Christian, and insisted on as essential to Christianity and personal salvation. What is falsehood in one province passes for truth in another."

Parker went on to write *Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion*, which was labeled vehemently heretical. But the die was cast. The Unitarians were very much in evidence on the religious scene in America.

In the meantime the American Unitarian Association had been formed in 1825. A national conference was held in 1865. In the 1884 meeting of this conference the nature of the American Unitarian Association was changed from a loose association of individual believers to an organization of churches.

During this time Universalism in America ran a separate course. John Murray, an English Universalist, came to New Jersey in 1770. He had been influenced by the writings of James Rely, an advocate of universal salvation. Murray became minister of the first organized church in America in Gloucester, Mass. In 1786, the Universalist Baptist Church was formed in Philadelphia, under the leadership of Elhanan Winchester, who had come to his Universalist views independently of Murray.

Primary theologian of the Universalist movement was

Knoian Benfield Photo

Hosea Ballou, who in 1805 wrote *Treatise on Atonement*, renouncing doctrines of depravity of the human race and of everlasting punishment.

By 1894 the Universalists had grown to sufficient size to form the Universalist General Convention and four years later appointed Isaac M. Atwood as their first general superintendent. In 1903, the General Convention met in Boston and adopted the "Essential Principles of the Universalist Church," including the tenet for the final harmony of all souls with God.

The high point in twentieth-century Universalism came in 1961 with the merger with Unitarians and the formation of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The new organization was possible because of the common beliefs the two groups already held. These included the supreme worth of every human personality and a free search for truth.

Unitarian Universalism has now grown to include more than 1,200 churches and 500 fellowships. Church school enrollment and adult membership now approach 300,000 in the United States.

Basic Doctrines

All Unitarian Universalist doctrines rest on the principle of the free mind and the role of reason in the search for religious truth. This stance leads to a tolerance toward different views and practices.

Corollary is distrust of creeds. "Freedom of belief in matters of religion means that nothing which has been handed down from the past is acceptable as a complete and final exposition of all truth." Because of this, it is difficult to pinpoint the beliefs of this movement, but certain recurrent themes keep appearing.

On salvation, Channing set the stage in 1821 when he said, "Our proper work is to approach God by the free and natural unfolding of our highest powers." "Man is not seen to be a



fallen sinner in need of miraculous salvation but as a being worthy and capable of bringing about his own salvation through work for love, justice and freedom. Since man is not condemned by original sin, he is capable of "self-improvement."

In a recent pamphlet, George Marshall continues this train of thought: "We believe in salvation by character, that is, man is capable of achieving a more ideal life by the results of his own efforts to strengthen and sensitize himself. We do not rely on some supernatural intervention."¹²

Unitarians regard the Bible as a piece of great literature while subjecting it critically to the rule of reason. Marshall says,

We find it (the Bible) to offer great lesson, fine poetry, important records, understood best with archeological aid and comparison with other cultures and literature. We also find that it contains much unimportant material. Unitarians and Universalists use their reason when they study the Bible, and it becomes a larger Bible in consequence.¹³

The Unitarians' name reflects their view of the oneness of God. Channing spoke for most Unitarians when he said, in 1819, "We object to the doctrine of the Trinity, that, while acknowledging in words, it subverts in effect, the unity of God."¹⁴ The key word here is "unity." Most Unitarians believe that classical Christian statements of the Trinity tend to do injustice to the "uni-personality" of God.

A corollary of this stance, however, is that the Holy Spirit is identified with the Father himself, being a holy influence rather than a person. Jesus is revered as a great teacher and the best among men. One Unitarian writer comes to the conclusion that "the Jesus portrayed in the gospels is a confusing and bewildering figure. It is pertinent to honor Buddha, Zoroaster, Isaiah and Confucius, no less than Jesus for symbolizing compassion, unselfishness, self sacrifice and good will . . ."¹⁵ According to most Unitarians, the primary reason that Jesus came to earth was to be a moral example. They affirm the normal humanity of Jesus and not his eternal deity.

Universalists have contributed to this association the idea that eventually all men will be saved; or, if any soul is saved, none is ultimately lost. S.H. Mellone wrote, "Final communion with God is the destiny of every soul, and not alone those who know in this present by living experience what such communion is."¹⁶ This concept has given a large popular appeal for Unitarianism to those in America with relativistic tendencies in comparative religion.

Man is held to be basically good and the child of God, standing high on the evolutionary ladder with great potential for growth. Human nature does not separate man from God but binds him together with God. Jesus Christ supposedly taught that not only was he divine but also that all men are divine. It follows, then, that man is to find religious meaning and truth by correctly using the powers God gives him. The person who desires to share this message speaks not of sinfulness, but appeals to man's highest potential.

Unitarian Universalists have no creed, but the aforementioned views of God, man and the world do permeate the thought world of most members of this association. The reader should note how drastically these views differ from those of most Christians. More will be said of this in the section entitled "Basic Doctrinal Weaknesses."

What They Can Teach Us

Unitarian Universalists can teach tradition-oriented Christians a great deal. For one thing, "All Unitarians would agree that the impact of religion on individual human life and on society must be ethical—or it would be worthless."¹⁷ Unitarians have continually stressed the practical application of religious faith. This stress has produced important leadership, including Dorothea Dix and George W. Quimby, a leader of opposition of capital punishment.

Unitarians have realized that social problems demand social

action, and have therefore organized to meet social needs. They have had, since 1908, the Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice with the purpose of "the realization of religious ideals in present day society."¹⁸ Baptists would do well to allow the spirit of Christ to permeate the courthouse lest he perish on the modern-day steeple. Baptists should pay close attention to those advocating that the Good News is potentially redemptive in every area of life, individual and social.

Another lesson is pointed up by Carl F. Henry, former editor of *Christianity Today*, who maintains that the greatest danger faced by evangelical Christians today is "anti-intellectualism." Distrust or misuse of reason within the religious experience by evangelical Christians has been a deterrent to reaching intellectuals with the gospels.

Unitarians have appealed to this same group with a strong emphasis on the free search for truth—religious, scientific, or moral—wherever it is to be found. The constitution of the Unitarian Universalist Association lists as the first aim, "To strengthen one another in a free and disciplined search for truth as the foundation of our religious fellowship."¹⁹ This means the admission that there may be religious truth in Buddhism, scientific truth in some theories of evolution and moral truth in Judaism.

By coupling the responsible use of reason with the spiritual truths in the living and written Word, evangelical Christians may learn that God's truth is not confined in specific creeds and denominations or movements.

A third lesson traditional Christians would do well to learn from Unitarians is the development of a spirit of toleration. The Unitarians' struggle against persecution, coupled with disdain for creeds and doctrinal certainty, has given the movement an overarching appreciation for the differences and common aspirations of all peoples. Some Christians have assumed that "cornering" the truth of God has given them the right to degrade the beliefs of others.

Kenneth Cragg, calling for balance between religious certainty and toleration, maintains that the Christian must appropriate the grace "to hold positive premises without negative influences."²⁰ This phrase serves as a reminder that the gaining of religious liberty does not necessitate theological relativism, but always demands the recognition of the dignity of the believer.

The tendency toward sectarian attitude in comparative religion—the idea that one's own convictions are correct and others' convictions are the incorrect assumptions of deluded people—can be avoided by granting full religious liberty. This spirit of religious toleration, granted by Unitarian Universalists, is to be emulated.

Basic Weaknesses

Representing the liberal wing of Christianity, Unitarian Universalism has certain weaknesses when viewed from the standard of Scripture and of the risen Lord.

First there is a question as to whether Unitarianism can be called Christian. When asked this question directly, one of their leaders replied:

"If Christianity means a respect and reverence for Jesus and what he sought to be and do in his own time; if Christianity means the effort to bring to birth in our own lives today something of 'that spirit which was in Jesus'—then Unitarians have as good a right as anybody else to call themselves Christian."²¹

This statement makes it clear that Unitarianism defines Christianity as emulation of the spirit and teachings of Christ, with little attention given to his divine nature. It fails to affirm the total Christ-event, including the virgin birth, the miracle of the incarnation, the Savior's ministry to human despair, and his death and resurrection.

Second, the high place that Unitarians have given reason in determining religious truth has tended to bring about such statements as, "The substance of religion is to nurture rea-

son."²² The recognition of the proper use of reason in religious faith and practice is one matter, but to allow it to preempt the regenerate heart and the spiritual and emotional growth of the Christian is another. The basic question, of course, is that of the source of authority. The Christian need not forget his mind as he searches for God's truth in Scripture and in the world; but on the other hand, he need not eliminate the possibility of miracle in the name of reason.

Elton Trueblood sheds valuable light on this question when he writes:

Since the supposition that we must choose between clear-mindedness and reverence is something that has no foundation in fact, the rational evangelical is the new man for our generation. It is the vocation of the Christian intellectual to be both tough-minded and tender-minded, and to be both at once.²³

Third, the prominent role Unitarians have given to reason has affected their view of the Bible. Many Unitarians believe that the Bible is a record of events of history. "The natural character of the Bible" is upheld as opposed to the view that God has revealed uniquely in this written Word his will for every generation. To affirm that God used and still uses human instruments to record and to do his will is different from asserting that the Bible is unique, especially in light of its witness to the Son.

Fourth, Unitarian Universalists disagree with the emphasis of the Hebrew-Christian faith in the sinful nature of man. The corollary to this view is that final communion with God is the destiny of every soul. Heaven and hell are held to be meaningful only as names and conditions within the human spirit. Man is seen to be potentially good and capable of perfectibility. No need is seen for the substitutionary atoning death of Christ.

This virtually ignores the teachings of both the Old and New Testaments that "whoever hath sinned against me, him will blot out of my book" (Ex. 32:33) and "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29b). To assert that man does not stand in need of salvation is also virtually to ignore men such as Hitler and deeds such as murder, rape, greed and war.

For modern man, it is to fail to provide a release for his overriding sense of guilt. To contend for the dignity of man is not to say that man's worth has not been raised by the self appropriated grace and glorious resurrected presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The issue is still, as phrased by Earl Morse Wilbur, "a conflict between the claims of perfectly free inquiry on the one hand and the limitations of supernatural revelation on the other."²⁴ The Christian intellectual, following the pattern of Christ who astounded the rabbis with his knowledge, should complement one with the other. "Free inquiry" ideally includes the liberating influence of supernatural revelation. To ignore light given by revelation is to black out a vast storehouse of knowledge, the opposite of free inquiry.

How to Witness

The first stage of witness to the Unitarian Universalists in our midst is the emulation of their strong points. Their appeal to socially-concerned intellectuals serves as a "summons to reformation" for those churches and individual Christians who have neglected the social and intellectual content of the gospel.

Open and frequent discussion in evangelical churches on such matters as birth control, war and peace, racial and student unrest and political responsibility would do much to enhance the practical application of Christian principles to a society in need of them. A must is the curbing of anti-intellectualism in the faith, voiced by some persons in such phrases as "those liberal seminary professors" and "all it takes to witness is a telling of your experience."

The second state of witness takes place on the individual level. When Unitarian Universalists begin to meet more of what Trueblood calls "the Christian intellectuals," they may be astounded that one may hold conservative Christian convictions based on revealed and experienced grace without being adverse to truth in whatever form.

Regenerated Christians who have discovered the meaning of 1 Peter 3:15 ("Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.") should seek out Unitarians for discussion of biblical truths. Stress should be laid on the eternal hope which born-again Christians experience and the need of every man to consider openly the total Christ-event, not only Jesus' example and teachings.

Conclusion

Unitarian Universalists in America stand as a serious challenge to committed Christians to broaden their discipleship to include:

- Social application of the gospel;
- Full use of the mind in balance with God's revealed will;
- Frank discussion with Unitarians on religious matters;
- Reliance on the Holy Spirit to "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:18).

The challenge and the call are clear. The resultant commitment must be as genuine.

Footnotes

¹John Adams, *The Works of John Adams* (Boston: 1850), I, p. 42.

²William Ellery Channing, *Unitarian Christianity and Other Essays* (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1957), p. 3.

³*Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 112.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁵Austin Phillip Hewett, *An Unfiltered Faith* (London: The Lindsey Press, 1955), p. 51.

⁶Channing, op. cit., p. 87.

⁷"Unitarians and Universalists Believe," (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1967), p. 1.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁹*Three Prophets*, op. cit., p. 57.

¹⁰Jack Mendelsohn, *Why I Am a Unitarian* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1960), p. 192.

¹¹Hewett, op. cit., p. 114.

¹²*A Pocket Guide to Unitarianism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), p. 5.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁴Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1951), p. 212.

¹⁵Kenneth Cragg, *Christianity in World Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 85.

¹⁶*A Pocket Guide*, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁷Mendelsohn, op. cit., p. 161.

¹⁸Elton Trueblood, *A Place to Stand* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 36.

¹⁹*A Pocket Guide*, op. cit., p. 36.

The Unity School of Christianity

by A. Jase Jones

"The word for today is . . . Confidence . . . Together . . . Love . . . Patience . . . Honesty . . . Win." "The Word from Unity," a one-minute spot commentary, appears on approximately 600 radio and television stations throughout the United States. The voice of a well-known person from movies, television, stage, radio, recordings, or sports does the commentary on the word for the day.

Seen and heard by a nationwide audience, "The Word from Unity" is just one part of the broad ministry of the Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, Missouri, which through all of its programs touches the lives of millions of people in the United States and around the world.

A sister institution located on its campus is the Association of Unity Churches, related to Unity School and cooperating with it but organically separate. Although Unity School has no control over it, AUC seeks to act within the framework and spirit of Unity School policies. The Unity Churches, or Centers, as Unity leaders prefer to call them, are scattered throughout the United States. They have approximately 60,000 people, or members, affiliated with them.

Unity Village is a corporate municipality located on 1400 acres at the southeast edge of Kansas City, Missouri. The beautiful natural setting is complemented by attractive, imposing buildings, formal gardens, tree-shaded walks, and fountains, all arranged to form a planned, symmetrical whole. The 165-foot-tall Unity Tower overlooks the scene and is a landmark for miles around. The large, red-tile-roofed buildings, the arched Bridge of Faith, and Unity Tower combine architectural and artistic excellence, inside and out, with maximum utility.

Also on the grounds are a farm, orchards, motel and cottages for guests, amphitheater, swimming pool, tennis courts, golf course, greenhouse, Wee Wisdom School, and printing building. If architecture is frozen music, as has been said, Unity's buildings are a visual symphony.

A tour of the buildings and grounds leaves the visitor with at least two immediate impressions: people involved in an almost beehive-like activity, and a pervasive kindly, generous spirit. The buildings are filled with people coming and going, talking, working, studying, praying, and observing. Sightseeing visitors go on guided tours or crowd into the bookstore. Retreatants in small groups engage in animated discussions. Students study in the 35,000-volume library.

More than 450 employees run the computers, answer the telephones which bring in as many as 35,000 prayer requests per month and more than 250,000 annually, and ship more than 100,000,000 pieces of Unity literature each year. And throughout every hour of every day, a solitary figure sits in the Prayer Room, praying for the person whose request for prayer is written on the card held in her hand.

History

If every institution is but the lengthened shadow of a man, Unity School of Christianity is the extension of the lives of a Kansas City couple, Charles (1854-1948) and Myrtle (1845-1931) Fillmore. The beginning of the Unity movement is usually said to be in April, 1889, when the first issue of Charles Fillmore's magazine, *Modern Thought*, appeared.

The actual beginning, however, might be said to go back to Myrtle Fillmore's serious illness, diagnosed as tuberculosis. She had been given six months to live. One evening in 1886, she and Charles Fillmore heard a lecture given in Kansas City by E. B. Weeks. In the course of his lecture, Weeks said, "I am a child of God and therefore I do not inherit sickness." This statement made a profound impression on Mrs. Fillmore. She could not get away from it, and "two years later she had made herself completely whole!"

Mrs. Fillmore soon began her own ministry of praying for the sick. Healings were recorded. These experiences made an impression on her husband. He became involved in the growing movement and soon assumed the leadership of its activi-

ties, bringing to the movement his own marked business abilities. His contribution to the movement was by no means limited to its business aspects, however, for he was a writer, lecturer, and teacher.

The Fillmores began instructional classes in their home, teaching people how to apply Christian principles in their daily lives. These classes grew in size and multiplied in number until there was a need for more teachers. This called for the training of teachers to teach more and more classes, and paved the way for Unity School.

Modern Thought, the forerunner of today's *Unity* magazine, quickly increased in circulation. Other writings followed. Soon the mailing department carried a heavy load, mailing the magazine and other requested literature, and sending replies to the many letters that came.

Unity moved several times to needed larger quarters in various buildings in downtown Kansas City. The Fillmores constructed a new building in 1906 on Tracy Street, east of the downtown area. This location at Ninth and Tracy Streets was for many years the Unity headquarters and the site of many large buildings. During 1948-1950 all the departments of Unity headquarters moved to Unity Village.

Charles and Myrtle Fillmore did not intend to start another church or denomination. They thought of their movement as being supplementary to the larger Christian movement. They conceived their work to be that of teaching certain ideas and concepts they considered to be essential to Christianity and which they felt were being neglected by the churches. In order to avoid competing with the established churches, they held their classes at different times from the regular hours for Sunday church services.

They were not able to continue this practice, however. People were attracted to Unity who had no church affiliation or who did not attend services at the churches where they held membership. These began to request Sunday worship services at the convenient and customary church times, and the Fillmores acceded to their requests.

This idea that Unity is not a denomination and sees itself primarily in a supplementary relationship to the total Christian community is still strong. Unity's current president affirms this concept of Unity's role. Those who read the literature and study in Unity's classes today are generally encouraged to stay in their own churches, using there the ideas and concepts they have learned from Unity.

To the outside observer, however, there is the appearance of a trend toward denominationalism in the increase in the number of Unity centers. These carry on "church" activities and are a part of the Association of Unity Churches, which suggests a denominational structure.

The Association has at least one characteristic of denominations: the natural desire to increase the number of members in Unity centers, as well as the number of centers. On the other hand, some Unity leaders strongly emphasize that Unity ministers do not aggressively seek members and do not proselyte members of other churches.

The primary objective of the Fillmores was to help people learn to apply in a practical way the teachings of Christianity in their daily lives. This is reflected in the first name of their organization, the Unity School of Practical Christianity. The Fillmores believed that divine power was at hand and available for everyone's use in overcoming the problems of life. Mrs. Fillmore's experience in overcoming tuberculosis, and Mr. Fillmore's ability "to fill out and lengthen" his withered leg and to overcome a "catarrhal condition" that had bothered him since childhood fortified their faith. They conceived their work as being, in addition to direct and personal prayer for people in need, to help each student "find his inner Christ" and utilize the power that would thus be available to him.

Many ideas current in the American religious community

of the last third of the nineteenth century, particularly those of New Thought, are reflected in the Fillmore's writings. New Thought is the name for a viewpoint or approach in religion which appeared in the middle of the last century. Its influence was felt in several new religious movements, including Unity and Christian Science. Basic concepts in New Thought are,

the immediate availability of God; conscious and practical application of spiritual thought force to the solution of human problems; the inevitability that good shall come to every soul; the belief in immortality and the continuity of the individual stream of consciousness and the external expansion of the individual life; the awakening not to an absorption of man's identity in Deity but to his complete unity with the Whole. Thus every man becomes an individualized center of God Consciousness, eternally expanding."

The influence of Mary Baker Eddy's ideas is also discernible in the thought of the Fillmores. It is important to keep in mind, however, that while Charles and Myrtle Fillmore were naturally influenced by religious ideas then in vogue, the movement they began carried their own distinct imprint and travelled in the direction they gave it. Their grandson, Charles Rickert Fillmore, states that his grandfather was acquainted with Christian Science, but that he never had any direct contact with Mrs. Eddy, nor did he think of himself as a member of Christian Science.

One must not minimize the part Myrtle Fillmore played in Unity's founding and progress. Her husband was a much more prolific writer than she was. She confined her writing in the main to personal letters and to articles in *Wee Wisdom*, the magazine she created. His work as director of the business aspects of the movement also placed him in a more visible position than she occupied. However, her personal influence was great, and through the publication of her collected letters, her thought continues to serve as a guide to Unity leaders and students.

Unity from the first could be called a family affair. Husband and wife were partners and coworkers. The three sons, Royal, W. Rickert, and Lowell, began by performing such chores as preparing the magazines for mailing, and grew up working in the movement. Royal was very active in the movement until his death only a few years after his wife died in giving birth to their daughter. W. Rickert was an architect and was the designer and builder of Unity's handsome grounds and buildings.

Lowell Fillmore, the eldest son, succeeded his father as president of Unity School. He became president emeritus in January, 1972, being succeeded as president by Charles Rickert Fillmore, the son of W. Rickert Fillmore. Lowell Fillmore is still living, with his wife, Alice, in Unity Village and still attends many Unity activities. Rosemary Fillmore Rhea, daughter of W. Rickert Fillmore and sister of the current president, is co-director, with her husband Ralph Rhea, of Unity's Radio and Television Department, and the voice of Unity on the television and radio programs.

Unity is not the property of the Fillmore family. It is so organized that it is not possible for any individual to profit personally from any of Unity's activities.

Unity Today

Unity School of Christianity is the name of the parent organization of the worldwide Unity movement. Since it does not consider itself a church or denomination, its followers are not called members, except for those affiliated with Unity Centers. The millions who subscribe to its periodicals, study in its classes, enroll in its home study courses, or write or call with prayer requests, are referred to as students, correspondents, or subscribers.

Unity is not creedal in emphasis. Fillmore disliked dogma and resisted for 30 years all efforts to persuade him to write

a statement of faith. When he finally did so, he warned that it was subject to change at any time. Yet, Unity has definite beliefs to which it adheres.

There is worship although Unity's primary thrust was not in the beginning and is not now to lead people in the worship of God. Its purpose is to instruct people in the application of certain Christian principles to daily life.

Unity's principal activities and its major impact upon human society are through three major avenues: its prayer ministry, its educational program, and its publishing activities including radio-television.

Silent Unity is the continuation of the prayer ministry initiated by the Fillmores at the beginning of the movement. It is referred to as "the light that shines for you," for the lights in the telephone room shine and the telephone operators are on duty 24 hours each day. Even in the quietest hours, four operators are on duty. More than one million persons write each year requesting prayer and more than 250,000 call. Every prayer request is honored, and every letter requiring an answer is answered by a corps of trained writers. At least one employee is on duty in the Prayer Chapel 24 hours every day, fulfilling Unity's promise to pray for all who request prayer.

Unity Institute for Continuing Education is a summer program for lay people, and offers resident courses in Unity teachings for credit and "self-unfoldment." There are four consecutive four-week sessions each year. Courses are offered in Bible, history, metaphysics (truth, prayer, healing, prosperity), and interpersonal studies (counseling, communication of Unity ideas, contemporary issues). These courses are also offered at Unity centers.

Another phase of the educational program is a series of week-long vacation retreats, eight altogether. Unity Village Chapel conducts a year-round program of activities including classes, Sunday and midweek prayer services, and evening lectures. Important figures on the American scene are brought in as guest lecturers.

The School for Ministerial and Religious Studies provides a two-year program of training for ministerial students. Unity prefers to train its own ministers, rather than accept those trained in other theological institutions. The Association of Unity Churches ordains and licenses all Unity ministers and teachers.

The third major avenue of outreach to the public is through publishing activities. Three monthly publications are *Daily Word*, *Unity*, and *Wee Wisdom*. The first, now 50-years old, contains a devotional thought for each day. *Unity* contains selections from the writings of Charles Fillmore and articles written by free-lance writers, and *Wee Wisdom* is designed to provide children with "constructive ideas without preaching." *La Palabra Diaria* has a circulation of 34,000.

In addition to the magazines, Unity publishes books, pamphlets, and cassette tapes. Its publications appear in many languages. Unity furnishes in Braille without charge *Daily Word*, *Wee Wisdom*, the Unity Textbook *Lessons in Truth*, and the booklet *Finding the Christ*. Through its free literature department, Silent-70, Unity sends free literature to more than 5,000 institutions in many parts of the world.

The Department of Radio-Television sends *The Word from Unity* program over several hundred radio and television stations throughout the United States. It produces 20 new scripts for radio each month, and several for television. Those who read Unity literature, listen to the broadcast programs, and respond by telephone or letter, represent all faiths, Jewish and Christian, Protestant and Catholic, and both clergy and lay persons.

Principles of Unity

What is Unity all about? Charles Rickert Fillmore says, "People often ask me, 'What is Unity's purpose?' Essentially, my

answer is that we are endeavoring to help you think of yourself as a unique, worthy individual, and thus, to gain greater appreciation for your importance in the universal design of things. Such an understanding gives an inner strength which dissolves wasteful hostility and defeatism, and helps you meet life's situations with poise and confidence. In other words, there is a basic unity in all creation, and you are an important part of it."

In this statement can be seen the aim of the ministry of Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, to equip people to deal successfully with life's problems, with life itself. The objective is that man might have health in his body, success in his affairs, happiness in his life, a sense of self-worth, and peace of mind.

In equipping people, Unity stresses a phrase from the apostle Paul: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." The student is taught that Christ is within him, that the Christ-spirit can be as strong in him as it was in Jesus. If he recognizes this fact and effects the realization of this potential, he will have within himself unlimited power with which to meet every need. He will have the same power that Jesus had and can do all that Jesus did. Illness and physical handicaps can be overcome (as were Myrtle Fillmore's tuberculosis and Charles Fillmore's withered leg). Material prosperity is certain. Career success and personal happiness are assured. One can overcome every limiting mortal condition, even death itself. Man is infinitely perfectible.

A primary technique for attaining these objectives is prayer. This is not prayer of entreaty, but prayer of affirmation. The "affirmative prayer approach" is based on the teachings of Jesus that the Kingdom of God is within, already at hand, awaiting our acceptance, experience and expressions.⁷⁹

In prayer, the individual affirms positive truths from Scripture, from the writings of the Fillmores and others, and from one's own inner self. An affirmation might be, "I am Spirit, perfect, holy, harmonious. Nothing can hurt me or make me sick or afraid, for Spirit is God, and God cannot be sick or hurt or afraid."

The purpose of prayer is to change one's own thinking and thus to change one's life. By the affirmation of ideas in prayer, one creates reality and so effects changes. One can bring any desired good into actuality by affirming that it is already there. This principle is operative in one's prayers for others, whether they are near or far.

To whom does one pray? Prayer is usually addressed to God, but it may not be. When one prays to God, does one expect a God who is a self-knowing Person to intervene and act to achieve the desired result? Not in the traditional Christian sense, it seems. "Everyone who prays for another person really does only this...he stands with the person in faith."⁷⁹ By standing with him in faith, one assists the other to create the reality desired, to get his prayer answered. "According to Jesus: God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth—and our Creator knows our needs even before we ask."⁸⁰

Unity also encourages the use of the Bible and its teachings in meeting the problems of life. By the proper understanding of its deeper or inner meanings and the application of these truths to life, the individual enlists divine wisdom in the solution of his problems.

Unity is primarily concerned with this life, with providing people with practical directions for living this life successfully. It is largely unconcerned with the life hereafter.

As a primarily non-creedal religion, Unity admittedly has doctrines but prefers to call them principles. It does not try to persuade people to believe and adhere to a creed. The follower is expected to take only those Unity teachings which he can use in order to improve his life and to bring it into line with the moral and spiritual standards he endorses.

The lack of a body of authoritative thought is a very important aspect of Unity. No two Unity ministers present the teachings exactly the same way, nor are they expected to.

There is no pressure toward conformity. There is freedom to disagree with today's leaders and with the founders of Unity. The leaders prize this freedom and cultivate it, while pointing out that the price of freedom is found in certain inconsistencies and contradictions observable in the movement's body of thought.

Unity takes no official stand, issues no pronouncements, and offers no public statements on social problems. Its approach is through the individual. Society is improved as the individual is improved. At the same time, Unity is concerned about such problems, and some Unity centers are becoming experimental centers where groups work in alleviating social problems.

Perspectives

In Unity thinking, God is not the God of traditional Christian theology. That is, God is not a self-conscious Person with his own distinct characteristics, different, separate from, not to be confused with those of any other being. Instead, he is principle, universal principle, impersonal principle, law, a power present throughout the universe, universal intelligence, love. God is personal only in that man's experience of him is in man's person. In his book *What Is Unity*, James Dillet Freeman, who emphasizes that God is principle, also says, "'God is Love. God loves you. God is your loving Father. You are His beloved child. God is good. God's will is good. God's will is joy, not pain; life, not death; wholeness, not imperfection; plenty, not lack; peace, not inharmonious.'"⁸⁰

Yet, the discussion of God in these personal terms does not change the concept of God as principle. Unity uses "he" in referring to God for want of a better pronoun, one Unity leader said. Similarly, other familiar religious terms related to God are used, but often with quite different meanings. The concept of the Trinity, according to Unity, is that God is Infinite Mind, Idea, and Expression, and not three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

God in man is simply a part of man's potential, needing only to be appropriated to accomplish one's wish. Charles Fillmore said,

"You cannot use God too often. He loves to be used, and the more you use Him the more easily you use Him and the more pleasant His help becomes. If you want a dress, a car, a house, or if you are thinking of driving a sharp bargain with your neighbor, going on a journey, giving a friend a present, running for office, or reforming a nation, ask God for guidance, in a moment of silent soul desire."⁸¹

Jesus was a man inhabited by the Christ-spirit, which is present in all people as it was in him. It was the Christ-spirit that enabled Jesus to do the things he did, and which enables man to do the same things.

Jesus was a "way-shower." By his realization of the potential of the Christ-spirit in his life, he showed man what man can do if he but realizes the same potential.

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection were not an appeasement, a sacrifice for sin in the traditional sense. By his death, particularly his resurrection, grace was released, that is, enthusiasm or inspiration, which frees man to follow the example Jesus set for him in the use of the Christ-spirit.

Satan is man's lower, more mundane self. Salvation for man means being saved from his own lower, human impulses and from the things of the world that are degrading to his higher, spiritual nature. It is accomplished by this increasing awareness or consciousness of God within him, as he prays and meditates.

This is not to say that man saves himself, however. Jesus' part in man's salvation is in showing him the kind of consciousness, the kind of attitude of mind, and the way of relating to the primary source of being, God, which makes possible this escape from his lower impulses. Ultimate salvation is the establishment of a complete freedom of relationship with God.

Life is continuous. Death does not destroy life. Belief in heaven as a place to which people go after death is not prevalent in Unity thought, although many people in Unity may have brought this belief along with them from their previous religious training. Nor is hell a specific place to which people are consigned. "The hereafter is right here after we wake up to what's here."

Jesus' promise to go and prepare a place for his followers does not refer to a physical place, but to a state of consciousness. This new consciousness, which comes to those who accept the teachings and demonstrations of Jesus, goes on eternally. The new heaven and new earth promised in the Bible is that whole new state of consciousness brought to mankind through many individuals, but uniquely through the life and demonstrations of Jesus.

Charles Fillmore believed in the perfectibility of man and espoused the idea of reincarnation as a possible explanation for the possibility of man's ultimate perfectibility. In order to attain perfection, that is, complete consciousness with God, man will need and will have additional lifetimes through a series of reincarnations in which to work toward this goal.

Unity makes a distinction between the "outer" Bible and the "inner" Bible. The outer Bible came through the inspiration of man by the Holy Spirit and is a book about the inner Bible. The words of the outer Bible have inner meanings, inner applications and implications, which portray the divine constitution of man and the unfoldment of his soul.

In its Bible courses, Unity School leads the student through a study of the "full scholarly and critical approach to the Bible," introducing him to the mainstream of biblical scholarship. He is taught what the writers of the biblical books originally meant. Then, he is given Unity's metaphysical interpretation of the Bible which may or may not coincide with the original meaning of the text. The interpretation Unity gives to a passage is the one it chooses to give, which attempts, from Unity's viewpoint, to disclose the heart and spirit of the Bible, whether stated or not. It is Unity's attempt to get at the ideas which lie behind the written words.

There is much in the Unity movement that is admirable, much that others would profit by emulating. Possibly its outstanding characteristic is its concern for helping people with the problems of everyday life, especially those arising out of life's crisis experiences. It focuses an intense and singular attention on the individual and his problem. The entire operation is organized to carry out this helping mission. A costly, complex system is used to establish contact with individuals, identify their needs and help them deal with those needs. The letters of gratitude that pour in testify to the success of this mission.

Unity has from the beginning recognized the relationship between the mind and bodily ills. It has helped people develop the positive, healthy mental attitude that promotes healing of psychosomatic ills.

Southern Baptists and Unity

There are many basic differences between Unity doctrines, which must be recognized by both groups in the creation of a complete relationship. Not all will be discussed here. The most important concern God's nature and the identity of Jesus. God is more than impersonal principle. He is person, self-knowing, distinct from man, able to infill man but maintain a separate identity, with characteristics and powers beyond man's ability ever to possess.

The same can be said of Jesus. On his human side Jesus and man are alike, but on his divine side he has characteristics which are forever superior to human characteristics. Man can have the spirit of Christ, which He gives man, but not the Christ-spirit, if one means by that a spirit of the same quality and power that Jesus had. Man can never be Christ. Jesus'

death, too, is more than just example and generator of inspiration for man's achievement. It was a unique sacrifice and atonement for sin, and the basis for man's justification in God's sight.

In view of these very basic differences, one wonders if it is possible for Unity to be merely supplementary in its relationship to the Baptist branch of Christendom. Is it possible for one to be a committed follower of Unity principles and an active, participating member of a Baptist church? This would be a decision for the individual and the church to make. The one might be unhappy in so different an environment, and the other might feel that a denial of doctrines it considers basic would make a continuing relationship impossible.

Unity and Baptists differ in their approach to biblical interpretation. Words in the Bible are vehicles of thought deliberately chosen by the writer to convey precise meanings. To attribute meanings to the words of the Bible which the words do not contain is contrary to Baptist instincts. The eisegetical method simply opens the door for one to make the Bible say anything that he wishes it to say. It is no longer God's message to man, but man's message to himself.

Prayer is communion with a knowing, loving God. One cannot commune with a principle. There is a sense in which man in prayer creates positive results, for the act of praying in itself is a positive psychological step toward improvement. But it is also true that there are realities which man cannot establish by his thinking, realities which only an omniscient, omnipotent God can bring into being.

Sharing Our Faith

In view of the similarities and the differences, the relationship between Southern Baptists and the people of Unity must be steeped in respect, love, candor, and friendliness. Candor requires that we frankly and honestly acknowledge our differences, but we should differ agreeably, courteously, kindly, respectfully. The Baptist can share his own faith and experience in Jesus Christ, and listen respectfully as his friend discusses those things that are spiritually meaningful to him. The outcome of such a relationship can be left to the will of God.

The Baptist will wish to emphasize certain primary Baptist concepts of Christian gospel. While these will differ from Unity concepts, they are ones the Baptist will in honesty feel compelled to affirm because he sees them as based on the Bible.

God

One of these concepts concerns God. God is a person, a loving Father, one who communicates in understandable terms with his children. He intervenes to shape the events that bless or threaten men's lives, who has provided a way of salvation for his children. To make him impersonal principle or law is to make man, his creature, of a higher order than his Creator.

God is different from man, other than man, not to be confused with man. God in man is not simply a part of man and his potential. The God within man is a God distinct from him.

God is not a genie to be employed, to be "used" for one's self-determined purposes. He has a purpose for man, and man is to find that purpose and embrace it. God will help man find fulfillment, but the help man seeks from Him is to be in line with the will of God.

Christ

That which has been said about the Father can also be said about the Son. Man can have the spirit of Christ, but he can not be Christ. In the New Testament, to have the spirit of the Christ is not to have the nature of the divine Christ, with his infinite qualities and powers. It is to have Jesus' spirit of love,

compassion, forgiveness, even though in lesser degree and quality. The greater works that Jesus foretold that man would do are works done by the power that God grants to man.

Jesus was more than a "way-shower." His mission and his supreme accomplishment on earth was to serve as a sacrifice for man's sin, and by his death and resurrection break the power of sin and death. His mission was of such character and magnitude that only Deity could accomplish it.

Salvation

Salvation is more than freedom from man's lower self. It is freedom from two powerful forces outside man, sin and death. They are more powerful by far than man has shown himself to be. Man's only hope rests on Jesus' death and resurrection. Freedom from these twin powers is a gift bestowed upon man because of his believing acceptance of the One who was the sacrifice.

One of the clearest promises Jesus made concerns the life to come. He talked about heaven, the place he was going to ahead, to make ready for his followers. He warned that those who reject God's salvation condemn themselves eternally to the separation from God which they deliberately chose.

Authority

The Bible is the source of our authority for belief and practice. Since it is in words that God's message in the Bible is conveyed to us, Baptists seek to determine the precise meaning of the words and to limit their beliefs to those meanings.

These are some essential Baptist beliefs one will share in religious discussion. Others will come to mind, with appropriate Scripture passages, as the Holy Spirit leads.

The purpose in sharing one's faith is not to proselyte members of another religious body or to discredit any religious belief. It is simply to help another human being see Jesus the Christ as God's Son and sacrifice for sin, and to accept him as Saviour and Lord of one's life. All else is secondary.

Footnotes

¹Nale: Much of the information in this monograph was obtained during a meeting with several officials at Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, Missouri.

²Words from Unity (Unity Village, Missouri: Unity School of Christianity, n.d.), p. 10.

³James A. Decker, ed., *Unity's Seventy Years of Faith and Works* (Lee's Summit, Missouri: Unity School of Christianity, 1959), p. 11 ff. p. 16.

⁴Ibid., p. 10.

⁵Robert Collier, *Secret of the Ages*, Intro., quoted in Charles S. Braden, *These Also Believe* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), p. 129.

⁶From personal interview.

⁷Words from Unity, p. 8.

⁸J. Sig Paulson, from personal letter, September 19, 1974.

⁹James Dillet Freeman, quoted by Helen Huyck, "Unity Builds Faith with Silent Prayer," *Kansas City Star* (April 1, 1972), p. 2B.

¹⁰J. Sig Paulson.

¹¹Lee's Summit, Missouri: Unity School of Christianity, May, 1964), p. 9.

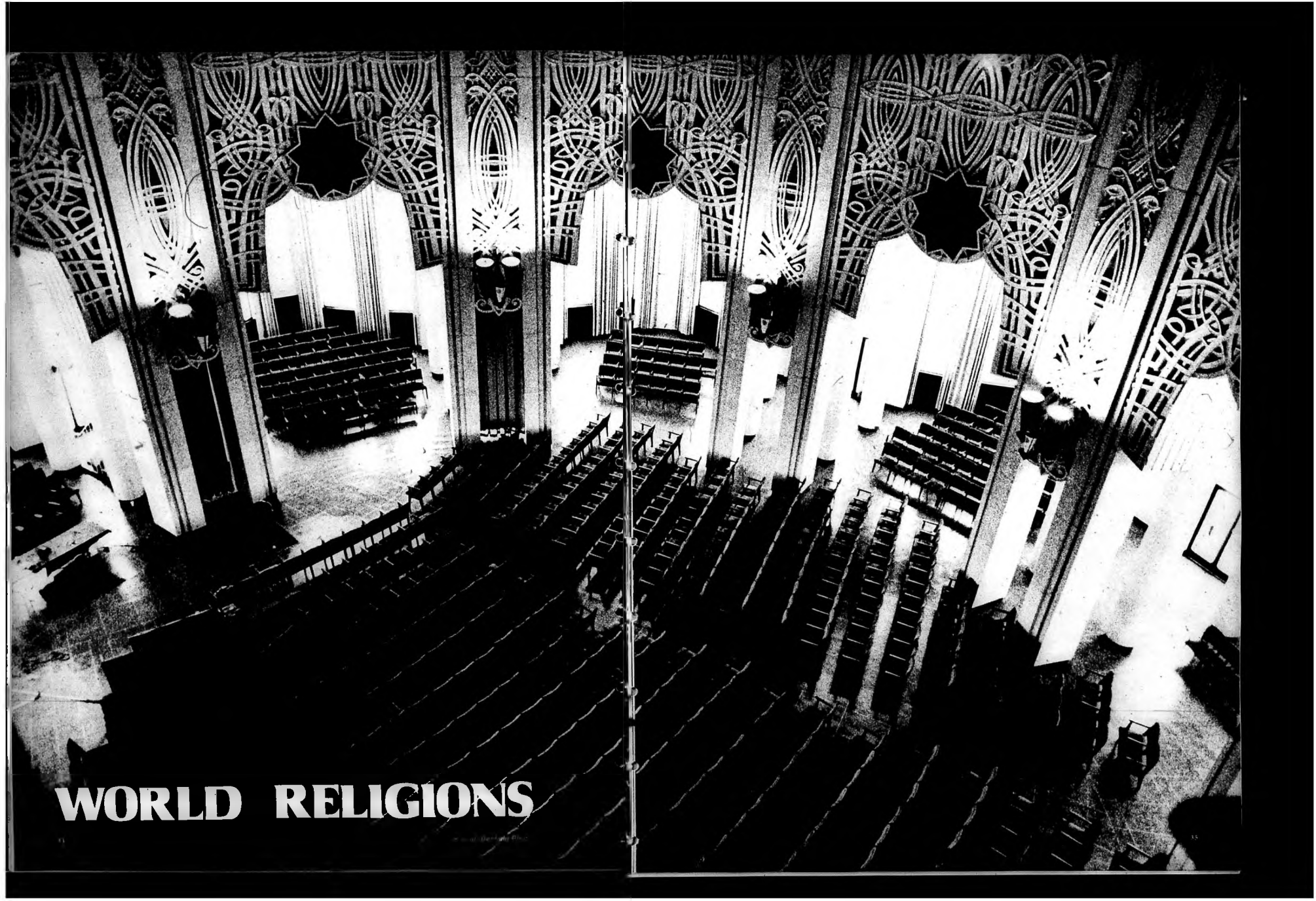
¹²James Dillet Freeman, *The Story of Unity* (Unity Village, Mo.: Unity School of Christianity, n.d.), pp. 9-10.



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WORLD RELIGIONS

Witnessing to World Religionists

by M. Thomas Starkes

"Never the twain shall meet" may serve as the final line in a beautiful poem but its accuracy can be questioned in light of Eastern religions' influx into the Western world. The more than six million internationals in the United States each year—students, visitors, resident aliens, immigrants—include many adherents of the major world religions. Increasing numbers of Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and other world religionists have brought to the U.S. religious ideas which include reincarnation, relativism (the idea that all religions are about the same), meditation and absorption into Nirvana. "Yoga," "Zen," "Vedanta" and "Mecca" have become frequently used terms in many homes in our nation.

Major world religions have flourishing missionary agencies actively propagating their faiths in the United States. This effort, coupled with cultural and religious exchange programs, has made East and West meet on a broad scale.

This interchange makes it imperative that Christians be equipped with practical guidelines for making the good news of the living Christ available to every world religionist. But witnessing to the world religionists is a divine mission best handled with love, listening, understanding and an appreciation for the other person's cultural and religious experience.

Where Is the World Religionist?

Almost every concerned Christian living in or near an urban center should be able to locate non-Christian internationals. Baptist student ministry directors at institutions of higher learning often operate effective ministries to world religionists; they can list services for Christians to perform. Protestant chaplains at military bases often have names and religious affiliations of foreign nationals in the United States for military training. Hospitals and medical centers are often focal points for students and other internationals in need of crisis ministries. Protestant hospital chaplains should be able to help bring the ministering Christian together with internationals.

In metropolitan areas, locating one world religionist often

leads to contact with others of similar background in that city. Christians concerned about world religionists usually don't have far to look for the "stranger in our land."

The Learning Witness

A basic introduction to the history and doctrines of the major religions is essential. In addition to this magazine, basic reading materials may include:

- *Religions in a Changing World* by Howard F. Vos¹ introduces the Christian witness to the individual world religionist.
- *Encyclopedia* give insight into attitudes and customs.
- *Understanding Other Cultures* by Ina Corinne Brown² helps the Christian become aware of and understand the world religionist's "quirks."

World religionists attitudes and needs are conditioned by culture, nationality and the degree to which he has responded to his religious heritage. The Christian who is serious about witnessing to him must realize that, above all, the world religionist is a creation of God; he shares with the Christian common yearnings and needs. There is no substitute for time spent with the world religionist to learn of his human needs. This learning includes a *sense* of acceptance and orientation to his culture. Time so spent will help dispel mutual gross misconceptions and prejudices and develop instead a genuine concern for the world religionist.

Methods of Ministry

Mission Action Group Guide: Internationals, published by the Woman's Missionary Union³, provides guidelines for more than 40 practical witnessing projects, including conversational English, citizenship classes, employment assistance, home hospitality, baby-sitting, cooking classes, sewing classes, driving instructions and day camps.

Because they are vehicles for practicing Christian love on a continuing basis, three methods of ministry have proved especially successful in reaching followers of non-Christian religions.

In the first, "home hospitality," a Christian family "adopts" a world religionist for a year; the family welcomes that person(s) into the home for regular visits and helps care for his needs, from showing him how to shop to providing him a place to study.

One Oriental student was so impressed with his new "family" that he wrote them: "I am happy, but not with the permanent happiness that your family has. . . I am thirsty all the time. . . I know there is a water that can make you not thirsty permanently, but it always seems so far away from me."

The "adopted" international, invited to the home, comes to understand the true significance of special occasions such as Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Often the new friend needs a place where he can be himself. Feeling free to romp with the children or mess up the kitchen when he prepares one of his own national dishes will help him.

Groups of foster parents may want to meet monthly to pray, compare notes, study ways of presenting God's love, discuss mistakes and coordinate efforts for special occasions such as banquets. The group should also recruit and train more foster families.

In the second method of ministry, the "big brother" or "big sister" program for foreign students, Christian students room with or "adopt" a non-Christian foreign student for a year. Again the emphasis is on watchcare and personal interest. The Christian student can serve the non-Christian by helping him study, master English, learn the campus layout and develop friendships. Continuing dialogue concerning cultural and religious convictions and differences will give the Christian ample opportunity to express his faith in Jesus Christ. The world religionist will discover the concrete differences that Christian discipleship means to at least one American.

The third method of Christian ministry to the world religionist is teaching conversational English to those unable to communicate well because of a language barrier.

Special techniques for teaching non-English speaking persons have been developed. Through this ministry, the Christian volunteer teacher has innumerable ways to witness: personal contacts, friendship, Bible stories, Bible study and meeting special needs of the learner.

Don Rutledge Photo



One church which has had success with such a program is Niceville, Fla., First Baptist. About 70 internationals enroll in English classes, citizenship class and or Bible study. Each Tuesday the group meets for fellowship and the classes. Bible study is offered on Sunday morning.

In addition to the weekly classes, an annual dinner prepared by the volunteers is held for students and husbands or wives.

At Christmas there is a party for the students and their children. In March or April a covered dish luncheon is held, with students bringing native dishes. In May, when the classes close for the summer, the church has a recognition service for the students.

In addition to the planned activities, other contacts evolve. Sharing Christ is a natural part of these relationships.

Recommended for conversational English is *The Foreign Language Learner* by Mary Finocchiaro and Michael Bonomo, Publishing Company. *The Mission Action Group Guide for Newcomers*, published by Woman's Missionary Union, gives helps in planning for this ministry. *The Handbook for Literacy Missions*, published by the Home Mission Board, devotes a major section to this ministry.

A church beginning a ministry in conversational English should plan for a 16-hour workshop on an associational or area level. The Home Mission Board can provide guidelines for planning a workshop.

All methods of ministry are dependent on concerned love. No method automatically produces "converts." Serving and sharing out of concern for God-created individuals, coupled with dependence on the spirit of Truth, are essential partners in the implementation of any Christian ministry.

Introduction to the Savior

The Christian who witnesses to the adherent of another world religion should bear in mind several basic guidelines:

- Avoid polemic which makes little of the religion or religious commitment of the person.
- Avoid being placed in a position of defending Western culture or Christianity as producer of a justice-oriented society.
- Present the totality of the unique and miraculous Christ-event, including the incarnation of the Son of God, his teachings, leadership ability, sin-free life, sacrificial death and significant and unduplicated resurrection.
- Stress individual commitment and personal reliance on Christ. Many world religionists believe in an impersonal God and the equality of all religions.
- Recognize truths to be found in other religious traditions, but stress that God revealed himself most clearly in Jesus of Nazareth.
- Stress the Heavenly Father as a loving God (see John 1:1-18).
- Emphasize *clear* communication (use of new modern translations will be of great value, e.g., *Good News for Modern man*).⁴

Conclusion

Witnessing to the world religionist is an expression of godly love which reaps many benefits: exposure to new ideas, different cultures and divergent beliefs. But the joy of seeing forgiveness experienced despite formidable barriers may be the supreme reward.

Footnotes

- ¹Chicago: Moody Press, 1959.
- ²Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963.
- ³Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, 600 North Twentieth Street, Birmingham, Alabama 35203. Mission action guides also may be purchased at Baptist Book Stores.
- ⁴Additional insights can be found in Alan Richardson's *Christian Apologetics* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947).

Muslims on the American Scene

by Kate Ellen Gruver

For Americans today in search of a religious faith that is personally meaningful, Islam (iss lah-m') is a serious, viable option. As such, Southern Baptists are confronted on American soil by this growing challenge of the world's major competitor to the message of Jesus Christ.

Claiming one seventh to one sixth of the world's population—around 500 million people—Islam has gained ground on the Christian faith. In the United States its growth has been phenomenal. Close to 150,000 Moslems¹—excluding international students and others on temporary visas as well as members of what mainline Islam considers an illegitimate offspring, the Black Muslims—are now a permanent part of the American scene.

The bulk of these are first, second, and third generation Muslim citizens stemming originally from the 60 predominantly Islamic countries such as Albania, Turkey, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, the Philippines and others. A smaller number are Moslems who immigrated to the United States in more recent years.

Evidence that the crescent is present in the land of the stars and stripes mounts steadily. A Muslim obstetrician attends the wife of a Baptist pastor. A Muslim engineer is a key executive in a major United States industry. Muslim professors in science, engineering, sociology, literature, history and other subjects are on the faculties of large universities. On college and university campuses, the Muslim Student Association of the United States and Canada² is active—alive and well.

Attractive—in some cases, magnificent—Islamic Centers and mosques, as well as clubs and other organizations, are increasingly found in metropolitan areas and in smaller cities. Most of these are actively developing their public relations, seeking to improve their image and to make "Islam and its culture known to American people."³

Since 1973 a new phenomenon has appeared as American news media have proclaimed to the world that hundreds of millions of dollars of Arab wealth from the Muslim Middle

East, particularly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, are now being invested in United States businesses and industries.

To be uninformed of this major world religion is to fail to know of the growing number of Americans who search for God. To be uninvolved in a ministry of evangelism to Muslims is to fail proportionately in our Christian obligation to share with these followers of the Arabian Prophet the message of love and salvation for all men which Christ commissioned us to share.

History

Muslims regard the founder of their religion as the greatest of all God's messengers to man. Born in Mecca in A.D. 570, Muhammad came into a society that was characterized by lawlessness, gross immorality, social injustices and religious degradation.⁴ Superstition, idol worship, infanticide and warfare were rampant.

During his early years no person ever seemed to offer less promise of eventual greatness and power than did Muhammad. Fate seemed against him from the beginning, for his father died before he was born and his mother died six years later. After the death of his mother he was in the care of his grandfather, a direct descendant. Muslims claim, of Ishmael, son of Abraham. Abu al-Muttalib lived in a house overlooking the Kaaba, a shrine Muslims believe was originally built by Abraham and Ishmael, which housed the pre-Islamic deities of Mecca. One of these, Allah,⁵ was recognized as the Supreme God among all the Arabian gods.

From his grandfather the boy learned the pagan worship and legends of the past. Yet unlike those about him, he exhibited except for Allah a strange abhorrence for the pagan gods. Once when asked to act in their name, his answer was startling: "Do not ask me anything for the sake of these idols. I have never hated anything more."⁶ As he grew older, this hatred of the gods and idols, and his disbelief in them, became fixed.

The young Muhammad was eight when Abu al-Muttalib died, and he came into the care of his uncle, Abu Talif, "who dealt in cloths and perfumes and owned some sheepfolds in the hills."⁷

In the years that followed the boy served his uncle as a shepherd, tending his flocks of sheep and goats.⁸ Later, when Muhammad was about 10 years old, Abu Talif began to allow him upon occasions to accompany his caravans to the north, hiring him out as a guardian and driver of camels. Thus the boy began to learn the profession in which he was to become skilled and experienced, and which was to become the pivot that brought about the first radical change in his fortunes.

Until he was about 25, life seemed to hold little promise for any change from what it had been—a rather dull and monotonous progression of years filled with activities and a mode of living that was identical with that of many other Meccans. He lived in virtual poverty, although he had advanced from being a camelboy to becoming a manager of caravans, gaining a reputation not only for his skill in this profession but also for his great kindness and honesty. His high personal morality was outstanding and greatly praised.

Indeed, his noble character had won him in his youth the title of "al Amin"—the faithful or the trustworthy—from the people of Mecca.⁹ Without possessions of his own, yet sensitive and generous in every way, he had always been concerned, it is recorded, for the persons in distress and did whatever he could to help relieve their misery.

By nature a gentle man, he disliked warfare intensely and participated in the various tribal wars only when he had to. He rejoiced when a confederacy was formed to punish wrongdoing and to secure brotherhood among the different branches of his own great Quraysh family tribe.¹⁰

Muhammad led a fairly solitary life during these years, often alone in contemplation. Yet he was friend of all, greatly trusted by his fellow Meccans. In time, word of his reputation reached a wealthy Meccan widow, named Khadija, whose caravans Muhammad was employed to manage. Intrigued, she asked to see him and apparently fell in love with him immediately. Although Khadija was 15 years his senior, their marriage during the next 25 years was happy. During that time she was his only wife.

For 15 years Muhammad went quietly on with his daily living, occupied with Khadija's estate, enjoying family and friends, worshipping each night at the Kaaba, and seeking to relieve the oppressed and the needy. He was a humble serene man without the usual ambitions that tore men apart.

He liked to work with his hands, often mending his own furniture, cobbling his shoes, patching his clothes, even milking his goats. His preoccupation with such menial tasks continued throughout his life. Even after his flight to Medina, or Yathrib as it was then called, he assisted in building the first mosque.

During these years he continued his long-time habit of solitary meditation. More and more he retreated to a cave on Mt. Hira, outside of Mecca, where for long hours he would sit alone in profound meditation and prayer.

One night during a storm Muhammad was alone in the cave when, according to his testimony, he heard a thundering voice ordering him to "Read!" When he protested that he could not read, the voice twice again commanded him to read. Finally, in desperation, Muhammad asked: "What can I read?" He was shown a scroll on which words were written in fire. Muhammad read although it is said he had never before read a word in his life. Later, the voice gone, the words were still vividly burned upon his memory.¹¹

In great agitation, he was afraid that he was going mad or was possessed. Outside the cave, trembling violently and in an agony of mind, he again heard the voice from heaven, say-

ing: "O Muhammad! You are Allah's messenger, and I am Gabriel!" Looking up, according to his words, he saw Gabriel in human form standing in the sky.

Khadija comforted and reassured her terrified husband, insisting that it was Allah who had chosen Muhammad to be his messenger to the world. But her husband could not accept this interpretation. It was sometime later when, wrapped in profound meditation and greatly depressed, he felt himself called again by a voice from heaven. "Arise and warn," it commanded, "and thy Lord do thou magnify!"

The call, issued not once but twice, was at last accepted. Muhammad submitted himself to the will of Allah, and in the process the man Muhammad became the Apostle of God. His doubts ceased, and he assumed his prophethood with a fixed, undeviating purpose.

At first, he made no public announcement of the new religion. He simply proclaimed to his family and friends the revelations he received from the angel Gabriel. His wife, of course, was the first to believe in him; then his wife's uncle, Waraqa; Ali, his cousin; and Zaid, an adopted son. The fifth person was Abu Bakr, a notable of wealth and influence in Mecca. Slowly, others heard and believed, but at the end of three years he had only 30 followers.

During these years Muhammad became convinced that he had been entrusted by God with the unique duty of proclaiming a pure monotheism to his idolatrous countrymen. His commitment to the will of God became firm and irrevocable.

Until now he had shared his new religious teachings quietly. At first the people of Mecca had been amused, indulgent, then irritated. Polytheism was deeply rooted among the people. And the Quraysh, the ruling tribe in Mecca including the Kaaba, had vested interests in it, for their prestige, honor, power and wealth were dependent upon its maintenance. So the prophet had to oppose not only the idolatrous worship but also the ruling oligarchy which governed its destinies.¹² The early proclamations dealt with the absolute necessity of worshipping only the one true God and the terrible punishment awaiting those who refused.

When Muhammad stood at last before the Kaaba to proclaim the unity of God and condemn idol worship, urging the people to turn away from idolatry and submit themselves entirely to the one true God, the power structure of Mecca decided the time had come to put an end to such nonsense.¹³

Persecution—involving cruel, inhuman tortures; imprisonments; and whippings—was set up against the believers. Families were set against families. The Prophet himself was induced by every means possible to recant and turn away from the insanity of the teachings he was publicizing. But Muhammad continued to proclaim the revelations, preaching, warning his fellow citizens as well as the strangers in the city, urging them to abandon the abominations of their ways.

The ten years that followed were fearful. As the persecutions increased in violence, some of the followers, with the Prophet's blessing, fled to Abyssinia to escape the fury.¹⁴ Later others followed. In time, the Prophet himself was forced into hiding, able to come into the open only during the temporary amnesty of the annual seasons of pilgrimage.

Yet terrible as these years were, the Prophet was undaunted in his determined proclamation of the revelations that continued to come with greater frequency. Increasingly he demanded complete surrender to God. He saw himself as successor to the ancient prophets—Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others—and also as the final messenger God would ever send to the world.

In time, among those who came to Mecca for the annual pilgrimage to the Kaaba were a growing number of Muslim converts from Yathrib. Over a three-year period they negotiated with the Prophet, urgently inviting him and his Meccan followers to move to that city. The invitation was accepted



and arrangements for the move, later called the *Hijra*, were made.¹⁵

Through the spring and summer of A.D. 622 some 150 Muslims made their way secretly out of Mecca to the haven of Yathrib. And on September 20 Muhammad himself, with an escort of 70 warriors, entered the city. Already the men of Yathrib, months earlier, had sworn allegiance to him as the Apostle of God. For the Arabian prophet and his followers this day marked the beginning of a new era, evidenced in the Muslim calendar which begins with that date. Also, the city was renamed Medina (the Arabic word for city) in honor of the Prophet's eight-year residence there.

During these years Muhammad increased in strength and stature as a religious leader, continuing to proclaim revelations and establishing the *ummah*, the community of believers which now is worldwide. He also exhibited unsuspected capabilities in other directions. Catapulted by circumstances into the role of ruler and statesman, he established a political and social system that welded the people of Medina, and later of all Arabia, together in a government based upon one loyalty, to God, and bound together by one brotherhood, Islam. Among his unique accomplishments was the first democratic charter ever developed. It granted religious freedom and civil liberties to the Jewish and other non-Muslim population of Medina.¹⁶

Muhammad also became a formidable military commander and strategist. He realized that the survival of Islam depended on Muslim control over antagonistic tribes and particularly over the Quraysh in Mecca who, more than ever, were determined to destroy him and his followers. To accomplish this, he set up military training for his men and developed new techniques of warfare and strategy, some of which are still used by armies around the world. The result was victory after victory for the Muslims, often against unbelievable odds, until at last in A.D. 630 Muhammad marched victorious into Mecca to claim it as the holy city of Islam. Two years later, he died.

But Islam lived on. Resistance to the faith in Arabia was over. The "unity of God" had been firmly established, abolishing forever polytheism and idolatry. Tribal separatism had been replaced by the *ummah* and warfare by the bond of

Muslim brotherhood. Immorality and social injustices of all kinds had fallen to the tenets of Islam, providing a strict moral code and laws for the relief of the oppressed and needy.

Almost immediately Islam began to spread beyond the borders of Arabia. By 636 Jerusalem was captured and by 715 the Arab empire stretched from the Chinese frontier westward to the Atlantic Ocean. Until the Middle Ages it grew in strength as both a religious and political empire that was almost undefeatable. Since then, though Islam has declined as an empire and has lost its warring character as a means of expansion, the religion has continued to grow into one of the three great world religions with central belief in one living God.

Muslim contributions to the world were not only in the field of religion. As the Dark Ages settled upon Europe, the Muslims, spreading across the Mediterranean world from Arabia, gathered up great libraries, with their centuries of accumulated knowledge, and carried them back into the heart of the Arab empire. This became, between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, the repository of Europe's literary and scientific wealth, protected from the destruction that threatened them in Europe and preserved for future generations.

Eager to explore and learn, keen-minded Arab scholars studied and expanded the knowledge they gained from these acquisitions. When the dawn began to break again in Europe it was from the Arabs that influences came that helped to push the Renaissance on its way. One of the important discoveries was the amazingly accurate calculation of the size and circumference of the earth which Muslim astronomers insisted was round. Without similar important contributions of the Arabs during those centuries in the fields of astronomy, medicine, mathematics, geography, philosophy and literature, man's progress today might again have reached the level it had at the beginning of the ninth century.

Basic Beliefs

The word *islam* comes from a root word of three consonants, SLM. Its primary meaning is to escape from danger.

From this root comes the word that means peace—*salaam*, closely akin to its Hebrew counterpart *shalom*. Islam, still another form of the root, means submission or surrender. Religiously, it means absolute submission to the will of God. Muslim, a third form of the root, is one who submits absolutely and unquestioningly to that will. One can obtain an inherent meaning that escape from danger—peace—is found in submission to the will of God. A Christian is reminded of many biblical passages such as John 14:27 and Philippians 4:7 that suggest the same basic idea.

Islam demands absolute acceptance of and faith in five basic beliefs. These cardinal doctrines of the faith are sometimes called the Islamic creed:

- *Unity of God*—The first is the simple statement of the oneness of God: "There is no God but God." It is all inclusive and rules out even the possibility of any speculation concerning God. This simple creed in only 22 years struck the death-blow to any trace of Arab polytheism and idol worship that prevailed in the Arabian Peninsula. It also led to Muhammad's rejection of the Christian concept of the Trinity, accusing Christians of worshipping three gods, as in the Qur'an in sura 5:76:

They do blaspheme who say:
God is one of three
In a Trinity; for there is
No god but God.

Islam claims that it is impossible to know the personality or character of God for "whatever you may think about God, that he is not." But it is possible to know the attributes of God, of which there are 99. These form the names of God and make up the Muslim rosary. Some of them, given the Qur'an, are Compassionate, Merciful, All Knowing, Sovereign, Holy One, Guardian of the Faith, Exalted, Irresistible, Supreme, Evolver. A Christian is impressed by the name that is missing: Love.

- *Angels*—Muslims believe in the existence of angels but do not worship them. They are divine messengers, guardians of heaven and earth. They are created from light, are free from carnal desires, and are to sing the praises of God. Among them are Gabriel, considered the most important because God gave the Qur'an through him; Israfil, who will announce the day of judgement; and Satan, considered to be a fallen angel.

- *Sacred Books*—Muslims believe that through the ages many sacred books have been revealed by God through his prophets, all giving the "pure faith." But they all have been corrupted and interpreted to suit men. Among these are both the Old Testament, particularly the first five books, and the Gospels which Muslims compare in value with their own Traditions rather than with the Qur'an. Muslims are directed to believe in the Bible, often referred to as "the Book," insofar as it has not been corrupted by Jews and Christians. The test of its purity and lack of corruption is whether or not the Scriptures agree with the Qur'an.

The Qur'an is believed to be the directly revealed word of Allah verbally dictated to Muhammad through Gabriel and given to reestablish the pure faith of Islam. Though unwritten until some years after Muhammad's death, a cardinal Islamic belief is that the Qur'an exists today in the original purity in which it first came to Muhammad. Regardless of one's own religious belief, however, its value as an authority on Islam and its doctrines and as a primary source of information about the times and social conditions out of which it came must be considered genuine and above suspicion.

Other books called the *Traditions*, which have "acquired the force of law and some of the authority of inspiration," are a collection of stories relating the sayings and practices of Muhammad. Gathered from his contemporaries and written

after his death, these sayings and practices were in the beginning the sole criterion for guidance in all public and private matters not dealt with specifically in the Qur'an. Sometimes they served as commentaries on what was in the Qur'an.

- *Prophets*—These were special messengers of God sent to redeem man from infidelity, idolatry and superstition. Some 125,000 are supposed to exist, but only 25 are mentioned in the Qur'an. Among these are Adam, Noah, Seth, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. These were sent to their own people, but Muhammad, the last and "seal of the prophets," was sent to all mankind. Therefore he supersedes all others.

To Muslims, Jesus was only a prophet sent to the Jews. While they accept his virgin birth, they reject him as the Son of God. Throughout the Qur'an both the idea of the Trinity and the fatherhood of God are vigorously denied. The latter is declared blasphemous and the former polytheistic. The Qur'an says:

They say: the Most Gracious
Has begotten a son!
Indeed ye have put forth
A thing most monstrous!
For it is not compatible
With the majesty of God that He
Should beget a son.
Jesus Christ the son of Mary
was no more than
an apostle of God

(sura 19:88-89, 92)

So believe
In God and His apostles,
Say not "Trinity": desist
It will be better for you:
For God is One God

(sura 4:171)

Islam also rejects the crucifixion, declaring it to have been an optical illusion in which Christ was miraculously snatched away and carried into heaven while another, probably Judas, was substituted on the cross in his place. Muslims believe that Jesus will return to earth a second time but to be judged along with all men.

- *The Day of Judgment or Resurrection*—On this day all men will have to give an account of their actions and will be judged accordingly. All Muslims will enter paradise, though some will be purged for their sins first. Non-Muslims will be condemned, and no intercession for them will be effective. Muslims believe in a paradise and a hell, the latter a pit of fire.

The Qur'an makes it clear that man has the freedom to make his own choice; that is, to submit to the will of God and follow the teachings of Muhammad or not. Man is responsible for the choice he makes. The well-known Muslim expression "As God wills it" is an admission of resignation to the will of God in the face of man's own frailty, dependence and ignorance. It embodies the Islamic doctrine of predestination which is very close to Presbyterian doctrine and is often identified as an element of fatalism.

Along with these doctrines of faith are five articles of practice or duties which must be observed by Muslims in carrying out their practical devotions. Sometimes these are called the five pillars of wisdom. They are:

- *Recital of the creed*—"I testify that there is no god but God, and that Muhammad is the apostle of God" is repeated daily by all Muslims. It is also the form of profession of faith in Islam; the simple recitation of these words makes a person a Muslim.

- *Daily prayer*—Every faithful Muslim must pray at five stated times a day—at dawn, midday, midafternoon, directly after sunset, and two hours after sunset. In observing these times, he must follow certain rituals of preparation, postures and prayer forms. In addition to these daily prayers, a Friday-noon prayer service in the mosque should be attended.

• **Fasting**—During the entire month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar year according to the Muslim calendar, every Muslim—man, woman, child—must fast from just before dawn, when there is light enough that a white thread can be distinguished from a black one, to sunset. During these hours the believer must abstain from food, drink, perfumes, tobacco and marital relations, and must hear or recite the whole Qur'an at least once during the month.¹⁸ After sundown Muslims are free to eat. The last day of the fast is a great annual festive occasion.

Movements in Islam

By the ninth century a spiritual movement called Sufism, which continues today, had begun in Islam. In a sense apart from the faith's mainstream, Sufis have served Islam in a catalytic role with their emphasis on their burning search for a living faith characterized by a close, personal touch with God. The movement developed because, dissatisfied with the sterility orthodox Islam had developed, some pious Muslims yearned for personal fellowship with God and turned to meditative contemplation on his nature. They rejoiced in the evidence of his greatness and goodness. Through practical spiritual exercises, often reaching periods of sheer ecstasy, his presence became intoxicatingly close to them. The Sufis were literally possessed by their love for God.

One of the greatest Sufis, now ranked as a Muslim saint, Rabi'a al Adawiyyeh, often expressed this in a prayer on her roof at night: "O Lord, the stars are shining and the eyes of men are closed and kings have shut their doors and the lover is with his beloved. And I am alone with thee." Rabi'a completely renounced the world as far as her personal desires were concerned and consecrated herself to God, though she did not withdraw from the world. Teaching others the depth of understanding she had gained about divine knowledge and fellowship with God was a major part of her work. Another of the great mystics, Abd Al-Rahman Jami, wrote:

His beauty everywhere doth show itself,
And through the forms of earthly beauty
Shines obscured as through a veil . . .
Whatever heart doth yield to love,
He charms it.
In his love the heart hath life.
Longing for Him, the soul hath victory.
That heart which seems to love
The fair ones of this world, loves
Him alone.

Because of the great satisfaction and comfort this personal approach to God gave to people, the extreme persecutions carried out by orthodox Islam failed to prevent the spread of the movement. It was Al Ghazzali, among the greatest of the Sufis and considered Islam's greatest philosopher, who at last forced Islam to accommodate the movement. One of his most revolutionary concepts was his definition of man as divine.

There is no wonder that orthodox Islam had difficulty coming to terms with such teachings.

Over the centuries pure Sufism in many places has been modified by influences such as animism and pantheism. Yet it has survived and expanded. Its influence has found expression not only within Islam, in the Shi'ite tradition, but often within sects which have branched off the mother faith. The Baha'i faith, Lovers of Mehr Bab and Subud are three of these sects found in the United States today.

Within Islam the purpose of the Sufis is still to remind Muslims of the mystery and otherness of God, to stress personal piety, and to perform the function of inspiration.

Relation to the Christian Faith

Several things can be pointed out here, partly in summary:
1. The Bible is considered, in the Qur'an, to be one of the

sacred scriptures given by God in times past, containing the "pure" faith of Islam. Though it has been corrupted by both Jews and Christians, it is still to be considered sacred.

2. Because of the Qur'an's teaching about the Bible, Christians along with Jews are declared to be the "People of the Book," and Muslims are enjoined to recognize them as such. This gives Christians and Jews a standing approved by God in the sight of faithful Muslims.

3. The Qur'an contains numerous references to persons in both the Old and New Testaments, many of whom are accepted as important Islamic prophets. It also includes many of the Bible narratives although, in recounting them, changes have been made in many vital details. To the Christian, this reflects on the authenticity and validity of the Qur'anic account.

4. Jesus is frequently mentioned but as a prophet only, not as the Son of God. Instead, this is repeatedly denied. While his virgin birth is accepted and recounted in the Qur'an, the account contains changes in important details, as does the account of his crucifixion, making the Muslim view unacceptable to Christians.

Witnessing to Muslims

The following guidelines should prove helpful.

1. Avoid arguments. Because of the Muslim's belief about the Qur'an and the strong, repeated denials of basic tenets of the Christian faith that it contains, any attempt to witness to a Muslim may be subject to possible violent disagreement. Avoid this by creating a climate favorable to frank, open discussion and dialogue. Show at all times patience, love, care and concern for the individual as well as appreciation for him, his faith and his religion.

2. Emphasize full agreement, as a Christian, with Islam's insistence on the unity of God as stated in the first part of its creedal affirmation: There is no god but God. The Muslim will appreciate this affirmation by you. In the beginning, it may be well, if possible, to avoid mention of other persons of the Trinity as you seek to make clear that Christians, too, believe in only one God. However, if the Muslim mentions the Trinity, be careful not to get into an argument. Speak quietly and in Christian love.

3. Do not compromise in stating your beliefs. The minute you do, you have lost. Remember that the Muslim has no hesitation in stating his, regardless of your reaction to them. State your beliefs openly and frankly, without compromise; speak with conviction. Show clearly that, because you respect your beliefs and are not forcing them upon him but are only sharing with him, you expect him to respect your belief in them. Be careful to show him the same respect regarding his beliefs.

Muslims will tell you that while they trust and respect a person who openly acknowledges his own beliefs and convictions and does not compromise with them either in words or actions, they neither trust nor respect a person who does compromise. The reason, they say, is because, although they may not agree with the first man, they know where he stands; the other man they are never sure of and so distrust.

4. Present Jesus as the Word made flesh. Try to lead Muslims to realize the total significance of the virgin birth (which the Qur'an accepts).

5. Present the total life and teachings of Jesus as a manifestation of God's love and concern for man in all areas of his life.

6. Present the possibility of the resurrection as a symbol of God's love and the hope he provides for all men. Deal with the necessity of each individual being free to decide for himself what his relationship to God will be.

7. Be able to share the testimony of your experience with God, not only as it relates to your conversion but also as it relates to your current up-to-date experiences. This is important.

8. Be willing to listen to your Muslim friend and what he

has to say to you. Dialogue must be a two-way experience. Often as you listen to him, asking questions in a sincere effort to learn what he is concerned about and what he believes, he will be more willing to listen to you. And be sure that he, like you, has something to say.

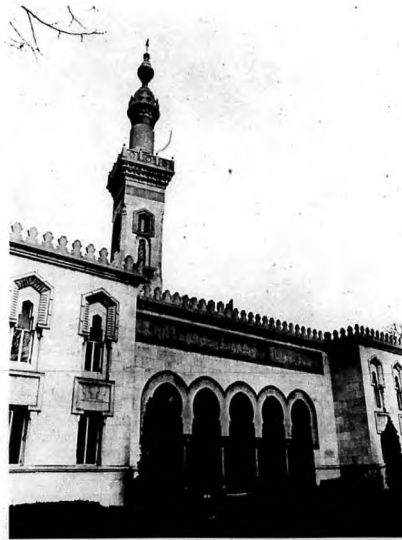
9. Learn, if possible, something of Muslim customs, etiquette and dietary laws, and be ready to observe them to the degree your Muslim friend does. (Muslims who have been long in the United States may have relaxed and discarded some of them.)

Conclusion

Islam in the United States seems to be on the ascendency. Already Islam is a definite part of our pluralistic religious scene. Materially, judging by our past, Americans will think long and hard before turning down the fabulous monetary investments the Muslim Arabic world is offering. Such investments will undoubtedly mean an increasing influx of Muslims into the daily life of this country. These, together with the ones who continue to come for still other reasons, will comprise a sizeable portion of our population.

In spite of the still unresolved tensions and pressures created by the conflicts of orthodox Islam with modernity, commitment to the One God and the firm belief that he sent the Arabian Prophet to all mankind to restore the original pure faith of Islam has always been a fundamental missionary motivation in Islam. Today that motivation is being reactivated, especially in our land, with the result that many Americans are finding in Islam the answers to their search for God.

Evangelical Christians, especially Southern Baptists in particular, are being confronted by the challenge of Islam as never before. We who know beyond any doubt that only Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, who can light men to God, dare not fail in the task of showing our Muslim friends that Way.



FOOTNOTES

¹Both "Muslim" and "Moslem" are correct. The first spelling is the actual Arabic word, the second spelling simply transliterates the Arabic vowel sound for "u" into "o." In either case, be careful to pronounce the "s" as "ss," not as "z," and each syllable distinctly, with the accent on the first syllable.

²This organization's address is: 3702 West Eleventh Avenue, Gary, Ind.

³Mahmoud F. Hnballah, "Muhammad the Prophet," (Washington: The Islamic Center) p. 1.

⁴Ahmad A. Calwash, *The Religion of Islam*, (New York: Hefner Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 28.

⁵Pronounce al lah.

⁶Abd-al-Rahman Azzam, *The Eternal Message of Muhammad, Trans. from the Arabic by Carver E. Farah*, (New York: Mentor Books, 1964), p. 29.

⁷Robert Payne, *The Holy Sword*, (New York: Harper, 1959), p. 11.

⁸Calwash, op. cit., p. 28.

⁹Calwash, loc. cit.

¹⁰Payne, op. cit., p. 12; Azzam, op. cit., p. 29, footnote 10.

¹¹Payne, *ibid.*, p. 15 f.; Azzam, *ibid.*, p. 30.

¹²Calwash, op. cit., p. 33.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁴Azzam, op. cit., p. 35.

¹⁵Payne, op. cit., pp. 25-27.

¹⁶Reynold A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1941), p. 173. (This document is extant in Ibn Hisham's *Biography of Muhammad*, c. 833, pp. 341-344.)

¹⁷Payne, op. cit., p. 78.

¹⁸Payne, *ibid.*, p. 194.

East Meets West - Hindu Style

by M. Thomas Starkes

At least 80 percent of the more than 40 million people of India are Hindus. Since Hindu is a Persian word which means Indian, Hinduism means merely the religious belief and practice of the Indian people.

A definition of Hinduism is difficult to formulate. As a religion embodies much ancient folklore of India, customs of the people, social caste distinctions and modern reform movements such as Vedanta. However, it is valid to speak of Hinduism as a somewhat unified religion because, as D.S. Sarma points out, most Hindus do share common scriptures, deities, ideals, beliefs and worship practices.

This oldest of the world's religions permeates the life of India, but remains only a minor religious force in the United States. Hindus in the U.S. number from 90,000 to 185,000.

Of these, most adhere to fairly specialized forms of Hinduism, which makes the maze of classical Hinduism easier to decipher. So this article will speak of Hinduism in America and relate Southern Baptist witness to followers of the movement.

History

Hinduism began somewhere in the mythology and folklore of Indo-European peoples; it has no distinct founder, such as Gautama Buddha or Confucius, and no definite date of origin, but rather emerged with the development of the Indian nation.

Hinduism scholar R. C. Zaehner divides Hinduism into four distinct periods, based primarily on the way the Indian people viewed God.¹ The earliest period was that of the *rig-veda*, which clearly viewed the world as filled with many gods. The next period was characterized by viewing God as equal to nature and as merely the supreme god among many others. In the third period, the Hindus continued the process of exalting the traditional gods, *Vishnu* and *Siva*, as supreme reality. Zaehner points out that we are now living in the fourth epoch of Hinduism, in which we are seeing emphasis on the spiritual essence of the individual.

At least three world religions began as reform movements

within Hinduism. Gautama Buddha, a younger contemporary of Ezekiel, began Buddhism as a protest against the rigid worship patterns and caste distinctions of his day. Later, Mahatma presented his system of asceticism and austerity which became known as Jainism and which today claims almost two million followers in India. The World Jain Mission today is very evangelistic and publishes a series of booklets that are circulated throughout the English-speaking world.² The latest major world religion, Sikhism, was founded by Nanak early in the sixteenth century, as an attempt to harmonize Hinduism and Islam. Today more than six-and-a-half million Sikhs are in the world.

Hinduism has also experienced modern reform movements such as *Brahma Samaj*, started in 1828 by Ram Mohan Roy, who called for a personal God. Later, in the same century, Dyananda Sarasvati began *Arya Samaj*, a social reform movement within Hinduism. The most familiar twentieth-century figure is Mahatma Gandhi, who led unstructured but powerful reforms within Hinduism by incorporating Christian concepts and caste reforms into his thought and action.

Hindu Scriptures

Hinduism's oldest work is the *Rig-Veda*, composed primarily of hymns to nature gods. It existed in oral form for at least three centuries before finally being written down in the eighth century before Christ.

Veda, meaning knowledge, incorporates a large category of sacred writings including the *Samhitas*, *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads*. The *Vedas* consist primarily of the *Samhitas*, or collection of hymns and knowledge. The *Brahmanas* are both a commentary on the *Samhitas* and a guide for priestly and sacrificial ceremony used by the Hindus in the seventh and eighth centuries B.C. The highly significant *Upanishads* contain 108 mystical poems written by various authors after 600 B.C.

Sacred Hindu literature may also be divided between *sruti* and *smriti*. *Sruti* (hearing) is the eternal "word" while *smriti* (memory) is secondary commentary on the word, including law books and two epics.

The *Mahabharata* contains the most loved, influential and widely read portion of Hindu literature, the *Bhagavad-gita* or "Song of the Lord." In the *Gita* the Hindu begins to speak of the love of God for man and man's loving response to it.

Hindu literature is immense and, reflecting major periods of Indian thought about God, progresses from primitive nature gods to a picture of God as love. The scriptures of the world's oldest religion are as variant as they are lengthy. They should be read with discretion and in the proper context by the beginning Christian student, with special attention to date of authorship and subject material. But they certainly should be read by the Christian who desires to witness to the modern Hindu. An acquaintance with Hindu writings will enable the witnessing Christian partially to know and understand the thoughts of his Hindu neighbor. An excellent source for beginning to read Hindu sacred literature is *Hinduism*, edited by Louis Renou.³

Hindu Teachings

Most modern Hindus hold in common several major areas of belief. First is the doctrine of *karma*, which decrees that every responsible decision must have its determinate consequences. Sidney Cave points out that this Hindu doctrine differs from the Christian idea of retribution in that Christianity does not teach that sin and punishment are mathematically adjusted. In Christianity there is no judgment merely for judgment's sake. Another difference is that *karma* carries individualism too far and does not take a merciful God into account.⁴

The question as to whether Hinduism is monotheistic is an involved one. Indian thought has consistently held to belief in one god, but frequently experienced a deep desire to give this god various forms and names. The Hindu is monotheistic if

this term means that there is one reality, but not so if the term means that this reality has only one form.

A third common doctrine held by most modern Hindus is their idea of a composition of man. This begins with the *atman*, or "inner self," which remains as the individual's permanent and unchanging substance. Man is also held by the Hindu to be a layered being, composed of a body and of a conscious and subconscious personality. In order to be a "real" person, one is to "know" himself but not confuse his real self (*atman*) with his outward self.

Hindu thinkers recognize in man four channels of self-expression: his natural desires, his craving for power, his social aims, and his spiritual urge.⁵ These desires are to be correlated if a person is really to "know" himself in a full and rich life.

Perhaps the most popular and prominent idea in Hinduism is reincarnation. Each Hindu sees as the most desirable outcome of death his absorption into Brahman or an escape from the cycle of reincarnation. This absorption, however, seldom occurs and the person is supposedly reborn into any form of animal, vegetable or insect life. The kind of life into which he is reborn depends on his response in his previous life to the law of *karma*.

A study of *karma* and reincarnation might lead to the conclusion that God, for Hindus, is primarily a bookkeeper; but their view is far more sophisticated than that. In the *Rig-Veda*, nature powers were worshipped as the true deities and were pictured as being manlike. Later, in the *Upanishads*, all the old nature gods were abolished in favor of the Hindu trinity: *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Siva*. *Brahma* is described as the creator and is given the attributes of being, awareness and bliss.

Vishnu is worshiped as the god who becomes incarnate at times; he is popular with the masses because of this power of reincarnation. One of his incarnations is believed to be Buddha. Another is Krishna, the supreme god and "universal savior of mankind" to the Vishnuite sect. Some modern members of this sect consider Christ as the final incarnation of Vishnu and thus fit Christianity into their religious outlook as a good religion with Christ as one god among many.

Siva, the third god in the Hindu trinity, supposedly promotes self-mutilation and starvation along with his power of illusion or *maya*. Besides the three main gods in Hinduism, there is *Sakti*, the mother goddess.

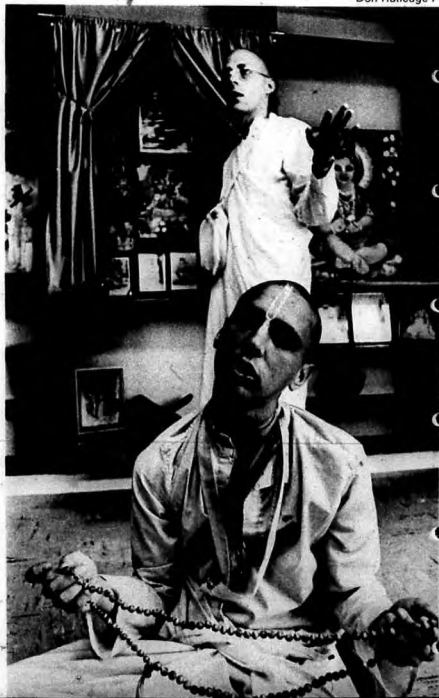
Hinduism views our world as going through cycle after cycle in time, being governed by *karma*, being deceptive in trying to pass itself off as ultimate reality, and primarily as a training ground for advancement toward their concept of God.

To most Baptists and other evangelical Christians, the main issue in all religious thinking is salvation or redemption. Hindu has its answer to the question of salvation, albeit radically different from the Christian one. The *Bhagavad-Gita* reads: "But the man who has found the joy of the Spirit and in the Spirit has satisfaction, who in the Spirit has found his peace, that man is beyond the law of action."

As one can see, the Hindu thinks that what men need deliverance (*moksha*) from is the endless cycle of reincarnation governed by *karma* and the limitations of individual existence. There is little concept of individual sin. Hinduism teaches that the un-free man is enslaved by his own actions and is condemned to be reborn.

Escape from this fate can come in one of three ways: through works (*karma yoga*), such as studying the *Vedas* and showing hospitality to one's neighbor; through knowledge (*man yoga*) by deep meditation; or through devotion (*bhakti yoga*) by worshipping God. All of these efforts come under the broader heading of *yoga*, which is the term for working out one's own escape from this life. So, life itself is not what each person is reaching for but he desires instead escape from life to a higher level of existence.

The message of Hinduism seems to be something like this:



Don Rutledge P.

live out your life doing what you know to be right, so that finally you may enter into eternal peace through deliverance from the limitations of your present life.

Hinduism in the United States

Almost 40 years ago, in *Hinduism in the United States*, Wendell Thomas pointed out that Hinduism appears in America in nine different forms.⁸ At least six of these remain today: Hindu cults, cultural movements, professors and students, Hindu-based religions, American cults of partly Hindu origin, and Hindu-oriented writers and thinkers.

The first Hindu sect in the United States, the Vedanta Society, was founded in 1894 by Swami Vivekananda, a follower of Ramakrishna. The Society works in conjunction with the Ramakrishna Mission, which has over 140 centers of propagation in ten countries. Vedantists feel a strong compulsion to spread their faith over all the world. Vivekananda himself wrote: "This is the great deal before us . . . the conquest of the whole world by India . . . and we must get ready for it, strain every nerve for it . . . up, India, and conquer the world with your spirituality!"⁹ Today, in the United States, Vedantism has at least 1,200 members with 11 major societies.

Vedanta philosophy consists of three propositions: man is divine, the aim of life is to realize this divine nature, and all religions are essentially in agreement.⁸ Vedanta is so capable of assimilation that it sees no difficulty in accepting Christ as a Son of God.

In most cases, Vedanta appeals to seekers of truth without any definite tradition, so Hinduism becomes their first vital religion. Many remain in their original churches with more tolerant views of beliefs of others. This mission-oriented philosophy has made such inroads into the American religious scene that it is regarded by some evangelical Christians as the greatest danger to Christianity in our nation today.⁹

The second way Hinduism is found in America is through the "Threefold Movement," a cultural movement with one aim: "mutual appreciation of East and West."¹⁰

A third manifestation of Hinduism in the United States, and the one with which most Southern Baptists are likely to come into contact, is the Indian student and professor in centers of higher learning. Well over 10,000 Hindus are on college and university campuses; they offer a splendid opportunity for evangelical Christian-Hindu dialogue and witness.

A fourth way in which a modified form of the Hindu religion has made its way into the nation is through Hindu-oriented religions such as Buddhism. More than 150,000 followers of Buddha worship in a hundred churches and temples, and their mission efforts are increasing.

A fifth form of Hinduism in America comes through influential thinkers such as Aldous Huxley and Ralph Waldo Emerson, who have influenced American intellectual history to a large degree.

The sixth way in which Hinduism has a definite influence on American religious thought and practice is through cults of partly Hindu origin—outstandingly, Theosophy and Christian Science. The Theosophical Society entered the United States almost a century ago in New York City through the efforts of Madame Helena Blavatsky, who claimed to be in mysterious communication with "Mahatmas" in Tibet. The movement's modern doctrine is easily traceable to Hindu scriptures such as the *Upanishads*. Theosophy says that Buddha, Vishnu and God are to be considered as equal while asserting that man is essentially a part of God.

The Christian Science movement propagates, through a vast publishing agency, certain ideas more Hindu than Christian. Mary Baker Eddy Patterson taught such Hindu-based ideas as God being impersonal and salvation coming through self-merit. To evangelical Christians, the propagation of such ideas is certainly the most disturbing aspect of Hindu thought in America, for it comes through organizations that claim to be partially Christian.

Continued



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Because Hindu cults work for universal acceptance of all religions and emphasize the growth of the individual believer, they will continue to increase as society grows increasingly depersonalized. The evangelistic Christian who seeks an opportunity to witness to Hindus does not have to look far because they are here in varying forms and growing number.

Similarities

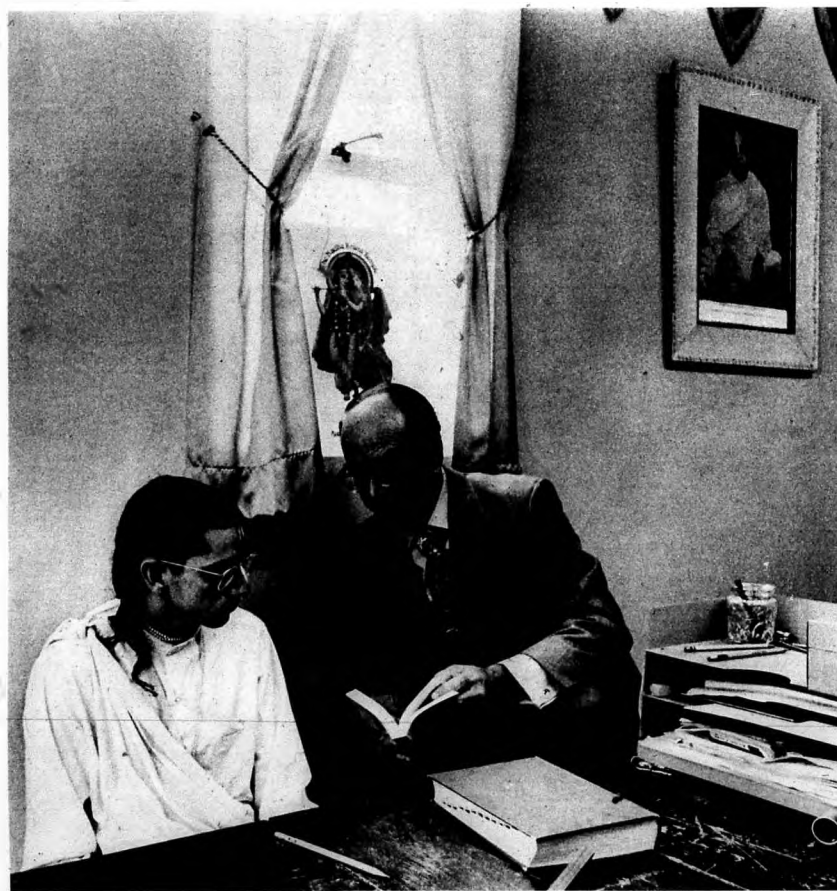
The Hindu doctrine of *avatars* is one example of similarity between Hinduism and Christianity. An *avatar* is an event during which God comes to the help of man when He deems it necessary. Such an event may take place at any time or place

and is constantly occurring some place. Similarly, the Christian has a dynamic concept of God's acting on behalf of mankind in distress.

Other similarities will become evident as modern Hinduism places more emphasis on a personal God who acts through grace. Worldwide mission activity and emphasis on individual piety are two other parallels which may be drawn between these two great world religions. But, as one might expect, the differences are much more numerous and striking.

Difference in Doctrine

Most evangelical Christians justifiably place more emphasis



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on the question of one's salvation than upon any other matter in religion. Any discussion of the differences in Hindu and Christian thought should therefore start with the question of salvation. The salvation of which the Hindu speaks may be achieved by man's own effort and is escape from the effects of *karma*. There is no concept of sin, repentance and forgiveness such as proclaimed by Baptists and other evangelical Christians.

A second difference is that Christian doctrine does not seek deliverance from life, but rather the fuller enjoyment of life itself in existence hallowed by the presence of Christ. On the other hand, Hindu doctrine robs life itself of much meaning by advocating escape of human existence.

The third difference in Christian and Hindu doctrine involves the manner in which God makes himself known to man. Christianity starts with the belief that God's acts in history matter to man. The Christian is what he is because of Christ, whose coming and cross were historical events that cannot be ignored by his followers. God's grace is thus tied in with history. A formless God has no meaning for the believing Christian. The Hindu, caught up in endless cycles of time, puts little emphasis on history.

The different attitudes toward history account for a fourth variance between the two religions. Because the Christian starts with a concrete event in time—Christ coming as the instrument of his salvation—he is necessarily not as tolerant toward other faiths as is the Hindu. Hindus, on the other hand, can afford to be more tolerant of other religions because they start with no historical data from which to reason or discuss. They are vague regarding God's attributes and are thereby able to incorporate other beliefs into their religious system.

The differences listed above, four of the many between Christianity and Hinduism, should be sufficient to indicate to the evangelical Christian that the differences between the two are key ones because they relate to the heart of religion itself—one's relation to his maker through grace.

What Hinduism Can Teach Us

Encounter with members of another religion should never leave the evangelical Christian unchanged. The serious-minded Christian who seeks to witness effectively to his Hindu friends can learn much that may lead to spiritual growth.

He can learn the value of "interior" commitment to God's cause. The Hindu places emphasis on the value of meditation and self-analysis. If the Christian adds to the practice the element of self-evaluation in the light of God's expectations of man, as revealed in the Bible, this can be a valuable lesson.

A second value can come in the development of the total personality for God. Total commitment to Christ should be as complete as one's self. Surrender must be more than "heart-felt"; it must be thought-centered and action-expressed. Christian commitment is not partitioned in God's sight, but includes surrender, love in action and use of the enlightened intellect. Partial commitment of one's being is not total surrender to the Lord. Sessions with enlightened Hindus may teach that much needed lesson.

Hindu Inclusiveness

Hinduism consistently condemns narrowmindedness and all rivalries between religions, which are held to be simply different manifestations of the universal religion. Max Stilson wrote of Hinduism's inclusiveness: "It rejects nothing. It is all-comprehensive, all-tolerant, all-compliant, all-compliant."¹¹ Ordinarily the Hindu does not bother to label an idea about God as being true or false. This is especially true of the Vedanta Society, the largest Hindu contingent in the U.S.

The Hindu view that all searches for God are equally valid is a logical result to the lack of emphasis on historical revelation within that religion. For the Hindu, Christ is merely one

revelation of Vishnu, not the clear evidence of God himself as he is for the confessing Christian. The Christian is not ready to admit that all religions are true because he is convinced with Peter and John that "There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby ye must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The Hindu spirit of syncretism makes it difficult to present the claims of Christ to Hindus. They are likely to take the good news of Christ as a nice idea to be placed on equal footing with Buddha and Vishnu. Only dependence on the Holy Spirit and sharpened tools for Christian witness can overcome this Hindu attitude.

How to Witness to a Hindu

The task of witnessing to Hindus is easier because they are already in search of God. After friendship with them has been established, Christ may be introduced as the end of their search. The Hindu is not interested in merely learning about God; he wants to know God intimately. Through the witnessing Christian, Christ offers the way to the true knowledge of the Father by being the incarnation of him. Christ is not just a hero among the many in Indian mythology. The witnessing Baptist should present Jesus Christ as unique, the clearest indication of God's love for men. This is God's answer to the Hindu in search of release from *karma*. He waits only on concerned and knowledgeable Christians who are willing to approach people of differing color, culture and religious faith.

With God's help, Christ can be successfully presented in all his fullness, love and deliverance for the Hindu caught up in the vicious circle of endless rebirth. Christ only can supply the hope in the Hindu's life.

Conclusion

Hinduism in the United States has been growing since its formal introduction here over 75 years ago. It will continue to flourish as increasing numbers of Indian students come and as Theosophy and Christian Science function under the guise of being essentially Christian. As this growth continues, it will afford Baptists and other evangelical Christians the opportunity of presenting the Hindu with the answer to his problem of despair—a personal belief in Christ.

In such an endeavor, Baptists can learn much about themselves as well as about their non-Christian neighbors. They can become increasingly aware of a changing culture in which each Christian must know his beliefs and upon what they are based. Most important, the Christians who are unafraid of change and of the hard work of witnessing for a Savior who gave his life, will see their Hindu friends come to know the peace given by the Prince of Peace.

Footnotes

¹Hinduism, London: Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 8-9.

²See Charles S. Braden, *The World's Religions*, New York: Abingdon Press, 1954, p. 107.

³New York, Washington Square Press, Inc., 1963.

⁴Redemptive, *Hindu and Christian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1919), p. 195f.

⁵*The Role of Man in Hinduism: the Religion of the Hindus*, New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1953, p. 135.

⁶New York, The Beacon Press, Inc., 1930, p. 14.

⁷*The Complete Works*, Almora, Advaita Ashrama, 1924-32, vol. III, p. 276f.

⁸Christopher Isherwood (ed.), *Vedanta for the Western World* (New York: The Marcel Roud Co., 1964), p. 1.

⁹See Edmond Davison Soper, *The Inevitable Chalice* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 13.

¹⁰More information about this group may be obtained by writing: The Threefold Movement, 152 West 42nd Street, New York, New York.

¹¹*Leading Religions of the World*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1964, p. 9.

Buddhism: Zen and Nichiren

by M. Thomas Starkes

Most Southern Baptists are unaware of the rapid growth in the number of U.S. followers of Buddha, now estimated from 80,000 to 150,000. Experts agree that the recovered Buddhist sense of mission and unity will foster even faster growth. Buddhist strength is now confined to 13 states, but its influence is spreading through such aspects as Zen. Already there are more Buddhists in the United States than in India, the land of its birth.¹

Buddhism as an organized movement came to America in 1896 when two Japanese priests established congregations in San Francisco. In 1905 the first Buddhist temple was consecrated there.² Evidences of acclimation to American culture are prevalent, such as Christmas with candy and Santa Claus and Sunday School.

As Buddhists enter more freely into business, religious and social life, evangelical Christians will become more aware of their presence.

History of Buddhism

In the sixth century B.C. the Hinduism of India needed reform. A young prince, later to be named Gautama Buddha was born of the Sakya tribe in northern India, where he lived until about age 30. At that time he left his wife and baby son to seek meaning for life.

He tried intensive study and meditation, followed by near starvation. Then he fell down, an exhausted man, under a tree and, after 24 hours of meditation, became the "Enlightened One" or the Buddha. He later wrote of his life-altering experience, "Ignorance was dispelled, knowledge arose. . . . So it is with him who abides vigilant, strenuous and resolute."³

With his newfound knowledge, Gautama Buddha gathered a group of disciples about him and began quietly to protest the ritualism and caste distinctions of Hinduism by teaching a doctrine of self-enlightenment. After his death at about 80, his followers began to worship him as an exalted person rather than as a teacher. He became the symbol of compassion as well as of self-knowledge.

For two centuries Buddhism developed strength in India and spread into Ceylon, China and Japan. The Mongol tribes' conversion to Buddhism four centuries ago was the last vast territorial gain.⁴ However, inroads into the academic communities through Zen and militant lay movements, such as Soka Gakkai,⁵ have increased the influence of Buddha's followers in recent years, especially in the United States, Japan and Korea.

The future of worldwide Buddhism is difficult to predict but one thing is virtually certain: within the United States, it will grow in influence and popularity, with the influx of international students and others of Oriental ancestry (who make up the majority of Buddhists in the U.S.) and with the increased assimilation into American culture. Evangelical Christians will increasingly see a changing society, especially in the once "solid South." Southern Baptists especially should note this trend and respond with a positive witness.

Buddhist Teachings

Because he was primarily concerned with the pain and meaninglessness of human life, Gautama Buddha sought to provide a corridor into a realm of being where no time, pain or death exists. He taught that responsibility for the future lies with the individual and that each person is to work out his own salvation by escaping from the pain of human existence through the process of "undeception." The route for this escape is found in Buddha's early teachings, codified in the "Four Noble Truths" and the "Eightfold Path."

The first truth is that natural human existence is filled with *dukkha* (pain, anxiety, frustration). The first step to deliverance is to acknowledge that fact. The second truth is the recognition of *samudaya* (the cause of one's pain), that is, false craving for and attachment to the alluring things of this world. Buddha's third truth is that the person in search of deliverance should realize the possibility that this pain can be stopped.

Once a prospective believer admits the presence, cause and possibility of deliverance from anxiety, he is launched on the Eightfold Path, which constitutes the fourth Noble Truth. First steps on the path are right mind-set or viewpoint, followed by right aspiration, based on happiness and compassion as being life's true values. Third step on Buddha's path is right speech, coming from a healthy attitude toward others and therefore controlled and considerate. Right behavior is the fourth step. Buddha indicated that his disciples were not to engage in retaliatory actions or even to harbor resentment.

Gautama spoke of right livelihood in his fifth step and forbade any involvement in business which might injure a form of life. In the sixth, Buddha assured his followers that they were free to determine their own rate of growth toward true happiness. The seventh step called for right mindfulness with the warning that the mind leads most men into disruptive living. The path culminates in the eighth step, right contemplation.

The goal of following the Eightfold Path for the individual adherent of Buddhism is *nirvana*, the complete opposite of pain. It is the deathless state encompassing the end of all suffering and frustration, a free state of mind. Man has no soul, according to Buddhism, if by soul one means that there is a spiritual substance that retains its separate identity throughout eternity. To attain *nirvana* is to negate self as having permanent value. The whole structure of a person simply dissolves at death.

According to most sects of modern Buddhism, this state can be reached in one's earthly existence. *Parinirvana* is a higher state and can be reached only after one dies. For the Buddhist, this is the ultimate or the eternal. It is similar to biblical present-action of heaven, primarily because it is that final eternal state to be desired by the believer.

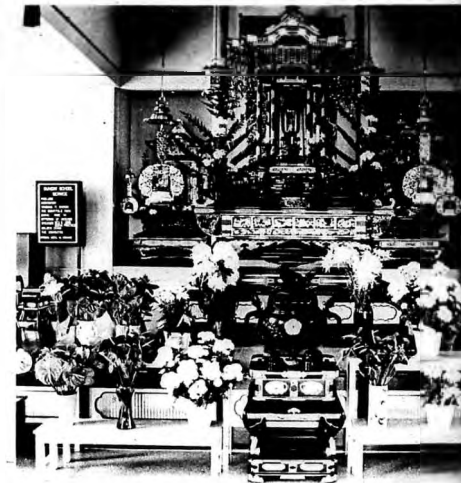
The founder of Buddhism presented also ten guidelines for living a life consistent with one's quest for nirvana:

1. Thou shall not kill any living being;
2. Thou shall not take what is not thine;
3. Thou shall not commit adultery;
4. Thou shall not prevaricate, but shall speak the word of truth;
5. Thou shall not partake of any intoxicating liquors;
6. Thou shall not partake of food after midday;
7. Thou shall not be present at any dramatic, dancing or musical performance;
8. Thou shall not use any personal adornment or perfume;
9. Thou shall not sleep on a broad, comfortable bed;
10. Thou shall not be owner of any gold or silver.⁶

Basic Buddhist teachings are found in the *Tripiṭaka* ("The Three Baskets of Wisdom") the first of which contains sermons; the second, rules for the priesthood; and the third, doctrines. The *sūtras* are those texts which claim to have been written by Buddha himself. *Śāstras* are written in a more systematic fashion by later authors and frequently quote the *sūtras*.

1. The Buddhist scriptures reveal a personal ethic somewhat different from the Christian one, largely due to their respective interpretation of love of compassion. When Gautama Buddha taught that *metta* (compassion) should be the guide for personal relation to others, he lifted Indian ethics to a new level. However, his downgrading of the value of human individuality has tended to curtail concrete efforts by his followers to aid their fellowmen. Active love is a doctrinal impossibility to Buddha's followers because this principle assumes that something in the world has value.

When viewed through the eyes of Christians, Buddha's ethic of compassion helps to ease Hindu unconcern but falls short of the ethics of Godly love as taught by Christ and Paul. Buddhism has most often stopped with merely "feeling" for a neighbor in distress and with failing to help in a concrete



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way, and is therefore different from the Christian ethic of all-giving love. However, the American Christian should be aware that Soka Gakkai, the most vigorous aspect of Buddhism in our land, has developed a sense of personal concern and social action in Japan and increasingly so in our nation.

The evangelical Christian should be careful, while trying to interest the Buddhist in Christ, of his use of the word "love." At the mention of love, most Buddhists think of self-ish, possessive or erotic passion. A demonstration and explanation of *agape*, the all-giving love of 1 Corinthians 13, however, may be of real value in witnessing to a Buddhist friend.

2. Students of Buddhist doctrine disagree as to whether it teaches atheism. Evangelical Christians should be slow to pass off Buddhism as an atheistic philosophy and thus worthy of little note and consideration. Buddhism can be called atheistic because it denies the existence of a Creator or any Being who stands outside of man and the world or of any power that judges the action of man. However, Buddha's followers do recognize the law of *karma*. This law is the Buddhist's conception of payday-someday and conveys the impersonal principle that one's deliberately-willed actions produce future mental and physical results in keeping with their original quality.⁷

Further, members of the Buddhist Churches of America, with headquarters in San Francisco, affirm allegiance with Amida Buddha, who has reached Buddhahood along with Gautama. His name is held to have the four aspects of full compassion, perfect virtue, ultimate value and absolute power—qualities attributed to God by Christians and Jews. As one can see, Buddhists are only atheistic in the denial of an ultimate personal being called God. They live with many of the same principles and attributes which Christians do, yet in an impersonal manner.

3. Perhaps the most unique contribution Buddhism has made to the world of religious thought is *anatta* (no self, no soul). According to their teaching, as mentioned earlier, man

has no soul. For the Buddhist, a person can be really happy only after he as an individual is no longer there. The reaching of nirvana is negation of seeing one's self as of ultimate value. The individual, according to Buddhist thought, is composed of five factors: physical form, feeling, awareness, mental formations and consciousness. There is no mention of soul as a separate entity or even of the resurrection of the body in any form. At death, the whole structure of a person simply dissolves.⁴

4. The most pressing question in Baptist doctrine is the matter of one's salvation. The same is true for Buddhism, but the paths are widely divergent. The Buddha taught his disciples to rely on their own powers for self-culture on the way to salvation. They may rely on the counsel of those who

have already attained salvation, but it is primarily on their own achievement, without the help of God or prayer to any unseen being. So, one's salvation does not depend on what he is but on what he does. With little concept of what Christians call sin, the Buddhist is taught that he can trust himself on the way to nirvana.

The basic differences in Buddhist teaching and evangelical Christian doctrine are immediately evident. First, Buddhism emphasizes the impersonal law of karma; Christians the personal Lawgiver. Second, nonexistence is the ideal goal for the Buddhist, whereas Christians believe that human life is the gift of God and is designed to have existence forever. Third, nirvana is salvation from life, while the Christian's entry into the kingdom of God denotes new birth into a life of joy

and love. Finally, the way of salvation is different in that the individual is far more dependent on himself in Buddhism than is the Christian with his emphasis on God's grace. Thus, on what evangelical Christians consider to be the fundamental questions of religion and human existence, the two beliefs are widely divergent.

Even after one notes the wide differences between the two beliefs, he cannot help but notice some strange similarities. Both rely heavily on their founder as the teacher to whom they look for authority. Both result in the creation of religious communities which aid in the maintenance of the individual believer's spiritual life. Both have sets of commandments which emphasize one's social duty in a negative fashion,

but Buddha's ten rules lack any mention of a personal god. These rules enjoin chastity and decry theft or loose sex relations, and reveal a common respect for another's life and possessions. Finally, both believe in an added dimension to human life above mere existence. Life is not completed when lived simply on the animal level.

This section on Buddhist teaching, though only a brief and elementary introduction, makes evident that Buddhism and Christianity differ radically on the question of the existence of a personal God and one's relation to him. The evangelistic Christian, it is hoped, will use this section as a means to an understanding of and witnessing to his Buddhist friends who deserve to know of the hope possible to believers in our risen Lord. *Continued*

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Buddhism in the United States is primarily that of the *Mahayana* tradition and takes many forms, from the highly institutionalized to the free thinker or adherent of New Thought. A brief introduction to the historical development of *Mahayana* Buddhism will help the reader to understand the Buddhist he finds in America.

Historical Buddhism is divided into two camps: *Hinayana* (small raft) and *Mahayana* (large raft). The largest and only surviving sect within *Hinayana* is Theravada, and the two terms are used interchangeably in current studies. The *Theravada* school limits the authoritative Buddhist scriptures to the *sutras*, teaches that one must work out his own salvation alone, and emphasizes the place of the *arhat* (monk). It is the conservative branch of Buddhism and claims to be true to the intent and teachings of Gautama.

Mahayana Buddhism arose in northwest India between the third century B.C. up to his time. Adherents of this more liberal camp do not idealize the monk but have respect for the *bodhisattva*, a person so in sympathy with the sufferings of all human beings that he refuses to enter into nirvana until all others can enter with him.

The most outstanding *bodhisattva* for most *mahayanists* is Amida Buddha, who is esteemed next to Gautama. They believe that anyone who has faith in Amida will at death enter into the "Pure Land," a western paradise. Another *bodhisattva* is Kwan-Yin, who is the goddess of mercy who took a vow to help anyone who needs her.¹⁰

Chinese *Mahayana* Buddhism reached Japan five centuries after Christ, having come through Korea. From Japan *Mahayana* has come in the last century to the United States and is by far the most popular form here. The major divisions here follow the three major sects of *Mahayan* Buddhism found in Japan: The "Pure Land" whose central doctrine is faith in Amida, the "intuitive" whose prime example is Zen, and the "socio-political" which is characterized by the *Soka Gakkai*. At least five major Buddhist organizations exist in our

nation. One of these is the American Buddhist Association which was founded in 1959 and whose purpose is to study and propagate the principles of Buddhism. The organization publishes the monthly leaflet "Suchness," containing book reviews, poetry and articles regarding Buddhism and the western world by such scholars as D.T. Suzuki.¹¹ Circulation of the leaflet is growing rapidly.

The Buddhist mission of North America, started in San Francisco in 1896; in 1942 the name was changed to the Buddhist Churches of America, an organization presently publishing a series of tracts, a newsletter and a monthly leaflet, *The American Buddhist*. The newsletter tells of summer camps, Boy Scout troops and Sunday Schools, much like most Christian churches in America. The social and educational emphasis reflects the fact that the organization follows the *Shin* school of Pure Land Buddhism which states that it is not necessary to withdraw from the world to become a perfect Buddhist. The sect traces its origin back to Shinran Shoshu, a thirteenth-century Japanese scholar, who taught that the common man could have salvation by placing faith in Amida Buddha and by the recitation of his name. The organization now has at least 60 temples and a membership of 35,000. It is the organization most like American Protestant churches in structure and church administration.

The "intuitive" sect of *Mahayana* Buddhism is in evidence in our nation through the presence of a small group named "Followers of Buddha,"¹² a manifestation of the *Dhyana* school of Buddhism. This organization emphasizes the individual experience of enlightenment, solitude and silence, optimism and tranquility.

A much more influential manifestation of intuitive Buddhism is the practice of Zen, which often cuts across lines of religious preference. It is therefore difficult to pinpoint the measure of its influence. Modern Zen had its beginning with Hui-Neng, a Chinese monk who, about seven centuries after

Christ, stressed immediate enlightenment. The central teaching is the principle of allowing the mind to operate freely. A common method of beginning the process is the *koan*, a type of riddle which makes little sense to most Americans, such as "How do you get a goose out of a bottle?" By concentrating on such questions, the mind is freed from its normal, rigid patterns of thinking. When this happens, one day enlightenment will come.

Zen in America has been popularized through the work of D.T. Suzuki, author of the three-volume work, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*,¹³ as well as of more than a dozen other books on the subject. Suzuki's interpretative skill partially accounts for the popularity of the Zen philosophy in the academic community.

In 1930 a Japanese Zen master named Roshi founded the first Zen institute in America for the purpose of bringing the tradition and practice of Zen to our nation.¹⁴ The institute has already published three books along with two monthly leaflets, "Zen Notes" and "Letters from Kyoto."

Zen's freedom from patterned thinking affords many persons a mental frame of reference for rebellion against what they consider society's rigid thought forms. It is very popular among many young people because it symbolizes a break-away from questionings wherein the answers are already evident. It is utilized by some scholars because of its claim to free the mind for thought. As merely one aspect of Buddhism, Zen in America is difficult to pinpoint in numbers except to say that it is widespread in influence.

The most militant and flourishing company of Buddha's followers in the United States are the members of *Soka Gakkai*, a lay organization within the *Nichiren Shoshu* sect. *Nichiren* was a thirteenth-century Japanese Buddhist who taught that allegiance to Amida Buddha was the one true religion. The lay organization, *Soka Gakkai* was founded in 1928 as a religiously-oriented, educational group and is the third largest political party in Japan.¹⁵ There are over 30,000 members of the organization in the United States. It publishes the *World Tribune*, a weekly newspaper in Chicago. An excerpt from an article in that newspaper reveals the narrowness of the sect: "The final state of life can never be reached by any other method than the practice of Nichiren's Buddhism."¹⁶

Members of the group are frequently exhorted to missionary activity, because they believe that the Japanese are an advanced people with the true religion. Individual effort is given a high premium, and members are advanced in the organization on their activities, regardless of social status. There is a real sense of community effort to convert non-believers to their brand of Buddhism. It's fervor for this effort comes under constant criticism from other Buddhists, especially in Japan.

Soka Gakkai publicly in America tries to lose this image of "forced conversion," as evidenced by an article in the organization's newspaper: "Decision on whether or not the newcomer will take faith is made by his voluntary will, free from any coercion, because if he were forced into his religion he would never practice daily worship."¹⁷ Actually, however, *Soka Gakkai* frequently employs harsh methods of conversion. One Japanese student at a university in Atlanta reports that members of *Soka Gakkai* got his name and began harassment which continued for more than a year and included late-night phone calls. Other methods have included locking the "prospects" behind closed doors for 20 hours at a time until he "converts" to *Soka Gakkai*. This method, called *shakubuku*, is very effective.

Soka Gakkai is the most rapidly growing form of organized Buddhism in our nation and does not geographically limit its function to the large cities of the North. For example, a new chapter was started in Atlanta late in 1967.

There is some evidence that there is rapidly developing a distinctively American Buddhism. Their use of Santa Claus

and candy at Christmas, Sunday Schools, and addressing their ministers as "Reverend," and further examples of this change. As the movement grows, there will be more public witnessing to their faith in terms we can understand. Most Buddhists are aware of this development and are beginning to reflect upon it in their periodicals. The following excerpt from an article in *The American Buddhist* is but one example of this:

...much of our present Buddhist practices can be understood and appreciated only by those who are familiar with the customs and thoughts associated with Japan. On the other hand, our present Buddhism in America is American Buddhism in that many of our present practices and philosophy of church administration and leadership have been revised in its interpretation and function so as to suit the total sociological climate of this country. This trend is truly encouraging, because the Buddhist philosophy of education states that Buddha's Truth must be taught in accordance with the needs of the individual, which, of course, means in his particular society.¹⁸

Buddhism will lose the look of pagodas and monks with shaved heads and will become barely recognizable as an Eastern religion as it gains popularity in America. Baptists and other evangelical Christians will see more of it as it spreads across racial and geographical lines, and they will be forced to formulate a way of sharing their Christian faith in a culture which no longer is "Christian" in any sense.

Besides the organized forms of Buddhism which bear that name, the movement exists in thought forms found in religious groups on the border of evangelical Christianity.

New Thought is a broad category including several sects which have in common tenets of faith similar to Buddhism, including the importance of the mind and the secondary value of matter, man's real search being the discovery of his own soul, no future punishment, an optimistic view of man and thought-power.

One sect adopting New Thought principles is the Unity School of Christianity, started in the 1880's in Kansas by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore; today it claims over four million followers. One example of the Buddhist-like teaching of the Unity School concerns the Godhead: "God is not a . . . person, having life, intelligence, love, power. God is that invisible, intangible but very real something we call life . . . love . . . Power."¹⁹

A second clear parallel between Unity and Buddhist thought involves the question of reincarnation. The Unity Statement of Faith (Article 22) states: "We believe the repeated incarnation of man to be a merciful provision of our loving Father to the end that all may have opportunity to obtain immortality as did Jesus . . ."

These parallels of thought, but two of many common ideas shared by Buddhism and Unity, are sufficient to demonstrate that Buddhist ideas exist in disguise in this school of thought which claims to be Christian.

The clearest case of the amalgamation of Buddhist with Christian ideas on the American scene is Christian Science. At least three ideas presented by Mary Baker Eddy are definitely more Buddhist than Christian. In the first parallel, Mrs. Eddy contended that God is impersonal, devoid of any personality at all. A second parallel idea is that of meriting one's fate. This principle is expressed in *Science and Health*: "The sinner makes his own hell by doing evil, and the saint his own heaven by doing right."²⁰ A third parallel viewed within the light of mainstream Christian theology, is that neither group has a doctrine of man's sinful nature. According to Mrs. Eddy, sin and evil are unreal. Buddhism similarly begins with the problem of man's suffering and disregards man's basic problem of sin.

Unity and Christian Science are but two segments of the



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larger movement of New Thought, which also includes individuals with large followings, such as Glenn Clark and Frank B. Robinson. Actually, Buddhist ideas in America have a much wider outreach than given to them solely by organizations calling themselves Buddhist.

What Buddhism Can Teach Us

Baptists are not perfect as a group or as individuals. They have weaknesses which may virtually be removed by a close reexamination of Scripture and a critical look at themselves. Other religious philosophies have some measure of truth in them or they could never have appealed to and gained the number of members which they have. Buddhism is but one example of this.

Baptists can learn from their Buddhist friends the value of personal discipline, whether it be mental, spiritual or physical. A reexamination of Jesus' teachings and example on personal sacrifice will help one to deepen the measure of that same sacrificial attitude which we profess and most Buddhists practice. Thorough knowledge of the written and living Word comes only through grace and self-discipline.

Secondly, Buddhists can help to teach compassion for one's neighbor. Buddhism stops with "feeling" for another, but at least it goes that far. Cultivated callousness will vanish from among Baptists in the hot light of a restoration of Christian agape—love in action. This restoration can come with a look at how Buddhists fail to become involved in the concerns of their neighbors.

Thirdly, an encounter with Buddhists in America can lead Baptists to a more active response to Christ in his uniqueness. As the risen Lord, he offers infinitely more than a mere good teacher such as Gautama Buddha.

Finally, the presence of the Buddhists in this nation can awaken Southern Baptists to the realization that ours is a rapidly changing culture. No longer will Buddhists be thought of as a strange phenomenon on a newsreel but as neighbors, whether they be international students or local doctors. God may just be using their presence to awaken and sharpen Southern Baptists' Christian witness to a risen Lord.

How to Witness to a Buddhist

The first step for a Baptist who desires to be an effective witness to any adherent of another faith is to be in a dynamic personal relationship with Christ. The ultimate question for each person is, "What has Jesus meant in my life?" When convinced that Christ is as real as the next breath and dearer than the closest earthly friend, one is on the road to being ready to speak to Buddhist neighbors about a personal relationship with him.

The second step is to befriend the Buddhist neighbor. He must be treated as a person who is of real value rather than as a "prospect." Most present-day Buddhists in America are transplanted persons of Japanese or other Oriental descent and will welcome a helpful hand in becoming better acclimated to American culture. By winning his confidence, one

can begin naturally to persuade him of the uniqueness of Christ and of the meaning and hope he gives believers. One way to cultivate friendship is to send a card of a "Happy Wesak" greeting on the birthday of the Buddha, April 8.

The third step is to talk with the Buddhist friend regarding the value of personal relationship. He has been taught to think religiously in terms of the impersonal, although he can hardly do so in his family or social relations. One's own friendship with him and testimony to the happiness found in Christ is an indictment against the Buddhist claim that religious faith is impersonal.

The fourth step is the realization that the typical Buddhist will judge by results and not by beliefs or claims. He has been told that Christianity is solely for the western world or, more specifically, for Americans. Only when Christians act like Christians and quit looking, smelling and sounding like the world will Buddhists listen to the message presented to them. The Christian belief and practice of social service will prove attractive to the young Buddhist.

Conclusion

Buddhism in America is a growing enterprise. To ignore the presence of its followers is to pass up an opportunity for Christian witness. To be ignorant of their history and doctrines is to miss the opportunity of expanding our knowledge of our non-Christian neighbors. To close our eyes to the positive qualities of this ancient religion is to diminish the spirit of self-criticism which enables us to grow spiritually. To fail to equip people to witness to them is to fail our Savior's expectations of his followers.

Footnotes

¹Max Stilson, *Leading Religions of the World*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964, p. 21.

²Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, New York: Abingdon Press, 1961, p. 61.

³Edward J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1933, p. 68.

⁴Kenneth Scott Latourette, *Introducing Buddhism*, New York: Friendship Press, 1956, p. 18.

⁵These will be discussed in the section regarding organizations.

⁶Stilson, *ibid.*, p. 27-28.

⁷For firsthand contact with Buddhist texts consult Edward Conze, *ed.*, *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages*, Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1953.

⁸Winston L. King, *Buddhism and Christianity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 35.

⁹*Op. cit.*, p. 187.

¹⁰Floyd H. Ross and Tynette Hills, *The Great Religions by Which Men Live*, New York: Beacon Press, 1956, p. 71.

¹¹More information can be obtained by writing: The American Buddhist Association, 1151 West Leland Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

¹²More information can be obtained by writing: Followers of Buddha, 40 Las Encinas Lane, Santa Barbara, Calif.

¹³London: Luzac and Company, 1927.

¹⁴The Institute's address is 130 East 30th Street, New York, N. Y., 10016.

¹⁵James Allen Dator, "The Soka Gakkai: A Socio-Political Interpretation," *Contemporary Religions in Japan*, September, 1965, p. 205.

¹⁶August 26, 1965, p. 5.

¹⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁸LaVerne S. Sakaki, "Whither American Buddhism," April, 1967, p. 1.

¹⁹H. Emily Cady, *Lessons in Truth*, Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1925, p. 6.

²⁰Mary Baker Eddy, Boston: First Church of Christ Scientist, 1914, p. 266.

American Baha'is and the Baptist Witness

by M. Thomas Starkes

I dialed the number listed in the yellow pages under "Baha'is." The kindly woman on the other end sounded excited when I indicated interest in her religion. In ten minutes she arrived at my motel, took me to her home, offered me an evening meal and eagerly answered my questions on the Baha'is and their faith.

The woman and her husband were thoroughly convinced that the intricate system of doctrine constituting Baha'i teaching was the key to the unity of religion and subsequently to world peace. The most impressive aspect of this couple's faith was their zeal and certainty that *their* religion was the only one for the world's woes.

As I left their house, I remembered how quickly the woman had reached me, eager to share her faith. How would I have been received had I dialed the number of a Baptist? Would the same eagerness to share faith have been so apparent?

I was sure of one thing: The Baha'is and other cultists in our nation can hardly keep from spreading because of their sense of urgency—in spite of their false ideas about Christ—unless evangelical Christians capture the spirit which drove the early followers of Christ to be as enthusiastic as are the twentieth-century cultists in our land.

Who Are the Baha'is?

When asked on one occasion "What is a Baha'?" one of their leaders replied: "To be a Baha' simply means to love all the world, to love humanity and try to serve it, to work for universal peace and universal brotherhood."¹ This constitutes the Baha'is' definition of themselves as religious persons. Evangelical Christians in the United States will become more aware of their presence as they practice brotherhood.

The Baha'is in the nation worship in more than 945 local centers. National headquarters is in Wilmette, Ill., where the nine-sided House of Worship was constructed at a cost of more than \$2,500,000. They also maintain schools for study in Michigan, Maine, California and Colorado.

Certain practices of the Baha'is immediately appear strange to most Americans, including the observance of a 19-month calendar. However, the Baha'is' concern for peace and brotherhood will capture many Americans despite their strange-sounding practices and distinctly Eastern origin. A prime example is singer Vic Damone, who spent a few minutes on a nation-wide television show telling of his Baha'i faith.

Baha'i History

In October, 1819, the person who was later to be called the *Bab* (the door) was born in southern Iran. At age 25, he declared that God had exalted him to the station of "babhood" as a forerunner of a great educator who was to change the customs of mankind. This declaration brought him and some of his followers six years of imprisonments and deportations until his martyrdom in 1850 at Tabriz.

The great educator of whom the *Bab* spoke was Baha'u'llah, who was born in Teheran two years before him. Baha'u'llah was an ardent follower of the *Bab* who announced in 1863 that Baha'u'llah was that great prophet whom the *Bab* had foretold. For the next three decades Baha'u'llah lived most of the time in seclusion. He wrote letters to such world leaders as Queen Victoria and the Pope, commanding them to profess him as their lord and master. Until his death in 1892, Baha'u'llah wrote the spiritual writings which became the scriptures for the Baha'i World Faith. All of his *Tablets* are considered equally authoritative as the word of God. As the manifestation of God, Baha'u'llah is the outstanding leader of historical Baha'ism.

In his will, Baha'u'llah indicated that his eldest son, Abdul-Baha, was to be the interpreter of his teaching and exemplar of the faith.² The Baha'is' faith was introduced to the Western world by Abdul-Baha who came to the United States in 1912 for a nine-month lecture tour. He was well received, especially in Theosophical centers. He was knighted by the British Commonwealth in 1920 for his humanitarian activities dur-

ing World War I and passed away the following year.

Abdul-Baha's will established his grandson, Shoghi Effendi, as guardian of the faith. Effendi died in 1957 after 36 years of leading the Baha'is. He left no successor such as he had been, but instigated the Hands of the Baha'i Faith, a group of 23 persons who are to protect the interests of the Baha'is.²

Presently, the Baha'is boast more than 30,000 followers in the United States located in over 4,800 municipalities. World Baha'i membership has grown to a little over one million in 4,600 local "spiritual assemblies." The future holds for them the zealous seeking of new converts to the Baha'i creed of universal brotherhood.

Organization

The local meeting body of the Baha'is is called the spiritual assembly and elects annually an administrative body of nine persons. There is no clergy within the Baha'i fellowship and the bodies are social rather than ecclesiastical institutions. These local assemblies in a nation are coordinated through another elected body of nine members, the national spiritual assembly. Baha'is live with the belief that this new administrative world order is a model of the world order of the future.

Baha'u'llah also called for a "house of justice" to be established in each community, on national and international levels. This structure is to serve as the court system when universal peace is attained. This system will supposedly be limited "to matters not covered by the teachings of Baha'u'llah himself."³

Baha'is maintain that the attempt of the United Nations to foster peace will fail because it lacks the "most great peace" of Baha'u'llah which bases social measures upon spiritual unity.

Baha'is gather every 19 days for a devotional, a business meeting and a time of fellowship in their local spiritual assembly, which functions as the base for the foundation of the coming world order.

The Baha'i "Manifestations"

According to the Baha'is, the biblical prophecies which speak of the last days or the coming of the Lord of Hosts refer not to the coming of Christ, but to that of Baha'u'llah. They believe that the second coming of Christ was fulfilled in the Bab and Baha'u'llah.

The Baha'i faith claims to be the completion of all the ancient religions. It notes that the Jews await the Messiah, the Muslims await the *mudhi*, the Buddhists await the fifth Buddha, the Zoroastrians await Shah Bahram and the Hindus await the reincarnation of Krishna. Baha'is contend that Baha'u'llah, as the prophet for this age, has completed the messianic expectations of all the major world religions.

The Baha'i concept of history constitutes the basis for their view of progressive revelation. They hold that history goes through recurring cycles and that each prophet, or "manifestation," of God speaks just enough truth for that given cycle. These manifestations are not God but do have certain powers and qualities that ordinary human beings do not possess. They are to perform three functions: restate the eternal spiritual truths, present laws for that particular cycle, and release a spiritual force in the world. The Baha'i looks upon each prophet as an added chapter in the divine book called history, and they see all the major religions as part of the same evolving world religion.

Baha'u'llah declared that he was the educator of all peoples and the channel of a wondrous grace that would transcend all previous outpourings.³ He beseeched all religious people

Souls and Craft, a popular singing group, are members of the Baha'i faith; after concerts, they ask those in the audience who want to hear about Baha'i to remain for a discussion. Many do.



to follow him as the latest teacher of God's commands. The view of history upon which he placed his claims assumes that the world is increasingly becoming better educated, morally and spiritually, and so his teachings supersede rather than supplement those of Christ's. To quote a Baha'i writer: "The human race is evolving... There was a childhood of primitive man, there was youth, and now we enter the great age of maturity."²

Aim for World Unity

The ultimate aim of the Baha'i faith is the unity of all mankind, based primarily on the disappearance of strife among religions. Abdul-Baha said, "We must not allow our love for any one religion or any one personality to blind our eyes that we become fettered by superstition."³ The Baha'is blame immorality, social dislocation, materialism and discontent on religious discord. The prospective convert is told often of these plans for world unity based on other Baha'i doctrines.

The Baha'is teach that eventually all "sectarian" churches will be abandoned and replaced by a spiritual center in each community. These spiritual centers are to be the teachers of universal education and will involve the spiritual and moral training of mankind. Eventually this education will supposedly lead to a universal auxiliary language and solution of all economic and moral problems.

The entire new world order advocated by the Baha'is will be built on what many Christians call the Golden Rule. Baha'u'llah expressed it negatively: "Do not approve for another what you do not approve for yourselves." This rule will ideally be administered by persons who have discovered their "inner self" and who live by Baha'u'llah's words.

Baha'i Ethics

The Baha'is have conviction that world unity can exist on certain ethical principles. They are pragmatic in their religion to the extent that they believe that loyalty to mankind is the real sign of devotion to God. This loyalty is to be shown by concrete efforts to improve brotherhood.

Coupled with this loyalty is a high standard of moral conduct including the prohibition of alcohol and narcotics except for medical purposes. Each Baha'i has the obligation of daily prayer and an annual fasting period of 19 days. He is also to be obedient to civil government and to engage in a useful trade, art or profession.

Similar to the Hindu idea of *karma*, Baha'i teaching stresses that all disease and all other forms of calamity are due to disobedience to the divine commands. A form of fatalism crops up in Baha'i teaching in that the believer is to accept with "radiant acquiescence" his lot in life, whether it be riches or poverty. Baha'u'llah's call for brotherhood comes regardless of economic or social class.

As one can see, the Baha'is ethical code is based on rather rigid moral laws, including a fatalistic view of their lot in life.

Baha'is are careful not to alienate the believing Christian. They profess to accept Christ as a great prophet-educator. One of their writers says:

Baha'u'llah fully confirms the teachings of Christ and no person is permitted to become a Baha'i without first acknowledging Christ Jesus as the Word made flesh... and as the Son of God. Thousands of Jews and Muhammedans have accepted Christ through the Baha'i teachings. Baha'is believe that Baha'u'llah is that spirit of truth foretold by Jesus when he said (John 16:12-13), "Howbeit, when he, the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth."⁴

The pattern becomes clear in the way that Christ is treated by the Baha'is. According to them, Jesus Christ is but one among many manifestations who is not and never has been divine. There is no mention of the meaning of the cross, no doctrine of man's basic personal and social problem of sin,



Knotan Benfield Photo

and no attention given to his resurrection—except to say it has no reference to any physical happening.

Inherent in the Baha'i evaluation of Jesus also is the contention that Jesus was not even as complete a teacher as two who came chronologically after him, Muhammed and Baha'u'llah. So the Son of God ends up not a risen Lord, not the Savior, but a second-rate teacher of eternal truth.

With the Baha'is, as with all other members of cults, evangelical Christians must be careful to define terms when discussing religious truth. The lengthy quotation two paragraphs above illustrates this principle. The Baha'i author says that all Baha'is "acknowledge Christ Jesus as the Word made flesh" and "as the Son of God." No Baha'i means by this assertion that Christ is or was divine. The title "Son of God," to them, means simply that Christ was a great educator for this particular age.

Their claim that Baha'is have led thousands of Jews and "Muhammedans" to "accept Christ" must be evaluated in the light of their own terminology. They teach converts to the Baha'i faith to accept Christ as a great prophet but as no more. For the evangelical Christian, to accept Christ means to own Jesus Christ as fully God and to give one's life in obedient surrender to him as Savior and Master. The words are the same, but the commitment involved is poles apart.

For the Baptist and every evangelical Christian, the dividing point of all religious commitment and search for truth comes with one's acknowledgement of Christ as what he claimed to be when he said, "I and my Father are one." That Christ might have been merely a good teacher is not an op-



Tim McKay Photo

Festival Days

One cannot really understand the Jewish people until one knows about their holy and festival days, and realizes the importance of those days for Jewish life. Through the historical experiences they commemorate, they reflect and preserve Jewish religious, ethical and cultural values. They have played a significant part in the survival of the Jews as a people. The excitement, joy, pride and courage they arouse have helped the Jews to endure the dreariness and sorrows of the dark days of their history. By providing opportunities for the Jewish people to relive their history and identify with their forebears, the holy days strengthen among Jews their sense of commitment to the Jewish mission and destiny. As recurring dramatizations of religious, moral and practical lessons learned through sometimes bitter and costly experience, they embody a wisdom that through the centuries has guided Jewish people in their resistance to every effort made to destroy them.

The sabbath is the principal day and a happy day in the Jewish calendar. Jews do not view as burdens the detailed restrictions placed upon man's actions on the sabbath but, because the restrictions free man from the cares and labors of the week, Jewish people view them as aids to rest and to the contemplation of the Torah.

Other major days are, first, Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year; second, Yom Kippur the Day of Atonement; and Passover. The ten days beginning on the first day of Rosh Hashanah and concluding on Yom Kippur constitute the High Holy Days. They are a time for solemn reflection on the past year, for recognizing one's sins and resolving to do better in the coming year, and for repenting and requesting forgiveness. While Passover is an occasion for commemorating the escape of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, it is also a

time when Jewish people remind themselves that, because their forefathers were once slaves and with God's help were freed, they today must aid all who struggle to escape injustice and oppression.

Judaism and Christianity

There are many similarities in belief and practice in Judaism and Christianity. In each, God is both unique and one; and he is a moral being and Creator of a moral order. Man is a responsible moral being and accountable to God for the life he lives. Baptists and Jews have additional similarities. Neither has an ecclesiastical hierarchy and centralized control. They follow the biblical admonition not to make graven images. Both strongly support freedom of the individual in religious matters and civil liberty for all.

Many differences exist between Judaism and Christianity. Able scholars of both religions have carefully delineated these differences. Some differences between Judaism and Christianity are not important, but others are of the most fundamental nature.

The principal difference, and one which appears irreconcilable, concerns Jesus Christ. Judaism sees Jesus as a good man, a teacher of the high ethical principles current in Judaism in his day, and even as a prophet. However, Christian claims that he was diety, lived a sinless life, atoned for man's sin in his death, and arose from the grave and ascended bodily into heaven, are unacceptable from the Jewish point of view. Since, in their view, Jesus was man only and since no man can atone for another man's sin, Jesus' death plays no effective role in man's salvation. Thus, without a mediator between man and God, each person is left to his own resources in accomplishing his salvation. The term "salvation," used with the commonly accepted Christian meaning, is not part of the vocabulary of Judaism.

It can be said that, generally, Christianity is by nature evangelistic, and Judaism is not, although some Jews do actively seek to gain converts to Judaism. Jews think that Judaism is the religion for Jews and that the religions which other peoples have are right for them and are their particular pathway to God. Thus, they do not feel the necessity for evangelizing other peoples, and they do not think that Christian evangelistic activity among Jewish people is necessary or justifiable. Some Jewish people label Christian missionary efforts as anti-Jewish because, if successful, they would mean the disappearance of the Jews as a separate people.

Jewish opposition to some Christian mission activities, because of the methods used, is understandable. In past centuries, for example, Christians have compelled the "conversion" of Jews under the threats of death or expulsion from their homeland. Today, some Christians employ tactics that Jews classify as insulting, dishonest or distasteful. The Christian who is concerned that a witness be given that is true to the spirit of Jesus disassociates himself from such methods and joins Jewish friends in condemning their use. At the same time, he feels that to ask the Christian to forego all missionary activity is to ask him to cease to be authentically Christian.

Jewish-Christian Relations

Since the almost six million Jewish people in the United States comprise the world's largest Jewish community, and since Southern Baptists are the largest Protestant group in the United States, the relationship between Jewish people and Southern Baptists is of particular significance for Jewish-Christian relations. Because the lives and activities of Jews and Baptists are intermingled in the broader American community, it is impossible for either group to isolate itself from the other. It is to the best interest of both that they openly approach each other and work intelligently at the construction of the most harmonious relationships possible.

The interests and objectives of these two groups sometimes coincide, sometimes diverge, and at times conflict. Where Jewish and Baptist interests coincide, the two can work together to reach common goals. When their interests diverge, each can strive to obtain for the other the right to maintain his chosen life-style, free from fear or abuse. A conflict of interests, as when the Jewish people wish to be left alone in their religion, runs counter to the Baptist sense of obligation to witness to all peoples and demands from both groups the fullest measure of understanding and dedicated effort. Such a time calls for dialogue toward understanding and action toward problem solution. Both could find implementation through joint dialogue-action—"dial-act"—groups. From them could come a deeper appreciation of each for the other and the solution of such vexing problems as the centuries-old plague of anti-Semitism.

Christian Witness

To Southern Baptists evangelism is an ineradicable part of the Christian faith, embracing all people everywhere in its scope. Also, they believe that an individual's religion should result from a personal choice made after reaching responsible age. Because of this they wish to witness of their Christian faith to all persons, whatever their religion or lack of it. This witness must

- come through a personal relationship that overcomes all stereotypes;
- be love expressed in deeds and attitudes;
- come through a shared relationship; and
- be open to sharing of beliefs in dialogue.

Effective Christian witnesses recognize stereotypes of Jews for what they are, products of prejudice and falsifications of fact. They look at the Jewish people, not as a group in which each member looks, thinks and acts exactly like all other members, but as a group made up of individuals, each having his own distinctive traits. They refuse to perpetuate the stereotypes, abolishing from their vocabularies the old and vicious clichés that unfairly and inaccurately reflect on Jewish people; they never laugh at jokes which poke fun at Jews. The Christian understands that simply to harbor misconceptions about his Jewish friends is as much a denial of Christian love as is an active perpetuation of them.

He avoids comparisons between organized Christianity and Judaism, and, particularly, any claims to the superiority of Christ over Judaism, for at least two reasons. First, the Christian is not pressing the claims of the Christian religion, but of Christ. Second, the human beings who make up Christendom are too imperfect and their treatment of the Jews in history too unchristian for Jewish people to do other than resent any claims to superiority made for historical, institutional Christianity. The Christian carefully leaves his friend full freedom to make his decision, avoiding the pressure that reflects lack of respect for the integrity of the other person and that to the Jew is reminiscent of Jewish conversions in the past which were forced at sword point.

Equal in importance to the demonstration of genuine love is the Christian's complete dependence on the leadership of the Holy Spirit in every aspect of the relationship. Nowhere is this more vital than in the verbal communication of God's way of saving man and the invitation to another to follow the way of faith in Jesus Christ. Because religious backgrounds and spiritual understanding vary so much from person to person, and because the appeal which unlocks the door to one person's heart is not the key to another, a person must pray for and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading. One cannot rely upon an unvarying formula, follow a set pattern, offer a mechanical plan, or use a "sure-fire" sequence of Scripture passages.

He can, however, enter into each encounter with his friend

with confidence that he will find the fitting approach, if he is responsive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit will, during the course of the visit, provide opportunities for sharing the Christian faith, guide in the choice of words and ideas, and, what is as important as all else, help the Christian to clothe his words and acts in a spirit as loving and kind as that shown in our Savior's dealing with people.

If one finds difficulty in initiating a religious discussion, he might ask: Will you tell me about the most meaningful religious experience in your life? or: What parts of your religion give you the most happiness, peace of mind? or: Tell me about when you first came to know God. Then, there are innumerable questions a person can ask about another's religion. If that person is Jewish, his Judaism is so varied and noble a religion, and so fascinating, that it offers opportunity for endless questions and discussion. And when the relationship between the Christian and his Jewish friend is one of mutually respectful sharing, the Christian has opportunity for a full presentation of his own religious experience and understanding.

The Christian gains great confidence from realizing that it is his responsibility to witness of his Christian experience and to invite a person to consider the claims of Christ. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to persuade and to convict. The Christian's work is to witness, not to proselyte. His principal concern is that his friend establish a personal relationship with God through the person and work of Jesus Christ, not that the friend become a Baptist or a part of the Christian religion. The New Testament speaks only of beginning new life in Christ. The choice of church membership comes later.⁶ The Christian should not discuss becoming a Christian in terms of a transfer of cultural loyalty and identity. It is not necessary that Jewish people forfeit their Jewish heritage and identity in order to become Christians. Jews who are Christians report that they are no less proud of their Jewish heritage. In fact, many converts from Judaism say that they feel that they are even more Jewish than before, and their use of the term "completed Jew" indicates their evaluation of their new spiritual state.

Program Suggestions

The Department of Interfaith Witness of the Home Mission Board is charged with the responsibility for suggesting to Southern Baptists ways by which they can reach Jewish friends with the message of Jesus. Some possible activities include:

1. Fellowship—The church as a whole, or organizations in all age groups within the church, can plan events to which Jewish people can be invited. The program could include a devotional and prayer, an explanation of Baptist beliefs and practices, dialogue time, a consideration of social and moral problems of mutual interest, and discussion of Jewish customs and of Judaism by a rabbi or other Jewish person. A meal or simple refreshments should be served and adequate time left for an informal time of visiting and talking.
2. Jewish Fellowship Week—Each year the Southern Baptist Convention calendar designates a particular time for the observance of Jewish Fellowship Week. The purpose of the week is to encourage better mutual understanding on the part of Jews and Baptists. This can be accomplished by encouraging Baptists to visit Jewish friends in their homes and by planning special church during the week.
3. Greeting cards exchange—Recognition of special days in the life of the Jewish community by sending greeting cards commemorating those days is one way of showing appreciation for the Jewish people and their religious and cultural heritage. Jewish holidays, when greeting cards are exchanged, are Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year), Passover and Hanukkah.⁷ Other times for sending cards are at a

tion. The event in Jesus' life which most clearly points out this fact is the one which most Protestants label the story of the rich young ruler. This man tried to honor Jesus as a master rabbi and addressed him as such but went away sad when he saw what discipleship means—commitment to the cross of Christ even to the forsaking of this world.

The miracle of God in flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth remains a stumbling block to the modern Baha'i. One of their leaders in America, Horace Holley, wrote, "The infinite cannot be incarnated."⁸ The evangelical Christian agrees that God cannot logically be flesh, but the miracle of Jesus is that he was all human as well as all divine. What could not possibly be done, God did, and man's "response-ability" makes it possible to believe that it did happen at that precise moment in history in a stall at Bethlehem. The Christian is reminded of Mark 10:27, "Jesus looked straight at them and answered: . . . Everything is possible for God."⁹

A Critical Analysis of the Faith

The most crucial issue to evangelical Christians is the matter and manner of salvation. The Baha'is do not often speak of salvation in the personal sense, but their system implicitly indicates the following pattern of action: faith in God and Baha'u'llah, plus their own good works toward world unity. There is no mention of sin or forgiveness. They speak of bringing world unity among people without removing a major cause of disunity: personal rebellion against the claims of God.

The Baha'is also face the constant problem of spiritual haughtiness in their religion with their lack of a concept of sin, coupled with extreme pride in the fact that they consider themselves to have arrived at a faith progressively superior to all other religions.

Baha'is seem to have three major weaknesses in what they presuppose about the world and faith in God. First, they overlook the fact that basic truths such as those taught by Buddha or Mohammed are eternally valid and have no need to be restated by a new prophet. In principle, the words of Christ are relevant to every age and need no restatement assumed to be superior simply because it comes later.

Second, the Baha'is choose only the leaders of the major world religions to be included in the "manifestations" of God. Are such leaders as Nanak, the founder of Sikhism in the sixteenth century, A.D., neglected because they upset the Baha'i theory that a new educator appears only approximately every thousand years?

Third, and most important, is the question of whether man has really progressed morally to the degree that he can now implement world unity and brotherhood. Evangelical Christians might wish that this were the case but will have serious doubts as to whether men are capable of meaningful unity with each other before they make individual peace with the Prince of Peace.

The chief weakness in the Baha'i system of thought is the inconsistency regarding its inclusiveness. Baha'is insist that religious disunity is the root cause of all disorder and that narrow-minded insistence on belief in Christ as Savior accounts for much of that religious disunity. In effect, however, the Baha'i faith simply complicates the religious scene by adding yet another system. The same narrow-mindedness of which Baha'is accuse others reoccurs in their insistence that history evolves in thousand-year cycles and that Baha'u'llah is the ultimate manifestation of God that man has had up to the present.

So, the Baha'i thought-system does not settle the question of world unity but complicates the picture even further by introducing another prophet as the supreme manifestation of God for the present.

How to Witness to a Baha'i

The evangelical Christian who desires to bring the good

news of Christ's deliverance from sin to a believer in Baha'u'llah faces, first of all, a serious cleavage in definition of terms. Such phrases as "belief in Christ" should be thoroughly discussed from both the Baha'i and the biblical viewpoints. Baha'is will be found to have a shortsighted view of Christ's importance. The initial definition of terms will make it apparent to both parties that extended dialogue is necessary, but only with explicit redefinition of words referring to faith and Christ.

The Christian who desires to tell the Baha'i about God's good news should critically re-examine Christ's nature. Unlike any mere prophet, Jesus was the unique revelation of God, not just his spokesman. His teachings are revolutionary and profound, but his nature is the crucial point for discussion.

The Christian view of the uniqueness of Christ is perhaps best expressed in Colossians 2:9: "For in Christ, in his humanity, the full content of divine nature lives" (from *Good News for Modern Men*). For the Baha'i, one's personal goal is to know self. For the Christian, this is accomplished in the person of Christ, in whom "the full content of divine nature lives."

The witnessing Christian should then introduce into the conversation with his Baha'i friend the Christian concept of sin. The Baha'i faith speaks of an "inner man" who must emerge, but it does not discuss man's evil nature. The Baha'i should be reminded that the same "new age" which produced Baha'u'llah also produced Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin; and that, while man's inventive genius produced the Salk polio vaccine, it also left bomb-scarred Hiroshima in its wake. In other words, the Baha'i and all other men must first acknowledge man's evil nature collectively and then on a personal basis.

With the help of the same God who sent his son in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the articulate Christian can witness effectively to the Baha'i in his community, if that witness is permeated with prayer. Personal contact with Baha'is, especially in larger cities, is both available and essential for bringing an effective Christian witness to them.

A common philosophy in the United States is that of relativism in religion. "One religion is just as good as another" and "after all, we're all working for the same thing" are ideas commonly expressed in our nation. The Baha'i faith will continue to attract some persons who are religiously naive and indiscriminating. In the midst of this secular and relative view of religion, perpetuated by such movements as Baha'i, the evangelical Christian must tirelessly present the only end to man's search for meaning—forgiveness through Christ.

The growing Baha'i community in America presents the witnessing Christian with a challenge and an opportunity for witness. The challenge is religious relativism and the opportunity simply awaits our concern and action!

Footnotes

¹E. Eslemont, *Baha'u'llah and the New Era*, Wilmette, Illinois: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1950, p. 90.

²W. Kenneth Christian, *The Baha'i House of Worship*, Wilmette, Illinois: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1960, p. 10.

³Arthur Dahl, *Baha'i: World Faith for Modern Man*, Wilmette, Illinois: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1960, p. 10.

⁴Horace Holley, *Religion for Mankind*, Wilmette, Illinois: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1956, p. 62.

⁵Eslemont, *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶Holley, *ibid.*, p. 216.

⁷Eslemont, *ibid.*, p. 239.

⁸Mirza Husayn Ali, *Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1961), p. 63.

⁹Elizabeth H. Cheney, *Prophecy Fulfilled* (Wilmette, Illinois: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1944), p. 16.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 130.



The Jewish People and the Baptist Witness

by A. Jase Jones

The Jewish people have been a minority of the world's population throughout their history, yet few peoples can match their contribution to the welfare of humanity. Mankind is forever in their debt for the work of their sons such as Moses, Jesus and Paul. The Christian religion came to birth in the Jewish community and out of its religion; and the Savior-Lord of Christians was Jewish both by birth and religious observance.

The memory of Moses, Abraham, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micah is honored and treasured by the Christian community. Their lives and writings shape the character and deeds of Christians to this day. The first Christians and all but one of the writers of the Christians' New Testament were Jewish. God used a "Hebrew of the Hebrews" to thrust the Christian missionary enterprise into Europe and, through Europe and her children, to the islands and continents of the globe.

The Jewish contribution to mankind's well-being did not cease with the end of the first century of the Christian era, however. Nor is it limited to the religious area of life. Throughout the years, the Jewish people have continued their creative efforts to forge a better order for the inhabitants of planet Earth. Today, they apply to the solution of human problems an innovative blend of Jewish ethical principles and constructive methods. Their great vitality is so impressive that Arnold Toynbee had cause to reverse his previous judgment of Judaism as an unimportant, fossilized sect and to place it "among the significantly vital religions" of the world.

Of the four men who have most influenced the world in the last hundred years—Marx, Darwin, Freud and Einstein—three were Jewish. When one adds the names of Robert Oppenheimer and Edward Teller; Bela Schick and Jonas Salk; Boris Pasternak, Sholem Asch and Marcel Proust; Julius Reuter and Joseph Pulitzer; Felix Mendelssohn and Jascha Heifetz; Louis Brandeis; Felix Frankfurter and Benjamin Cardozo; Benedict Spinoza and Harold Laski; Samuel Com-

pers and Sidney Hillman; David Belasco, Richard Rodgers and David Sarnoff; Al Jolson and Jack Benny, Sarah Bernhardt and Paul Muni; Julius Rosenwald and the Rothschilds, one is impressed with the wide variety of fields other than the religious in which Jewish people have enriched the quality of human life.

Identity

Who are these people whom we call Jews? They are the people who look back for their beginnings to Abraham, who is called the "father of the Jews." In addition to these descendants of Abraham, however, many other peoples are included among the Jews—Chinese, Japanese, Indians, the black Falashas of Ethiopia, Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians and Latins. Because they embrace the Jewish faith and identify with the Jewish community, they can be called the spiritual descendants of Abraham, although they find their physiological roots in other soil.

The Jews are the people through whom God revealed himself to man during Bible times. They have called many lands home, among them, Israel (Palestine), Egypt, Babylon, Spain, Central and Eastern Europe, and the United States. Through intermarriage with the inhabitants of these lands, they have become a mixture of many peoples. Consequently, there is possibly no people today who have been more influenced by such a variety of cultures and, yet, by passing those influences through the prism of their own culture, have so truly maintained the continuity of their distinctive heritage.

The Jews are a people whose mission in history has been a religious one, a people for whom God's Torah has been the foundation and center, but for whom religion is not a requirement for belonging to the Jewish community. They are composed of people with such a variety of racial backgrounds that they cannot be called a race. They are citizens of so many different nations that it is patently incorrect to speak of a "Jewish nationality"—a folk in whose physical appearance are so many skin colors, nose patterns, hair textures and

colors, body shapes and sizes, and eye contours and colors, that to say that someone "looks like a Jew" is meaningless.

They are a people so unified on certain essential elements of Jewishness that Jews anywhere share a deep feeling of kinship with Jews everywhere. But they are people who exhibit such a diversity of thought, expression and customs that one risks embarrassment by voicing such generalizations as "the Jews believe," "the Jews think," or "the Jews say," as though there were a recognizable and verifiable Jewish community consensus to use as a point of reference.

This great variety and diversity in Jewish life make it difficult to give a simple answer to the questions: Who is a Jew? And, how does one determine if a person is Jewish? To this day, there is no answer universally acceptable to the Jewish community. In fact, one distinguished Jewish leader concludes that "Jews may have to abandon, at least for a long while, the quest for an all-inclusive objective formula" for determining who is or is not a Jew.

Another difficult question is: What are the Jews? If they are not a race or nationality, or if religion is not a requisite to being accepted as Jewish, into what category then can the Jews be placed? Possibly the best answer is one used by some Jewish authorities: Jews are a people. One can add to that statement, a people bound together with a strong sense of belonging to a common family and of being committed to a common destiny.

A person becomes a Jew in one of two ways: by birth or by conversion to Judaism, the Jewish religion. While the former would doubtless be acknowledged by all in the Jewish community and many would accept the latter, other Jewish people would deny that conversion really makes one a Jew. Possibly a majority, but certainly far from all, of the conversions to Judaism result from intermarriage where the non-Jewish partner embraces the faith of the Jewish spouse. A period of instruction in the synagogue is prescribed for the aspirant. Conversion involves not so much the acceptance of a religious creed as a commitment to the people and way of life, and a willingness to share whatever destiny awaits the Jews. A third possible way to become a Jew does not involve either of these ways; one becomes a Jew simply by adopting the Jewish way of life and by being accepted as a Jew by the Jewish community.

Types

There are several ethnic strains of Jews today, but the principal ones are the Sephardic and the Ashkenazic. Ashkenazic Jews comprise more than 80 percent of the world's Jews. Principal differences between the Ashkenazic and the Sephardic relate to synagogal rite and tradition (the former reflecting the influence of Palestinian Jewry and the latter of Babylonian Jewry, to the pronunciation of Hebrew (Sephardic pronunciation is standard in Israel today), and

States with Largest Jewish Population

New York	2,535,870
California	721,045
Pennsylvania	471,930
New Jersey	412,465
Illinois	284,285
Massachusetts	267,440

Cities with Largest Jewish Population

Greater New York	2,381,000
Los Angeles Metropolitan Area	535,000
Philadelphia Metropolitan Area	350,000
Chicago Metropolitan Area	269,000
Boston	180,000

to language (the Hebrew-German Yiddish of the Ashkenazic and the Judeo-Spanish Ladino of the Sephardic).

Population Distribution

Today's world Jewish population—almost 14 million—is scattered through scores of countries around the globe. The United States, with approximately six million, has the largest Jewish community. Russia is second with 2,600,000, and Israel has the third largest number, 2,560,000. The Jewish population in the United States is concentrated in the Northeast and in a small number of major metropolitan areas, although there are Jewish residents in every state and in thousands of small cities and towns across the country. Some characteristics of the Jewish population distribution in the United States are seen in the tables below.

Major Events

To understand the Jewish people today, one must realize the importance to them of four events in this century.

The first of these is the Holocaust, the killing of six million Jews by the Nazis prior to and during World War II. This horrible experience so scarred the Jewish soul that even now it colors the outlook of Jewish people on almost all of life. It spurred their efforts to secure a homeland for their people, and it continually goads them to do everything they can to insure that there will be no Holocaust II.

The second event is the establishment of Israel as a sovereign state in 1948. The significance of Israel for Jews is that it is a refuge and a home for any Jewish person anywhere in the world who needs or wishes to go there. It reminds all Jews that Jews are no longer homeless, doomed to transience in another's land with bags packed in readiness for inevitable flight, and condemned to perpetual minority status in lands whose national holy days and religious festivals and customs are not his but those of another. Zionism, a movement principally political rather than religious in nature, played a central part in Israel's establishment.

The third event is the war waged June 5-10, 1967, between Israel and Egypt, Syria and Jordan, popularly called the Six-Day War. When the Israelis achieved victory so swiftly, Jewish people around the world became unified as they have not been for centuries and possessed of a revived pride in being Jewish.

A fourth event was the Israel-Arab confrontation in September, 1973. This led to the first serious move to negotiate a lasting peace between the Arab countries and Israel.

Problems

The Jewish community has many problems, but three are particularly serious, namely, intermarriage, assimilation and anti-Semitism.¹ All three are important elements in the problem of the continued survival of the Jews. Intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews is a growing phenomenon in America's open society: Jews see it as a threat to Jewish survival because of the possibility the Jewish spouse and any offspring will be lost to the Jewish community. Assimilation endangers the continued existence of the Jewish people and the dissipation of their rich culture, as Jewish advocates of assimilation encourage abandonment of the effort to maintain a distinctive Jewish way of life and urge adoption of the way of life of the dominant culture group. Individual Jews wishing to assimilate change their names, if they have not already done so, to escape some of the penalties resulting from anti-Jewish attitudes, discontinue their observance of Jewish customs, and sever their ties with Jewish institutions.

Anti-Semitism is possibly the gravest threat to Jewish survival. In its ancient and dishonorable history, it has found expression in a variety of ways, from such crude and savage

outbursts as the Spanish Inquisition and the Nazi holocaust to the more subtle but no less savage vote to exclude Jews from clubs and residential areas in the United States. It is perpetuated in the repetition of the charge that "the Jews killed Jesus," in the blunderbuss evaluation of the Jews as "pushy" and arrogant, in generalizations about "rich Jews,"² in the unthinking characterization of the entire Jewish people as avaricious, and in swastikas painted on synagogue walls and dormitory doors. It surfaces in laughter at jokes told about Jewish people, and snickering and knowing-nodding of heads when the story of the man who bought a piece of land without inspecting it (Luke 14:18) is read and the comment added, "Can you imagine a Jew buying a piece of land without looking at it?" It appears in religious writings, as in this example: "'Mammon' is an Aramaic word for property (not only money) and profit with unpleasant implications even in Jewish literature" (italics added).

It is important for non-Jews to realize that anti-Semitism is really their problem to solve. Although it is true that Jews are the ones who suffer the consequences of anti-Semitism, it is the non-Jew who is anti-Jewish. And because most non-Jews in Western lands are at least nominally Christian, anti-Semitism is particularly a Christian problem.³ Christians must exert the moral leadership necessary to eliminate anti-Semitism from Western culture, for if they remain silent in its presence, they become accomplices in its brutalities. Attainment of the goal begins with humble acknowledgment of Christian misdeeds and the resolve not to indulge in anti-Semitic attitudes, deeds and words (even those that buy a laugh).⁴ The essence of anti-Semitism is hatred, an emotion that has no place in the life of the disciple of the God of love.

A universal concern of the Jew is to ward off unwarranted persecution anywhere in the world.

Judaism

Judaism has such a long history, and a body of thought, doctrine, literature and customs of such depth and range, that it would require many volumes to describe it fully. It also has such an amazing variety and disparity in belief and practice that one cannot safely generalize about Jewish religious matters. Thus, any statement made here about Judaism is made with the dual realization, first, that it is but the tip of the iceberg and, second, that any statement made about any Jewish belief or practice reflects only one or two or more possible viewpoints to be found among Jewish people.

The belief that there is but one God is at the heart of Judaism, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4 RSV), called the *Shema*,⁵ has been chanted in synagogue services throughout the centuries as an affirmation of Jewish belief that there is but one God of all creation.

The centrality of the Law is another essential concept in Judaism. Jewish people have a saying to the effect that the Jews have kept the Torah (Law), and the Torah has kept the Jews. While it is true that important segments of contemporary Jewry no longer accord to Torah (in the sense of ceremonial, ritual law) the central place in their religious thinking, it must still be named as one of the vital elements of Judaism.

A third general characteristic is that in Judaism the emphasis is upon deed, not creed, upon what one does rather than what one believes. Judaism also focuses on the present rather than the future life. Although there is some concern in Jewish thought with the life after death, Judaism is almost indifferent to it in comparison with Christian preoccupation with the life to come. Judaism is primarily a home-centered religion. Jewish people have sabbath services and observe their holy days in the home, under the leadership of the father and with the help of the mother, as well as in synagogue and temple. This is one reason Jews say that should their synagogues be destroyed they would be able to continue the practice of their religion without interruption.

The three principal branches of organized Judaism are the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. The difference between them is less a matter of doctrine than of practice, with the Orthodox the most concerned, and the Reform the least concerned, about conforming to the traditional forms in their observance of traditional customs in worship and daily living. For example, in the strictest form of Orthodox life, the man begins his day by meticulously following a prescribed ritual; the mother keeps a kosher kitchen; females are separated from males in the synagogue services; and, since the Orthodox are not to ride in automobiles on the sabbath, homes are close enough to the synagogue for the people to walk.

Other differences are found in synagogue services. Hebrew is used more extensively in the Orthodox than in the Reform; men have their heads covered and wear the tallit, a prayer shawl, in the Orthodox and not in the Reform service; the Orthodox do not use musical instruments while the Reform do; and the order of service in the Orthodox is traditional, while sabbath services in the Reform, at times, can be quite similar to the order in Christian churches.

Conservative Judaism will more closely resemble the Orthodox in some practices, while in others they will be more nearly like the Reform.

The three branches are approximately equal in size, with Conservative Judaism growing rapidly. It is most important to understand that neither branch thinks of itself as a departure from the central meaning of historical Judaism. Orthodox Judaism insists on the necessity for the literal observance of the requirements of the Law. Reform Judaism believes that this is no longer necessary, and that Judaism, in its devotion to God and to truth, must adjust its understanding and practice to the knowledge gained through science and reason. Conservative Judaism, with its recognition of the value of tradition and its openness to new ways, attempts to bring into balance that which is true and essential in both.

Each branch follows its self-chosen path with a sincere conviction that it embodies in practice and in spirit the essence of this ancient religion. That the Jewish community, generally, does not view any one of the three branches of Judaism as contradictory of Judaism's essence or that affiliation with the other two, is illustrated in the fact that a Jewish person may be at the same time a member in good standing of an Orthodox, a Conservative and a Reform congregation.

Congregations within the same branch differ among themselves in certain practices. While members of one Orthodox congregation, for example, faithfully follow the Orthodox practices described above, members of another Orthodox congregation will vary in regard to the keeping of kosher, will fill the parking lot with their cars on the sabbath, and will seat men and women together in the synagogue service.

Reconstructionism is a movement within Judaism that does not establish separate congregations but purposes to serve as a leaven within the existing bodies. Reconstructionism's thesis is that Judaism is not just a religion but an evolving religious civilization and that Jewish culture and Jewish religion cannot be separated. Its aim is to build a dynamic religious civilization.

The congregation in a local synagogue is an autonomous body. Its head is a layman, who is elected by the congregation to serve it, is thought of primarily as a teacher and has not traditionally had the pastoral and administrative functions associated with the pastor of a church. In charge of the synagogue's musical program is the cantor. Principal organizations in the congregation are the Sisterhood and Brotherhood, or Men's Club. Many synagogues support a full day school where Hebrew, the Bible and Jewish history and customs are taught. Jewish youth who attend public schools receive instruction in the Jewish subjects after school hours.

boy's *bar mitzvah* and a girl's *bos mitzvah*. One can also send cards expressing sympathy at the death of a relative, as well as a card for the legal New Year on January 1.

4. Baptist Good Neighbor Day—The fifth Sunday of every quarter is designated as a time for special emphasis on Baptists' approach to those of other religious persuasions. On this day churches are encouraged to learn about religious groups and to plan activities designed to reach out to them, and to invite them to the church for fellowship and a sharing of religious concepts or experiences.

5. Service ministries—With the emphasis in Baptist church organizations on ministry and witness, there is a growing realization of the effectiveness of witness through ministry. Mission action groups can engage in service projects related to Jewish institutions, such as homes for the aged and hospitals, and in this helpful way express their love and appreciation to and for the Jewish community.

6. Other church activities—(1) The Sunday worship services and revival services are occasions for inviting Jewish people. It would be well to inform the pastor of their expected presence in order that he might use terms understandable and meaningful to a visitor, or be prepared to clarify distinctively Christian terminology and concepts for the Jewish listener. Certainly the pastor and all others in the service will eliminate anything that would be offensive to the guests, and will refrain from the use of pressure toward a public decision for which the guests may not be prepared.

(2) January Bible Study Week, if the book to be studied is an Old Testament book, is an especially appropriate time to invite Jewish friends. However, if one informs one's friend that it is a New Testament book that is to be studied, one may invite him for that study as well. Since the Jew does not refer to his Bible as the Old Testament, one could use instead the terms: the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Scriptures.

(3) For a long time Christians have been inviting Jewish children to Vacation Bible Schools, and they have been attending and their parents have been expressing appreciation. Baptists should be careful to explain that in Vacation Bible School, along with other interesting activities, the children study about Jesus, but that no one will take advantage of the Jewish children's presence to demean their religion and culture or to pressure them into a commitment to Christ.

(4) Visits to synagogues by Baptist individuals or groups is a way of increasing Baptist understanding of and appreciation for Jews and Judaism. Such visits are welcomed by Jewish congregations. Often synagogues and temples have special "Christian Friends" nights, or "Institutes on Judaism for the Christian Church School Teachers." Baptists should respond enthusiastically to such gestures toward understanding and good will. A Baptist Vacation Bible School group activity could be a visit to a synagogue or temple to hear a discussion of Judaism and to make a tour of the facilities.

(5) Both whole Bibles and New Testaments can be given, preferably in a modern translation. Booklets on Baptist history, beliefs and practices will be accepted by Jewish people. Great care should be taken in giving any reading material to see that it contains no trace of anti-Semitism or stereotyping of Jewish people. Rarely, if ever, should one mail unsolicited tracts, even to close Jewish friends. They receive too much hate literature by mail, and even good Christian tracts may be put in the same category with the hate literature. It is far better to offer the material in person, giving the Jewish friend the option of receiving it or not.

(6) Visitation. As a part of the total community, and with the Christian understanding of the Lord's instructions to be his witness to all people, it should be considered quite natural to include Jewish people in the church's visitation effort.

7. Organization—The church missions committee, after care-

ful study of the church and its community, can decide on the extent of the effort it should make toward outreach to the Jewish community and make its recommendation to the church council. The council can then assign responsibility for this effort to the church organizations it thinks can best carry out the chosen projects.

The district or county association could have a special committee designated to carry out the association's interfaith witness program, adapting the suggested church activities to the associational program, or it could create a special subcommittee of its missions committee for the purpose. A representative from each of the associational organizations and from the associational evangelism committee should be on the committee either as elected or ex officio members.

Conclusion

Whatever action is undertaken by Baptists in relation to the Jewish community or Jewish individuals should be based on the fullest information obtainable. For this reason, much space has been given here to discussion of the history, identity, characteristics, problems and religion of the Jewish people. Persons with a serious interest in the Jews and their welfare are encouraged to read as much as possible on Judaism.

Certainly, those carrying out any of the program suggestions should prepare themselves by gaining as much understanding of Jewish people as they can. Information gained from the study of books should be supplemented through association with Jewish people at every possible opportunity. Such association will be a source of delight and pleasure, as well as information.

Personnel of the Department of Interfaith Witness are available to assist individuals and organizations.

Footnotes

¹Since, among other Semitic groups, Jewish people are the principal or sole objects of acts and attitudes usually designated as anti-Semitic, some believe that "anti-Jewish" is a more accurate designation of these acts and attitudes. This term will be so used in this article.

²A letter to the editor of *Time* magazine from S. Elly Rosen (May 1, 1972, page 5), executive director, Association of Jewish Anti-Poverty Workers, New York City, contains the information that Jews are the third largest poverty group in New York City, after blacks and Puerto Ricans, and that about 300,000 Jews in New York City and 900,000 in the nation subsist at incomes below or near the federal poverty index.

³A study on the correlation between Christian beliefs and anti-Semitic attitudes has been made by Charles T. Cline and Rodney Stark, *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960).

⁴A resolution against anti-Semitism was passed by the Southern Baptist Convention in its annual meeting in Philadelphia, Penn., June 7, 1972. Recounting the abuse that Jewish people have suffered in the past, and pointing out the responsibility that Christians have for the continuance or elimination of the poison of anti-Semitism in western Christian cultures, it concluded, as follows:

"Therefore be it Resolved, that this Convention go on record as opposed to any and all forms of anti-Semitism; that it declare anti-Semitism un-Christian; that we messengers to this Convention pledge ourselves to combat anti-Semitism in every honorable, Christian way.

"Be it Further Resolved, that Southern Baptists covenant to work positively to replace all anti-Semitic bias with the Christian attitude and practice of love for Jews who, along with all other men, are equally beloved of God.

⁵*Shema* is a transliteration of the first Hebrew word of Deuteronomy 6:4, the imperative of hear.

⁶For further discussion of this subject see *Neighbors Yet Strangers*, chapter 7.

⁷Dates on which these holidays occur vary annually. A calendar of dates for a wide variety of religious holidays can be found in desk calendars, almanacs and similar publications. Greeting cards should be mailed in time to arrive before the beginning date of the holiday period.

**CATHOLICISM
AND
ORTHODOXY**

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Don Hanley photo

Catholic - Baptist Witness

by C. Brownlow Hastings

Many Baptists are unaware of the great changes taking place in Roman Catholicism today. They cling to old myths, such as, "The more Rome changes, the more she stays the same." They cannot see the opportunities for barriers they keep proping up. Some wear comfortably their ancient prejudices; the pope is the anti-Christ; all Catholics are lost; the Catholic Church is trying to take over the government. They cannot share Christ for constantly looking for the devil in others.

All the while, Catholic friends are looking with eagerness toward Baptists. Many desire only a listening ear. Others are genuinely interested in what Baptists believe and how they worship. Some would even join in Bible study and prayer groups in homes. They do not want to convert or be converted. They just want to share differing experiences under one Lord. Least of all do most of them want to promote one world church. For the most part they have had enough of colossal institutionalism. They want to be genuine persons with-in "the people of God," called anew to be "servant to the world."

What Baptists do in this historic moment turns upon our vision, generous spirit and zeal. We must earn the right to share Christ with others by developing a relationship of love and trust. Paul said, "We recommend ourselves by the innocence of our behaviour, our grasp of truth, our patience and kindness; by gifts of the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by declaring the truth, by the power of God" (2 Cor. 6:6, NEB).

Baptist and Catholic progress may be likened to two neighboring patrimonies, whose ancestors fought so much each built high walls against the other. As a consequence all manner of suspicions, false images, rumors and outright lies grew like weeds in a dismal swamp. As the walls crumble with age, the present descendants find less and less enthusiasm for restoring them to their former perilous heights. Now, between fallen parapets, we are beginning to catch a glimpse of each other in our patchwork backyards.

Our first shock is to discover that our neighbors are very human, made in all points like we. Then, as we begin to reach across and touch, we discover that Christ truly shines forth through more of us than we used to admit. The walls are still

there; the heritage is still strong; but the hearts are more and more concerned with the needs of the present age and the eyes are alight with a new hope of the kingdom of God.

One of the decrees of the Second Vatican Council said: "The brethren divided from us... carry out many of the sacred actions of the Christian religion. Undoubtedly, in ways that vary according to the condition of each Church or Community, these actions can truly engender a life of grace, and can be rightly described as capable of providing access to the community of salvation."

This is a remarkable statement. For some decades now the consensus of Catholic thought has admitted the possibility of salvation for non-Catholic individuals. This is the first official statement that recognizes other church bodies as "capable of providing access to the community of salvation." It is important to note this official stance of the Catholic Church, while expecting individual Catholics to reflect all degrees of openness or none.

In the increasing pluralism and mobility of American life today Baptists and Catholics are coming more and more into contact with each other. It is harder to remain in one's own religious ghetto. We are going to school more together, working alongside each other, politicking across religious lines, playing and even praying together. Inter-marriage used to be rare, but, though it is still advised against by both sides, it has become increasingly common. Can we share in all these ways and refuse to share the deeper things of the Spirit? Let us explore ways we can learn to share Christ.

MODELS OF STRUCTURED MEETINGS

It is most encouraging to see how many ways people are finding to relate to each other without having to be organized. However, many people and some churches can become so content to run in their own religious rabbit warrens that they would never reach out to others unless they were programmed for such. Let us look at some purposes of the structured meetings:



Don Rutledge Photo

To inform each other as to who we are and what we believe today. This is needed to remove needless barriers—false images, old stereotypes, outdated beliefs and practices. To learn how to cross ancient barriers with a positive witness to one's faith. "Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you. But do it with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15b-16:2, TEV). To develop the ability to read the Bible and pray together, even to worship when others lead the way. To bring the resources of our faith to bear upon the common concerns of personal, family and social life today.

Models of Dialogues

These may be at different levels and may be directed toward a general invitation or a specific group. "Dialogue" is a way of sharing by simply listening at least half the time. Its success

may be measured by how free each group felt in responding to the other and how generous was the spirit of communication.

Get-acquainted sessions. For a Sunday evening worship service (or some special night during revival services), the Baptist pastor together with his congregation will extend an invitation to the neighboring Catholic pastor and his parish to come for Baptist open house, Catholic friends' night, or Good Neighbor Day. The invitation will make it clear that this will be a typical Sunday evening-style worship service.

If possible, schedule a baptismal service but not the Lord's Supper. Plan the music so that all may sing well-known songs. The Catholic pastor may be invited to respond to the Baptist pastor's welcome, read the Scriptures and lead in prayer. After the service, a time of fellowship is important with perhaps a brief panel, made up of the pastors and representative laity from each church, to answer questions. During the service keep explanations of beliefs and practices to a minimum. Major upon an evangelical witness to Christ and the gospel.

Success will largely depend upon how involved the congregation is in inviting and making welcome their Catholic friends. Be ready to respond to a return invitation from the Catholic church for a Saturday evening mass or perhaps a "folk mass" on Sunday afternoon. The policies of the local bishop and the attitude of the local pastor will determine the extent of participation possible in both these services.

A Baptist-Catholic town meeting. This kind of area meeting may be sponsored by a Baptist association, pastors conference, or two or more Baptist churches. On the Catholic side this has worked when the initiative has been taken by the ecumenical commission of the diocese, a deanery of churches, or even by a single pastor. The purpose is primarily to acquaint each group with current beliefs and practices of the other without trying to resolve issues or set up programs. It could be scheduled for a week night or a Sunday afternoon. A typical program might follow this schedule:

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styles of ministry, helping the laity understand the Bible, training laypeople to share their faith with the unchurched. If the conference is held in the mornings, the group might adjourn to eat lunch together or arrange for lunch at the host church.

If both clergy and laity are invited, then the discussion topic might be presented by one person from each communion. The time would be divided and the approach made more popular than scholarly. Since the group would be larger, it might be advisable to adjourn for discussion to small groups of 10-12. Choose the group leader for his skill in keeping the discussion moving with each member of the group drawn into the open insofar as possible.

Another variation of the dialogue conference is to have a joint committee plan the whole meeting around six or eight "workshops." As the people register, they will either choose or be assigned in rotation to one of the workshops, each with a different issue of current concern to Baptists and Catholics. After a brief opening period, all of the time is spent in the assigned workshop. There will be two resource people for each workshop, one from each communion, to present in ten minutes each his approach to the subject. The rest of the time is spent in discussion. There will usually not be enough time for a closing general session at which reports would be made. However, a reporter in each group can provide the planning committee with a summary and evaluation for future guidance.

Regional leadership conferences. Three of these have been sponsored jointly by the Department of Interfaith Witness of the Home Mission Board and the Bishop's Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of Washington, D.C. The first was held at Daytona Beach in February, 1971, with some 50 Baptist and 50 Catholic leaders from the southeastern 10 states represented. In October, 1972, a southwestern meeting was held in Houston which featured a Baptist worship service by the pastor and choir of the Bel Air Baptist Church and a "Mariachi Mass" celebrated by the Bishop of San Antonio and an Indian folk band from Houston.

In February, 1974, the northeastern regional conference was held at Marriottsville, and featured a major theological address by Avery Dulles, S.J., Woodstock College, New York City, and a worship service by the pastor and two choirs of the First Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church, Washington, D.C. A fourth is planned for the San Francisco Bay area in late 1975. Books of reports from each of these are available from either of the sponsoring organizations.

This kind of leadership conference could readily be adapted to one state, where the state Baptist leaders and the Catholic diocesan ecumenical commissions might plan the agenda. Since this involves a longer period (up to 48 hours), it is advisable to select a retreat or motel conference center as the location rather than a church site. The sponsoring organizations above stand ready to serve as consultants and provide suggested reading lists, tentative programs and visual aids.

Scholars dialogues. Led by its founder, former congressman and Southern Baptist Convention president Brooks Hays, the Ecumenical Institute at Wake Forest College and Belmont Abbey, near Charlotte, N.C., have jointly sponsored several such scholars conferences. These take the usual style of formal papers on theological issues, followed by formal responses by another scholar and open discussion. These two-day conferences are usually attended by college and seminary professors and a few pastors and denominational leaders.

This kind of dialogue frequently takes place apart from formal sponsorship around university and seminary centers. Scholars will be invited to give a series of lectures or bring a featured address to some academic society or faculty-student fellowship.

It is hoped that in the near future a "closed" type of schol-

ars dialogue can be held for as much as a week at a retreat center, where four or five outstanding theologians from each communion may spend the full time in theological discussion among themselves. This will give time for the clarification of those issues that historically have divided Baptists and Catholics as well as opportunity for exploring those areas where agreement can provide the basis of greater functional cooperation.

Models of Retreats

A weekend or even a day-long retreat in some quiet facility offers the best opportunity for individuals to get to know one another in deeper relationship. This may be for clergy, for lay couples, or for clergy and laity together. These should be planned around spiritual and practical concerns with as much freedom as possible for the group to develop its own agenda. In lay retreats, if there are pastors or other ministers present, let them serve as enablers and resource people only. Laity should be recruited from mature, experienced Christians and not from those who have an axe to grind or a cause to promote.

Informal retreats for lay couples may follow this suggested schedule.

Friday evening:	
Supper	6:00 p.m.
Introduction of everyone	7:00 p.m.
Listing of topics for discussion	7:30 p.m.
Discussion by small groups	8:00 p.m.
Break	9:15 p.m.
Evening devotions	9:45 p.m.
Free time	10:00 p.m.
Saturday morning:	
Breakfast	7:30 a.m.
Individual silent vigils	8:15 a.m.
Explanation of Catholic worship	8:45 a.m.
Group discussions (continued)	9:30 a.m.
Explanation of Baptist worship	11:15 a.m.
Lunch	12:00 noon
Open forum	1:30 p.m.
Closing meditations	3:00 p.m.

This retreat program can be varied by having two assigned topics to be presented in 10-15 minutes each on a subject like "What (Baptist/Catholic) Beliefs Are Most Important to Me." Another variation would be to allow each group the first evening to choose a short book of the New Testament for devotional study for three sessions (Friday night, Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon). No program notice is taken of any issues between Baptists and Catholics. These will arise normally out of the discussion of the study. A discussion leader may be assigned or chosen by the group, but not to do formal teaching.

Clergy retreats. These can often be scheduled at some retreat center, monastery or assembly grounds for two days during the week, rather than on the weekend. The planning committee may want to include such features as: four Bible study periods, led by two teachers either together or alternately; joint worship; prayer times for both individual vigils and small groups; well-prepared presentations, but not formal papers, on such subjects as church music; spiritual growth for ministers; developing more human relations and ministries; opportunities for free time and recreation.

Out of such retreats can come lasting friendships and mutual planning on moral and social projects in the community. A regular Bible study and prayer time may be scheduled by the whole or a part of the group of retreatants.

Special retreats. For couples, marriage encounter retreats, sponsored by Catholics and open to others, have proven very

valuable. Marriage enrichment retreats of various kinds have been developed by Protestant groups. Family life conferences, held in many Baptist churches, while not retreats, should also be open to Catholic neighbors and associates.

Models of Bible and Prayer Fellowships

These often grow out of either a dialogue conference or a lay retreat. An easy way to begin is for two neighboring pastors to select five or six couples out of their churches and have an exploratory meeting in a home on a weeknight. The group may plan to study a book of the Bible one night a week for a definite period of weeks. They may choose a study guide, such as *Interfaith Prayer and Bible Study*, published by the Department of Interfaith Witness and specifically written for Baptist and Catholic couples who want to learn to read the Bible and pray together. They may choose some classic of spiritual devotional literature from each communion as the basis for their reading and discussion. Such might be Thomas a Kempis, *On the Imitation of Christ* together with Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*.

Suggestions for ways to set up and conduct such Bible and prayer fellowships can be had in the introduction to *Interfaith Prayer and Bible Study* and in pamphlets produced by the Department of Church Extension of the Home Mission Board.

While many of these Bible fellowships and prayer groups are already operating, for the best results in Baptist-Catholic relations it is wise to set up such for them specifically.

Other Occasional Events

These are events usually planned by one or the other church for its own members. Friends in other churches should not be overlooked.

1. Catholics observe annually in the third week of January the "Octave of Unity." This eight-day period is to emphasize the responsibility of Christians to reach out in practical ways toward others. It is a good time for Baptist churches to plan a Catholic friends' night or some other appropriate observance to which they may invite their Catholic neighbors.

2. The feast and fast days are also opportunities for spirit-

ual retreats and other events. During the 40 days of Lent, preceding Easter, Catholics are especially interested in moral and spiritual means of strengthening their Christian lives.

3. Music and drama events in Baptist churches. The youth are very interested in the musicals that are becoming widely popular. Special showings of Billy Graham films, television specials, and other features through the media offer opportunities.

4. Invite a priest or qualified lay member to speak to your adult education program. A topic of coming interest is the "Holy Year" in 1975, observed worldwide every 25 years. The theme for next year is "Reconciliation and Renewal." In preparation for it, the 1974 Synod of Bishops in Rome studied "the evangelization of nations." These themes offer ground for some common concerns for Baptists and Catholics.

5. January Bible Study should be used as a means of sharing the Word of God.

6. Invitations can go out to both clerics and laity among Catholics to attend conferences and workshops sponsored by Baptists. They would be interested in such as the Christian life seminars, literary workshops, adult education training, music conferences, recreation workshops and Christian social ministries conferences. Baptists would be interested in the various types of Catholic conferences such as on biblical preaching, theological studies, the National Conference of Catholic Laity.

SUGGESTED GROUND RULES FOR GROUP MEETINGS

Robert McAfee Brown and Gustave Weigle in *An American Dialogue* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1961) gave guidelines which can be adapted for our purposes:

1. The purpose of each meeting in which Baptists and Catholics share should be clearly stated in advance so that participants may not be misled.
2. Equal respect of the feelings and faith of the other parties must be shown.
3. Each leader of a Baptist-Catholic dialogue situation should be one who is well informed on his faith.

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- Each participant must desire to have a fuller and clearer understanding of the faith of the other. This means that each must rid himself of caricatures of the other's faith, seek to enter sympathetically into the rationale of the other's faith, and thereby be open to constant revision of his understanding of the other's faith.
- Each participant must be prepared to deal frankly with his own faith, its weaknesses as well as its strengths, and to avoid being overly defensive or polemical.
- Each participant must be prepared to agree and to disagree in all candor. The possibility of disagreement must not destroy the relationship but be a natural expression of the desire for unity.
- Each participant must seek honestly to face the issues which divide Christians even if they are an indictment of his own group.
- Each participant must avoid judging the other's spiritual condition or acceptability to God. Only God judges who is "saved" and who is not.
- Each participant must believe that the other is sincere in his faith and genuine in his desire for unity in Christ.
- Each participant must be motivated by love for the other.

Suggestions for Speakers and Program Planners

- Major on the distinctives of the faith. It is not necessary to use the other's religion as a foil to your own. You are a bridge-builder, not a demolition expert.
- Inform yourself on contemporary beliefs and practices. What you remember from college and seminary may be past history.
- You have not defined or described another's belief unless both its form and meaning are acceptable to him. When in doubt, quote!
- You may disagree in doctrine but never question another's motives in his devotions.
- Stay relevant to where your audience lives and the kinds of things they can do something about (for example, local Catholic pastors and laity can do nothing about changing Canon Law on marriage and divorce. They can decide to cooperate in a joint forum on the family, however).
- Demonstrate confidence in the combination of the Word, the Spirit and the people by leaving the meeting open. There should be no hidden agenda, no manipulation of people to a preconceived end. Do not try to dictate findings or resolutions that do not honestly and wholeheartedly come from the group.

SUGGESTED CONCERNS FOR INDIVIDUALS On Your Personal Strategy

- Strengthen those bonds of agreement, while honestly facing those areas of disagreement.
- Exchange visits to each other's worship services. When you go to mass, you will find that in the first half, the Liturgy of the Word, there is much with which a Baptist can agree and share. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, you may quietly observe and prayerfully meditate and no offense will be given. On returning from the services, you may find that objective questions will be helpful in opening deeper conversation (for example: What did it mean when the priest did this, or said that? When a trust relationship is well established then each of you will feel free to go into more personal discussion of the experience or worship.

Before bringing your Catholic friend to a Baptist service, explain the religious and spiritual reasons behind these. Explain the central focus on the preaching of the Word, the role of congregational singing and public prayers, and the meaning of fellowship. Catholics will often want to know why Baptists do not observe the Lord's Supper every

Sunday, why we give an invitation at each service, why we vote members into the church, and what is the function of the Church Covenant. They are interested in tithing, our missionary programs, our social involvement, and our ecumenical stance. Be sure that you don't take definitions of similar words for granted, such as "grace," "saved," "repentance."

- Exchange reading and resource materials. Let your Catholic friend know that you have one of the two new Bible translations made by Catholic scholars from the original languages: *The New American Bible* and *The Jerusalem Bible*. Share with him those recent Protestant Bibles that have received the official approval ("imprimatur") of the Catholic hierarchy. Today's English Version (*Good News for Modern Man*); The Revised Standard Version and the Common Bible.
- Expect to learn from your Catholic friends and develop appreciation for: their self-discipline in prayer and devotional meditation, their ways of developing love for God that have as their goal the mystical vision of God, their reverence in worship, their practice of worshipping as a family, the courage of many priests in social action and the dedication of many nuns and sisters in selfless service.
- Be honest about your motives and your ends in your relationships. Fr. Frank Ruff, of the Clergy Home Missioners, told a group of Baptist leaders they might find many kinds of Catholics: "Expect that a certain percentage of Catholics are not Christians, i.e., not followers of Jesus and not living according to the values of the gospel. But I would also expect that a certain percent were real followers of Jesus. Therefore, I would approach each Catholic as an individual."

If we are dedicated to the Master's commission to "disciple" all people, we will not be trying to proselyte, which is the manipulation of people so that they convert to our own beliefs. Our purpose is to lead them to Christ that they may believe. Our purpose is to lead them to Christ rather than our disciples. If our relationship of trust is well founded, a nominal church member, whether he be Catholic or Baptist, will eventually reveal the deeper hunger of soul that opens the door to the Spirit of the Lord working through both of us. Then we can also trust the same Spirit to lead the other's decision about the will of God for his church membership and style of service in the kingdom. This attitude will save us also from the sin of quickly cutting off relations when we discover that the other is "not a prospect" for our church.

Sensitive pastors will want to help the family relationships of a Catholic who becomes a Baptist. A letter to the parents of a young person or a visit in the home will do much to allay the suspicions that may have been aroused. It is a good opportunity for helping Catholic family members to understand what a step like this involves. Where good relations exist between pastors, a phone call or informal notice of the change will also be appreciated.

On An Impending Marriage Between a Baptist and a Catholic For parents:

- Do not "blow your cool" or try to lecture the young couple. It is too late already by the time they inform you of their intention.
- Inform yourself about the true state of affairs in interfaith marriage (see *Baptists and Catholics in Interfaith Marriage*, page 86). There are many changes in the rules of mixed marriages.
- Encourage both young people to seek conferences with their pastors, with both going to each conference.
- Accept your son-in-law or daughter-in-law even if you cannot accept all their religion. Remember you are called to "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18). How can you assist the young people to find reconciliation if you remain unconciled? Remember, the youth



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did not create these religious problems; they inherited them!

- After marriage, allow them "to leave father and mother and become one flesh," but do give them moral and spiritual support through your own maturing love for them.

For pastors:

- Inform yourself also, as above, then inquire of your fellow Catholic pastor exactly what his bishop requires.
- Welcome the young couple to as many conferences as they feel will be profitable, including one with the Catholic pastor and both young people. Offer your counseling to the parents of either, if they so desire.
- Let the ceremony be beautiful in its simplicity and appropriate to the needs and wishes of the young couple. Do not use the occasion for preaching or polemics.
- Follow-up the marriage with a "check-up conference" three months and one year after the wedding. This will need to be understood and scheduled willingly by the

couple before the ceremony. Often this ministry can be as helpful, perhaps more so, than that prior to the wedding.

May we suggest a concluding prayer for all who would share their faith:

"Lord Jesus, thank you for the presence and confidence of your Spirit. Make me to know my heart. Am I trying to satisfy a duty, make a report, or prove myself victor in religious argument? Lord, forgive! Let me see you, where you are truly present in any friend, no matter what his religious label.

"You know I love the sound of my own voice. Help me to love my friend's voice equally. Give me patience to hear him out without the urge to jump on everything he says and contradict him.

"I'm no expert, Lord, but you have promised wisdom. Help me not to wait until I think I know enough to share your faith. Just give me another push, Lord, and love all kinds of people through me. All this for your glory and by your name, Amen."

A Baptist View of Changes in Catholicism

by C. Brownlow Hastings

Everybody knows Roman Catholics are changing. But who knows how deeply and in which directions? The media tries hard to explain the changes, but they often mislead by seeing only the sensational and reporting only the superficial.

For example, *Newsweek* (Dec. 3, 1973) featured the "third way" of priestly life-styles: instead of celibacy or leaving the priesthood to marry, the third way "includes close personal relationships with women, leading sometimes to sex but seldom to marriage." Apart from the author's admission that he could only guess at how widespread such a practice might be, the report only further incites those arm-chair experts on Roman Catholicism who love to play the games "Ain't it awful" and "I told you so."

On the other hand, one must search through the dusty tomes of a monastery library to find a powerful study by Yves Raguin on "Chastity and Friendship" prepared for the International Jesuit Symposium at the University of San Francisco in 1973.¹ This must have seemed like bread to the hungry for that vast majority of priests and nuns who remain faithful to their vows after being suddenly dumped, in the sixties, into a vortex of humanism, permissiveness and self-determinism.

Television recently tried its hand with a special drama, "Catholics," which portraying 20 years hence in Irish monastery desperately trying to return to the traditional Latin mass in the face of a young priest-emissary from the Vatican. He sought to dictate to the old Abbot the new law of the vernacular mass and its liberal meanings. Great drama, yes, but risky prophecy if current trends are believable.

This overlooks, however, the remarkable fact that such voices from the monasteries as Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk of Gethsemane, Ky., who died in 1968, are sparking a current wave of interest in the spiritualities that is reaching far beyond the Roman Church.

Indeed, trying to report on current trends in the Roman Catholic Church is a bit like a radio commentator at a three-ring circus who discovers his program notes are outdated because impromptu acts keep springing up in every ring. In

the past ten years the Catholic faithful have experienced more dramatic changes than in the preceding 450 years. In order to appreciate what the Second Vatican Council has brought about we must go back a bit.

An *ecumenical council* is a meeting of all the bishops of the Roman Catholic world to consider the state of the church, to pronounce against heresy and rule on all matters that pertain to faith, morals and church discipline. Catholic historians count 21 councils, beginning with the one in Nicaea in 325. The earlier ones were usually called by emperors to settle theological disputes and bolster the political unity of their realm.

The first councils (down to the Second Council of Nicaea, 787) are recognized by both Roman and Orthodox churches. They have been influential because they sought to settle such matters as the canon of the Bible, the creeds, the views of Christ and the Trinity and the relation of the Holy Spirit. Modern councils are called by the reigning pope, as were medieval ones. Their decisions are not binding upon the church until accepted and proclaimed by the pope. In modern times there can be no appeal from the decisions of a pope to a council.

The *Council of Trent* (a village in northern Italy) met off and on for 25 sessions between 1545 and 1563. Because of the violence of the dispute with the Reformation leaders, it crystallized much of the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church for the next 400 years. Its decrees spelled out Catholic theology over against Reformation theology, formally defined the seven sacraments, and approved the Latin Vulgate (translated into the vernacular Latin by Jerome about A.D. 400) as the official Bible. It instituted many internal reforms, particularly with reference to the discipline and education of the priesthood.

Only one addition to dogma² was made between Trent and the next council in 1870. In 1854 Pope Pius IX decreed the dogma of the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary.³

In 1870 the *First Vatican Council* met in Rome amid much concern over modernism and the threat to the Papal States by the rising tide of Italian nationalism. The 800 bishops decreed the dogma of papal infallibility.

This does not mean that the pope is sinless or that his ordinary decrees are kept free from error. Since Vatican I the pope has exercised his authority infallibly only once: in 1950 when Pope Pius XII decreed the dogma of the bodily assumption of the virgin Mary: "We pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."⁴

So it was that after almost a hundred years when Pope John XXIII called for another ecumenical council, his advisors were surprised and shocked. He called for *aggiornamento*, the updating of the Church. He spoke of a "new Pentecost" when the Spirit would renew the ancient institution. He wanted "to open the window and let in a little fresh air." He opened the first session in September 1962, with a total of 2,860 bishops participating with many Protestant observers and the world news media looking on.

Following John's death, June 3, 1963, Pope Paul VI was elected and reconvened the Council for three more sessions, ending Dec. 8, 1965. Altogether, the Council produced and the pope decreed 16 documents that ranged from the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, through the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World to the Decree on Ecumenism and the Declaration on Religious Freedom.

Search as we may through the sixteen documents of Vatican II, we do not find any evidence of change in *dogma* since Trent. This unchangeableness is not all bad. In an age that threatens to deny any possibility of absolute truths it is good to know that there are many dogmas which Catholics and Baptists hold in common: God as a Person, Creator and Redeemer, Ruler and Judge of man, expressing himself in the Trinity; Jesus, Son of God, Savior through his atonement, and Lord of all through his resurrection; the Virgin Birth, miraculous ministry, present reign and final coming of Christ. We agree in general upon the inspiration of the Scriptures, the sinful state of man that demands God's saving grace, the primacy of love in Christian virtue, the sacredness of marriage, and many others. In many of these truths we Baptists are closer to traditional Catholic teaching than we are to some liberal Protestant interpretations.

There are other dogmas which Baptists will continue to find an occasion for stumbling when trying to walk with Roman Catholics: the whole hierarchical system that controls the dispensing of grace through the sacraments, the primacy and infallibility of the pope, prayers to Mary and the saints, and some lesser matters.

Where, then, have changes taken place? In *doctrine*, where the theologians are taking a new, more critical stance toward what the Church today ought to be and do. Catholic biblical theologians are calling for a return to the Scriptures as over against tradition. The younger theologians are influenced by the contemporary philosophies of existentialism and process theology. The pastoral educators by personalism and humanism. The canon lawyers by concerns for social justice and world peace. No dogma is safe from critical examination, even that of papal infallibility.

There has always been some degree of tension between the theologians and the *magisterium*, the teaching function of the Church as it resides in the popes and bishops. The latter are prone to use doctrine as a means for preserving the institution and promoting the immediate aims of the Church.

The debates of theologians and the deliberations of bishops do have their effect upon the faithful. Before Vatican II such might be kept subdued and confined to the ivory tower. Now even the secular press jumps toward every theological controversy. The paper-back book has made profitable the popular-

izers and the critics. The wealth of Catholic and ecumenical journals has brought all these issues into the living rooms of a people who formerly relied on a simple catechism and standard answers from priests anywhere they might live. Now the faithful are receiving conflicting signals. Many are having trouble distinguishing the essence of the faith from its historical and cultural expressions.

The area of worship and devotions has seen the most traumatic of changes, especially to the older Catholic. It is true in any religion that, when change is made in the customary ways of expressing faith, immature people will often jump to the conclusion their religion is being taken away.

Let us consider some of the major areas of change in Roman Catholicism today. The choice of emphases will reflect our evangelical bias. While it is impossible to illustrate all the changes or even the variety of Catholic reactions to the ones chosen, we will try for a fair and balanced view.

Changes in the Area of the Bible

Here we get into the basic issue of authority in religion. How do you know what you know? Is truth revealed by God or discovered and developed by men, or is it some of both? Who has the *authority* to tell us what we must believe and how we must behave as a Christian? Actually all Christians are in general agreement that the *final* source of authority is Jesus. It is the manner in which the Lordship of Christ is delegated to men that divides Christians. Protestants emphasize the Scriptures, holding that the believer is guided by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Still, they continue to develop creeds and confessions of faith by which to measure orthodoxy.

Catholics speak of the *magisterium*, the teaching function residing in pope and bishops. Since according to their view Peter and the apostles wrote the New Testament, then their successors to whom their authority passes have the responsibility for the transmission and the proper interpretation of the Scriptures. Thus the developing tradition of the "church fathers," councils and popes has played a dominant role in the exercise of authority.

Today, however, the pendulum in Catholic thought is swinging back to the primacy of Scripture over tradition. Catholic biblical theologians are in the forefront of contemporary scholarship. In many ways they are fortunate to be Johnny-come-latelies to the field, since they can profit by a century of Protestant scholarship without having to wander through too much of the latter's wildernesses.

The green light to Catholic biblical scholars was given by Pope Pius XII prior to Vatican II. His 1943 encyclical letter, *Divino afflante Spiritu*, opened the way for scholars to use the historical-critical method of studying the Bible. He encouraged translation and study based on the original Greek and Hebrew texts rather than on the Latin Vulgate. He encouraged priests to study and preach the Bible to their people and bishops to support every movement designed to distribute the Bible as widely as possible among the faithful. He challenged the seminaries to place more emphasis upon biblical studies.

Catholic scholars since have been widely involved in textual studies and translation work in many modern languages and dialects in cooperation with Protestant scholars in several of the United Bible Societies. Toward the end of the fifties they produced *The Jerusalem Bible*, a French translation from the original biblical languages with introductions and notes. This became so popular that a group of English and American Catholic scholars made an English translation, based upon but not translated from the French version, and using generally the same introductory notes and comments. The effort has brought much critical acclaim from Protestant scholars for its faithfulness to the originals.

In 1970 the Catholic Biblical Association of America saw the fruit of 25 years of labor in the publishing of the *New American*

Bible. It is more popular in style, but is still an excellent translation of the originals. It is used for the Scripture readings in all masses in English in the United States.

Following the encouragement given by the Department of Bible Translation and Distribution in the Vatican's Commission on Ecumenism, American bishops have put their stamp of approval (*imprimatur*) upon several Protestant translations: *Today's English Version* (the American Bible Society's version for new readers, popularly known as "Good News for Modern Man," largely by a Southern Baptist scholar, Robert G. Bratcher. Since the original *imprimatur* was given by Richard Cardinal Cushing shortly before his death, more than two million copies of the Catholic edition have been distributed); and the *Revised Standard Version* (and its slightly altered *Common Bible*, edited by a joint Protestant-Catholic committee.)

In 1972 a Congress on the Word of God, held at the national Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., heard several outstanding Catholic scholars and preachers in a conference designed to promote a greater use of biblical preaching in the "homily" (sermon) of the mass. Each mass has a passage from the Old Testament and one from the Epistles read by a layperson. Then the priest reads from the Gospel for the day as the people stand. Usually he will preach from one or more of these passages. If a Catholic is faithful to attend mass every day for three years, he will hear all of the New Testament, all of the Psalms, most of the Prophets and much of the rest of the Old Testament.

Changes in the Concept of the Church

One of the most far-reaching innovations of the documents of Vatican II is found in the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church." No formal definition of "the Church" is given, but there are many descriptive terms used, most of which are biblical. The Church is the new people of God. "For, those who believe in Christ, who are reborn not from a perishable but from an imperishable seed through the Word of the living God (cf. 1 Pet. 1:23), not from the flesh but from water and the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 3:5-6), are finally established as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people... You who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God" (1 Pet. 2:9-10).⁵ The Church is a "pilgrim people," a "servant Church," a "messianic people."

The Church is no longer described as the hierarchy supported by the laity, but "the common priesthood of the faithful" is elevated alongside that of the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood. All alike receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and each has his unique "apostolate" or calling to service. The people of God share the fundamental commission of their lord as priest and prophet. Instead of the old triumphalist identification of the Church with the kingdom of God, the Church "receives the mission to proclaim and to establish among all peoples the kingdom of Christ and of God. She becomes on earth the initial budding forth of that kingdom."⁶

It is still true that the Church is "one, holy, catholic and apostolic" and "constituted in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in union with that successor, although many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside of her visible structure."⁷ This paved the way for the later decree on ecumenism to recognize the validity of non-Catholic churches and communities. "Moreover, some, even very many, of the most significant elements or endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church herself can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: the written word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity; along with other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit and visible elements. All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to him, belong by right to the one Church of Christ."

"The brethren divided from us also carry out many of the sacred actions of the Christian religion. Undoubtedly, in ways that vary according to the condition of each church or community, these actions can truly engender a life of grace, can be rightly described as capable of providing access to the community of salvation."⁸

Thus did the Council carefully recognize the validity of non-Catholic churches while at the same time preserving to its own the fullness of the Church of Christ. Yet it is far more humble than formerly. Though it claims for pope and college of bishops and the entire people of God the ability to speak the truth of God infallibly, there is at the same time a recognition of past sins and present need: "The Church, embracing sinners in her bosom, is at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, and incessantly pursues the path of penance and renewal."⁹

Now what can we say this has produced in the past ten years?

1) There is a ferment at work in the theology of the Church unmatched since the days of the Reformation. Furthermore, this ferment is at work from within and has not tended toward a new and/or separate structure. No Protestant theologian since the days of Karl Barth can match the depth of probing demonstrated by Karl Rahner, Hans Kung, Avery Dulles and Richard P. McBrien.

2) The new dignity of the laity has resulted in their new freedom to criticize even papal decrees. "Every layman should openly reveal to them 'their sacred pastors' his needs and desires with that freedom and confidence which befits a son of God and a brother in Christ. An individual layman, by reason of the knowledge, competence, or outstanding ability which he may enjoy, is permitted and sometimes even obliged to express his opinion on things which concern the good of the Church."¹⁰

The laity are consequently expressing themselves with ever increasing boldness, from the Pope's Council of the Laity, made up of 15 lay people from around the world who meet annually with him, to the smallest and most tentative "parish council." Lay people are involved more in financial accounting and decision-making in local parishes and dioceses. Married men are now ordained as deacons, able to perform all priestly functions except that of presiding over the Eucharist and administering the anointing of the sick. Laymen and more rarely laywomen serve as lectors to read the Scriptures and as "extraordinary ministers" to distribute communion. The shortage of "religious" (the Catholic noun for "full-time vocational workers") is forcing a greater reliance upon lay teachers in parochial schools and CCD programs (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, the chief non-parochial program of religious education). This in turn is demanding a new emphasis upon adult education.

Women are still second-class citizens of the Kingdom in the eyes of many. Even though such organizations as the St. Joan's International Alliance have been lobbying for 60 years for the rights of women in the Church, little progress has been made. In 1972 the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a report of a committee's study on "Theological Reflections on the Ordination of Women." Although it called for further study, the report listed seven traditional arguments against ordaining women, even to the minor orders of the priesthood. Sister Ann Gillen, executive director of the National Coalition of American Nuns, replied to the report: "NCAN predicts that Catholic women will become increasingly alienated by the rejection they experience in the Roman Church; they will enroll in Protestant seminaries and seek ordination in other Christian churches or else simply evoke their own unique priesthood as their right and duty if they are to be true to the call of the Spirit inviting them."¹¹

In spite of this, hardly any Christian communion can boast the presence and ability of such women theologians as Rose-

mary Keuther, Rosemary Haughton, Sister Albertus McGrath, Sister Jane Marie Richardson, Monika Hellwig and Dr. Josephine Ford.

3) The new concept of *co-responsibility*, while it has not solved the problem of power in the Church, has certainly pointed the way to a modification of the old pyramidal structure. At any given time in the history of the Roman Church there have been three poles of power operating: the pope, the bishops (primarily when in "council") and the Curia (the administrative departments of the Vatican).

The "conciliar movement" reached its peak when the Council of Constance (1414-18) decreed the superiority of an ecumenical council over the pope. This was reversed in the next Council of Florence (1428-45) and supposedly buried by Vatican I (1870). The latter had on its agenda the defining of the power of bishops over against the newly defined infallibility of the pope, but it never got around to the debate by reason of the invasion of Rome by the Franco-Prussian forces. The adjourned agenda was taken up by Vatican II.

The idea of co-responsibility elevates the bishops to more than "vicars of the Roman Pontiff, for they exercise an authority which is proper to them, and are quite correctly called 'prelates,' heads of the people whom they govern."¹² Though a council of bishops may not act unless called, directed and promulgated by the pope, yet in council their decisions have great influence on the direction the Church will take.

Likewise, the bishop is encouraged to "regard his priests, who are his co-workers, as sons and friends." "Although priests do not possess the highest degree of the priesthood, and although they are dependent on the bishops in the exercise of their power, they are nevertheless united with the bishops in sacerdotal dignity."¹³ As a result most bishops have encouraged the formation of priests' synods in their dioceses. These, partly elected by their fellow priests and partly appointed by the bishop, serve as a sounding board of priestly concerns to the bishop.

Changes in the Area of Worship

Worship is the touchstone of faith. For the faithful Roman Catholic all of religious life flows to and away from the mass. Ask any one of these, "What do you think of the changes in the mass?" and their answer will illumine every other religious attitude.



The strength of the old mass was its uniformity: the same language, the same rituals, the same vestments, the same assured effects the world over. The priest "said Mass" in behalf of the people at the altar against the back wall. The people for the most part worshipped in silence, sensing mystery in the sights and sounds and odors of incense. The sacrifice was everything. Traditional theology taught that grace was bestowed efficiently in the sacrament (*ex opere operantis*), provided the proper authority, the priest, observed the proper form in behalf of the proper worshipper, a baptized and penitent Catholic. There was little or no Scripture reading, preaching of the Word or congregational singing.

The reform of the liturgy goes back considerably before Vatican II in the probing of theologians for new meanings and of liturgists for better means of expressing these. But it was the Council that had the power to bring about wide changes. In the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy it said,

But in order that the sacred liturgy may produce its full effect, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their thoughts match their words, and that they cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain (cf. 2 Cor. 6:1). Pastors of souls must therefore realize that, when the liturgy is celebrated, more is required than the mere observance of the laws governing valid and licit celebration. It is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part knowingly, actively, and fruitfully.¹⁴

Changes in the forms and practices arose from these emphases:

By way of promoting active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamation, responses, psalms, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity... more reading from holy Scripture. The sermon, moreover, should draw its content mainly from scriptural and liturgical sources. Bible services should be encouraged.¹⁵

The altar is pulled away from the rear wall; the priest faces the people, who now are said "to assist at mass." The Council left open the possibility of using the vernacular in the mass for each national conference of bishops. In 1964, the U.S. Conference decreed English to be used generally. Folk masses, using guitars and other contemporary instruments and music, began in 1960. The congregations were gradually introduced to more singing of hymns and gospel songs. In the vacuum carried over from the past, liturgists have rushed in with classical Protestant hymns, such as "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" and "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," and gospel songs such as "Amazing Grace" and "To God Be the Glory." In the rush to create new songs, antiphons and responses, much inferior music has been spawned.

In spite of the inevitable confusions and criticisms from both the right and the left, the liturgical movement now seems to be smoothing out. The new *Roman Missal* was published in 1970 by the Vatican with many optional texts for various parts of the mass. It has been translated and adapted recently into English by the U.S. Bishops Committee on the Liturgy.

One of the more interesting innovations is that of exchanging the "sign of peace." At the high point of the mass, between the words of institution ("This is my body") and the reception of communion, the priest turns to the people with the words, "Let us offer each other the sign of peace." As he shakes hands with the lay reader and others, the people exchange the greeting with each other, "May the peace of Christ be with you." This still "shakes up" many of the older traditionalists who cherish their privacy and mystical aura of the old mass. But it is restoring a long-lost sense of the corporate experience of the people in worship.

Fr. Joseph M. Champlain, who traveled the U.S. for a

number of years as the secretary for the Bishops Committee on the Liturgy, evaluated the acceptance of the changes:

The heavy majority, perhaps 75 percent, of Roman Catholics like the new look, welcome the changes, find that the revised liturgy has deepened their faith, strengthened their prayer life and increased their love for Christ and for others. The minority fall into various categories—articulate, outspoken, sometimes bitter opponents of the reformed liturgy; individuals who miss something from the past and have not yet grown terribly comfortable with the present state of church affairs; apathetic church-going persons who really don't care one way or the other. . . . Note that the major task of updating the liturgical rites, the external rituals, has been accomplished, I think we will see a concentration in the days ahead on the internal, on the spirit beneath and beyond those ceremonies.¹⁸

Most encouraging to evangelicals is the work of theologians and catechists to bring a more spiritual experience and meaning into the mass. Theologians are saying that the Church can no longer appeal to the ancient doctrine of *ex opere operato*, that now the mass is of no avail apart from the prior commitment of faith in the Lord Jesus by the worshipper. In the matter of the one sacrifice of Christ, a recent catechism for adults says, "At Mass Christ does not suffer or die again. Rather he represents, prolongs, continues, renews his great moment of sacrifice down through the centuries so that we can be a part of it. There are millions of Masses, but only one sacrifice of Christ."¹⁹

Of interest to Baptists, who have always rejected those interpretations of the liturgical churches which seem to localize the presence of Christ in the elements of the Supper, is the emphasis of the *New Catechism*:

We must not see Jesus' presence in the Eucharist as something apart, in isolation. . . . we should not isolate it from the other modes of the Lord's presence among us, from his presence through the word, and above all, from his presence through his Holy Spirit in the hearts and mutual relationships of men. In a certain sense, it may be said that this last form of presence is the greatest. It is the form by which Jesus is most among us, by which we have him most continually in our circle.²⁰

Developments in the other Sacraments

1. *Baptism* is still considered necessary to salvation, the means of removing original sin and restoring supernatural grace to the soul. It is the rite of initiation into the Church and is preliminary to all other sacraments. It gives an indelible imprint to the soul and hence can never be repeated. It is usually done by pouring or "affusion" although any form is allowed so long as it is done "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." In emergency it can be performed by any Christian. If there is no possibility of carrying out the act, then its place may be taken by "baptism of desire" (e.g., the thief on the Cross) or by "baptism of blood" (martyrdom).

Now these traditional views are being modified somewhat. The theologians are recognizing that the New Testament witnesses to only two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, although the others are present in germ. They have long since agreed that the earliest form was immersion and that infant baptism cannot definitely be proved until a generation or two after the New Testament.²¹ Baptism is now being linked more closely with personal faith. Fr. Timothy McDonald, S.A., of Graymoor, N.Y., says, "Faith is a gift of the Spirit and leads to baptism. Baptism without faith is unthinkable and real Christian faith without baptism is unthinkable. Baptism, then, signifies a free acceptance of Christ's salvific role; it signifies a willingness to enter into a personal encounter with him; it signifies a conversion to him as Savior. Baptism introduces one into the community of those who believe in the Risen Christ."

This kind of thinking about faith as a validating of baptism has been expressed in several tentative practices lately: a renewed emphasis upon confirmation as the necessary com-

pletion of baptism; an experiment allowed in a small French parish where baptism and confirmation were delayed until the late teen years; and a statement from the 1974 Conference on Liturgy in America at Scottsdale, Ariz., reached in agreement with Lutheran and Episcopal scholars, that "The rite of Christian initiation should normally consist of the unified sacramental even in which the three now separated moments of baptism, confirmation and eucharist are integrated. The full rite is to be used at any age when a person is initiated. . . . Within the economy of the sacraments, adult initiation should be the practical norm. . . . Infant baptism derives from the adult form."²²

2) *Confirmation* is the occasion of personal commitment after proper catechesis to the beliefs of the Church and the acceptance of full responsibility as a Christian. It can only be performed by the bishop, usually around the twelfth year. It is the sign of receiving the Holy Spirit and equipping the person for becoming a soldier of Christ and accepting his apostolate.

Most of the changes taking place in this area have to do with the content and methods of catechesis. Formerly only the Baltimore Catechism of 1885 predominated. Now there are as many as eight or ten publishers producing catechetical materials. Some order is beginning to come out of the welter of Catholic productions as a result of the recent release of the Catechetical Directory by the Congregation for the Clergy (in the Curia). The directory and its American equivalent does not offer a new, standardized catechism, but only provides guidelines by which catechisms are to be written.

3) *Penance* is another area where changes are taking place. Formerly a person in the confessional had to enumerate which of the 8^{1/2} kinds of sins he had committed since last confession, tell how many times he had committed each, and whether they were mortal (depriving the soul of its supernatural life) or venial (not so depriving). Now moral theologians are shifting the emphasis away from exclusive focus upon personal, fleshly or religious sins to these more corporate and concerned with violations of justice and love. Indulgences are not denied, simply largely ignored.

There has recently been a hot debate over the necessity of first confession before first communion for children, usually around the age of seven or eight. The Vatican had given the U.S. bishops permission to experiment for several years with delaying first confession. This was urged by many religious educators and parents on the basis of insights from child psychology, which would allow a period of growth of the child's conscience until he was fully able to recognize sin and forgiveness. Ladislav Orsy committed himself in an article on "The Sins of Those Little Ones," where the subtitle summarized, "Common sense and ancient Church practice recognize that children do not sin mortally. Catechisms of the past misled us in classifying sins as either 'venial' or 'mortal'—there is a large area in between."²³

One month later the Congregation for the Sacraments of the Vatican issued its long awaited New Order of Penance. It held the line on first confession before first communion, a very limited use of communal services of penance, which can no longer take the place of individual confession in the case of mortal sin. But it also placed more emphasis upon responsibility to the Church and to society for one's sins. Also it opened the door a bit to "conversational confession," where the priest and the person confessing sit openly facing each other with no confessional box.

4) *Holy orders* has witnessed no significant legal changes, although as much ferment is going on here as any other area. It was widely speculated that after the Council Pope Paul would relax many of the rules on the priesthood, especially by the ordering of married men (which is permitted in the Eastern Rite Catholic churches and in the Orthodox churches). There was much talk even about relaxing the rule of cel-

bacy to permit priests to marry and continue with their priesthood. Although the 1971 Synod of Bishops debated these issues at awesome length, nothing was changed.

The U.S. Conference of Bishops authorized in the same year a half-million dollar study of the priesthood under the five topics: the priest and sacred Scripture, the systematic theology of the priesthood, and the historical, psychological and sociological investigations of the Catholic priest in the United States. Three documents have been produced so far and the one on the sociological study definitely suppressed.

Meanwhile the secular press has given reams of print to the "defections" of priests and nuns. (It is understood that nuns and sisters are not ordained to even the lower orders.) It is true that many have left for all kinds of reasons: disappointment over the slowness of change after Vatican II, the wave of humanism which called for individual freedom from authority and a greater involvement in the social issues of the age, a desire for personal fulfillment in marriage, and some for disillusionment with the Catholic faith. But the picture has been overdrawn.

A careful study of the official directories of the Catholic Church in the United States for the 10 years since the Council shows that the total of priests serving in 1973 was only 359 less than 10 years previous. The slack was taken up in two ways: through 1967 the number of seminarians was at an all-time high and a large number of priests have been brought to the United States, especially from Ireland.

The largest drop is in the number of sisters—337,000 in 10 years. This reflects the more drastic changes in the orders of women: democratic polity granted each order; more individualized ministries with more freedom of choice; increasing social action leading away from strict community life. While all the orders of both men and women are concerned over the scarcity of candidates today, many feel that the trend has begun an upswing. A more mature novice is coming into the orders today, since candidates are not encouraged to enter as high school graduates, as formerly.

5) *Marriage* is justified as a sacrament on the basis of Paul's analogy of Christ and the Church (Eph.5). It is the only sacrament that is altogether administered by laity, for each spouse administers the sacrament in the vows they make. The priest and two witnesses are required as representatives of the Church. There is now a much relaxed regulation of "mixed" or interfaith marriages. The non-Catholic spouse makes no promises, but must be informed of those made by the Catholic spouse. With proper dispensation of the bishop, mixed marriages may take place in non-Catholic churches and conducted by Protestant ministers.²⁴

6) *The anointing of the sick* was declared by the Council of Trent to be a sacrament on the basis of James 5:13-16. It was formerly known as "extreme unction," but, in an effort to divorce it from the moment of death, Pope Paul's encyclical of 1972 preferred the anointing of the sick. Formerly only olive oil, blessed by the bishop and administered by the priest, was used on each of the five senses with an accompanying blessing and prayer for healing and forgiveness. Now only the forehead and hands are anointed, and in the absence of olive oil any other vegetable oil properly blessed may be used. Trent gives the meaning:

"This reality is in fact the grace of the Holy Spirit, whose anointing takes away sins, if any still remain to be taken away, and the remnants of sin; it also relieves and strengthens the soul of the sick person, arousing in him a great confidence in the divine mercy, whereby being thus sustained he more easily bears the trials and labors of his sickness."²⁵

The sacrament is often connected with confession and receiving of communion when the sick is able (called the "Viaticum"). It can be repeated any time later if the sick recovers after the first anointing.

The Main Concerns of Catholics Today

Two men named John greatly helped Roman Catholics to arrive in the twentieth century in America. When John F. Kennedy was elected to the highest office and proved that a Catholic could maintain America's integrity of religious freedom under the Constitution, Catholics moved out of their nineteenth-century emigrant status. When John XXIII "opened the window to let in a little fresh air," Catholics experienced a new surge of freedom to enter into positive dialogue with the world around them.

One consequence of being thrust into the twentieth century is that the Church inevitably took on all society's conflicts. The once-monolithic, cozy structure is no more. All of the tensions and polarizations of other Christians plague Catholics, plus a generous helping of their own unique problems: freedom of conscience or obedience to authority?, the traditionalists vs. the progressives; pietists against social activists, the theologians against bishops, defenders of truth vs. exponents of love. The non-Catholic observer must beware evaluating trends on the basis of counting heads, weighing books or following sensational journalism, whether religious or secular.

In the light of this a listing of main concerns is bound to be tentative. But we can say with some assurance that publicly the Catholic Church in America is primarily concerned with the family. Birth control, abortion, divorce and remarriage, the religious education of children, and the protection of the family from pornography, drug abuse and irreligious attacks—these are major issues. The Roman Catholic Church is practically the only Christian body left that tries to legislate personal and family morality and ethics. Many Protestants would agree with their aims but question seriously their methods, especially when the latter seek to enlist the State to legislate the codes of the Church.

Presently the greatest drive, uniting possibly more diverse Catholics, is the "Right to Life" movement. Sparked by the Supreme Court's 1973 decision that all state laws against abortion during the first two terms of pregnancy were unconstitutional, the movement is now seeking a constitutional amendment that would overturn that decision.

The biggest debate within Catholicism came earlier when Pope Paul issued his encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, in 1968, in which he went against the majority of his "birth control commission" and decreed no change in the Church's traditional stance. Arguing from natural law and from tradition, the Pope condemned abortion, direct sterilization and then: "Similarly excluded is every action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible."

This immediately triggered a statement of "responsible dissent" by a group of eighty-seven Catholic theologians in the United States, led by 20 faculty members of the Catholic University of America. The consequent debate, both here and in Europe, called for the most searching definitions of those occasions when a loyal Catholic has the right to dissent from a papal decree. Six years afterward, the noise of battle has died down, but 68 percent of American Catholic couples have already chosen to act in accord with their own consciences and practice birth control beyond the allowed "rhythm method."²⁶

The issue over Catholic parochial schools is in a state of flux. Not all Catholics are convinced that Catholic education, even if funded largely by the state, is desirable for their children.²⁷ The rising cost of education combining with the reduced number of religious faculty has put parochial education in such a bind as to force them to seek state aid every way possible. Since the courts have struck down all direct and most indirect aid, many schools have been hard hit and

the percentage of lay teachers has risen dramatically in ten years.²⁸

Reflecting the trends of the sixties, the Catholic Church has been much more outspoken in matters of world peace and social justice. This was one of the two main agendas of the 1971 Synod of Bishops meeting, during which the "third world" bishops emerged as an influential voice. Younger Catholic priests and laity have been active in the civil rights movement, in the opposition to the war in Southeast Asia and the consequent advocacy of amnesty, and in the struggle of Chicano workers in Texas and California. While priests and people are taking much more role in politics, it is no longer true, if ever, that the Catholic Church in America could "deliver the vote" for any political leader or party. Catholics today reflect very accurately the political and economic pluralism of American society.

Is there a New Evangelical Spirit and Movement?

If it is true that in pluralistic America all Christian groups reflect the prevailing culture, it is also true that all are more or less influenced by current spiritual movements. These have taken many forms in the past 10 years. Some flash brilliantly across the media skies and are soon gone. Others attract much less attention, but provide significant direction changes. The American Catholic Church has, along with others, been affected by the Billy Graham crusades, the Jesus movement among the youth, lay renewal, the shift from activism to meditation and withdrawal, and especially the charismatic renewal.

The small group movement has been the vehicle for much spiritual awakening. Here Catholics are rediscovering the personal and devotional experience of the Bible. Informal worship has encouraged free prayer, directed primarily to Jesus. He is appreciated more than ever in his presence and humanness. There is much emphasis upon the sharing of joy, the experience of peace and the showing of love.

Although the monasteries and convents have lost considerably in numbers, their influence has been rising. Through writings such as those of Thomas Merton and Jane Marie Richardson, there is a new interest in the way of meditation as a counterbalance to America's long love affair with activism. Eastern influence, particularly through Zen and Yoga, has contributed techniques. Retreats, both individual and group, are providing the "journey inward" that prepares the Christian for the "journey outward." "Marriage encounter" weekends help good marriages become better, at least partly by deepening the spiritual roots of couples. *Cursillos* (little courses) provide an intensive three-day retreat that focuses upon the Bible, Christian doctrine and personal experience.

By all odds the most dramatic of the spiritual movements in the Catholic Church is that of the charismatic renewal. This began on the campus of the Duquesne University in 1967, spread rapidly to Notre Dame University and Ann Arbor, Mich., and from there to many countries of the world. The national conference at Notre Dame has grown from a few hundred in 1969 to 22,000 in 1973.

Early, the movement attracted the attention of the bishops who appointed a committee who returned a "Gamaliel report." Several bishops have been active, including Joseph McKinney of Grand Rapids, who serves as official liaison with the National Conference of Bishops. In 1973 during the International Leaders Conference, Pope Paul received in private audience 13 leaders of the charismatic movement from seven countries. While recognizing the validity of the movement he warned against its dangers and urged full cooperation with their bishops.

Some have felt that, like the Protestant Pentecostal movement of the early twentieth century which developed a

new denomination, the Catholic charismatic movement would soon develop into a kind of evangelical Catholic Church. Outsiders will evaluate it from the standpoint of their own experience and/or prejudice, but evangelicals cannot afford to ignore what is happening. There are some unique features about this Catholic variety that deserves attention.

One of the early leaders is Kevin Ranaghan, a married deacon in the Catholic Church, and a member of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee (a kind of steering committee based in South Bend, Ind.). In his address to the International Conference, he summarized the main features of the movement that have emerged in the past seven years:

I believe that there are three principal thrusts which form the center of the charismatic renewal. The first thrust is to personal conversion. In the charismatic renewal, the Lord is calling us all to enter into a deep personal relationship with him, to accept him personally as our Lord and our Savior, and to turn our lives over to him as completely as we can. The second thrust is toward what we might call radical discipleship. We have conceptualized this idea of radical discipleship around the notion of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Thirdly, the charismatic renewal is gathering us together. A chief result of people being baptized in the Spirit is that they spontaneously come together. They begin to share their lives, their prayer, and their work.²⁹

He explains how they are able to stay within the theological framework of Catholicism:

What has been done for us objectively in baptism, in confirmation, and in our entrance into the eucharistic community has become a real experience of power in the lives of individuals in the charismatic renewal. We have come to one principal conclusion: that the charismatic renewal in the Church, for the Church, for the renewal of the Church. We reject the idea that the charismatic renewal is some kind of para-ecclesiastical structure, it is not a movement which exists for itself. It is not a grouping of the elect or the wonderful spiritual elite who have been called out of a carnal, dying structure.

He recognized the pitfalls pentecostalism has experienced elsewhere.

In the past seven years the Lord has been saying to and through us that a real, personal conversational encounter with God in Christ is meant to be a normal and regular Christian experience. This kind of encounter with Jesus is for everybody and is available to all Christians. It is not just something limited to the few or the elect, to those who have been given some special mystical grace; it is meant to be a normal part of Christian life.

As might be expected, there are also strong voices within the Church that are critical of the movement: that it is a departure from authentic Catholic faith and so a "Protestantizing" of religion; that it handles the Bible as though it were a kind of magic talisman, "a game of revelation roulette";³⁰ that overzealous catechetical leaders try to set up the children for this experience soon after confirmation. The gravest concern of many is that the movement is both superficial in theology (but it has attracted some worthy theological defenses, e.g., Fr. Harold Cohen, S.J., and Fr. Donald Gelpi, S.J.) and weak in social action.

What of the Church of the Future?

The crystal ball is of little worth. Pope John could not have foreseen the drastic changes he set in motion by calling the first Council. Pope Paul, like Churchill, is trying to say by many of his decrees since *Humanae Vitae*, "I did not come to the chair of Peter to preside over the breakup of the Roman Catholic Church."

Sometimes where popes fear to tread, theologians are driven to speculate. Hans Kung does not try to define the church of the future but says that it will be characterized by its ministry of witness and love to the world.³¹ Richard P. McBrien sees the church of the future as being the dedicated minority of true disciples, serving within the larger institu-

tional church.³² Andrew Greeley stresses the "salt" and "leaven" mission of the Church with a leadership that demonstrates spiritual competency rather than one that demands unthinking obedience.³³ The most prestigious supporter of the charismatic movement, Cardinal Suenens of Belgium, foresees a Church made more profoundly spiritual by its devotion to a more human Jesus and a new discovery of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the people of God. "A certain Church is dying, a new Church is coming out. It's the same Church but with a sort of renewed image, as if lights were put on some aspects of the Church which we did not enlighten enough in the past. . . . I think what is coming and what is badly needed is an increase of spirituality. I use an abstract word, but spirituality means, 'Holy Spirit at work,' a profound action of the Holy Spirit in His Church, renewing that Church from the inside."³⁴

What, then, can a Baptist observer conclude? Despite uncertainties, the more significant trends within the Roman Catholic Church seem to be:

- the new emphases upon the movements of the Spirit
- a wholesome turning to the Scriptures in both theology and devotion
- a maturing of responsible consciences and decision-making on the part of the laity
- a searching by the priests and religious for new kinds of ministry to match new, more democratic life-styles
- the struggles of the hierarchy to develop a true co-responsibility at all levels of authority
- the tendency of national churches to become more independent of Rome in administering their affairs while still loyal to the papacy as the visible sign of unity

Where the Baptist can merit the love and trust of the Catholic community, he may finally move from the role of observer to that of enabler through the same indwelling Holy Spirit.

Don Rutledge Photo



Footnotes

- ²⁸The Way, Supplement 19, Summer, 1973, pp. 105-117.
- ²⁹A dogma is a revealed truth defined officially by pope or council which must be believed by the faithful upon pain of loss of salvation.
- ³⁰That is, that Mary was born free from the transmission of original sin by a special dispensation of grace in order to qualify her to be the mother of Christ.
- ³¹Quoted in *The Papal Encyclicals*, Anne Fremantle, ed., New York: The New American Library, 1956, p. 290.
- ³²*The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., New York: Guild Press, 1966, p. 25.
- ³³*Ibid.*, p. 18.
- ³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 23.
- ³⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 34-7.
- ³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 24.
- ³⁷*Document*, p. 64.
- ³⁸*Statement on the Ordination of Women*, *Catholic Mind*, Nov. 1973, p. 4.
- ³⁹*Document*, p. 52.
- ⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 54.
- ⁴¹The New Saint Joseph Baltimore Catechism, explained by Bennet Kelley, C.P., New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1954-62, p. 173.
- ⁴²*Document*, p. 143.
- ⁴³*Ibid.*, pp. 146-50.
- ⁴⁴See Archbishop Robert Dwyer, Portland, Ore., "Vast Conspiracy to rob religion of mystery," *Town Circle*, Dec. 15, 1972, p. 2.
- ⁴⁵Joseph M. Chumpley, "Roman Catholic Efforts to Return the Liturgy," *The Long March*, 1974, p. 5.
- ⁴⁶Anthony J. Wilhelm C.S.P., *Christ Among Us: A Modern Presentation of the Catholic Faith*, New York: Newman Press, 1967, p. 231.
- ⁴⁷An English translation of *The Dutch Catechism*, New York: Herder and Herder, 1967, p. 344.
- ⁴⁸For a full historical survey see Dale Moody, *Baptism: Four Dates for Christian Unity*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967.
- ⁴⁹Fr. Mary Collins, O.S.B., "Liturgy in America," *Worship*, Feb. 1974, p. 71.
- ⁵⁰*America*, Dec. 8, 1973, p. 438.
- ⁵¹For full details, see *Baptists and Catholics in Interfaith Marriage* elsewhere in B.O.O.K. or write the Home Mission Board for copies.
- ⁵²Quoted in the "Apostolic Constitution on the Anointing of the Sick," *Catholic Mind*, June 1973, p. 57.
- ⁵³See *Science*, Jan. 15, 1971, reporting on the 1970 National Fertility Study, conducted by sociologists Charles F. Westoff, Princeton University, and Larry Bumpass, University of Wisconsin.
- ⁵⁴E.g., Mary Perkins Ryan, *Are Catholics Shaking the Anagen?* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964, and by the same author, *We're All in This Together*.
- ⁵⁵*The Official Catholic Directory*, New York: P.I. Kennedy and Sons, 1964, 1973.
- ⁵⁶*New Covenant*, March, 1974.
- ⁵⁷Frank O'Meara, "Pentecostalism Is Not the Answer," *U.S. Catholic*, Dec. 1973, p. 14.
- ⁵⁸*The Church*, p. 484.
- ⁵⁹*Do We Need The Church?* New York: Harper and Row, 1969.
- ⁶⁰*What a Modern Catholic Believes About the Church*, Chicago: the B. Thomas More Press, 1972.
- ⁶¹"Toward Tomorrow's Church," an address to the John Courtney Murray Forum, New York, March 19, 1972, printed in *Catholic Mind*, 1972.

Baptists and Catholics in Interfaith Marriages

by C. Brownlow Hastings

Nowhere is the breach between Protestant and Catholic felt more keenly than by two young people who insist that their mutual love is able to conquer all foes in an interfaith marriage. They inherit many centuries of bitter conflict. Often they are not aware of the power of their different cultures. While the young couple feels, often deeply, the antagonism of their two families and are truly grieved at their hurt, they naively believe they can work out all of their differences if their families will just stay out of the way. They have heard all the preachments of minister and priest, yet they insist on following love and not logic.

This situation is growing by leaps and bounds. In 1971 in the South Atlantic states (Maryland to Florida, excepting Miami, which is omitted because of its large Cuban population), 60 percent of all marriages involving a Roman Catholic were mixed. The province, East South Central (Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi), had 57 percent mixed. The following figures prove a trend: in predominantly Roman Catholic areas, mixed marriages drop off (28 percent for each of Louisiana and Texas). Where Protestants are in the majority the reverse is true (Oklahoma, 72 percent; Arkansas, 71 percent).

The reasons are easy to find. As a consequence of the Second Vatican Council the greater ecumenical stance of the Roman Catholic Church has permitted more communication between laypeople of various faiths. As a result of many problems experienced by parochial schools, particularly on the secondary level, a much larger percentage of Catholic students is enrolling in public schools. Finally, the temper of today's youth tends to take advantage of the religious pluralism in America. They decry the religious warfare of the past and are no longer impressed by the denominational distinctions of their grandparents. A permissive society encourages youth to "do their own thing," yet provides no answers to the hard problems incurred.

This list of causes does not do justice to the many and complex forces which produce intermarriage. The Jewish sociol-

ogist Albert I. Gordon sums it up:

Intermarriages in the main occur, I believe, because people in our American society, in ever-increasing number, come into contact with each other, socially, industrially, educationally, culturally, politically. The price that we must pay for living with persons of religions other than our own is the increasing likelihood of intermarriage. Unless we wish to create a separate ghetto for Jews, for Catholics, and for Protestants, we are obliged, in the American society of which we are a part, to take our chances with intermarriage.²

In an excellent discussion of the various factors that make for and the forces that withstand intermarriage, Gordon roughly classifies youth who enter mixed marriages into four types:

1. The "emancipated," those whose religious and cultural ties are weak, are attracted by their mutual pursuit of freedom of choice and of a new humanism.

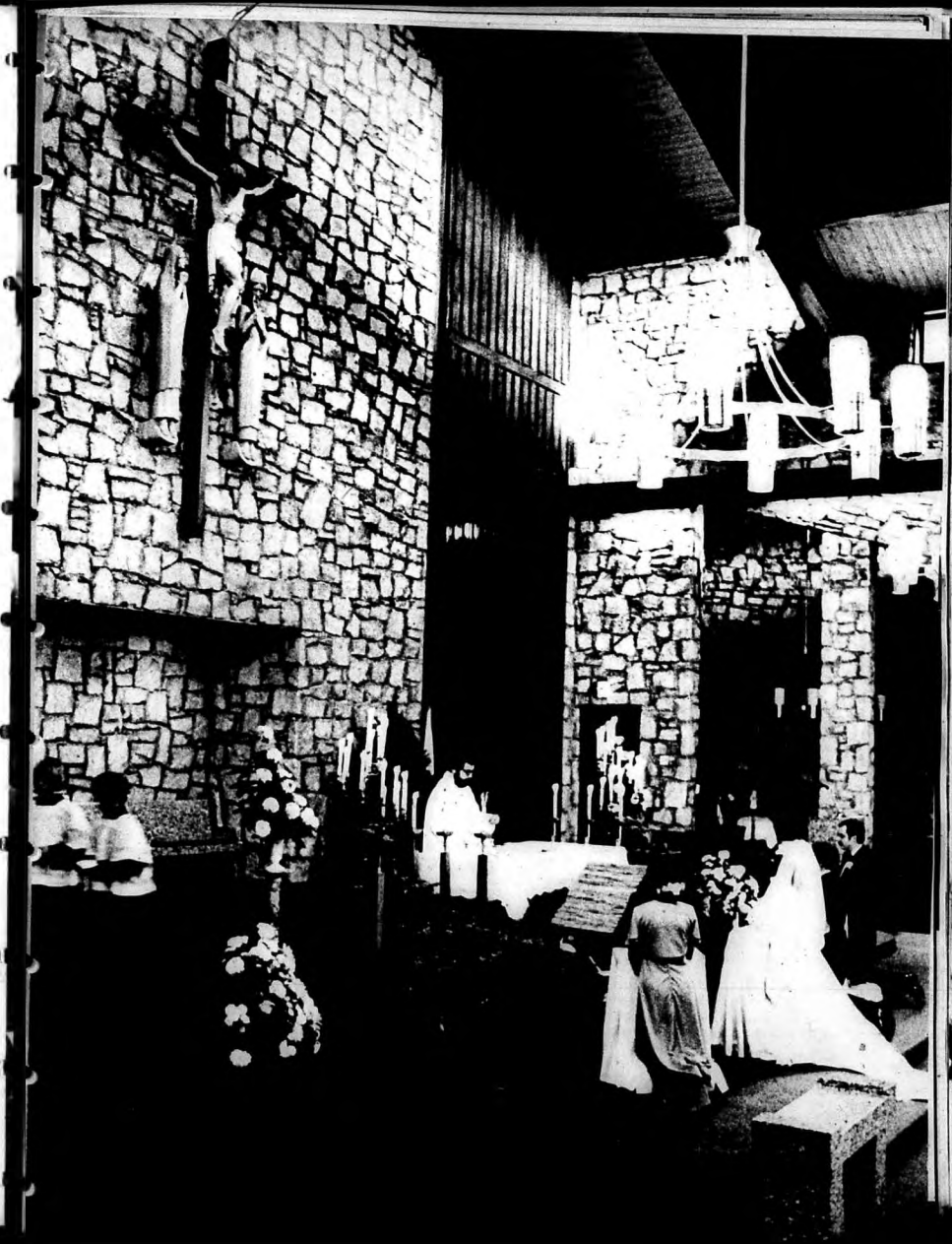
2. The "rebellious," those who are expressing their independence of parental control and their reaction to a strict and often legalistic religious rearing.

3. The "reluctant," those with real ties to their religion and culture and many misgivings about their prospects, who nevertheless are drawn by a love for each other they cannot reason away. They simply hope for the best and fear the worst. They often compromise by choosing a third religion they can accept.

4. The "nuclear," those with complete commitment to their respective faiths. These may go either way. Their long-range intention may be to proselyte. Some, more purely motivated, may work out a way of life that respects and supports the faith of the other. Either way, the religious education of the children is more critical here than in any of the first three.

There is implied here that both young people are attracted to each other by similar motives. This is, of course, an oversimplification, for there may be many combinations of the types above in any given couple.

Continued



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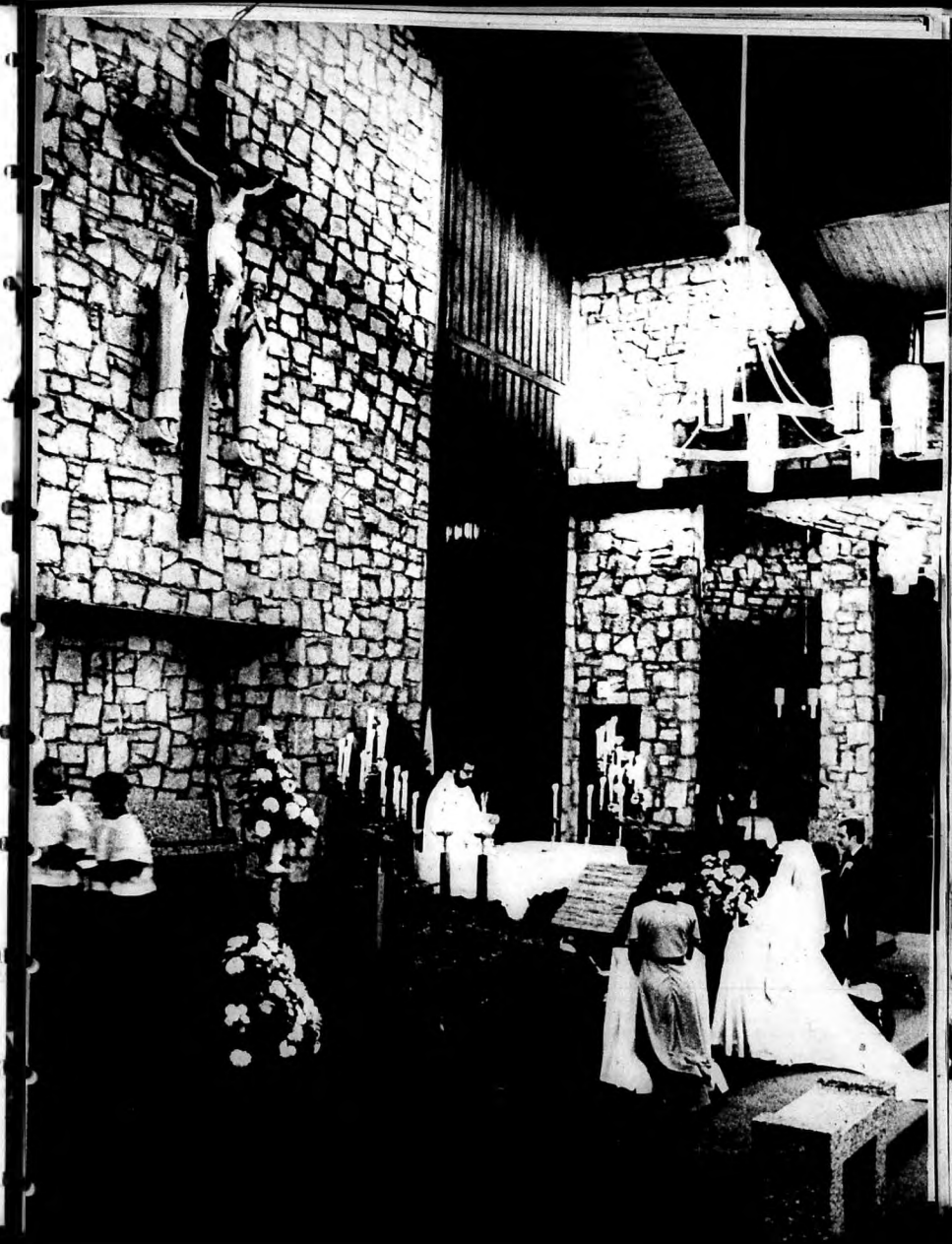
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Continued



The experience of most who counsel youth in prospect of intermarriage indicates that by the time the couple seeks advice their minds are already set to marry. The question, therefore, is: Where do we go from here? and not, How can we go back and start over? It is too late to do the skipped homework in the midst of the final exam.

The odds against success in intermarriage are still great, but there are a number of resources available which may help. Paul and Jeanne/Simon, in their most helpful book, *Protestant-Catholic Marriage Can Succeed*, warn of the pitfalls:

In those agonizing months prior to our engagement and marriage we devoured everything we could read on Protestant-Catholic marriages. We felt almost all of it was negative, carping, and unduly partisan. Too many authors in both camps wrote on this subject as a chance to pour out some weaknesses of the other side, as a chance to pour out some theological vitriol while at the same time they announced boldly that they approached the problem objectively. There was little of substance to help people in our situation.¹

What follows is an example of a joint counseling situation for the purpose of exploring the issues in a Protestant-Catholic marriage. The young couple are "reluctant." Bill, a Protestant, and Mary, a Roman Catholic, have asked for a conference with their minister and priest. The priest's statements reflect, as honestly as possible, official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church; The minister's reflect the approach of the writer. This is not intended to cover all the important subjects of good premarital counseling but only those appropriate to the subject of intermarriage. (In the actual counseling session there would be much more warmth and fewer "bookish" references.)

The Prospects of Success

Bill: What do you think of our prospects for successful marriage?

Priest: If there is one area where the minister and I heartily agree, it is here: the prospects are not good. Our consistent position through the years has been that "the Church firmly opposes marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics. Her opposition is based upon centuries of experience—centuries in which she has seen a large percentage of such mixed marriages end unhappily, with many Catholic partners and their children lost to the Faith."²

Minister: We do agree. A sociological study of the 1950's stated that "six out of every ten children of a Catholic-Protestant marriage end by rejecting all religions... About half of the Catholic men who marry outside of their faith abandon their faith... The divorce rate of the intermarried is higher than that for those who marry within their own faith... The teen-age arrest rates for the children of mixed marriages are much higher..."³

Mary: These observations are 20 years old. Are these trends true today?

Minister: Recent studies are not sufficient yet to answer that. One study made in Iowa in the 1960s does indicate that more factors need to be considered than mere church affiliation. What denomination is the Protestant? How deep is the commitment to religions? What is the age (and so the degree of maturity) at marriage? What of the economic and educational backgrounds? Sometimes the difference in religion gets blamed when other factors are primary cause of divorce. Iowa is the only state that keeps statistics on

the religious affiliation of both those marrying and those divorcing. On the basis of a study published in 1963 in *Social Forces*, Lee G. Burchinal and Loren E. Chancellor found that in 72,485 marriages the survival rate of the marriage (100 being perfect) was:⁴

Both Catholic	96.2
Both Protestant	94.0
Catholic-Lutheran	90.5
Both Baptist	89.8
Average for Total Population	87.6
Catholic-Baptist	81.6
Catholic-Unspecified	28.7

They conclude: "Apparently the clash of religious values and beliefs less frequently led to divorce in the interreligious marriages than did circumstances associated with the lack of affiliation... with a church by the non-Catholic partner."⁵

Priest: In other words, it may be easier for two young people, both with deep commitment to their faith, to work through to a successful marriage than for two, only one or neither of whom has strong convictions. We are not saying, however, that the difficulties are to be taken lightly. Now that you have fully decided to marry, the minister and I are dedicated to bring all the resources of our different faiths to your support. This involves first of all a clear understanding of the issues involved.

The Teachings on Marriage

Mary: Surely our two faiths agree in many ways on marriage, do they not?

Minister: Yes, they do. The Bible teaches that God created man, male and female (Gen. 1:27), and designed each to complement the other (2:18 and Eph. 5:21-25). The marriage union is so complete in body, mind and spirit that the two are said to become "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:5). Our Lord taught that this union should consist of one man and one woman for life (Matt. 19:6). In spite of some impressions to the contrary, Paul really had a high view of marriage. He takes over the Old Testament analogy of marriage for the covenant relation of God and Israel (Hos. 2:19-3:1), and applies it to the relation of Christ and his church (Eph. 5:23-32). The body is not evil to be despised, but to be "cherished" (Eph. 5:28-29). The book of Hebrews declares the marriage bed "undefiled" (13:4).

Most of us would agree in condemning abortion as a general practice. We resist divorce and work constantly for the reconciliation and the strengthening of the marriage tie. We warn against premarital and postmarital unfaithfulness.

A legalistic approach, however, that tries to define exactly what can and cannot be done is too weak to meet the stresses of modern marriage. Successful marriage, therefore, must be built upon a growing respect for each other's personhood, a sense of responsibility for each other's life fulfillment, and a maturing character that expresses the union of two spirits who are also in union with God's spirit.

Priest: We Catholics teach these same Scripture truths. The Second Vatican Council stated:

God himself is the author of matrimony, endowed as it is with various benefits and purposes

... Thus a man and a woman, who by marriage covenant of conjugal love 'are no longer two, but one flesh' (Matt. 19:6), render mutual help and service to each other through an intimate union of their persons and of their actions. Through this union they experience the meaning of their oneness and attain to it with growing perfection day by day. As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union, as well as the good of the children, imposes total fidelity on the spouses and argues for an unbreakable oneness between them... "Authentic married love is caught up into divine love and is governed and enriched by Christ's redeeming power and the saving activity of the Church. Thus this love can lead the spouses to God with powerful effect and can aid and strengthen them in the sublime office of being a father or mother."⁶

In addition, in 1966 the Interfaith Commission on Marriage and Family Life published some basic affirmations on marriage which are acceptable to both Christians and Jews:

"We believe and unite in affirming, that God the Creator of the Universe and the Father of all mankind, did create us male and female and did establish families as part of his divine plan. Because of our understanding of this plan, we believe and unite in affirming that our sexuality is a wondrous gift from God to be accepted with thanksgiving and used within marriage with reverence and joy."

"We believe and unite in affirming that our understanding of God's plan for marriage ideally calls for life-long commitment in fidelity to a continuing supportive relationship in which each partner helps the other to develop to fullest capacity. We are united in our belief that God is an active partner in sustaining and enriching the husband-wife relationship in marriage."⁷

Marriage as a Sacrament

Bill: If you both agree that God instituted marriage long before either Moses or Christ, why does the Roman Catholic Church regard marriage as a sacrament?

Priest: We hold that matrimony is one of the seven sacraments established by Jesus Christ for the permanent use of the Church. As such, it is an external sign which confers grace upon the recipients.

"The Bible does not indeed present any explicit and convincing evidence on this point; but there is a passage in the Ephesians which implies that sacramental dignity of Christian marriage.

From this text we argue as follows: As the Apostle portrays marriage, it possesses all the requisites of a sacrament. It is an external sign for like every human contract, marital consent must be manifested externally. It is capable of conferring grace, for the saint compares it to the union between Christ and the Church, and this latter is productive of supernatural grace for the faithful. That marriage as a sacrament was instituted by Christ is not indeed expressly stated in this passage; but from other sources we know that under the Christian Law all sacred signs capable of giving grace have been established by our Lord."⁸

Bill: Do you not teach that the marriages of all non-Catholics are not true marriages?

Priest: No, we do not. We do believe that the natural and civil contract are inseparable from the sacrament, so that two baptized persons cannot marry each other validly without receiving the sacrament of marriage. It makes no difference whether these persons are Catholics or non-Catholics, whether or not they realize that Matrimony is a sacrament—in any case, a valid marriage between them is a sacramental marriage.

... In reality the Church teaches that every marriage of two baptized non-Catholics free from matrimonial impediments is just as truly a sacrament as the marriage of two Catholics celebrated before a priest."⁹

Because of this we do not allow separate civil and religious ceremonies or separate religious ceremonies. One ceremony must satisfy all conditions.

Moreover, marriage is the only sacrament which is not administered by a priest regularly. Each partner, when he makes his vow, administers the sacrament to the other. The priest is there simply as a witness in behalf of the Church.

Mary: What is the Baptist position with regard to marriage as a sacrament?

Minister: Baptists, like most Protestants, do not regard marriage as a sacrament. We do not accept the classic definition of a sacrament as "an outward sign of an inward and invisible grace." We do not believe that grace is a commodity or a divine effluent that can be bestowed by any ritual act. We hold grace simply to be that character of God which prompts him to deal mercifully and in forgiveness with undeserving mankind.

Since God instituted marriage from the beginning of the race, most of us hold that it is under natural law rather than churchly control. As the basic institution of society we believe that the state has a stake in its order and is just in demanding minimum responsibilities of the couple about to marry. We recognize civil marriage as the basic contract, while at the same time encouraging a religious ceremony.

Christian young people have a unique commitment to the lordship of Christ over all of life. They symbolize this commitment and cove the spiritual blessings of pastor and Christian friends by engaging in a religious ceremony. They believe that their act of pledging themselves to each other in such a ceremony will dignify and deepen their own act of sanctifying themselves to each other.

The minister acts as an agent of the state and not of the church when he performs the ceremony. If he is not convinced of the wisdom of the marriage, he may refuse to perform the ceremony, but a Baptist pastor has usually no church or denominational rules by which to decide or which he must follow. If one or both of the couple is a member of his church, he naturally feels a moral and spiritual obligation to render a full pastoral ministry.

Pre-marital Pledges

Bill: We have heard that there are some changes in the premarital promises required by the Roman Catholic Church.

Priest: Pope Paul VI on March 31, 1970, issued the

"Apostolic Letter Determining Norms for Mixed Marriages," in which he said:

"A marriage between two baptized persons, of whom one is a Catholic, while the other is a non-Catholic, may not licitly be contracted without the previous dispensation of the local Ordinary (bishop of the local diocese), since such a marriage is by its nature an obstacle to the full spiritual communion of the married parties.

"To obtain from the local Ordinary dispensation from an impediment (a hindrance to marriage imposed by Canon Law), the Catholic party shall declare that he is ready to remove dangers of falling away from the faith. He is also gravely bound to make a sincere promise to do all in his power to have all the children baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church.

"At the opportune time the non-Catholic party must be informed of these promises which the Catholic party has to make, so that it is clear that he is cognizant of the promise and obligation on the part of the Catholic."

Mary: How are these promises made?

Priest: That depends upon your local bishop. The U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops has stated, "The declaration and promise are made in the presence of a priest or deacon either orally or in writing as the Catholic prefers."¹²

Mary: What form do these promises take?

Priest: The same statement gave this form: "I reaffirm my faith in Jesus Christ and, with God's help, intend to continue living that faith in the Catholic Church. I do promise to do all in my power to share the faith I have received with our children by having them baptized and reared as Catholics."¹³

It is presumed that you are sincere in these promises. If your priest has reason to question this, he may not recommend that the bishop grant the dispensation.

Bill: Do I promise anything?

Priest: "No formal statement of the non-Catholic is required. But the mutual understanding of this question beforehand should prevent possible disharmony that might otherwise arise during married life."¹⁴

You are only asked to give evidence of your baptism. A letter from a qualified person stating the date and place is sufficient. This is necessary because the marriage of a Catholic to an unbaptized person comes under more difficult rules of canon law. After the ceremony the priest is required to send notification of the marriage to the church where the Catholic was baptized.

Minister: As far as these changes go, we commend the Roman Catholic Church for relaxing its requirements upon the Protestant party, especially that which pledged him to raise the children in the Catholic Church even after the death of his spouse and a subsequent marriage to a Protestant. Also the pledge of the Catholic to try to convert the Protestant is no longer mentioned. In all fairness, however, we ought to observe that the unborn children are still pledged to the Catholic faith by the Catholic spouse.

We look forward to the day when the Decrees

on Ecumenism and on Religious Liberty of the Second Vatican Council will result in equal status to the Protestant party and his pastor and in full freedom to the children in a mixed marriage to choose their own religion. We understand a worthy motive of the Catholic Church in combating "indifferentism" and secularism on the part of both parents and children. We also acknowledge that our belief in voluntarism in religion does not condone a hands-off policy on the part of the parents. Our commonly-used Baptist Church Covenant pledges us "to religiously educate our children." Our ideal is always to give primary emphasis to child's personal discipleship to Jesus as Savior and Lord and only secondarily to his denominational affiliation. Such we hold is all that is required to fulfill Paul's injunction to rear children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

The Children's Religion

Minister: Let us look at some poor alternatives which some have chosen on the issue of the children's religion:

1. The drop-out: "We did not bring about this conflict. Until our churches change so as to solve their differences, we will just drop out of religion altogether."

2. The "cop-out": One party says: "Although I do not believe my mate's religion, because of our love and desire for a united home, I will join his/her church anyway."

3. The "take-out": "We could not agree on either's church, so we took out of both and compromised on the _____ Church."

4. The "choose-up": "We want our children to have the best of both possible worlds, so I take the children in the morning and he/she takes them at night."

Few successful mixed marriages would approve any of these. The first is pure evasion, while denying to the home the very strength of the spiritual life so urgently needed. The second proves superficial and temporary. Religion which is chosen for any lesser reason than one's own devotion to God and personal conviction of its truth is doomed to hypocrisy and eventual rejection. The third sometimes works, but often in the middle years of marriage the conscience of one or both proves far from saved by compromise. The fourth imposes our divisions upon children who are least able to handle such stress of mind and soul. It may work, but those who choose this option ought to weigh seriously that they are asking their children to bridge chasms they themselves never could.

Paul and Jeanne Simon¹⁵ have worked out their decision in the matter in this way: While Paul is a loyal Lutheran and active in the lay leadership of his church, Jeanne is a faithful Catholic and is raising their two children in keeping with her vows. The Simons recognize that with their children, two and five years of age, they have many hurdles yet to leap. Realistically, they say that in many mixed marriages the couple may have to work through to decisions of conscience that probably are not acceptable to either of their pastors. These are the points they make out of their thorough study and growing experience:

1. The decision as to what affiliation the children should have should ideally be made before

engagement, but in any event as quickly as possible.

2. If you are religiously indifferent, your children probably will be also, no matter what denominational tag you wear.

3. If the choice of their affiliation is not obvious, two factors should be considered: which spouse is more religiously active, and what is affiliation of the mother?¹⁶

We Protestants applaud those decrees of the Second Vatican Council which speak of the role of conscience. In the Decree of Religious Freedom we read:

"On his part, man perceives and acknowledges the imperatives of the divine law through the mediation of conscience. In all his activity a man is bound to follow his conscience faithfully, in order that he may come to God, for whom he was created. It follows that he is not to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his conscience. Nor, on the other hand, is he to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience, especially in matters religious.

"For of its very nature, the exercise of religion consists before all else in those internal, voluntary, and free acts whereby man sets the course of his life directly toward God. No merely human power can either command or prohibit acts of this kind.

"Parents, moreover, have the right to determine, in accordance with their own religious beliefs, the kind of religious education that their children are to receive."¹⁷

L.G.A. van Noort, O.S.C., qualified conscience thus:

"The conviction of one's conscience is decisive. This is not to say that our conscience is autonomous. It seeks to discover what the demands are of human existence; it listens to the gospel; it engages in dialogue with the church and its dogma, and it engages in dialogue with the marriage partner as well. Conscience listens and records, then it makes a decision in personal responsibility."¹⁸

Mary: Does this mean that it is all right if we decide one way now and change our minds later?

Minister: I do not believe either of us would want you to make any decision with mental reservations that you intend to change later. Your own integrity is at stake here. But the priest has brought out two factors which need to be studied more fully. One has to do with the distinction between ecclesiastical law and obeying that will of God which always threatens to supersede the best of our human or ecclesial interpretations.

Another is the recognition that life is not static and decisions made in good faith may have to be altered in the light of new life and truth tomorrow. The very fact that popes and tribunals of the Catholic Church have frequently decreed exceptions to canon law still proves that the good of the person is always superior to the good of the law. Jesus himself said to his generation of lawyers, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

Birth Control

Bill: What about the practice of birth control?

Priest: Although many Catholics expected the stand of the Church to be liberalized as a result of the Papal Commission appointed by Pope John and continued by Pope Paul, the latter confirmed the traditional stand against any form of artificial birth control in the 1968 encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*. The rhythm method is allowed:

"If then, there are serious motives to space out births, which derive from the physical or psychological conditions of husband and wife, or from external conditions, the Church teaches that it is then licit to take into account the natural rhythms immanent in the generative functions, for the use of marriage in the infertile periods only, and this way to regulate birth without offending the moral principles which have been recalled earlier."¹⁹

This is based, according to the teaching of the *magisterium* (the official teaching office of the Church), upon the recognition that intercourse is for the two-fold function of procreation and mutual help. Vatican II's "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" said, "Marriage to be sure is not instituted solely for procreation. Rather, its very nature as an unbreakable compact between persons, and the welfare of the children, both demand that the mutual love of the spouses, too, be embodied in a rightly ordered manner, that it grow and ripen."

It is true that in the United States a sizable proportion of Catholic couples have chosen to practice birth control through contraception. This does not lessen, however, your personal obligation to work through this difficult problem to a decision of conscience you can live with in the light of the papal decree. You will find that Catholic people are much more uniform in their opposition to abortion, sterilization or mercy killings (euthanasia).

Mary: Is there a Protestant position on birth control?

Minister: No, there is not. Most Baptists prefer to trust the enlightened conscience of the couple. We are concerned about the population explosion, especially in the "third world." And we are not impressed with the arguments of *Humanae Vitae*. Robert McAfee Brown, one of the most sympathetic Protestant observers at Vatican II, has said:

"It is luminously clear to me, both as a Protestant and a married man, that the 'fundamental principle' of the encyclical (that there is an inseparable connection between the unitive and the procreative function in the conjugal act) is false, and grievously so. There is abundant evidence from countless marriages that at times the 'procreative principle' gives deep richness to sexual intercourse in marriage, but that on many more occasions the 'unitive principle' in and of itself, is the very deepest gift God can give to a man and woman, and that to separate it from the procreative principle, by whatever means the couple agrees upon, is the way to enrich and deepen and sanctify that particular marriage relationship before God."²¹

Priest: The United States bishops in their pastoral letter, "Human Life in Our Day," Nov. 15, 1968, spoke to the decision-making of a couple:

"*Humanae Vitae* does not discuss the question of the good faith of those who make practical decisions in conscience against what the Church considers a divine law and the Will of God. The en-

cyclical does not undertake to judge the consciences of individuals but to set forth the authentic teaching of the Church which Catholics believe interprets the divine law to which conscience should be conformed.

"The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World reminds us that 'in their manner of acting, spouses should be aware that they cannot proceed arbitrarily. They must always be governed according to a conscience dutifully conformed to the divine law itself, and should be submissive toward the Church's teaching office, which authentically interprets that law in the light of the Gospel.'"

The Wedding Ceremony

Bill: If we decide to be married in the Catholic church, may I invite my minister to assist?

Priest: Yes.

*"With the permission of the local Ordinary and the consent of the appropriate authority of the other church or community, a non-Catholic minister may be invited to participate in the Catholic marriage service by giving additional prayers, blessings, or words of greeting or exhortation. If the marriage is not part of the Eucharistic celebration (a nuptial mass), the minister may also be invited to read a lesson from the Bible and/or to preach."*²¹

Mary: What if we decide to be married in Bill's church? Could you assist the minister?

Priest: Yes. First, there must be obtained from the bishop the dispensation from the "canonical form" of the Catholic rite of marriage. The following are suggested reasons for the bishop's assent: "to achieve family harmony or to avoid family alienation; to obtain parental agreement to the marriage; to recognize the significant claims of relationship or special friendship with a non-Catholic minister; to permit the marriage in a church that has particular importance to the non-Catholic."²²

*"If the marriage service is not part of the Lord's Supper or the principal liturgical service of the Word, the priest, if invited, may also read a lesson and/or preach."*²³ While it is normal for the marriage to take place in the church or chapel of one or the other, dispensation may under rare circumstances be gained for the ceremony in a non-church setting.

Minister: At the close you will find a copy of the Catholic rite for celebrating marriage outside the mass, which is used when the priest takes the lead. In consultation we can work out my role in assisting. If I take the lead, I will use that form of ceremony to which I am accustomed and the priest and I will agree on his role. You are also free to make suggestions.

Bill: But does not the priest have to pledge the couple?

Priest: No, for you remember that all that is necessary is that I be a witness in behalf of the Church to your pledging of each other.

Minister: We would like to have a full conference with all your parents together, either at the time of the wedding rehearsal or at a previous time. There is much that can still be done to insure the whole-hearted support of both families in your future relationships, now that you have fully decided

upon marriage. We would like to schedule a follow-up conference with you in two or three months and also one year after your wedding.

Priest: We have some suggestions for making your marriage work.²⁵

1. Get to work and stay busy in your own church. It is a much easier way to develop mutual respect and appreciation. Any weakness here will not be interpreted as toleration but rather as hypocrisy and so justify the other's prejudice and condemnation.

2. Go to classes or dialogue sessions together to learn the basics of the other's faith. Let us help you with a reading program that not only will inform, but that will nourish your spiritual lives. There is much excellent devotional and biblical reading that you can follow.

3. Have at least one project in social or moral service which you can do together without compromise. Practical Christian service is hardly denominational.

Minister: And, four, respect each other's heritage in praying. But do not be content just to observe the other's prayers. Read the great prayers and hymns of Christians aloud and gradually develop your mutual praying. You can at least start with saying the Our Father or the Lord's Prayer.

5. Don't be snobbish of your families. They have a great stake in your lives. Remember that they, too, are not fully responsible for the prejudices and fears they cannot help express. Let love take the offensive in your relations with your in-laws.

6. Worship together in each other's church at least once a month. The Protestant will be able to join in without compromise in most of the first half of the Catholic service, the Liturgy of the Word. The Catholic can participate in the Protestant worship when the Lord's Supper is not an integral part of the service.

Priest: We appreciate your being on the firing line in inter-religious affairs. Most of us as professionals can protect ourselves from hurt by our own psychological and theological defenses. But we know how hard it is for a couple in a mixed marriage to achieve full harmony. Yet we are committed to a gospel that is reconciling.

*"Their own love as it reaches out to relatives and friends should have a healing effect in establishing closer relationships between groups of Christians who have been estranged due to divisions among them. In this way, such marriages, while encompassing within one home the divisions among Christians, nevertheless, like all sacramental marriages, should be seen as compelling signs of the mystery of Christ's abiding love for his Church, a love which continually seeks to reconcile."*²⁶

Minister: Remember, you are not alone in Christian marriage. To your human love with its weaknesses the Holy Spirit is able to add that divine love spoken of by Paul: "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous, or conceited, or proud; love is not ill-mannered, or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil, but is happy with truth. Love never gives up. Its faith, hope and patience never fail."²⁷

Typical Marriage Ceremonies

For the information of Baptist pastors and others interested in the Roman Catholic rite of marriage the new rite is appended in full.

Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside Mass

Entrance Rite and Liturgy of the Word

At the appointed time the priest, wearing surplice and white stole (or white cope, if desired), proceeds with the ministers to the door of the church or, if more suitable, to the altar. There he greets the bride and bridegroom in a friendly manner, showing that the Church shares their joy.

Where it is desirable that the rite of welcome be omitted, the celebration of matrimony begins at once with the Liturgy of the Word.

If there is a procession to the altar the ministers go first, followed by the priest, and then the bride and bridegroom. According to local custom, they may be escorted by at least their parents and the two witnesses. Meanwhile, the entrance song is sung.

Then the people are greeted, and the prayer is offered, unless a brief pastoral exhortation seems more desirable.

The Liturgy of the Word takes place in the usual manner. There may be three readings, the first of them from the Old Testament.

After the gospel, the priest gives a homily drawn from the sacred text. He speaks about the mystery of Christian marriage, the dignity of wedded love, the grace of the sacrament, and the responsibilities of married people, keeping in mind the circumstances of this particular marriage.

Rite of Marriage ¶

All stand, including the bride and bridegroom, and the priest addresses them in these or similar words:

"My dear friends, you have come together in this church so that the Lord may seal and strengthen your love in the presence of the Church's minister and this community. Christ abundantly blesses this love. He has already consecrated you in baptism and now he enriches and strengthens you by a special sacrament so that you may assume the duties of marriage in mutual and lasting fidelity. And so, in the presence of the Church, I ask you to state your intentions."

The priest then questions them about their freedom of choice, faithfulness to each other, and the acceptance and upbringing of children:

"_____ and _____, have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?"

"Will you love and honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives?"

The following question may be omitted if, for example, the couple is advanced in years:

"Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?"

Each answers the questions separately.

Consent

The priest invites them to declare their consent:

"Since it is your intention to enter into marriage, join your right hands, and declare your consent before God and his Church."

They join hands.

The bridegroom says:

"I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life."

The bride says:

"I, _____, take you, _____, to be my husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in

sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life."

If, however, it seems preferable for pastoral reasons, the priest may obtain consent from the couple through questions. First he asks the bridegroom:

"_____, do you take _____ to be your

wife? Do you promise to be true to her in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love her and honor her all the days of your life?"

The bridegroom:

"I do."

If pastoral necessity demands it, the conference of bishops may decree, in virtue of the faculty, that the priest should always obtain the consent of the couple through questions. Receiving their consent, the priest says:

"You have declared your consent before the Church. May the Lord in his goodness strengthen your consent and fill you both with his blessings."

"What God has joined, men must not divide."

"Amen."

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

Priest: "May the Lord bless these rings which you give to each other as the sign of your love and fidelity."

"Amen."

The bridegroom places his wife's ring on her ring finger. He may say:

"_____, take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

The bride places her husband's ring on his ring finger. She may say:

"_____, take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

General Intercessions and Nuptial Blessings

The general intercessions (prayer of the faithful) and the blessing of the couple take place in this order:

(1) First the priest uses the invitational of any blessing of the couple, taken from the approved formulas for the general intercessions.

(2) Immediately after the invitational, there can be either a brief silence, or a series of petitions from the prayer of the faithful with responses by the people. All the petitions should be in harmony with blessings which follow, but should not duplicate them.

(3) Then, omitting the prayer that concludes the prayer of the faithful, the priest extends his hands and blesses the bride and bridegroom. This blessing may be: "Father, by your power you have made everything out of nothing. In the beginning you created the universe and made mankind in your own likeness. You gave man the constant help of woman so that man and woman should no longer be two, but one flesh, and you teach us that what you have united may never be divided."

"Father, you have made the union of man and woman so holy a mystery that it symbolizes the marriage of Christ and his Church."

"Father, by your plan man and woman are united, and married life has been established as the one blessing that was not forfeited by original sin or washed away in the flood."

"Look with love upon this woman, your daughter, now joined to her husband in marriage. She asks your blessing. Give her the grace of love and peace. May she always follow the example of the holy women whose praises are sung in the Scriptures."

"May her husband put his trust in her and recognize that she is his equal and the heir with him to the life of grace. May he always honor her and love her as Christ loves his bride, the Church."

"Father keep them always true to your commandments. Keep them faithful in marriage and let them be living examples of Christian life."

Conclusion of the Celebration

The entire rite can be concluded with the Lord's Prayer and the blessing.

For information of Roman Catholic priests and laity, a sample ceremony of one Baptist pastor is given. Every pastor is free to adapt his own:

Marriage Ceremony

Address:

"Dearly beloved, we are assembled here in the sight of God, to join this man and this woman in holy marriage; which is instituted of God, regulated by his commandments, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ and to be held in honor among all men. Let us, therefore, reverently remember that God has established and sanctified marriage for the welfare and happiness of mankind. Our Saviour has declared that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. By his apostles he has instructed those who enter into this relation to cherish a mutual esteem and love; to bear with each other's infirmities and weaknesses; to comfort each other in sickness, trouble and sorrow; in honesty and industry to provide for each other, and for their household, in temporal things; to pray for and encourage each other in the things which pertain to God; and to live together as the heirs of the grace of life.

Let Us Pray:

"Almighty and ever blessed God, whose presence is the happiness of every relation, we beseech thee to be present and favorable unto these thy servants that they may be truly joined in the honorable estate of marriage in the covenant of their God. As thou hast brought them together by thy providence, sanctify them by thy Spirit, giving them a new frame of heart fit for their new estate; and enrich them with all grace, whereby they may enjoy the comforts, undergo the cares, endure the trials, and perform the duties of life together as becometh children of God, under thy Heavenly guidance and protection; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Giving of the Bride

"Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?"

"I do."

Father gives the bride's hand to the minister, who places her hand in the groom's.

Vows

"_____ wilt thou have this woman to be thy wife, and wilt thou pledge thy troth to her in all love and honour, in all duty and service, in all faith, trust, and tenderness, to live with her, and cherish her according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?"

"I will."

"_____ wilt thou pledge thy faith to him in all love and honour, in all duty and service, in all trust, faith, and tenderness, to live with him, and cherish him, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?"

Ring Ceremony

To the Groom: "Do you bring a token of your love and fidelity?"

"You will now seal your vows by giving to your affianced bride this ring, which is a beautiful symbol of the enduring affection which you promise to cherish for her through life. The circle, the emblem of eternity, and gold the type of what is least tarnished and most enduring, show how lasting and imperishable the faith now mutually pledged.

(Prayer) "Bless, O Lord, this ring, that he who gives it and she who wears it may abide in thy peace, and continue in

thy favor unto their life's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"You may repeat your vow as you give the ring:

"I, _____, take thee _____ to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith."

To the bride: "Do you bring a token of your love and fidelity?"

"You will now seal your vows by giving to your betrothed husband this ring, which is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual bond which shall unite your heart to his in endless love.

(Prayer) "Bless, O Lord, this ring, that she who gives it and he who wears it may abide in thy peace, and continue in thy favour unto their life's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"You may repeat your vow after me as you give the ring:



_____ take thee _____ to my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith. The giving and receiving of these rings, be the seal of pledged faith, and of your mutual affection and fidelity; a symbol of this sacred service, and of the holy bonds of marriage by which you are bound henceforth till death shall separate you.

Let us pray. Our Father, who are in heaven, who hast, in thy love and tender care for mankind, ordained and blessed the institution of matrimony, we pray of thee graciously to receive thy servant and handmaiden who have thus solemnly pledged themselves to each other, and sworn unto thee that, through thy good care and guidance, they may evermore remember and keep these their vows; that they be kept in unbroken concord and sympathy all the days of their earthly life, and at the last with all those most near and most dear

unto them that they be gathered an unbroken household to thy right hand on the day of judgment. And may all of us here assembled be of that blessed company who shall be called to go into the marriage supper of the Lamb. And this we ask, only in the name and through the merits of him, thine own Son and our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

"Forasmuch as _____ and _____ have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their faith each to the other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving of rings and by joining of hands, and by my authority as a minister of the gospel and under the laws of the state of _____, I now pronounce you husband and wife."

Benediction:

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee:

The Lord make his face shine upon thee,

And be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee,

and give thee peace. Amen."

Footnotes

¹The Official Catholic Directory, 1971 (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1971).

²Albert J. Gordon, *Intermarriage* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 60-67.

³Paul and Jean Simon, *Protestant Catholic Marriages Can Succeed* (New York: Associated Press, 1967), p. 14.

⁴George A. Kelly, *The Catholic Marriage Manual* (New York: Random House, 1958), p. 167.

⁵Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁶Simon and Simon, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Walter M. Abbott, *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press), pp. 25-281.

⁹James T. McHugh, *Mixed Marriages: New Directions* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1971), pp. 11-12.

¹⁰Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., *The Seven Sacraments* (Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1966), pp. 172-173.

¹¹Ibid., p. 175.

¹²Statements on the Implementation of the Apostolic Letter of Mixed Marriages, Jan., 1971, p. 7.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Op. cit., chapter 7.

¹⁶Op. cit., p. 87.

¹⁷Abbott, *op. cit.*, pp. 681, 683.

¹⁸A.M.J. Kreykamp, O.P., and others, *Protestant-Catholic Marriages* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), p. 56.

¹⁹Paragraph 16.

²⁰Ibid., paragraph 50.

²¹Robert McAfee Brown, *Humanae Vitae: a Protestant Reaction*, "Contraception, Authority and Dissent," Charles E. Curran, ed. (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), pp. 194-200.

²²"Statement," 15.

²³Ibid., 10.

²⁴Ibid., 10.

²⁵Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 49-75.

²⁶"Statement," 4.

²⁷TEV, 1 Cor. 13:4-7.

The Orthodox Among Us

by C. Brownlow Hastings

"The Easter service is the peak experience in the calendar of the Orthodox Church and the most impressive—I have to admit. I was attracted more by their liturgy than by the Roman Catholic, and the basic reason is that the singing is more beautiful in the Orthodox Church."

My friend ought to know. With a Russian army officer for a father, he was baptized as an infant with the three-fold immersion of the Russian Orthodox Church in western Russia. With a Polish Roman Catholic mother he was later baptized by affusion into the Roman faith. As a teen-ager, he was attracted by the simple gospel preaching of a Polish Baptist pastor and was again baptized, this time in the little Baptist chapel.

"I still long to attend the Easter service in the Orthodox Church," he continued, "because it is permeated with the deepest experience of Christian joy, of joy and conviction of the risen Lord."

I was reminded of my embarrassment in trying to attend my first Orthodox Easter service in the magnificent Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation in Atlanta. Being careful to choose the Orthodox Easter Sunday,¹ I showed up at 10:30 in the morning only to discover the church locked, the people gone.

My friend described such an Easter service: "When the sun rises and the rays come through the windows of the church, the priest comes and announces to the congregation, 'The Lord is risen.' The congregation answers, 'He is truly risen.' They repeat this three times. When you hear this, it does not matter who you are and what you feel about Christianity, you feel that something happened in the church in that service and in the hearts of the people who participated."

In fact, when I had dialogue with certain East European diplomats, one of them told me that though he was a communist, his mother took him to an Easter sunrise service. Since he experienced that service and heard the priest announce to the congregation that 'He is risen,' with the congregation responding, he was restless and not fully convinced

anymore that there is no God. His mind was set on the course of seeking the truth."

"Is it true that the Orthodox emphasize the resurrection whereas the Roman Catholics emphasize the Crucifixion?" I asked.

"That is an oversimplification, as you can see from the Easter service, which begins on Thursday night with fasting and prayer.² My mother joined my father in that service for the sake of doing things together religiously. They fasted from Thursday night until they came from church on Sunday morning. They drank a little water and maybe a little juice but they didn't eat meals."

"On Thursday night we went to the Russian Orthodox Church and listened to the 'Twelve Gospels.' These are the account of the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus. At the Easter service all of us brought candles and lighted them in the church. The idea was to bring a lighted candle to one's home—I have often used this as an illustration of Christian faith. We were anxious to light a candle in the church and bring that light into our home."

"You actually tried to take it all the way without its going out?" I asked.

"All the way. We protected and sheltered it, for it was a special experience and blessing. That light was the symbol of our Christian faith. Friday and Saturday were days of fasting and service. Mother prepared our Easter meal on Saturday, and the priest visited to bless the meal, but it would not be eaten then."

"We went to church on Saturday evening and stayed all night. The service begins at midnight and ends with sunrise Sunday morning.³ People stand there all night long. In the Russian Church in Europe I didn't see any Jews. They are a western innovation."

"Where is the difference of emphasis with a typical Baptist worship on Easter?" I thought I sensed something special.

"As I compare the Easter service of the Orthodox Church with that of a Baptist, I find that the Baptist preacher will try

to prove that the Lord was raised up. He points to the empty tomb and to other events to prove that Christ is risen. In the Orthodox service you don't hear the proofs; you just feel the presence of the risen Lord and his victory. The service is permeated with the assurance and joy of the risen Lord. There is no attempt to prove it, just as the Baptist does not attempt to prove the existence of God. There is no attempt to prove the joy and the triumph of the resurrection."

Religion in an Orthodox Home

Who are these people who put Baptists to shame with their assurance and joy in worship? They present many paradoxes to those who are just getting acquainted: sermons and prayers in Greek, Arabic or Old Slavonic; married priests and celibate bishops; tiny babes receiving both bread and wine at communion; evangelical preaching over a liturgy substantially unchanged in fifteen hundred years.

One learns quickly to call them Orthodox or Christian and not Catholics, which smacks of Rome and the papal claims. Or to speak of the "divine liturgy" rather than "the mass." Or that the icons are always paintings or mosaics, never sculptures.

Walk into a devout Orthodox home and you are struck with the many symbols of faith: an icon of the Last Supper in the dining room, an icon of the patron saint of each child on the wall over his bed, even a shrine in a prominent place with icons of Christ, the virgin Mary and the patron saint of the parish, with vigil lamps and incense burning. The mother may be baking the communion bread, or "prosphoron"—round, leavened loaves imprinted with the special seal containing the Greek letters that begin the words, "Jesus Christ conquers." She will take this as the family's offering or gift to be used, at least in part, by the pastor as the altar bread for the Sunday liturgy.

Together or individually the family will begin and close the day with prayers, suggested from the Manual for Private Prayer, largely drawn from the Divine Liturgy, which enables them to join with all other Orthodox in spiritual fellowship. One such prayer for the beginning of the day, written by Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow (died 1633) is:

"O Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace. Help me in all things to rely upon Thy holy will. In every hour of the day reveal Thy will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to me through Thy will with peace of soul, and with firm conviction that Thy will governs all. In all my deeds and words guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events let me not forget that all are sent by Thee. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering and embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day with all that it shall bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray, pray through Thyself in me. Amen."

An ancient prayer, much used in monasteries and convents, is the "Jesus Prayer": "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." The devout are encouraged to pray as a literal response to Paul's injunction to pray without ceasing.

Spontaneous prayer is encouraged also. "The faithful are encouraged to use the prayers of the Church though it is often recommended that they use their own prayers. Orthodox also pray through the Saints and the virgin Mary, that is praying to them to intercede."⁵

Reading the Bible each day is considered a Christian obligation, especially those passages assigned for reading in the church daily liturgy. "The Bible is the supreme expression of God's revelation to man, and Christians must always be faithful to the Book," says Timothy Ware,⁶ but he goes on to qualify that it must not be regarded as something set up over the

Church, but as something that lives and is understood within the Church (that is why one should not separate Scripture and Tradition).⁷ He warns against the danger of trusting private interpretation and quotes the promise each convert makes: "I will accept and understand Holy Scripture in accordance with the interpretation which was and is held by the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church of the East, our Mother."⁸

The Orthodox pastor is heavily involved in the family and business affairs of his flock. He is asked into the home on all significant occasions: the blessing of a new house, the feast day of the patron saint of each child (called his "name day"), the launching of a new business venture and, of course, at births, weddings and funerals. Various trades and professions will be honored with blessings on the day of their patron saints. The whole rhythm of life is tuned to the calendar of feasts and fasts observed in the Church.

Different Approach of Eastern Christianity

All of these practices reflect the differing approach of Eastern Christianity from that of the West. Nicolas Zernov illustrates this differing approach in several ways.⁹

1. Differences in religious vocabulary. Much of this is due to the subtle difference in the style of the Latin which is behind Western terminology—precise yet inflexible—and the Greek, which is by its richness and diversity a finer instrument of philosophers and mystics. For example, both use the ideas "catholic" and "orthodox." By catholic the West means universal and emphasizes uniformity of belief and practice; the East means wholeness and stresses unity of faith in the diversity of many cultural values in the whole. By orthodox the West holds to correct doctrine, precisely defined by papal authority. The East understands orthodoxy "more as the true glory than a right teaching, implicit in the indissoluble unity between faith and worship."

2. On the relation between spirit and matter, the West sought in religious rituals and disciplines a means of escape of the spirit from matter, which often was equated with evil; the East regarded matter as "spirit-bearing" and the world about man as reflecting the goodness of the Creator. So salvation in the West tends toward the removal of the guilt of original sin and the return to innocence and purity. In the East the emphasis is upon a restoring of the divinely blessed environment.

3. On the difference in understanding of the Christian community. Both Roman Catholic and Orthodox hold very tenaciously to the doctrine of the "one, true Church." In varying degrees they have held that outside the Church there is no salvation. Stephanou expresses the Orthodox attitude: "Churches that have separated from the Orthodox Church do not possess the fullness of the Holy Spirit and thus cannot grant complete regeneration and sanctification to the human soul."¹⁰ Yet where the West speaks of "the Church" the East says "the Churches." Orthodox understand the Church of God to consist of many self-governing churches, united in faith and worship but independent in their administration under their own patriarch. This accounts for a number of features of Eastern Orthodoxy: their rejection of papal infallibility and sovereignty over all hierarchies; their trust in the first seven ecumenical councils as expressing the truths of the faith, but only when ratified by the universal acceptance of the total Christian community; and their readiness to join the World Council of Churches as well as regional and local councils.

The Setting of Worship

The heart of Orthodoxy is the divine liturgy. An outsider at his first liturgy experiences a bewildering assault upon all his senses through color, movement, odor of incense, sounds of chants and anthems. It is strongly advised, therefore, that

he enlist the interpretation of both Orthodox friend and liturgical handbook (in Greek and English in the Greek Orthodox Church; in English for most other Eastern Orthodox, as is the liturgy). The most often used is that of St. John Chrysostom (fifth century). This largely unchanged liturgy is the chief source of pride of the Greek Orthodox: "For fifteen centuries we, as a Church, have worshipped through this Liturgy, and this worship has preserved our conscience, our language, our ideals and our very souls. It constitutes the greatest contribution of Byzantine culture to the whole world."¹⁰

Let us visit the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation. On entering the narthex (entrance hall) we see a few early worshippers lighting slender candles and placing them before one of two or more icons, one of which will be of the saint or martyr whose feast is today. Lightly kissing the icon, the worshippers lead the way into the service that has already begun. Through the glass walls we catch a glimpse of the beauty within. We step into the nave (seated area) and try to look everywhere at once.

Directly in front, the bronze altar screen, or "iconostasis," gleams with its seven-foot-high mosaic icons. Through the central archway, the "royal doors," we look into the sanctuary (the area behind the altar screen) with its marble altar and the illuminated mosaic of Christ on the cross on the rear wall. Towering above the altar in the half-dome of the apse is a larger-than-life mosaic of Mary, the *theotokos* (God-bearer), with her Son in her lap, sitting upon the throne of heaven and flanked by two angels.

By now we are aware of mighty eyes following our every move. We look up in awe at the huge mosaic of Christ enthroned (*pantokrator*) in the 58-foot dome above us. The 24-foot figure of the risen Lord is the second largest mosaic of Christ in the world! But Christ incarnate, Christ crucified and Christ glorified do not exhaust our worship setting. In the rounded nave, arched panels—three on either side of the sanctuary, each 21 feet high and more than 10 feet wide—portray the chief events in the life of Christ: the baptism in the Jordan, the transfiguration, the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension and two apocryphal resurrection gifts of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Each of these panels is surrounded by an arch of clear glass that unites the world without with that within and seems to float the Christ event into touch with the cosmic.

Our eyes return to the iconostasis. The six mosaic panels reflect the characteristic Byzantine color schemes—blue and gold, red and green—all stylized according to the traditional rules of the art. Every Orthodox church will show the same general icons on the screen. (In many churches they will be paintings on wood panels.) To the right of the royal doors will always be the icon of Christ, then the forerunner (*prodromos*) John the Baptist, and the archangel Gabriel. On the left of the royal doors is usually that of the virgin and Child, next the icon of the saint or event to which the church is dedicated (the annunciation to Mary), and finally, the archangel Michael. The panels of the archangel's table as the north and south doors leading out of the sanctuary into the broad, marbled *solea* or *dais*, that separates the people from the sanctuary. On the left of the *solea* is the pulpit, or *ambo*, and on the right the bishop's marble chair and the changers' lectern or *analogion*.

Above the iconostasis is another smaller row of icons—one larger, in an arch above the royal doors, of the Last Supper—and six smaller, of the four evangelists, Isaiah and Moses. Like jewels set in a crown, in the proscenium arch above the sanctuary are small round windows of stained glass with Christ at the apex flanked by six of his apostles on either side.

The resurrection panel holds our attention, for it is quite different from western portrayals of angels and disciples before the empty tomb. Christ is seen standing on the broken gates of hades with Satan bound and crushed beneath. Sur-

rounded by Old Testament kings and prophets, the triumphant Christ is raising with each hand Adam and Eve "from the hades of original sin" (from the full-color brochure, "Iconography," by the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, Atlanta).

Though there is some modernization, the Italian art st, Tonelli, has faithfully preserved the Byzantine character—dependence upon color, symbols and attitude of subjects—evoked a spiritual feeling rather than upon more realistic line and perspective. The fully clothed figures (except for the Baptism and Crucifixion) played down the ideal human of the ancient Greek art in order to convey the stylized spiritual element. The westerner must spend some time to study and appreciate the subtleties of Byzantine art. More than any other it has been blended from ancient cultures—that of Persia, Syria and Coptic Egypt—and the religious disputes of early Christianity. Will Durant attempted an objective evaluation:

Christianity at first suspected art as a support of paganism, idolatry and immorality; these nude statues hardly comported with esteem for virginity and celibacy. When the body seemed an instrument of Satan, and the monk replaced the athlete as ideal, the study of anatomy disappeared from art, leaving a sculpture and painting of gloomy faces and shapeless drapery....

The Byzantine artist had small choice of patron, and therefore of subject or style; monarch or patriarch told him what to do, and how. He worked in a group, and seldom left an individual name to history. He achieved miracles of brilliance, he exalted and humbled the people with the splendor of his creations; but his art paid in formalism, narrowness, and stagnation for serving an absolute monarch and a changeless creed. . . . Never before had an art been so rich in color, so subtle in symbolism, so exuberant in decoration, so well adapted to quiet the intellect and stir the soul.¹¹



The Veneration of Icons

After difficulty the western Christian encounter arises watching the early worshippers in the narthex of the kissing the icon. If Orthodoxy rejects three-dimensional images as a compromise, if not a violation of the second commandment, how then can veneration (*dulia*) of the saints and veneration (*hyperdulia*) of Mary be distinguished from worship (*latria*) of God?

...ing the accusations of superstition, Zernov counters: the spiritual Western mind draws a distinction between the intellect and its nature, between the person and his portrait, between spirit and body. The East is more aware of their interdependence. To the Eastern mentality the name of a person forms a part of his personality; his portrait also is in close relation to the man himself. The East believes that the Incarnation revealed the existence of a material unity between the divine and the human and that the human, no less than man's mind and spirit, can be used by God for his purpose. For an Eastern Christian the icons "represent" Jesus Christ, the Mother of God and the Saints, and the very word "represent" implies that one can speak of some presence of the heavenly persons in their images.

We must look back into early Christian history and the "koneklastic" (image-breaking) controversy to understand three factors, at least, come to light. The triumph of Christianity under Constantine (in the Edict of Milan, 314), with its consequent mass conversion of pagans, eased the tension between a persecuted, purist Christianity and the Greek world. The multitudes of illiterate converts needed dramatic and tangible aids to teach them the Christian faith and manner of worship. The new emperors needed to control religious unity in order to preserve the political unity and stability of the realm. Will Durant observes:

As the number of worshiped saints multiplied, a need arose

for identifying and remembering them; pictures of them and of Mary were produced in great numbers; and in the case of Christ not only his image but his cross became objects of reverence—even, for simple minds, magic talismans. . . . Fathers and councils of the Church repeatedly explained that the images were not deities, but only reminders thereof; the people did not care to make such distinctions.¹¹

The Divine Liturgy

We have wandered far afield from the Greek Orthodox service in Atlanta. It has been necessary, however, for the setting of worship here is not the interpretation of one man or church committee. Nor is it the reflection of a mere cultural trend. It is the root essence of the Orthodox faith.

Le Guillou explains that the church building is an image of the cosmos: The narthex corresponds to the earth, the nave to the heavens, the sanctuary to that which is higher than the heavens' (Simeon of Thessalonica). The whole of public worship is, then, an anticipation of the liturgy of Heaven; the icons—painted images of Christ and the saints—bear witness to the spiritual presence of the world of Heaven.¹⁴

As we enter the nave at the time of the divine liturgy we are struck with how few people are present. Sunday School is still in session for the children and youth, and there is a Bible class for adults. The liturgy is a drama in three acts of the whole life, sacrifice and resurrection and ascension of Christ, small but a largely conducted by the priest alone at the altar, the "office of preparation" behind the sanctuary screen. This is called the "office of preparation" and is symbolic of the bread and wine to be used later and is symbolic of the years of Jesus. While the priest is busy about this preparation, the chanters may be concluding the office of matins (*orthros*)—that is, a service of psalms and prayers which ends with the great Doxology, an ancient hymn of praise.

The second act is the liturgy of the Word (or *synaxis*—a coming together), and by this time most of the people have assembled. It begins with the litany of peace, entreaties by the priest with responses by the choir, "Lord, have mercy" (the *Kyrie, eleison*). The priest varies his prayers, sometimes audibly so that the people may follow, other times inaudibly while the choir sings hymns, some fixed, such as "Only-Begotten Son and Word of God," and some special, appointed for that calendar day (all the prayers are fully written in the liturgical handbook available in the pews).

The "little entrance" is made by the priest from the royal doors, carrying the Book of the Gospels on high and preceded by altar boys carrying lighted candles. On occasion this procession moves round about the congregation and ends with the priest depositing the book upon the altar. A lay reader will read from the epistle for the day and the priest (or a deacon) will read the Gospel. Before each reading the congregation is challenged by the loud cry of the priest, "Wisdom! Attend!" as the people stand to hear the Word of God.

Then the priest preaches from the Gospel for the day (this is often deferred to the end of the Eucharist). This is followed by certain prayers of the faithful for the Church as a whole. On earlier days at this point the catechumens were dismissed.

The third act, the liturgy of the Eucharist, begins with "the great entrance," the priestly procession bringing the gifts from the south door of the iconostasis round the congregation and into the royal doors to be deposited on the altar. The choir during the procession sings the "Cherubic Hymn": "We who mystically represent the Cherubim, sing the Thrice-holy Hymn to the life-giving Trinity. Let us put away all worldly care, so that we may receive the King of All."

Then after the Litany of Supplication there follows the call of the people to peace among themselves and the reciting of the creed (often first in Greek or whatever is the vernacular, then in English). This is the Nicene Creed as amended by the

Council of Constantinople (381). The choir sings the triumphant hymn (*Santus*): "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of thy glory." As he elevates the bread and then the wine, the priest recites the scriptures of Christ instituting the Last Supper (the *anmnosis* or calling to remembrance). A unique feature follows, the *epiclesis*, or involving of the Holy Spirit upon the gifts.

This invocation, the 'Epiclesis,' is of special significance in the Eastern Church, for only those who have been purified by the Holy Spirit can approach the life-giving and awe-inspiring mystery of the Eucharist. The Holy Spirit is not only asked to sanctify and change the bread and wine and make them the precious Body and Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, but is also implored to descend upon the gathered Church and open the eyes of her people to his perpetual presence.¹³

The priest (and any assistant) partake of the bread and wine at the altar. Then standing before the royal doors, the priest calls: "With fear of God, with faith and with love, draw near." Except on the high, holy days, we may be surprised at the small number of worshippers who come to receive communion and at the number of infants who are brought to receive a bit of the *leavened* bread dipped in the wine which has been mixed with warm water. We are told that while the people are encouraged to "communicate" frequently, they are also warned not to present themselves without the preparation of confession, fasting and spiritual disciplines. Since infants are confirmed by the "Holy Chrism," the oil of anointing, by the priest at the same time as they are baptized by three-fold immersion, communion is given as early as the babe can receive the elements from the golden spoon which is used for all communicants. As the people turn from the priest, they take a piece of the *antidoron*, bread which has been blessed but not consecrated, and from which the altar bread has been taken.

When all have received communion, the priest elevates the cup signifying the ascension of the Lord and the joyful expectation of his return. At the close of the service, all the rest of the congregation who have not received communion will come forward to receive the *antidoron*, eating it as they leave the church. The service concludes with benedictions and prayers. The people leave the nave, often to gather again around coffee in the fellowship hall.

Orthodox theologians like to stress the difference in the divine liturgy and the Roman Catholic mass: it is a drama of the whole Christ event and not alone of his sacrificial death. While both use the idea of transubstantiation, the East prefers not to define the process (certainly not in terms of Aristotelian philosophy) and attributes the change to the response of the Holy Spirit, climaxed in the *epiclesis*, and not to the priestly words of institution; the remaining bread is not to be adored, either privately or in special services. Admitting that the Eucharist is a propitiatory sacrifice, Timothy Ware makes a distinction:

The Eucharist is not a bare commemoration nor an imaginary representation of Christ's sacrifice, but the true sacrifice itself; yet on the other hand it is not a new sacrifice, nor a repetition of the sacrifice on Calvary, since the Lamb was sacrificed once only, for all time. The events of Christ's Sacrifice—the Incarnation, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension—are not repeated in the Eucharist, but they are made present.¹⁴

Distinctive Beliefs of Orthodox

Besides the beliefs already discussed, Baptists are interested in these questions: What is your view of the Scriptures and of authority in religion? How do you understand salva-



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tion? What do you think of Christ? Of the Holy Spirit?

Orthodoxy accepts the Greek version of the Old Testament (Septuagint), which contains 10 books not found in the Protestant canon, and the same number as Protestants for the New Testament. Their theologians hold a high view of inspiration while pursuing today the historical-critical method of interpretation. Bulgakov observes about canon law: "Nothing is said on the question of inspiration itself, of the correlation of divine and human which works in these books, of their history, nor of the interpretation of the relationship between their content and their historical background."¹⁷

This is not something which is left to the discretion of the individual believer. Bulgakov makes the application:

The essential principle of tradition is this: each member of the Church, in his life and his knowledge (whether it concerns scientific theology or practical wisdom) should seek to attain the integral unity of tradition, to test himself if he is in accord with it. He ought to be a link inseparable connected with all the chain of history.¹⁸

In the light of this there is no room for private interpretation of Scripture, for though there may be differing opinions debated, yet no reader of the Word of God can comprehend for himself the inspired character of that which he reads, for to the individual is not given an organ of such comprehension. Such an organ is available to the reader only when he finds himself in union with all in the Church. This gift is received immediately, in its fullness, in union with the church, in the temple, where the reading of the Word of God is preceded and followed by a special prayer.¹⁹

Salvation in the Orthodox faith combines a strong evangelical invitation with baptismal regeneration. "If you have not received Holy Baptism, you can make the momentous decision to accept Christ as your Savior and to repent of your sins in order to win God's forgiveness."²⁰ Stephanou admits that "there is no doubt that Baptism would be more meaningful for Christian believers if they were baptized at an age when they could understand Baptism truly as a new beginning in life and as a true rebirth in Christ."²¹ Quoting John 3:5 and Mark 16:16, however, he holds that Christ taught that baptism is essential to winning eternal life. "Without Baptism, along with the Chrismation (the Orthodox term for the sacrament of confirmation) and the Holy Communion which follows, the human soul has no share in the blessings of Redemption."²²

The emphasis in salvation is more upon what one is saved to rather than saved from. "In the East salvation is the grant of a new life of unity, holiness and immortality, bestowed upon redeemed mankind through Christ's victory over death and through the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost."²³ There is in this doctrine a three-fold emphasis upon: (1) the corporate rather than the individual, who is brought into the redeemed community where he shares the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the whole body; (2) the link with cosmic redemption (cf. Rom. 8:19-23), for the redeemed community is God's agent in the redemption of his world; and (3) "divinization" (*theosis*).

This idea, sometimes called deification, is the ground of much of Orthodox mysticism. The process of sanctification develops the believer in that union with Christ which is characteristic of Paul's mysticism. Second Peter 1:4 is the basis of Athanasius' dictum that God became man in order that man might become God.

Whether in theology, worship or spiritual disciplines the Orthodox Church gives much place to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The sacraments, fasts, vigils, charitable works and mystical disciplines—all have as their end the acquiring of the Holy Spirit and his gifts to men. The authority of bishops is the authority of the Holy Spirit passed on through



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apostolic succession. But it is not merely a historical and juridical succession but a charismatic one that must prove itself against the Holy Spirit in the whole body of the people of God.²⁴

The Great Schism East/West

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit figures largely in the decisive break between Eastern and Western Christendom, which is usually dated at 1054. The age-old controversy over the addition of the Latin word *filioque* ("and from the Son") to the creed is easily stated but hard to understand. On any rationalization of the argument, it is generally conceded by both sides that the controversy was but a trigger growing out of an annoyance rather than the cause of the "Great Schism." The highlights of the dispute, somewhat oversimplified, include:

- When Constantine became emperor and accepted Christianity as the religion of the realm, he chose Byzantium as the seat of empire rather than Rome, troubled with decay and threats of pagan invasions. He began to exercise a strong hand over the temporal and spiritual affairs of the Church, calling the first ecumenical Council at Nicaea, 325. Though later codes sought to make a clear distinction between the State and the Church in the East, the dominant power, even to appoint the patriarchs of Constantinople, usually was that of the emperor. This inevitably brought emperor and Roman popes into a power struggle. When Pope Leo III crowned Charles the Great, king of the Franks, as the first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, the unity of Christendom was henceforth doomed. Constantinople was too far committed to the cultures of the East and too preoccupied with the Moslem

threat to be concerned.

- The controversy over the patriarchate in Constantinople during the reign of Emperor Michael sealed the attitude of the East against the papal claims of primacy and jurisdiction. This Photian controversy—over the lay theologian Photios whom Michael elevated to the patriarchate (861) over the deposed Ignatius—was played out against the dispute over the missionary activity of both Rome and Constantinople among the Bulgars and later the Russians. This set a trend which perpetuated the alienation of language and culture. Rome insisted on the Latin liturgy everywhere. The Eastern missionaries translated the Greek liturgy into the Slav tongues wherever they went.

- By the eleventh century, political, racial and ecclesiastical differences made the Great Schism inevitable. Theological arguments by then were afterthoughts to justify the power positions already obtaining. But the *filioque* debate was by no means rankling. As early as the regional Council of Toledo (589) the word was added to the Nicene Creed where it reads "the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father."

The East had two objections to adding "and the Son" to the clause: (1) The addition was a gratuitous one made without the authority of an ecumenical council and in defiance of the canons of Nicaea and Constantinople. (2) The addition was theologically dangerous. It is more than doubtful that such fine points were uppermost in the minds of the papal legates of the now dead Pope Leo IX when their leader, Cardinal Humbert, laid the decree of excommunication on the altar of the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople in 1054. They were much more exercised over the high-handed move of Patriarch Michael Cerularius, who forced the closing of

churches in the city when their priests refused his order toavened bread at the altar. Cerularius promptly called them heretics and anathematized the legates.

The spat might have remained just that—a test of wills between churchmen—had it not been for the next, most decisive. When the Fourth Crusade, backed by the power of the Venetian fleet, conquered and sacked Constantinople in the aftermath was bitterness that time has only succeeded in mellowing to distrust. When Pope Paul VI visited the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I in Istanbul in 1967 and the two exchanged the kiss of peace, a first step in reconciliation took place. Efforts at reunion in the past, as at the Council of Florence, 1439, always broke down for lack of support and the councilors.

Orthodoxy presents a rather bewildering array of national churches today. This has come about because of several factors. Missionaries were allowed to translate the divine liturgy (which served as the chief bond of fellowship) into the vernacular and the national culture was respected and blended with the religious practices. Each bishop is supreme in his own diocese, owing allegiance to no pope and only guidance to patriarchs and councils. Each national patriarch is considered on a par with other patriarchs, although the Ecumenical Patriarch at Constantinople (now Istanbul) has long been held "first among equals." In modern times there has been no ecumenical council worthy of the stature of the first seven to promote ecclesiastical unity and provide Orthodoxy with a united front toward the West.

Getting to Know Each Other

In past generations Baptists and Orthodox have had little occasion and less motivation for getting to know each other. As long as Southern Baptists were a people of the rural South and Orthodox were confined to urban communities of the metropolitan North there was practically no contact. Now, Southern Baptists are attempting to meet the challenge of the unchurched masses of the great cities. Orthodox are moving out of their immigrant status into our pluralistic culture. The movement of more than four million immigrants from Eastern Europe and Asia to America has presented Orthodoxy with a challenge more far-reaching than any previous historic encounter. Heretofore, the Orthodox national church had to survive in the face of invasions from Mongols and Islam, of competition from Rome and now of dominance by communism. In America it is having to learn to live in a free state in the midst of a pluralistic and secularistic culture it has never known before. The great period of Russian migration to America was the double decade at the turn of the century, when more than three million came. Greeks sent almost 100,000 in the decades 1901-20. The communistic revolution has largely shut down the flow from Eastern Europe in the past 20 years, but a new surge of Greek immigrants, 100,000 a year, came during the decade of the sixties.

The church must be prepared to minister to these first generation people with a continuance of their language and culture while at the same time adjusting to the demands of the second and third generation to Americanize the Church. The challenge is more critical in America because of the religious pluralism and a more vigorous Protestantism it has known in Europe and Asia. For this reason, the growing spirit of cooperation of Orthodox with other Christian groups can assist this spirit by a wholehearted acceptance of ethnic backgrounds as full Americans and prove the genuineness of their friendship and understanding. My friend who was raised in Eastern Orthodoxy advises: "I don't want them where they are, because they have strong beliefs. They have the same traditional doctrines

that we have—existence of God, the divinity of Jesus Christ, life beyond the grave, and so on. I would meet them even at the point of their emphasis on good deeds, because the New Testament urges us to do good deeds but as a demonstration of our faith and not for acquiring merit for salvation." Here are some practical suggestions:

1. Ask your Orthodox friend to take you to the divine liturgy or perhaps to Saturday vespers. In discussion afterward you may learn the meaning of various words and acts in the worship and what this means to him. You may also want to visit an adult education group where you may ask further questions.
2. Invite a lay teacher or a pastor to visit your adult education group and explain the meaning and significance of the Orthodox faith. It may be possible for each group to exchange visits with a guide to explain the worship in each church.
3. Exchange Bibles and set up a Bible study group in the home. Or plan a spiritual retreat where lay couples may explore spiritual and moral values apart from any proselytizing effort.
4. Have an Orthodox "friends' night" in your church, where they may experience a typical Baptist worship service and perhaps a baptismal service. Follow with a get-acquainted time with perhaps a panel from both churches answering questions.
5. Investigate areas of moral and civic concern in which both churches can work together in service to others.
6. Encourage your Orthodox friends to contribute out of their rich tradition to the total Christian community, while drawing them beyond the borders of their own ethnicity.

Footnotes

- ¹There could be as much as five weeks difference between the Orthodox Easter and the Roman Catholic, Protestant date in 1974, however, the dates coincide.
- ²In Orthodox Churches in this country all of Holy Week is given to fasting and prayer. These practices will vary according to the customs of the various Orthodox churches.
- ³In the United States the Greek Orthodox began at 11:00 P.M. Saturday. At midnight the great doors of the "royal doors" and makes the resurrection declaration. Then follows the office and the divine liturgy.
- ⁴Quoted in Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963, pp. 311-312.
- ⁵George H. Denker, *Theology of the Eastern Church*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1964, p. 147.
- ⁶Op. cit., p. 207.
- ⁷Op. cit., p. 208.
- ⁸*Orthodox Explorer*, London: James Clarke and Company, 1961, pp. 328.
- ⁹Op. cit., p. 10.
- ¹⁰*The Divine Liturgy*, p. 25.
- ¹¹Will Durant, *The Age of Faith*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950, pp. 120-4.
- ¹²Op. cit., pp. 102-3.
- ¹³Op. cit., p. 426.
- ¹⁴M. J. Le Gullon, O.P., *The Spirit of Eastern Orthodoxy*, New York: Hawthorne Books, 1962, p. 54.
- ¹⁵Zernov, op. cit., p. 67.
- ¹⁶Ware, op. cit., pp. 293-4.
- ¹⁷Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, Dobbs, N.Y.: American Review of Eastern Orthodoxy, 1935, p. 25.
- ¹⁸Op. cit., p. 20.
- ¹⁹Ibid., pp. 22-3.
- ²⁰Stephanou, op. cit., p. 33.
- ²¹Ibid., pp. 27-28.
- ²²Loc. cit.
- ²³Zernov, op. cit., p. 93.
- ²⁴Niesel, op. cit., pp. 132-3.



The Occult: Stimulus To Revival

by M. Thomas Starkes

The occult revival poses a new option to thinking and experiencing Americans. Evangelical Christians who have the truth in Christ must be informed of the occult revival's potential force for sizeable alternative to meaningful discipleship.

Long before most adults had heard of "subculture," an alternate life-style began to emerge on the American religious scene. In the 1950s D.T. Suzuki and Alan Watts appeared, teaching a form of Zen Buddhism with its emphasis on celebration of life, intuitive knowing of truth, negation of the search for material goods and awareness of life.

Zen seeks enlightenment with little rational or logical base, distrusting logic with its accompanying weight of evidence and advantages. This doctrine in all forms has contributed, as the basic philosophical foundation, to the current interest in the occult by emphasizing intuitive ways of knowing. At the same time, the occult has returned to nature as a powerful force to be reckoned with, joining Zen in defining religious experience as relating seriously to nature.

The first inklings of the occult revival came in the mid-1960s introduced by the novel and movie, *Rosemary's Baby*, in which Anton LaVey played the role of Satan. The closing scene is easily remembered once experienced. This was also the cue for a number of other claimants for the interest and the involvement of Americans, particularly youth. Among them was the movement of Krishna Lovers, members of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness started by Swami A.C. Bhaktivedanta in 1966. These American young people in Hindu robes and with shaved heads, chanting "Hare Krishna, Hare Rama" on American street corners, are products of this resident guru whose promises are Hindu in origin and content, if Americanized in style.

Evidence that this is a religion about which evangelical Christians should be seriously concerned can be found in the increasing number of its followers and in a Krishna consciousness-owned Texas farm. Here babies, taken away as small infants from their Krishna parents, are being raised en

masse, in totally isolated settings that reproduce ancient Hindu environment and culture, divorced entirely from the twentieth-century world.

Another claimant was Maharishi Mahesh Yogi who introduced transcendental meditation with the aid of Johnny Carson, *Life* and the Beach Boys. He promised eternal consciousness and bliss. That his religious movement is taking serious root in the United States is seen in its purchase of a defunct college in Fairfield, Iowa and the establishment in the fall of 1974 of the Maharishi International University in facilities. Many Fairfield residents, at first wary and skeptical, have since become enthusiastic, practicing believers. The university, frankly established to teach transcendental meditation, has incorporated traditional courses to attract students and is seeking accreditation in Iowa. It has also become the TM headquarters and center, transferred from Southern California. Yogi's followers still promise that one can practice transcendental meditation without the basic premise of Hindu thought—a promise easier to make than to fulfill.

A viable channel in today's search for truth is the occult which comes from the Latin word *culus* meaning worship may, therefore, mean "hidden or mysterious forms of religious practice." Its appeal is attested by the presence of more than 1600 students who at one university attended lecture on the occult. Free university and high school courses on the occult overflow with respondents. A number of high schools across the nation have had to face furious parents protesting the removal of courses on the occult from the curriculum.

Characterized by a tendency to assume that religious pursuit is an escape into emotional highs or communal acceptance, this type of religious escape has been described as prefrontal lobotomy, performed on spiritual sensitivity as well as resultant energies channeled into selfish search after religious truth.

Causes for the rebirth of interest in the occult are many. The first is the political climate in the early 1970s. Disin-



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ing government interest in reform related to social problems is reflected in the vanishing social concern that was beginning to affect even evangelical churches in the late sixties. The vacuum thus created has left leisure for investigation of the metaphysical and the new neo-paganism.

A second factor is the almost indiscernible shift away from synagogue and church attendance. A parallel effect can be seen in the Hebrews. Out of touch with their Temple, when in Babylon, they took unto themselves strange gods. Abandoning carefully programmed religion and embracing spontaneity has enhanced interest in the supernatural.

A third cause has been the lessening of confidence in and disillusionment with science-technology so popular in the late 1960s. This is a far different world from the one theologians wrote about in books such as *The Secular City*, calling upon man to celebrate his own achievements and self-deliverance. Claims to have "conquered space" have been substituted by interest in conquering inner space. "Indifference to scientific achievements is the mood of the moment" wrote the decreasing number of science majors enrolling in the face of increasing national concern. This disenchantment has resulted in a fervent search for metaphysical solutions to material problems. The occult world has promised the answers.

A fourth cause of occult growth is the "dionysiac element" which marked religious life with joy, ecstasy and emotion. Witches, as in witchcraft, or a seance provides excitement for participants which some church services lack. The counter-culture's willingness to experience mystery with a curiosity in seeking deeper meanings has little with services that eliminate the spontaneous. This wonder is expressed by Rollo May who speaks of man's inability to express his true emotions. Even the "ecstatic sessions" of the Church of Satan speak to man's need to express himself publicly.

A fifth cause is the search for the unusual, for strange and weird—even spooky—ways of knowing.

A sixth cause is the heavy occult emphasis in the mass media today. Hundreds of books on the occult are sold through book stores and circulated by libraries. Newspapers and periodicals carry regular items as well as occasional new stories, on one or more occult subjects. Radio stations stream out free horoscopes; educational channels feature astrologers; while television's daily schedules are loaded with programs slanted to all ages, from very young children to adults, featuring the occult.

A seventh cause for the occult revival is renewed interest in ecology. Until the late sixties, few people in the United States had even heard the word much less become familiar with anti-litter campaigns and pollution control. Interest in ecology comes at a time when witches and astrologers promise exploitation of or harmony with nature and the universe. Taking advantage of legitimate interest in a purer world is part of the appeal of witchcraft.

An eighth cause of interest in the occult is the scraping off of the crust over superstition, which surfaces in such crises as Friday the thirteenth, a black cat, a broken mirror, spilled salt and others. A more subtle indication is the relation between the primitive Indian totem pole and the modern sophisticated naming of cars and ball teams for representatives of power and strength in the animal world. The layer of superstition is ever-present and newly discovered with the occult.

The reasons for the growth of the occult are manifold and as complex as society and individual human behavior. The only viable approach to the subject is phenomenology; this is, saying that one should study the subject from every possible angle. Biblically, theologically, philosophically, psychologically, sociologically, historically and politically are ways a person can know what is influencing him. The occult flourishes for as many reasons as there are people involved in it, and the ones mentioned above are but a few of the more prominent.

world without risk—will be the most threatened by the rise of the occult.

The alternative demands commitment of the total being to God in Christ. Many are lured into the occult initially because their contact with the church and its views of Christ are only nominal. The total Christ-event is almost as foreign to them as Buddha or Muhammad. Because the total Christ can emerge from occult interest when his aspects are magnified, any attempt in the contemporary world to dethrone him should be taken seriously. By focusing attention on creation rather than on the Creator, the occult is attempting to do just this. Whenever nature is equated with God and sought for secondary powers, God suffers for lack of attention.

The battle for men's minds and allegiances in this post-scientism age is between apathy-despair and hope. Against this, the alternate "gospels" to our age claim to be able to foreknow and somewhat control the spiritual powers around us. Persons who have used God in similar ways—that is, sought to manipulate him to their own ends so as to know a

Hopefully, increased interest in the occult will force many to re-examine the uniqueness of Christ. Persons searching for an exotic, revolutionary and spiritually powerful person in whom to place confidence, need look no further than to Jesus.

The call is hereby placed for an open dialogue between Jews, Christians and occult worshippers. Related questions that need to be answered are many. They include:

1. What is the relation between a Creator and lesser forces?
2. To what degree has nature been redeemed by Christ?
3. Can a Christian legitimately use hypnosis to counsel a bereaved person?

To limp along in darkness without answers to these and other questions is to allow discipleship to go begging for renewal and reality. Shall we go searching?

Witchcraft: Twentieth Century Revival

by M. Thomas Starkes

Among the many expressions of the occult revival that have surfaced since the early sixties is witchcraft, a term used today to include both the practice of all kinds of esoteric magic and a general neo-pagan religious belief system.¹

Older than modern civilization, witchcraft stems from an ancient, pre-Christian faith, called the Old Religion, of northern Europe. Cave paintings and carvings indicate that its basic concept was a nature god incarnate in human or animal form.

The present-day word "witch" is derived from the Old Anglo-Saxon word *wicca* meaning wise one. These "wise ones" constituted the priesthood of the Old Religion, built around the worship of a sun god and a moon goddess. With their sun worship and magic-stone circles, the Druids of ancient England were part of the Old Religion tradition of northern Europe. Modern practitioners, claiming to be in the same tradition, contend that their religion should be recognized along with Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam as one of the world's major religions.

The basic beliefs of witches as serious masters of the Old Religion are as old as humankind and often misunderstood. They include:

1. The physical world is only part of reality.
2. Each person has innate psychic capacities through which he can contact the realms beyond the physical.
3. The masculine, patriarchal concept of God is rejected in favor of the idea of personified gods and goddesses. Deity is seen as both masculine and feminine and evolving a series of gods and goddesses.
4. God is the impersonal life-process of the Universe.
5. Morality is viewed as highly individualistic and the following of one's own natural desires.
6. Thought is powerful for both good and evil. The mind holds the power of magic.
7. True practice is intelligence and perception, rather than intellectualism.

Various types of witches exist. The first is the contemporary witch who refuses to be classified as a sideshow and insists on his right to the same recognition accorded the neighborhood priest or rabbi. The one exception is the witch-priest who may prefer to work alone rather than form a congregation of a coven.

Suburban Americans are more likely to contact a second type, more often represented by the witch-housewife. The suburban witch may have read four books on the subject and purchased all the basic paraphernalia at the local occult shop and learned a few omens. This practitioner may or may not have a following and may mix witchcraft with astrology, I Ching and/or clairvoyance. The "suburban witch" syndrome is not a legitimate part of the Old Religion tradition.

The third type of witch currently in vogue is the junior high practitioner who may have read parts of only one book. Usually dressed in attention-getting black, he preaches loudly that he is a genuine witch. His parents are shocked, but his peers pay attention. Though he can invoke only limited power if any, the important thing is that everyone who really matters knows that he is delving into the dark powers.

Obviously, all self-proclaimed witches in America can be trusted to do magic, know chants or even know where a coven meets. This has caused the public much confusion in knowing who is a true witch. Caution must be used in differentiating between a serious student of the Old Religion and his suburban counterfeit.

The real link between ancient and modern witchcraft is the frustrated longing for natural wholeness and serenity. In a coven on the mountainside, is a search for true reality, which must be respected wherever human search for meaning. As a search crossing most cultural and professional barriers, the pursuit of witchcraft is as varied as its practitioners.

One key way to differentiate between witches is the label

one type as "white" and the other as "black." The white witch claims to work magic only for the good of other people, while the worker of black magic makes no apology for intent to work evil upon those he opposes. Traditional witchcraft teaches that the two powerful forces of good and evil are both warring within man and the so-called temporal world. Each of these forces is powerful and available through the use of ancient rituals and spells. Since man is a battleground for the gray between these two powers, no person is able to be a pure practitioner of one or the other. No witch is "white" in the consistent sense though many claim to be. Increasingly evil becomes so real a factor that black magic is used, giving rise to the term "grey witch" to describe those who use both black and white magic.

The tendency in all religions to balance the father-mother imagery in describing God, a vital cause for the growth of witchcraft, is evident in American religious history. Three prime examples are the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, founded by Emma Hale Smith, widow of Joseph Smith Jr.; Christian Science, formed by Mary Baker Eddy, the only pastor the Mother Church in Boston has ever had; and the doctrine the balance between the masculine and feminine in the Godhead; the Seventh-day Adventism, founded on the powerful personality and attractive writings of Ellen G. White.



Roman Catholicism also has traditionally accepted the virgin Mary as a representative or mediator between sinful man and God. Despite the current effective "Protestant Reformation" currently going on within the Catholic Church, Mariology may be the last emotional vestige to go. Even among the most liberal priests, Mary is held dear as a feminine defense lawyer before a judgemental, masculine god.

Witchcraft is no exception to this masculine-feminine balance. The god-goddess is seen as natural and the most complete approach man can make in the present tense toward god, with the mother goddess as inevitable as the horned god. In the initiatory rite in serious covens, the great mother goddess is called upon by the high priestess for, while honoring a god and goddess, modern witches regard the goddess as their special patroness and teacher.

One link with the past is the Lord of the Shadows, a lesser god in witchcraft. In the Old Religion as early as the sixth century A.D., he was the chief god due to return at the coming of winter. In the celebration that marked this event, carried over into Modern man's Halloween, fires were lighted around the house to dispell the darkness of winter. Spirits of the dead were supposed to come back to their living relatives on feasts set in the parlor or kitchen.

Usually thought to be the central worship form, the Black Mass is not a rite of the Old Religion, but a perversion of a Christian rite. It stemmed from defrocked priests, revengeful of the Roman Catholic Church, who originated this form of blasphemy to desecrate the eucharist. Frequently, a black

host instead of white will be used, and the wood chalice will often contain blood. The crucifix is turned upside down, and the sign of the cross, made by the renegade priest using his left hand, is reversed.

An incantation to the devil begins the Black Mass, with the Lord's Prayer recited backwards concluding it. It may incorporate the Satanic oath and include other blasphemous practices and acts, among which are:

1. Vows of special service to Satan, which may include destruction of holy relics.
2. A promise to pay annual tribute to Satan.
3. Having one's name written on the "Book of Death."
4. Denial of godparents and gaining of new sponsors.
5. A spoken denial of the Christian faith.
6. Rebaptism in the devil's name.
7. Symbolic removal of the baptismal grace, if baptized as an infant.

True practitioners of the Old Religion see little purpose in the Black Mass, saying that their god-goddess is the one to be followed or blasphemed. True witches see the Black Mass as a waste of time.

While witchcraft has been little affected by Christianity, the reverse is not true. Underlying animism has been incorporated widely by the church, even in Protestantism. John Calvin reflected both a common Old Religion sentiment and what he saw as a biblical principle when he wrote of predestination. Unless this emphasis is balanced with a concept of grace it becomes as fatalistic as the animistic concept of man being a pawn in the hands of unseen powers. Adaptation of the Old Religion without new grace is not only dangerous but approaches the heretical emphasis of law without gospel.

Another example of the effect on Christianity may be seen in Roman Catholic incorporation of symbolism borrowed from the Old Religion in its doctrine of transubstantiation. This states that the bread and wine become Christ's actual body and blood through a magical transformation by the power of God. The church's choice of animistic symbols for the eucharist, which is at the center of their worship, has enabled Catholicism to grow most rapidly in places where there are animistic underpinnings.

Advocates of the Old Religion contend also that the horned god was used as a model for medieval church art in depicting the devil. However, neither tradition takes into account the fact that in Babylon, where the Hebrew incorporated the word "Satan," he was pictured as a goat—with horns. One wonders to what degree the church accommodates the Old Religion when it chooses animistic and not abstract symbols.

Pictured in the popular American mind as primarily a series of sex orgies, reports on witchcraft in pulp magazines have highlighted nudity and sensationalism. This is an overstatement of the case. Admittedly a fertility cult, being part of the Old Religion, witchcraft is heir to a time when fertility was a necessity for survival. Contrary to many misrepresentations, witches believe in neither sexual promiscuity nor puritanism.

This misrepresentation has led many persons to dabble in witchcraft to fulfill selfish desires. With numerous and varied textbooks on the market, full information is available on the type of material to buy and how to develop occult powers or "start the black juices flowing." Among other details are suggestions for the choice of a certain new name; information about the witches' cup—it should be large enough to contain the salt water of exorcism and the wine of libation—and purchase of a steel knife with a black handle. The budding witch is then in business, needing only the addition of a few curses and hexes.

For several reasons, there will probably be continued open

interest in witchcraft in the late seventies. For one thing, there is little or no insistence on moral change by the initiate. Repentance and forgiveness are foreign to the underlying tenets of the Old Religion. Personal participation in the coven with its accompanying rites is a selling point for witchcraft. And removal of personal guilt is part of witchcraft's promise.

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The conflict between public and private beliefs, according to a Carl Jung theory, is evident beneath man's surface. The collective subconscious of the racial memory constantly calls the modern worshiper back to his forebears' "primitive" religious experience. According to this, and experience has borne it out, emphasis on the animistic, as in witchcraft, in the future will alternately underlie and surface. Christians should be aware of witchcraft's premises and be able to refute them. For initial assistance in this, the basic beliefs of witches are presented here with an evangelical response:

1. Witchcraft assumes as does Christianity that the physical world is only part of reality. Too long evangelical Christianity was equated with rationalism and; to some degree, scientism. It was perceived that discipleship could be neatly defined in terms of following or stating truths in terms of neat propositions on the basis of what the believer could deal with materially. But it is clear that God is in control of all his creation, including the heavenly and spiritual powers; he thus unifies rather than fragments in both the physical and non-physical worlds.

2. Witchcraft assumes that each person has innate psychic capacities enabling him to contact the supernatural. The Western Christian has wanted little to do with "the sixth sense" until the 1970's when research in parapsychology suggests that man does have innate psychic ability. A chief difference is that Christians make moral choices between what is good and evil, making a moral difference whether one practices white, black or gray magic. There are criteria by which one's actions are chosen according to the evangelical Christian:

- Is it thematically true to the Bible? That is, does this action ring true to such Bible themes as love and justice?
- Does this action glorify Jesus? Is it true to his teachings and is it in line with what he taught and practiced?
- Are persons being helped or injured by this use of innate psychic powers?

3. Witchcraft sees deity as both masculine and feminine, evolving as a series of gods and goddesses. Christians experience God as both love and justice, that is, being both seemingly harsh and tenderly loving. The dialectic between law and gospel is to enable man to be human by being a free choosing being. Man chooses to respond to God's love particularly in Christ. God, one in three Persons, reveals himself in unity; he is not fragmented. But that the feminine is honored by God is revealed in Jesus' teachings on and treatment of women.

4. Witchcraft views God as the impersonal life-force of the universe. Christians know God to be Person, displaying personal characteristics. They know God can be grieved. In a growing personal relationship with Christ, Christians know that their life with God is one of keeping his love more than keeping his laws. Further, Christians know God to be involved in the continual process of redeeming, creating and sustaining his world. He has not left the world to warring powers while he sits somewhere in space in meditative contemplation. Supremely, Christians know God is Person because he has revealed himself most clearly in a person, Jesus of Nazareth.

5. Witchcraft sees morality as highly individualistic and a following of one's own natural desires. Christian discipleship on the other hand combines the individual and the social. Jesus thrust his disciples into the world with the command and impetus to "make disciples" or seekers after him. His example and teachings compel one to act on behalf of his neighbor. The Christian disciple finds his own life "by giving it away, with part of his individual fulfillment realized in relationship to other. Repentance is necessary because one's own natural desires incline each person toward selfish, non-social pursuits. Hunger, poverty and corruption in government are among valid Christian concerns because Jesus prayed, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven."

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6. Witchcraft contends that thought is powerful for both good and evil, that the mind holds the power of magic. Christians know the value of disciplining the mind. They have seen also that one's mind is important to his perception of reality and value. Jesus said, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." The Christian knows that his mind must be in tune with the will of God. He views reality seriously, including the negative factors—pain, evil and death. However, the Christian's basic attitude is one of service to his fellow man. He knows that the Bible teaches man to "let this same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus."

7. Witchcraft perceives that true practice is intelligence and perception, rather than intellectualism. Christians also know that reality must be experienced with the whole being, not merely conceptualized. That is why the Christian disciple seeks to give his whole being to development of self and service to neighbor. By so doing, he becomes free.

The prophets of old knew that magic and witchcraft would distract from pure worship of the one, true God. They warned against such indulgence sight unseen, even before the Hebrew people entered the promised land. "There shall not be found among you any one who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer" (Deut. 18:10f).

Today, in the 1970s, the situation is chronologically reversed. The pioneers who came into wilderness America on an errand for God three-and-a-half centuries ago could not foresee the current popular disillusionment with standard ways of knowing. These early pilgrims came with high hopes that freedom would bring true worship of God. The Deuteronomy passage stands as an afterthought to what is a warning, a bit dated even if needed now.

Whenever social upheaval or lack of meaning predominates, witchcraft will surface and flourish. The art of producing a desired effect by using varied techniques to manipulate the natural forces will continue to appeal to frustrated humans, with or without reference to evangelical discipleship.

The challenge to believing Christians is to demonstrate the love of Christ and the power of God in such a way that personal meaning and social justice will make witchcraft superfluous. The challenge has never been more real than in the mid-1970s.

FOOTNOTES

¹Marcello Truzzi, "Nouveau Witches," *Hamas*, September-October, 1974, p. 13.

Satanism Rolls On

by M. Thomas Starkes

That *Time* lists Satanism as one of the prominent recurring ideas from the past, making headlines in the 1970's,¹ emphasizes the fact that Satan is making a frontal attack on American society and the world. With at least 200,000 followers who claim him as their "personal savior," his forces, whether spiritual demons or material spokesmen, indicate that he is in full power, working wrath and disguising evil as an angel of light.

Formerly occupied primarily with demonic methods of temptation, Satan has now changed his tactics. No longer is he clothed in ancient theological garb but is much more subtly lodged in aggressive human personality, often using methods of promotion worthy of the creativity of New York advertising. Moral decay, social mixtures and confusion of sexual roles in youth subcultures, and counter-passivity to the Judaeo-Christian ethic were only mild forerunners of the current attack.

In spite of sensational publicity of what might be stereotyped "sex-centered Satanism" the existence of this sort of cult activity seems to be overestimated. Most of what does exist relates instead to the drug culture with some satanic-type activity added for excitement of what might otherwise be commonplace.²

Satanism, as it exists in the United States, is largely a religious belief system distinguishable from modern witchcraft and ceremonial magic.³ However, its beliefs are nature oriented and its equipment does bear a similarity to that of ceremonial magic.⁴ But its worship of the antagonist of the Christian God and the Judaeo-Christian element expressed in the name of Satan tends to classify it as a sort of Christian religious heresy.

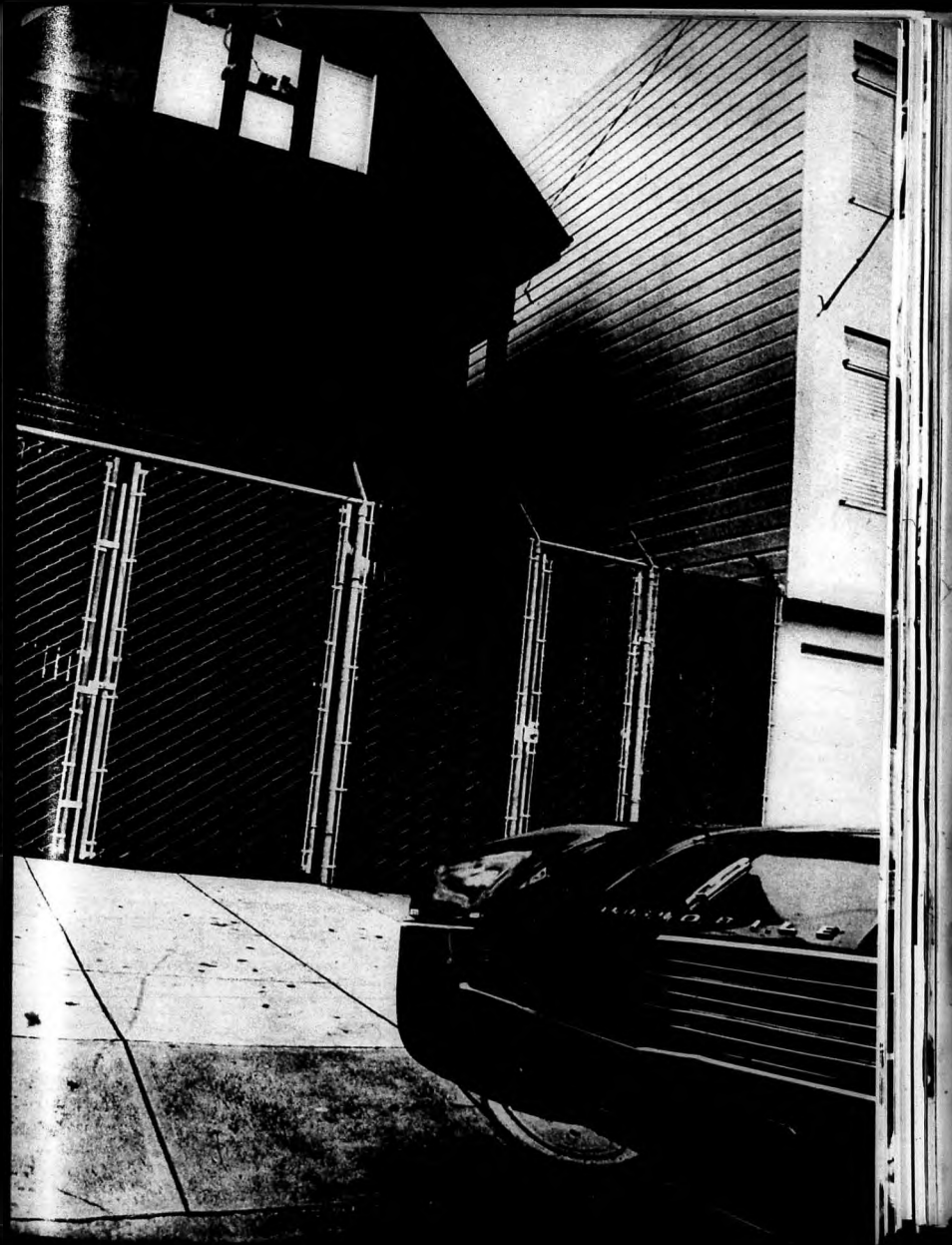
Satanism's most articulate and popular spokesman is Anton Szandor LaVey, called the "Black Pope" by many of his followers. A former carnival fortune-teller, circus musician and crime photographer, LaVey founded the Church of Satan in 1966 in San Francisco. This is considered by some to

be the only Satanist organization that is open and above ground and "attracts educated and 'respectable' people."⁵

Since 1966 it has expanded under LaVey's successful leadership from one small group of followers into an international organization of churches or "grottos" as they are sometimes called. Groups have been organized in England, France, Germany, Australia and in several African nations. In the United States multiple churches exist in many instances in major metropolitan cities such as San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Atlanta and Miami. Medium-sized cities with Churches of Satan include New Orleans, Cincinnati, Louisville, Memphis, Jacksonville and Birmingham. Even small areas such as Rock Hill, S.C., and some rural communities have at least one organized Satanist church.

In a personal interview, when asked why he is a Satanist, LaVey listed four reasons. The first was the hypocrisy of Christians. When traveling with the carnival, he doubled as a pianist for faith healers six nights a week and as barker for the burlesque show on Saturday nights when the men of the towns were sporting their paychecks. Gospel hymns six nights a week and "watch 'em shake, watch 'em wiggle" on Saturday seemed inconsistent to LaVey. Later, as photographer for the San Francisco homicide squad, he photographed the grossest crimes, some committed by professional Christians.

LaVey's disillusionment was complete and led to a conclusion that became his second reason: Man in his natural state has an inherently carnal nature which he must affirm and indulge. The process, however, leads to eroding guilt feelings. LaVey counsels his followers to gratify their carnal desires without restraint because this pursuit brings happiness and joy without guilt. It allows one to experience whatever he chooses, be it sex or drugs or wealth or gluttony. Satan becomes man's "personal savior"; thus, as the antithesis of Christian teaching which, LaVey claims, twists and distorts man's basic nature, Satan frees his followers from guilt in pe-



forming natural acts and fulfilling selfish natural desires.

The third reason LaVey gave for being a Satanist is the ineffectiveness of the Ten Commandments as stated. He believes that only by reversing them can the guilt caused by breaking them be eliminated. Sins then are redefined as virtues so that, if people do break the laws, they are much less likely to feel guilty about it. Instead, they experience joy and pleasure from their acts.

The fourth reason, said the "Black Pope," is because he sees Satan in control of this present age. He referred to Scriptures that indicate that Satan is the "Prince of Powers." However, LaVey refused to conjecture about the future. He seemed to indicate that Jesus Christ may triumph in the end, but that is beside the point. What is important is that at present Satan is on the winning side.

Anton LaVey should not be lightly dismissed. Be assured, he is a force for Satan to be reckoned with seriously, in spite of what the sensational press may make of him. Believing Christians should be fully aware of this articulate and active spokesman for the Adversary.

Reasons for the rapid growth of this Church of Satan include more than clever strategy and LaVey's articulation ability, though these powers should not be taken lightly. LaVey combines clever psychodramas with promises of power. The Black Mass and other Satanic rituals are designed to act out the "gospel" of deliverance from guilt which LaVey is pushing. The Judeo-Christian tradition of negative ethics functions as the villain while the hero of liberation claims the victory. Repressions and inhibitions are wiped out by Satan, who promises light and deliverance. This drama is combined with the knowledge that, in 1966, it was popular to say that God is dead. An opportunist, LaVey began to act out the truth that Satan is alive. He changed the classic form of the black mass from blasphemous mockery to a celebration of fertility and freedom. As the Black Pope, LaVey performs weddings devoid of what he describes as "sanctimonious platitudes."

Satanism also grows because there is no idealistic love-thy-neighbor concept to be followed. LaVey teaches that life is a struggle for survival in which the selfish and violent will win the ultimate goal. The soft, the meek, the loving will perish. Urban society is another macrocosm of the jungle. LaVey's message of survival comes at a time when society at large seems ready to listen.

Erich Fromm divides religions into humanitarian and authoritarian, identifying the first with man and his needs and the second as the surrender to a power transcending man. Satanism promises both humanitarian release and authoritarian power. As a symbolic figure, Satan is losing his frightening appearance and is coming on as a personal confidant to many who seek release from guilt. This is strengthened by LaVey's constant emphasis on removal of guilt. He contends that guilt will not be a factor if persons are told to follow their carnal desires and not be "hung up" on a set of rules. LaVey's safeguard at this point is clearly stated:

We hold Satan as symbolic personal Savior, who takes care of mundane, fleshly, carnal things. God exists as a universal force, a balancing force in nature, too impersonal to care one whit whether we live or die. The sons, such as Jesus, take care of the spiritual aspect, but the Devil takes care of the carnal side of man.⁷

As in the male-female view of God in classic witchcraft, this schizoid view of the Godhead does not account for the loving aspect of the Godhead.

LaVey's deficient theology is also seen in his attempt to separate the spiritual from the sacred. God is involved in all his world and makes no such distinction. One cannot imagine any aspect of the world in which God is not interested or involved.

The Satanists unhindered propulsion into the fulfillment of carnal desires is basic to LaVey's feelings about the afterlife. He says:

For a person who is satisfied with his earthly existence, life is like a party, and no one likes to leave a good party. Death, in most religions, is touted as a beautiful and spiritual awakening. This is very appealing to one who has had no satisfactory life, but to those who have experienced all the joys that life has to offer there is a great dread at the thought of dying. It is this lust for life that will allow the vital person to survive after the inevitable death of his fleshly shell.⁸

Under LaVey, Satanism is not designed to withdraw from the world. Instead, he and his followers advocate working within existing economic and political structures. He claims that Satanism, unlike some forms of witchcraft, is the only known religion in which the follower can enjoy the pleasure around him without dropping out of society.

The Church of Satan is working actively toward the day when signs and symbols of Satan reach skyward from church towers. This day may come soon because of the pronounced swing to radicalism now predominant in America. The modern American finds himself shrinking in importance. Uncertain of his future, this man may turn to a type of religion which promises power and identity. Satanism not only makes such promises but allows man to act out his desire for such experiences by symbolically identifying with the powerful forces of Satan.

Among others who also spread LaVey's schizoid view of reality is James Guthrie, a "lesser light" among Satanists. Now living in Los Angeles, Guthrie currently heads a 400-member church at a salary of \$1,000 a month. In 1971 he led a "Crusade for Satan" in a dozen major cities across the United States. As a high priest in the Satanic movement, Guthrie is typical of those who have become newly affluent through heightened interest in witchcraft and Satanism.

The Process Church of the Final Judgment is one quasi-Satanist group that will probably have a bright future in the western world as interest in Satanism expands. A unique feature of this group is that Satan, Christ, Jehovah and Lucifer make up its godhead. Process adherents reason that:

1. Jesus taught that one should love his enemies.
2. Jesus' greatest enemy is Satan.
3. Jesus loves Satan, and man should too.
4. Jesus and Satan are working together to bring the world to an end and reign at the final judgement.

This whole procedure is labeled the "Process" and followers of the movement are sometimes called the "Processians." On the surface, this group may profit more finally than other corporate forms of the Satanists. By combining devotion to both Jesus and Satan, it could be that the Processians will endure the inevitable swing back to traditional norms which will probably come in the 1970s.

Another strong growth factor for the Processians is their interest in social service. Frequently one can find modified day-care centers, tutoring programs or care for the elderly being combined with sale of Process literature as ways of spreading their message.

Historically, the Processians are an offshoot of Scientology. Charles Manson was involved in the Process before the ritual murders that made his name notorious. The Processians grow because, like the Satanists, while they see God as more powerful than Satan, Satan is viewed as more immediate and more of a personal ally to man. God is pictured as being remote. In the Process, God and Satan are brought closer to man.

As in other Satanic groups, the group process here is important because it gives identity to lonely persons. Feelings of superiority over non-Satanists are frequently expressed. The member knows he has found a secret way similar to the Gnostics of the first century.

For a number of reasons Satanism has made great inroads among young adults, even the educated and economically



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well-heeled. One of the reasons is a temporary escape from boredom. The followers are basically passive socially, rather than being initiators of action. Free rein given to selfish desires with no demand for social involvement or responsibility makes Satanism attractive to the socially inactive.

That Satan, fragmented as an angel of light, is trying desperately both to deceive and to devour God's children can be easily substantiated in the alarming reports about this demons at work in the world. What happened in a small Baptist church in a deep-South city may be repeated in a similar experience in any church.

One evening as prayer meeting was closing a woman asked if she could give a personal testimony. Granted the shocked the crowd by saying, "I have just accepted my personal savior. Tomorrow night I am starting a Satan in my home." She followed these words with an invitation for any who wished to come.

None of the stunned congregation attended, the shocked that such a thing could have happened in a church. But this experience can happen anywhere in the States today. While the minds of committed Christians mull over the idea of Satan as a "personal savior," so thousands in America are real.

For a number of reasons Satanism has made great inroads among young adults, even the educated and economically

nice option. Rightly, they have emphasized that one's relationship to God and his world is determined by his relationship to Jesus Christ. Consequently, the Holy Spirit has been as neglected as a poor cousin in the family of the Godhead. Now as never before, the Holy Spirit is needed as a defense mechanism, as an armor, against Satan on the march. One dares not take the Master Deceiver lightly.

FOOTNOTES

¹Time, (September 3, 1973), p. 59.

²Marcello Truzzi, "Nouveau Witches," *Humanist* (September-October, 1974), p. 15.

³Robert S. Ellwood, Jr., *Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 193.

⁴Loc. cit.

⁵Op. cit., p. 212.

⁶Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 35.

⁷Martin Ebon, *Witchcraft Today* (New York: Signet Books, 1971), p. 88.

⁸Arthur Lyons, *The Second Coming: Satanism in America* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1970), p. 188.

Spiritism: Search for Reality

by M. Thomas Starkes

Spiritists view Jesus, frequently called the "Elder Brother," as a prophet and a teacher. Partially because of this view, spiritism is not associated with the Christian faith as Catholics or Protestants know it, despite its optimistic note. The National Spiritualist Association of Churches, with a membership of more than 80,000 persons, state their "Declaration of Principles" as follows:

1. We believe in Infinite Intelligence.
 2. We believe that the phenomena of Nature, both physical and spiritual, are the expression of Infinite Intelligence.
 3. We affirm that a correct understanding of such expression and living in accordance therewith constitute true religion.
 4. We affirm that the existence and personal identity of the individual continue after the change called death.
 5. We affirm that the communication with the so-called dead is a fact, scientifically proven by the phenomena of Spiritualism.
 6. We believe that the highest morality is contained in the Golden Rule, "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye also unto them."
 7. We affirm the moral responsibility of the individual and that he makes his own happiness or unhappiness as he obeys or disobeys Nature's physical and spiritual laws.
 8. We affirm that the doorway to reformation is never closed against any human soul or hereafter.
 9. We affirm that the precept of prophecy contained in the Bible is a Divine attribute proven through mediumship.
- While not all spiritualists ascribe to the principles listed above, they affect enough persons in and out of the association to merit a theological analysis here. The Hindu base of these tenets is evident upon close examination. "Infinite Intelligence" is similar to the Impersonal Absolute in Hinduism called Brahman. The implication is that instead of being a God of love and compassion in forgiveness, the impersonal

spirit is dealing with a compiler and computer who (or which) keeps account of right and wrong.

The second tenet is close to pantheism. Nature is "expression" contiguous in being with Infinite Intelligence instead of being distinct creation from a personal Creator. The distinction between physical and spiritual creation is not made, and reality is seen as being jointly physical and spiritual.

The basic Greek concept of the immortality of the soul is evident in formal Spiritism. One does not die in totality, in the Hebrew concept that incorporates the totality of man leading to the free use of the phrase "the so-called dead." This theory does not harmonize with Jesus' experience as a rabbi in the informal sense, he sweated as blood in the garden because he knew he was about to die. Unfortunately, modern Christians have been so inundated with Greek concepts of man that the miracle of the resurrection has been perverted.

A passing nod at Christian discipleship is made by mentioning the Golden Rule. This is a common procedure among quasi-Christian groups who hope to find the lowest common denominator in discipleship with Christ. Other injunctions of Jesus, especially those with such drastic demands as selling all one's possessions, are ignored.

Karma comes under the guise of "spiritual and physical laws." One's afterlife, as is the present, is determined by responsiveness to these laws. This presumption helps explain visions of the spirit world by mediums showing departed enjoying himself in proportion to the morality of his previous life. This also accounts for the consensus among Spiritists that the disincarnate spirit moves from one level to another in the other world by keeping universal law.

The final tenet concerning prophecy is based on a misinterpretation of the Hebrew and Greek words translated "prophecy."

English versions of the Bible. The basic concept in the New Scriptures is that of the *nabi*, or spokesman for God. The Greek idea is that the prophet is a teacher or edifier. The spiritist's assumption that prophecy is exercised through mediumship is a loose appropriation of these classic concepts.

Due to its deviant theology, spiritism grows for various reasons. Among these are:

1. Natural curiosity about afterlife. Life after death remains a concern of old and young alike.
2. Repeated stories of how persons are helped who seek relief from guilt or grief from the death of a close friend or relative.
3. Seeking to understand childhood, reasoning that life is a unit and that the future sheds light on the past.
4. Successes as a "kick" by naive investigators who risk a cheap thrill for evil reality.

Alfred Messer, professor of psychology, relates spiritualism to man's feeling of inordinate helplessness. Messer counsels his patients to strengthen their resources to meet inner turmoil and social pressures. He observes, however, that many cannot or do not and instead turn to regression. He labels this, "a regressive search for illusory control."

In other words, persons use spiritualism in an attempt to relieve painful anxiety. They return to the illusion that man once controlled his fate. Spiritualism affords the individual feeling that instead of being just a will-of-the-wisp adrift in a turbulent sea, he has a sense of control and power. He can still master his own fate.

Messer warns that fantasy can be an escape valve. However, undue reliance on fantasy, such as incantations to help a student pass an exam, can lead to escape from the real world and to one's undoing.

A well-known medium, George Daisley, claims that his powers come through the spirit world, reasoning that his clairvoyance and clairaudience are "gifts of the spirit." He goes through that world with the aid of spirit guides, who tell him names and places. His chief guide is Joey Grimaldi, who died in 1837 and has been called "the greatest clown in British history."

Daisley says that spiritism grows because it gives meaning to death. According to him, death does not purify; it simply transfers continuing personality to a non-physical environment, which is composed of seven levels or heavens. The lowest or astral plane is usually called Paradise, an environment much like earthly existence. It is the level most easily contacted from the material world. As a spirit moves to higher levels, his contacts with the physical world become less frequent.

Spiritism, unlike other expressions of the occult, has not remained apart from established Christian churches. Through Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, a group founded by the famous medium Arthur Ford and to which Daisley and other prominent pursuivants of spiritism belong,

spiritism and psychic phenomena have been introduced to thousands of church members in this generation.

Its purpose is to sponsor, explore, interpret the growing interest in psychic phenomena and mystical experience within the church whenever these experiences relate to effective prayer, spiritual healing and personal survival. Frequently healing services are sponsored in Episcopal or Lutheran services because the minister has joined Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship. Through it he has become acquainted with the idea that contacts with spirits is a natural way to counsel and heal.

Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship is a nationwide organization dedicated to the idea that psychic phenomena, especially mediumship, is a natural, healthy human pursuit. It has made spiritism palatable to former skeptics like Ruth Montgomery and James Pike. This organization will continue to help explain two very common human occurrences reported by thousands of participants in lecture series on the occult: one, the removal of guilt feelings and two, the ability to control subsequent events after one wills to do so.

About 40 percent of persons interviewed over a three-year period say they have experienced a visit or vision from a recently deceased loved one within ten days or two weeks after the death of a loved one. Most of these said they were relieved somewhat from grief and that the experience was a healthy one. More than 50 agreed that the loved one spoke to them from "the other side."

About two-thirds claimed to have had precognition experience in which they saw beforehand what later evolved in a series of events before them. In such an experience their psychic world collided with their physical one.

The frequency of such events even among conservative skeptics seems to indicate that there is some element of truth in postulating a spirit world. It is conceivable that such biblical terms as paradise, hades, sheol and "the spirits in prison" may refer to a level of existence which can be used to reduce guilt.

Victor Ernst and other confessing Christians in the field of studying spirits agree that a spirit world does exist which Satan can easily counterfeit. The layman, however, should not be so adept at conclusion-jumping that he misses the point that there has to be something legitimate which is being copied with evil intent by Satan.

Besides being suspect because it wrecks some lives, spiritism presents a threat to evangelical Christianity because it helps to introduce the subject of reincarnation. Spiritualists are taught that the spirit world is divided into several spheres, or the seven levels, and that one's spirit ends up in a certain sphere based on his previous life and his demeanor in the spirit world. Practically, this means that a man not true to religious and social mores of this life will pass into the lesser realms of the spirit world. Here he will find other spirits like himself. Finally, sometimes only after centuries have

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passed, he comes to have an awareness of shortcomings. This awareness is usually followed by a desire to move on to something better.

With this heightened consciousness the spirit is given an opportunity of being reborn to live a better life in another body. Therefore, most spiritualists believe in some form of reincarnation and on a repeated basis until they are perfected and involved so highly that they become full of wisdom. Some spiritualists would even say that this highest wisdom leads to the spirit evolving into a ball of light.

Evidence shows that a fairly large percent of adult Americans now believe in reincarnation. Unfortunately, most currently intrigued with the doctrine as an explanation of this life and the next have little or no knowledge of the Hindu presuppositions leading to reincarnationist conclusions. And whether it comes through spiritualism or Edgar Cayce into American minds, Hindu thought patterns are vastly different from classic Christianity in at least four ways.

The first way regards history. According to the reincarnationist view, the more history changes the more it remains the same. This view assumes that there is a gradual growth as the whole of humanity progresses to higher stages of development. This premise also rests on a cyclical view of time. Time, or timelessness, rests on a recurring cycle. It makes little difference when one is born or reborn. The purpose of rebirths is to escape from this cycle into Nirvana.

The second Hindu view is that the world is *maya* or illusion. This deceptiveness carries over into anthropology. For the classic Hindu, the body is necessary for the soul to enter into the world-process. Personality is only a role into which man has been cast for a brief moment. Ego is responsible for the illusory feeling of "I" and "mine!" The essence of being which lasts and enters into Nirvana is *atman*—usually translated soul. The *atman*, eternal and immortal, cannot take the moment and the world seriously. There is the fact of rebirth waiting in the wings.

A third Hindu concept underlying reincarnation is that of *dharma* and its correlate, *karma*. *Dharma* is the all-inclusive eternal principle which constitutes the "fibre" of the world. It is reflected in the field of personal moral conduct. Responsibility rests on each person, in a series of lives, who can find a right and just law to regulate his life—but only if he is not deceived by *maya*. Hinduism urges man to live out this life doing what is known to be right. If he is successful, finally entrance can be gained into eternal peace through deliverance from limitations of this present life.

The fourth Hindu premise underlying reincarnation is that of Brahman. Brahman is seen as Impersonal Absolute by most Hindus, but not seen as personal God who loves, creates, reveals and redeems. Each person seeks to be at one with Brahman.

Issues prompted by the beginning Hindu-Christian clash on views of after life are:

1. Is history based on a cyclical view of time which makes linear time of little consequence? Oscar Cullmann's assertion that Christ stands at the midpoint of human history is a clue to the related issue of revelation. Whether a personal God reveals himself in time with initiative or awaits man's working through numerous lives is an essential issue.

2. Is this present world based on illusion or upon God's approval of his own creation? This issue has implications for how seriously the believer takes his obligation to this world, including society and its structures.

3. Is life to be governed by *karma* or by a continually growing experience of grace which correctly balances law and gospel? The issue of whether persons are recipients of a personal God's revealing grace is a central one in determining the nature of life after death. Closely related is the concept of judgment and whether man is responsible for each moment's decisions.



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4. Another key issue is whether and when God is involved in the maintenance of the world. Does he sit idly by having made the world to rest on eternal principles, or does he interact with his creation constantly under his watchful eye?

Spiritualism raises the question of reincarnation from a theological point of view. It also makes necessary a new look by evangelical Christians at the biblical view of man. The apostle Paul's day the prevailing Greek idea was that the soul survived by being released at death from its prison, the body. The soul was then either absorbed into the cosmic life or lived a shadowy existence in the underworld called Hades. Any hope of the resurrection of the body was unthinkable to the Greek mind.

In I Corinthians 15, Paul sought to refute these Greek ideas from a Hebrew-Christian base. Unfortunately, judged by the popular ideas about death and the after life in existence among evangelical Christians in 1974, Paul has been largely unsuccessful. He did not attempt to describe the resurrection body in detail, but he did make it clear that it will be a

different body. Thereby, Paul could view death as a victory. Paul, a Christian thinker immersed in Eastern forms, said,

The eternal doctrine of immortality has become a popular Christian doctrine. The future history of religion will largely be an attempt to find the two central symbols of eternal life: Nirvana and the Kingdom of God. The symbol of the Kingdom of God implies the life of the individual person, the ideas of social justice and the life of history.

apt for the kingdom of God because it fills life with responsibility. Few spiritualists have used clothing as a symbol of the afterlife. Their concern for the afterlife has been a concern for the nowlife.

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making contact with the enquirer.

What passes for seances now for the most part is a counterfeit of genuine spiritualism. Whether motivated by need for assurance, release from guilt or search for thrills, innocent persons will continue to seek mediums. Spiritualist groups will supply answers for the four basic human needs of personhood, belonging, community and understanding.

Christian churches can supply the same resources from a perspective of the Kingdom on a far more effective and enduring basis. Christian disciples, committed to the commandment of Jesus Christ, have an obligation to help supply those resources to persons seeking to know the truth of God.

FOOTNOTES

¹The Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine, August 31, 1969, p. 5.

²From: Marcia Moore, *Reincarnation, Key to Immortality*



EXECUTIVE'S WORD by Arthur B. Rutledge

The meaning of interfaith witness

Early this year I received a personal letter from Edward H. Friedman, a friend and fellow church member for the past decade and a half. Recent years have been very trying for him and his family. The warmth of his letter testified to the vitality of his Christian faith in the face of heavy burdens.

Dr. Friedman enclosed a copy of his testimony as it had appeared in *Royal Service*, April, 1964. The uniqueness of his pilgrimage and the continuing vigor of his faith leads me to share a part of his testimony. He wrote:

"In 1917, on the third floor of an apartment house on the lower east side of New York City a Jewish baby boy was born. Like most babies he was fed and loved and cared for. His every need was taken care of by a devoted mother and a God-fearing father. As time went on the baby grew in stature and in knowledge. He was sent to Hebrew school where he came to learn something of the love of God as given in all of the stories of the Old Testament.

"Time passed quickly. Grammar school... high school... college. A period of internship in a large city hospital. 1942... War... overseas duty in an Army hospital. Injured men being flown in from the field of battle. And then one night at the operating table... this Jewish boy—who had grown into a man—was born... Born all over again. Rothermel... a fine young American soldier had come from the battlefield to the operating table. His right leg was torn by the bomb that had exploded beneath his jeep. His arms, twisted like match-

sticks. Only half a face left... pain beyond endurance... and yet this American soldier was saying to me... 'Doc... don't worry Doc... Jesus is with me... don't worry Doc... My very soul was disturbed. Here at my fingertips was a man who had the answer to eternal life.'

"The sutures were placed... surgical dressing applied. By all the standards of medicine... this man... this man should have died. 'Don't worry Doc... Jesus is with me'... kept ringing in my ears over and over again.

"It was early morning now. I lay down upon my bed exhausted and yet refreshed. Was Rothermel's Jesus my Jesus, too? I started to read the New Testament. 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'... Here was the divine revelation of the prophets. Here was the unfolding truth of what I had learned as a young lad. Surely this Jesus was my Jesus too.

"The war was over... but not for me, for I had yet to go home to a loving devoted mother and father to tell them about finding Jesus in my life... To tell them of a wonderful Christian girl that had come into my life... Surely He was with me during those hours. But Mom and Dad did not understand...

"Dad is gone now. Mother has somehow come to know that her son has a living... a vibrant... a vital faith. A faith that is full and rich and alive.

"... Often... especially during beautiful summer days I love to get out of bed and look out my bedroom window into the rays of the sunlight as they come over the horizon and say... Good morn-

ing God... Thank you... thank you for another day... a day of work... a day of giving and sharing... for a new day of life in service with Thee."

This is the desired result of every effort at interfaith witness: to help others discover the transforming knowledge and power of Jesus Christ. To respect the faith of every person, and to right to hold and propagate such faith.

But our Christian conviction is that religion alone is not enough. To Christians Jesus Christ is not a way but a way. The ultimate answer to the longings expressed in the nobler qualities of the various religions is to be found in Jesus Christ.

This conviction was expressed beautifully by the Apostle Paul: "For there is one God, and there is one who brings us life, Jesus, who gave himself to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a peculiar people, zealous of good deeds" (1 Tim. 2:5, TEV).

The Southern Baptist program of interfaith witness seeks to help Christians and non-Christians alike to understand the faith of others and to share their own faith with them.

There are millions of fellow Americans—not to mention the hundreds of millions around the world—who have a religion but do not have a meaningful relationship with God.

And there must be thousands of people around us who, like the doctor, respond when they see Christ in action through one of His followers.

May we turn to God for needed guidance to share Christ faithfully and wisely day by day.



COMMENT by Walker L. Knight

Toward common understandings

I grew up with a deep suspicion of Roman Catholics, heightened by the fact that they attended their own schools and worshipped in the one large church building in our town of Henderson, Ky. There was always a mystery about what they did and why they remained separate from the religious life of the largely Protestant city (more Baptist than anything else). We Baptists were anti-Catholic by our heritage as Southerners and as Protestants.

If my favorite uncle had not married a devout Catholic that view might have crystallized even more than it did, especially with my entering denominational work in 1950 and serving under two strong Baptist state paper editors who were champions of church-state separation. This stance placed them in direct opposition to most Catholic moves for federal aid and the establishment of U.S. diplomatic relationships with the Vatican.

A major breakthrough came when one of these editors, E. S. James, endorsed John F. Kennedy for president on the basis of Kennedy's advocacy of separation of church and state. Richard Nixon federal aid to church-related education for a U.S. representative to the Vatican. No doubt both positions were politically motivated. James' endorsement (the paper, the *Texas Baptist*) had a circulation of more than 250,000 weekly was credited with the Texas vote to Kennedy.

Every five voters in the state voted for Kennedy. Texas was a swing state in the election James was invited to the White House to meet with Kennedy.

The myths of Catholic solidarity, of orders from the Vatican, and of foreign control of U.S. Catholics were shattered. Meanwhile, Pope John XIII had given world Catholicism a new look. The important change for Southern Baptist was the destroying of a mind-set, and the beginning of a new interest in other denominations.

Denominationally we were maturing and becoming secure in our own positions, for much of our fear and distrust was born of insecurity—that we might be destroyed by others, that we might not hold our own in face-to-face dialogue, that we had little to learn and maybe little to contribute to others. At least we made no effort to share what we had except by attacking those positions where we differed.

This is not to deny that differences there were serious with Roman Catholics and other faiths. The point is that we spent all our time and energy magnifying the differences, without understanding the many areas of commonality.

As the modern era of communication was born, the change was dramatically revealed at the Home Mission Board when our work with Roman Catholics shifted from one ex-priest to a department of Interfaith Witness. By 1974 Southern Baptist sent the only Protestant press representative, C. Brownlow Hastings of the HMB, to the Vatican. Not only are dialogues the order of the day throughout the nation, but trilogues between Catholics, Baptists and Jews are possible.

We have come to realize that true proclamation occurs only in communication, and this implies that in conversa-

tion with each other we are better able to state our own beliefs and we are free to affirm the positive qualities within another believer. We have taken a radical departure from a one-way flow of communication, which actually is not communication at all. And we have established two-way or multiple channels of communications. This allows us to both send and receive, to adjust the message for the receiver, and to be changed ourselves.

"Form and content are not to be separated, because only in genuine communication with the other person can there be proclamation at all," writes M. De Jonge in *Jesus: Inspiring and Disturbing Presence*. He also makes the point that even God adapted to man's form, a total entering into human language and human living conditions in the person of Jesus, to communicate to us. He quotes Eugene Nida, "The divine communication is essentially incarnational. Words in and of themselves are empty if they are not translated into life, unless they take form in life."

We have now entered a welcomed period of openness to others, of a willingness to adapt our message to a form that the other is able to comprehend, and of the possibility that we might be changed ourselves in the process.

We thus endorse the purpose of this issue as stated by M. Thomas Starks, former director of the department of Interfaith Witness that we understand our own faith better, that we grow in our knowledge of the faith of others, that we affirm the positive qualities within another believer, and that we share our ability to witness to our own faith.

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MEDIA by A.J. Conyers

Scooby-doo, ouija boards, and the occult revival

M. Thomas Starkes predicts that by the late 1970's the current interest in the occult will again be replaced by some more materialistic preoccupation. Meanwhile, there are a few lessons to be learned by the Christian faced with a society awash with crystal balls and Ouija boards.

Dr. Starkes, former director of HMB's Department of Interfaith Witness, finds the occult revival to be a somewhat apt commentary on today's needs and frustrations. In *The Occult as Option* he sees the movement as a result of disillusionment with the political ideals of the 1960's, the exodus from churches and synagogues, a loss of confidence in scientism, as well as a strange upsurge in the search for the bazaar and unusual.

Other factors contribute to this interest. Not the least of which is the influence of mass media. From Samantha, to Sabrina to Scooby Doo, Starkes points out, "American youth are being inundated with witches and haunted houses."

The Occult as Option is a good example of Dr. Starkes' gift for taking an unimpassioned look at religious options while he lays down a web of factual data that he finally used to the disadvantage of witches and Zen Buddhists alike. A part of this gift is his willingness to take the non-Christian believer seriously. Never mind the outlandish claims and the grotesque posturing; beneath this strange behavior exist real needs and, for the believer, a serious attempt at answers.

Nevertheless, Starkes points out, if there are positive aspects to the occult revival, they lie in the corresponding biblical and spiritual insights that Christians are forced to re-discover. Apart from this Christian response, the occult is only another attempt to remove Christ from the throne and focus attention "on creation rather than the Creator."

Dr. Starkes' book, unfortunately, is marred by numerous typographical errors. It is, however, an excellent analysis of an important part of today's religious scene, and well worth the reader's time.

The Occult as Option, M. Thomas Starkes. (Christ for the World Publishers, 116 pp., 1974), \$2.00.

Understanding the new cults

Readers who want a non-technical evaluation of the cult explosion could hardly do better than William J. Petersen's *Those Curious New Cults*.

Petersen, a journalist and the director of Eternity magazine, attempts to fit the youthful quest for the curious and bizarre into the spirit of protest that characterized the late 60s and early 70s. Against the profile of American religion, lit marked by deadening secularism and the rigid institutionalism of the church, as well as gross careerism among the clergy, the new faiths posed in shocking defiance.

The rise of the cults, says Petersen, mirrored what seemed to be a cultural breakdown in the middle and late 60s. Young people were disillusioned with the idealism of the early 60s. They were repelled by scientific dehumanization and frightened by a seemingly chaotic future. Other factors, as well, contributed to a popular quest for new ideals, new values, new gods.

Most of the book is devoted to the forms that these new gods take. Some of the new cults," says the author "...may seem almost grotesque; some sinister; others, naive." Yet, within the undercurrent of restless searching, "the young adherents come with hungry hearts and groping minds for something or Someone to reconcile their alienation and to make sense out of chaos." Astrology, Zen, Satan worship, and the Children of God form prominent parts of the strange cultic quest.

Within each the new adherents fit some hope, however misdirected, to answers to basic needs. Petersen's remarks, for instance, on the search for community within witch covens and the Children of God. Here is a basic human need—the need for community—and these groups offer some form of answer.

Eastern religions provide escape from the tensions of competition and social fears. Astrology and Spiritualism appear to satisfy desires for secret knowledge. Again, real needs are given some promise of an answer.

Petersen shows a real sympathy for these new believers and their expressive needs. Yet he is uncompromising in his conviction that Christians should recognize these curious new cults for what they are—idolatry. Characteristic of these religions, as with all idolatry, says Petersen, is that "man would rather create God in his own image than be created in God's image."

Those Curious New Cults, William J. Petersen. (Keats, 214 pp., 1973), \$4.95.

Book, film, and tapes

Christianity and Comparative Religion, J.N.D. Anderson. (Inter-Varsity, 126 pp., 1970), \$1.95. Does not avoid the hard questions about the uniqueness of the Christian faith. Anderson admits to values in other faiths, but argues against finding a "saving structure" apart from the gospel.

The author is Professor of Oriental Laws in the University of London.

The New Jews, James C. Hefley. (Tyndale, 158 pp., 1974), \$1.45. Hefley has compiled an intriguing collection of first person accounts from Christian Jews on how and why they became Christians. The chapters are interspersed with quotations from notable Jews reflecting the meaning of Jesus the Messiah. This is an altogether readable book sympathetic to Jewish culture and resultant in the discovery of their Messianic promises.

The Cults' Option to Commitment, M. Thomas Starkes. (Home Mission Board Audio-Visuals, 1973), \$9.00. In this series of cassette tapes, Dr. Starkes presents six lectures designed to promote an understanding of Christian deviations. The Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and others are discussed with sympathy and yet with a realistic assessment of their departures from orthodoxy.

Old Religions in a New World, M. Thomas Starkes. (Home Mission Board Audio-Visuals, 1973), \$9.00. A companion to the above series of tapes, these lectures provide a basic understanding of non-Christian religions that recently have been introduced (and in the case of ancient American religions, reintroduced) and are making an impact on the Western world. Discussions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam are followed by a brief theological assessment and some guidelines for witnessing.

This study series is not only valuable for learning to witness to people of other faiths, it also gives sympathetic insight into the lives of non-Christians and an appreciation for the uniqueness of the Christian message.

The World of the Occult, compiled by Walker Knight. (Tyndale, 128 pp., 1972), \$1.95. An inquiry into the occult movement highlighting current implications for society. In addition to his own contributions, Knight includes chapters by Thomas Starkes, Sandy Simmons, Annette Wilkinson, J. Newton, and others. The result is a fine, balanced combination of insights on subjects from astrology to parapsychology. *The World of the Occult* is invaluable for a serious introduction to the occult movement.

"...if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

John 16:7

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Pages 2-3—One of the newest "quasi-Christian movements to reach the U.S. is the One World Crusade of Sun Myung Moon, a Korean.

Page 5—At a recent national convocation, Jehovah's witnesses baptized converts in a swimming pool in a mass baptismal ceremony.

Pages 6-7—Jehovah's witnesses gather for a worship service during their national convention. The denomination is highly evangelistic and growing rapidly throughout the United States.

Pages 8-9—Working together, different Mormon groups are rebuilding Nauvoo, the small Illinois community where Mormonism first gained strength.

Page 11—The reconstruction at Nauvoo shows the town as it was before religious persecution drove the Mormons out of Illinois.

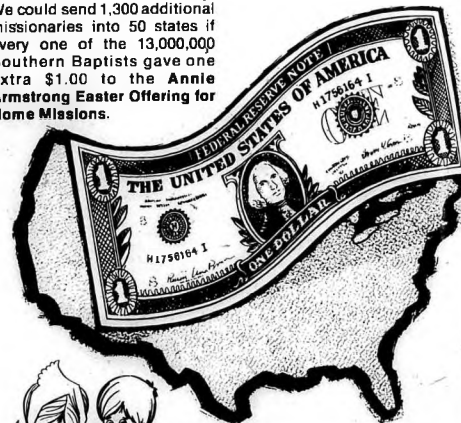
Pages 12-13—Mormonism today is a fast-growing religion, thanks in large part to Mormon missionary zeal. Every Mormon young person is expected to serve for two years as a missionary, supported by their parents. On their own labors, they go out in pairs. One is a photo of Kevin Stedman (left) and Scott Ercanbrack, both of Utah who served in Atlanta. Much of their time is spent in witnessing for their faith—as Ercanbrack does at a home.

Pages 16-17—One responsibility taken on by Mormon missionaries Ercanbrack and Stedman is visiting the children at the hospital.

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Page 19—At the end of the week, Elders Ercanbrack and Stedman look over their "Baptisms and Conversions" chart to determine their progress. Mormon young people such as these actively proselyte from other faiths.

Page 21—Recently, controversy has swirled around Garner Ted Armstrong and the World-Wide Church of God, founded by Armstrong's father, Herbert W. Despite charges of mismanagement and heresy, however, the church grows; it now reports more than 75,000 members.

Pages 22-23—Perhaps the most famous aspect of The Worldwide Church of God is its radio broadcasts; travelers find them in every section of the country.

Page 25—A Unitarian worship service, meeting in a school, draws a large crowd.

Page 33—Top, a worker in the Unity School of Christianity "telephone room," which receives 40,000 calls for prayer each year. This is one of the first photos taken of the phone room. Bottom photo, J. Sig Paulson, co-minister of Unity Chapel, shows Jesse Jones (right), HMB area interfaith witness missionary, a map pinpointing the principal Unity centers in the United States.

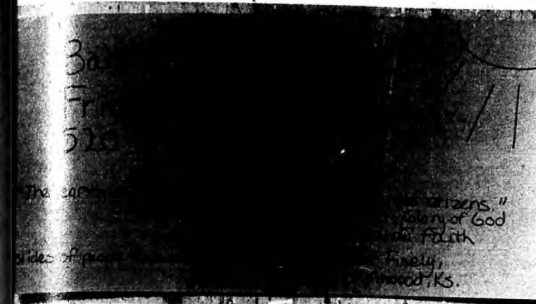
Pages 34-35—The inside of the Ba'hai temple in Washington, D.C.

Page 37—Claudia Beeman, a US-2er, working in San Francisco, has established contact with the Sino-American Buddhist Association.

Pages 42 and 43—Exterior of the Islamic Center in Washington, D.C.

Page 44—A follower of Hare Krishna fingers at a temple in Los Angeles. Krishna stems from Hindu philosophy.

Pages 46-47—Hare Krishna converts worship at an altar in the Los Angeles Krishna temple.



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Page 48—William McLin, HMB interfaith witness missionary, talks to the acting president of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, headquartered in Los Angeles.

Page 51—The altar of a Buddhist shrine in Hilo, Hawaii. American Buddhists now hold Sunday School to "compete" with Christian churches.

Page 54—The gates to Los Angeles' Chinatown, where live 54,000 Chinese. Buddhism is the predominant religion.

Page 56—In quiet, gilded splendor, the Buddha sits in a small temple in San Francisco's Chinatown.

Bertha Smith



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Pages 58-59—A rock music group, Seals and Crofts, are members of the Bah'ai faith and testify to their commitment at concerts.

Page 60—The Bah'ai temple at Evanston, Ill.

Pages 62-63—In a ceremony hundreds of years old, Michael Lauter takes his Bar Mitzvah—the "coming of age" of a Jewish young person. Looking on are his father, George Lauter (left) and Rabbi Edward Cohn of The Temple in Atlanta.

Page 67—With family and friends looking on, Michael Lauter goes through the age-old ritual of the Bar Mitzvah. Conducted after a young man reaches his thirteenth birthday, the bar mitzvah signifies attaining the age of religious duty and responsibility.

Pages 70-71—Father Joe Cavallo conducts mass at St. Jude's Catholic Church in Sandy Springs, Ga. Before coming to this parish—an upper middle-class one on Atlanta's outskirts—Cavallo ministered in the inner-city.



Page 73—Cavallo visits one of the people from his parish who's been hospitalized. When he was working in the inner-city, he did little hospital visiting, because the parish had a priest assigned specifically to visiting the five hospitals in the parish. Now he's learning that hospital visitation can take a lot of time.

Page 75—Most of the old stereotypes about Catholic priests have been breaking down since Vatican II loosened the structure of the church. One of them is Cavallo's freedom to put aside his "collar" for "secular" jobs as when he visits his family, or when he works in an ecumenical coffeehouse, Community in downtown Atlanta. Pictured with him are his grandmother, his sister, Betty, and niece and nephew.

Page 77—Cavallo is the chaplain for a group of young men who are members of the U.S. Air Patrol. Cavallo loves to fly and teaches pilot's lessons. For recreation on duty, he rents a plane and flies around the area.

Page 81—Cavallo conducts one of St. Jude's eight Sunday masses. Although Protestants cannot participate in all phases of the mass, they are welcome to attend any service, of which is conducted in English.



Page 85—At the parish grammar school, Cavallo teaches seventh graders. He first decided to become a priest while in elementary school. "My philosophy of ministry," he says, "is just the gospel—to be as close to Jesus Christ as was possible... to be loving, forgiving, giving."

Page 87—Cavallo conducts a wedding ceremony at St. Jude's.

Pages 94-95—During the wedding ceremony, Cavallo administers communion to the participants.

Pages 98-99—The Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, Atlanta, Ga.

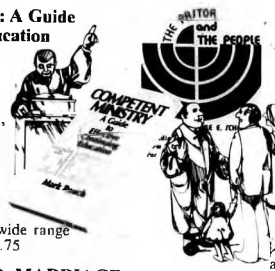
Pages 100-101—Father Goumenis prepares to perform the Divine Liturgy at the altar of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation.

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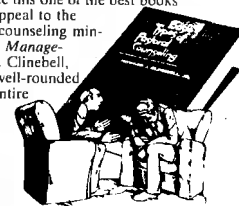


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Page 102—Father Goumenis, during the Liturgy, offers a prayer over "The gift"

Pages 104-105—A young man looks over offerings in occult/astrology at a book store.

Page 107—Astrology is one of the most common aspects of the occult revolution. Horoscopes appear in many daily papers and magazines.

Page 109—Dozens of books on witchcraft have appeared lately.

Page 110—Reading tarot cards and palm popular ways of telling a person's fortune can be one aspect of witchcraft.

Page 111—Even so simple an object as a Ouija board can take on meaning when used by someone believing in the occult.

Page 113—The High Priest of Satanism Anton LaVey, lives in a black house in San Francisco and drives a car with the license plate, "Vampyr."

Page 115—LaVey's "Bible," the Satan Bible, has sold hundreds of copies.

Page 117—David Bahar, a former Southern Baptist minister, has founded a Spiritual Growth Society in Tennessee. He is personally involved in almost all forms of psychic phenomena, from ESP to spirit communication.

Pages 118-119—With interest in the occult and spiritualism growing, newspapers and other literature has sprung up. But recent soundings indicate the trend may have peaked or at least leveled off—in the middle 1970s.

This magazine has been prepared in cooperation with the Interfaith Witness Department of the HMB. Material written by members of HMB's Interfaith staff, edited by Kate Ellen Gruver, assistant director of Department of Interfaith Witness.

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Kate Ellen Gruver is assistant director, Department of Interfaith Witness, HMB. Her present assignment is in the areas of world religions and Christian devotions.

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THE FACES OF MAN



There is only one man in the world and his name is All Men. There is only one woman in the world and her name is All Women. There is only one child in the world and the child's name is All Children.

This thought, by poet Carl Sandburg, is the life-beat of our first Home Mission Board poster set, five full-color posters (26" x 36") with quotes printed on each.

Sandburg's expression of the brotherhood of humans is beautiful and original, but the concept itself is as old as humankind. In every generation, persons of every color and every culture have voiced the same realization; we being called homo sapiens are members of one family.

To emphasize our human universality, the HMB poster set production team chose quotes by members of the five races living on this earth. The quotes ranged from one by a 16th century Chinese to one by an unknown Sioux Indian, but they all express—in their unique way—the same idea: our skins may be black or red or white or yellow or brown, but our species is human; we are all alike, all dependent upon the other, all threads in the tapestry woven by God.

Perhaps as significant as these concepts—for Southern Baptist, at least—are the people pictured in the poster set. For they represent not only the faces of humankind, but also the faces of Southern Baptists. All those featured in the poster set attend SBC churches in the Miami, Florida area.

For the complete set, send check or money order for \$5.00 to The Home Mission Board.

