

# new wine



MAY 1979

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# CULTS



*Mobile 79*



# Editorial

Eight years ago, I was less familiar with cults, so the incident took me by surprise. Unlocking my car in the parking lot of a shopping center, I noticed a young man, dressed in a navy blue shirt and slacks, walking directly toward me—almost as if I were a target. As he came closer, I noticed an odd pendant around his neck, and inwardly I braced myself for a “weird encounter of the worst kind.”

Staring rather blankly at me, he said, in a voice totally devoid of animation, “I want you to have this pamphlet about Jesus.” When he said, “Jesus,” my defensiveness melted into relief, and I said, “Hey, great. I’m a Christian, too. Thanks for the booklet.”

Getting into my car, I gave the booklet a casual reading, and my face flushed with embarrassment. “Man, what a sap I am,” I thought to myself. The pamphlet was an involved explanation of how the Trinity actually consists of the Father, Jesus and *Lucifer*, and that *Lucifer*—totally misunderstood by mankind—performs evil to balance out all the good that Jesus does.

Right then I vowed that the next time, I wouldn’t be duped so easily. Months later, I had the oppor-

tunity to prove it. This time, it was a young lady who, dressed in the same navy blue garb and strange pendant, aimed herself toward my wife and me in a parking lot. But when she got close enough, I cut her off before she could say a word: “You are in deep deception, and Jesus has no part in what you are doing.” Bewildered, she stammered a few pat phrases and then retreated quickly to find a less threatening target.

This time, I was smug. “That took care of her nicely enough,” I said, secure in the fact that I had discovered “sure-fire answer number 492” to anyone involved in a cult.

Eight years after those incidents, I look back at both of my reactions to realize they were typical, yet sadly inadequate. The fallacy underlying both those approaches, the naive endorsement and the heartless dispatch, is a failure to deal seriously and responsibly with cults and their members.

In this issue of *New Wine*, we present information and instruction to help Christians identify and understand cults, so as to avoid their deceptive web and minister responsibly to those caught in it.

DICK LEGGATT

*P.S. We’re delighted this month to present New Wine in a new and larger 36-page format in our continuing effort to strengthen New Wine’s appeal and effectiveness.*

## Letters to the Editor

My main reason for writing was to tell you that in my opinion these last two publications of *New Wine* are the best that you men have done yet. *New Wine* has always been a publication that helped me see what God was saying. These new articles, though, seem more potent than before. They give more of a declaration, and I for one like it. I don’t know how you were able to turn out such quality in the midst of your move to Mobile. With great travail, I expect.

Roland J. Lewis  
Ft. Worth, TX

I applaud your efforts to provide comprehensive and solid educational material to your readers in this time of moral disintegration. The article by Dr.

Harold M. Voth on the forces fragmenting the family unit in the March issue is a powerful indictment against those forces, and more important, it is a positive encouragement for those without Dr. Voth’s psychological experience to bolster those values which support and build the family unit. This article, in conjunction with the other articles in the March issue, of *New Wine*, can only encourage Christians to increase their efforts to build solid committed relationships with their God, their family, and their local Christian community.

Robert W. Treiber  
Steubenville, OH

I would like to express our gratitude to you and the staff of *New Wine* for continuing to send us these wisdom packed magazines each month. They have blessed me and many of our Bible school students here in the school of humility.

Pastor Daniel Del Vecchio  
Torremollinos, Malaga, Spain



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The editorial policy and purpose of *New Wine* Magazine is: (1) to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations, (2) to work with all Christian ministries for the maturity and unity of His Church, (3) thus making ready a people prepared for the coming of the Lord.

We recognize that, according to the Scriptures, God uses men given as ministries to build His Church in the earth. However, the basis of our relationship is not primarily commitment to human personalities, but to Jesus Christ as Head, to the Holy Scriptures as the ultimate standard by which all revelation and practice is to be judged and to God's purpose for His people in the earth at this time, as interpreted by the Holy Spirit.

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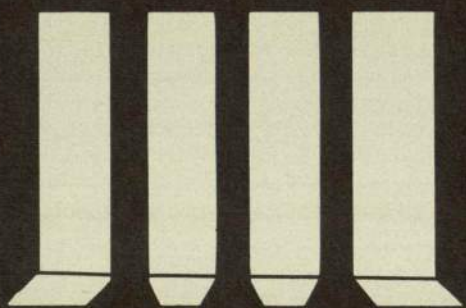
A close-up look at how people are deceived and how they can find truth.

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supervision of an editorial board which meets several times each year to provide direction and oversight. The board consists of Don Basham, Ern Baxter, Bob Mumford, Derek Prince and Charles Simpson, who receive no remuneration for their service on the board.

Please use the form found in this magazine to request *New Wine*, for address changes and contributions. All foreign contributions or payments should be made in the form of a check for U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank or International Money Order for U.S. dollars.





*Until last November, when 914 bodies were found strewn around the corpse of a Marxist, pseudo-religious madman named Jim Jones in a place called Jonestown, Guyana, not too many people were concerned about the subject of cults. But things are different now.*



# Cults: Dungeons of Deception

by Don Basham

**TODAY**, just as we live in a time politically identified as "post-Watergate," we must recognize that a new era in religion has begun—the "post-Jonestown" era.

Rather than doing just another post-mortem on the Jonestown massacre, in this article we want to consider the fresh responsibilities which now confront us as Christians committed to the Lord Jesus Christ and to one another in a spiritual climate permanently altered by the Jonestown tragedy.

In this article, we will:

- 1) Discuss the problems inherent in defining what constitutes a cult, particularly in the social and spiritual climate in which we live—a climate apparently conducive to the spawning of cults.
- 2) Contrast genuine Christian communities with cults, first listing the factors common to both, then clearly explaining the profound distinctions between the two.
- 3) Examine what the Scriptures say about cultic leadership.
- 4) And finally, conclude with some clear-cut advice and admonitions on how to avoid any tendency toward cultism without slackening our efforts to embrace God's present purposes as He establishes His rule among His covenant people in the earth.

## I. The Problem with Definitions

A dictionary definition of "cult" is easy enough to come by. The origin of the word is the Latin "*cultus*," which simply means, "any kind of ritual, ceremony or liturgy." A more recent secondary definition is "a teaching, group or movement which deviates from orthodoxy while claiming to represent the true faith."

This second definition makes us immediately aware of potential complications. To begin with, what represents a "deviation from orthodoxy"? Who has the right to define what is orthodox or to decide what is the "true faith"? By this definition, from an ancient Jewish standpoint, Christianity began as a cult!

It is scarcely an oversimplification to say that this definition opens the door to any person or group assuming authority, possessing superior knowledge, or claiming numerical majority to denounce as a "cult" any other group with views or practices different from their own.

To complicate matters further, the term "cult," which before Jonestown was restricted pretty much to a religious context, is now being used indiscriminately by many non-religious writers and commentators to label almost any closely knit group of people committed to a particular common cause. The dark implication now connected with that label is that such a group might at any moment turn on itself to commit mass suicide.

Since Jonestown, various legitimate Christian groups throughout the country which formerly received only mild criticism for their beliefs and practices have suddenly been skewered on the epithetical lance of the term "cult." Members of one flourishing charismatic church (whose emphasis on covenant commitment had provoked envy among other less successful churches in the city), arrived for Sunday morning worship recently to find these words painted in black, six-foot-high letters across one exterior wall of their sanctuary: "THIS IS A CULT!"

In the absence of an adequate definition, the word "cult" is being used or misused by critics of almost *any* church or group. As Attorney General of the United States Griffin Bell said recently to a Los Angeles audience, "I don't know what a cult is. I am a member of the Baptist Church. I suppose I am in a cult."

In our society then, what constitutes a cult depends upon the standards of the group by whom that judgment is made. For example, thousands of

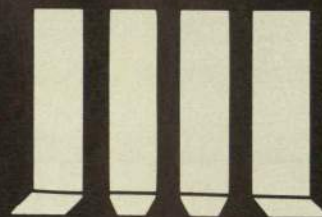


couples in America are living together without the covenant of marriage. If living together without marriage becomes the norm in our society, then those who believe in marriage could be regarded as a cult. If immorality and dishonesty become the norm in our nation, then honest and moral people become "members of a cult."

## II. Similarities and Contrasts Between Genuine Christian Communities and Cults

It should not surprise us to find many similarities between a true Christian community and a cult.

*The final authority is the  
Lord Jesus Christ, and He alone  
is to be worshipped.*



After all, a counterfeit, to be effective, must bear an extremely close resemblance to the real thing, and this is what makes the task of discerning the real from the counterfeit difficult. The Scriptures tell us that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), and Jesus Himself warns that false Christs and false prophets will so closely resemble true spiritual leaders that "if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Mt. 24:24).

How better could Satan oppose or frustrate the work of building the true Kingdom of God in the earth than to flood society with all manner of false prophets, cults, and pseudo-Christian groups which in many ways resemble the churches and communities which are truly moving in the purposes of God?

This, in fact, is exactly Satan's strategy! His intention is that even if people reject the counterfeit, they will also reject the real because of its resemblance to the false.

What then are some of the similarities between the real and the counterfeit?

1) Both genuine, covenant Christian communities and cults require strong human leadership.

2) Both stress the need for strong loyalty and commitment to that leadership.

3) Both believe in deep commitment to the group and its purposes and goals.

4) Both share a kind of apocalyptic view of the present world situation. "The old order is crumbling—a new order is on the rise."

5) Both are working to establish an alternate lifestyle with significantly different values from those of our present society.

However, it is just as important to be able to recognize the crucial differences between legitimate Christian communities and cults.

1) While Christian communities and cults both advocate strong leadership, the Christian community makes it plain that the pastor or shepherd has only delegated spiritual authority; the final authority is the Lord Jesus Christ, and He alone is to be worshipped. On the other hand, cults such as "The Moonies" or the Peoples' Temple tolerate or encourage the deification of their leader. The Reverend

Sun Myung Moon's followers insist he is "the second coming of Christ," and Jim Jones blatantly claimed to be God.

The determination of the cultic leader to have himself enshrined in the place of God as the primary object of devotion clearly marks the cult as satanic, for one unmistakable trait of Satan is his ambition to usurp the place of God: "I will exalt *my* throne . . . I will be like the most High!" (Is. 14:12-14).

2) While both Christian communities and cults adhere to a "body of truth," true Christian communities hold the Scriptures as the final authority, while cults are either anti-scriptural or embrace extra-biblical revelation as being equal or superior to scriptural revelation.

3) While both groups stress the need for commitment and discipline, Christian communities manifest a Christ-like concern for the spiritual and physical welfare of the families under their care, while cultic leadership exploits its people, often requiring radical sacrifice and imposing personal deprivation.

4) Christian communities recognize and cooperate with civil authorities, while cults usually consider civil government an evil threat and often run afoul of the law.

5) Christian communities stress the need for loyalty and covenant commitment on the part of their members, and oversight in the community is based



solely on moral and spiritual persuasion without coercion. Cults, on the other hand, strive to maintain physical control of their members, often resorting to physical force, kidnapping or even murder to keep members from defecting.

### III. Scriptural Examples of False Prophets and Cults

We don't need a special revelation from God to realize that man's basic problems don't change. Man's desire to rule his own affairs is as powerful in 1979 as it was the day Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. The drawing power of cults and the false prophets who lead them stems from the same satanically inspired rejection of God's revealed will that overwhelmed Adam and Eve. When religious people try to improve on God's way of doing things, a cult is usually the result.

While the word "cult" is not a biblical term, the Scriptures are laced with warnings against and descriptions of false apostles, prophets and teachers, and of the judgments which inevitably come upon them and the cult of followers they draw after them. Here are a few of those biblical warnings:

- 1) Jesus warns against false prophets (Mt. 7:13-23).
- 2) Paul warns against false apostles (2 Cor. 11:12-13).
- 3) Peter warns against false teachers (2 Pet. 2:1-22).
- 4) Paul warns against false pastors and shepherds (Acts 20:29,30).

as the Manifested Sons of God) headed by Rev. Sam Fife are examples of cults that had Christian beginnings. As they grew in influence, they deviated radically from historic Christianity to follow many non-biblical revelations and practices.

The Scriptures offer us a classic picture of the rise and fall of a cult when it describes the ministry of a man who began as a true prophet of God, but who fell into error and perversion, leading 24,000 Israelite followers to tragedy and death. The biblical character we refer to is Balaam, whose tragic story is recorded in Numbers 22, 23 & 24.

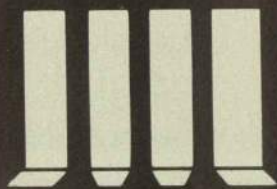
Balaam is a prophet of God whom Balak, king of Moab, tries to hire to come and curse the people of Israel. Driven by pride and lust for wealth, Balaam disregards God's clear directions *not* to go—"And God said unto Balaam, thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people for they are blessed" (Num. 22:12)—and joins forces with King Balak.

Since I covered the subject of Balaam's rebellion in my book *True and False Prophets*, I would like to cite a portion of my commentary on the matter here.

The incidents which follow [Balaam's disobedient trip to join Balak] are profoundly ludicrous. Every time Balak says, "Try cursing Israel from this place," and Balaam opens his mouth, blessings for Israel pour forth. *In fact, Balaam ends up prophesying the coming of the Messiah.*

"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel . . . Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion . . . " (Num. 24:17,19).

Balaam's inability to curse Israel eventually in-



*If you have authority,  
you need to be under authority.*

Perhaps we should note here that in addition to many blatantly non-Christian cults such as the late Jim Jones and his Peoples' Temple (Jones himself was a tormented, morally degenerate Marxist who blasphemed Jesus Christ and professed to be God), there are other cultic groups which must be recognized as semi- or quasi-Christian. That is, they have some roots in traditional Christian soil and hold some basic Christian convictions in addition to their many heresies. The Unification Church of Rev. Sun Moon and the Body of Christ (formerly known

curs King Balak's displeasure.

"I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour" (Num. 24:10,11).

While Balaam's rebellion does not prevent his blessing Israel, it leads to his own death and real tragedy for the Israelites, who later give heed to his false counsel and join themselves to the worshippers of Baal. The Scriptures solemnly testify



that 24,000 die because they follow Balaam's counsel. Balaam himself is slain along with the Kings of Midian (Num. 25:1-9, 31:16, 31:8).

Centuries later, the leaders of the New Testament church warn against false prophets and teachers, ". . . which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, *following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet*" (2 Pet. 2:15, 16).

"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, *and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward . . .*" (Jude 11).

The book of Revelation describes the sin of Balaam even more clearly. To the church at Ephesus, Jesus said, "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there *them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication*" (Rev. 2:14).

So what is the final portrait of Balaam? He was a false prophet: a man who spoke the true and exalted messages of God, even prophesying the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but whose life was governed by rebellion and greed.

Many will ask, "How can a rebellious, lustful man be an instrument for the miraculous ministry and message of God?" Well, Balaam was such a man. What's more, we have such men today, preying upon the church.

While the Bible does not describe in as great detail Balaam's involvement and prophetic influence with

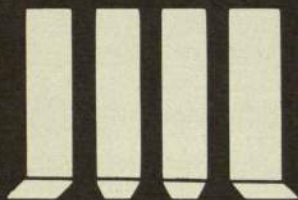
plague which destroyed the guilty Israelites. Balaam himself was later slain in Israel's war against the Midianites.

It is sobering to read of this prophet of God who, because of the greed and selfishness in his own heart, perverted his ministry and persuaded 24,000 loyal Israelites to forsake their own righteous faith to become a Baal-worshipping cult, destined for destruction.

#### IV. Warnings to Christians

It is a spiritual fact of life that every time God moves to fulfill a portion of His will in the earth, Satan is on hand with a counterfeit as an alternative. God sent His only begotten son as the Christ, so the devil spawns and inspires many false Christs. Even at the beginning, in the matchless Garden of Eden, the serpent was on hand to entice Adam and Eve to reject God's ways and accept his own perverted plan.

Most of us who are familiar with the charismatic renewal realize that just as God continues to pour out His Spirit in the earth, Satan is busy promoting his own counterfeit pentecost of occultism and drug addiction. Similarly, as God is moving today to gather His people into committed fellowships and covenant communities, Satan is paralleling that move with a proliferation of cults. Because of the intensity of Satan's efforts, all of us have had to struggle against vulnerability to deception and the temptation to drift into cultic attitudes and practices.



*When religious people try to  
improve God's way of doing things,  
a cult is usually the result.*

the Israelites as it does his involvement with Balak and the leaders of Moab and Midian, nevertheless, it does provide enough information to confirm Balaam's folly.

Shortly after his final prophecy (see Num. 24:15-25), he led a large number of Israelites into the apostasy of Baal-worship and encouraged the children of Israel to "eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication" (Rev. 2:14).

As a result, God commanded Moses to kill the Israelite leaders who allowed the seduction, and sent a

In this final portion of our article, we want to help alert our readers to some of those very temptations and dangers and to provide counsel to help avoid such practices.

*Cult Characteristic 1: Every cult has as its head a strong leader who is not answerable to anyone else, who acknowledges no delegated human authority over him.*

Christians should never place themselves under the spiritual authority of any pastor or leader who is himself spiritually unsound. "Don't submit to a man



who is not submitted." No human leader is so wise or mature as to be immune from error or deception. Every teacher needs to be taught; every pastor needs a pastor. If you *have* authority, you need to be *under* authority. Most of the tragedies arising from cults could have been avoided if their leaders had been humble enough to receive desperately needed direction and correction from other more mature leaders.

*Cult Characteristic 2: Cult leadership exercises harsh domination of its followers, subjecting them to extreme forms of service and personal deprivation.*

Christians forming themselves into covenant groups should remember to place a high priority on pastoral care and concern. A covenant group exists not to deprive people, but to nurture them and fulfill their needs so they may function as healthy and mature individuals within the larger spiritual family. Peter gives pastors specific advice on this point.

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

*Cult Characteristic 3: Cults tend to isolate themselves geographically.*

Obviously, as God draws us together in committed relationships, we become identified as people who spend time together. To participate in Christian community life necessitates physical proximity.

However, there is a clear danger in becoming exclusive or self-contained. It is the cult mentality that decides to flee to the jungle or to become isolated from the rest of the world. The Scripture tells us we are to be "in but not of" the world. It is true we need a strong identity and visibility as a particular group of God's people. But we need to use that identity and visibility to be a redemptive witness *in* the community. To become separatist or exclusive is to invite deception and suspicion. As covenant Christians we should, as Ern Baxter puts it, "be determined to fellowship the whole Body of Christ."

*Cult Characteristic 4: Cults tend to reject the authority of Scripture and the basic doctrines of the*

*Christian faith such as the divinity of Christ, the cross and the blood atonement.*

While striving to grow into spiritual maturity and to move in "present truth" (applying the word of God in a relevant way to life today), we must guard against extra-biblical revelation. Scripture and historic Christian revelation provide strong anchors which help prevent our falling into error and cultic subjectivism. The Spirit of God and the word of God agree.

Relying on the Scriptures as our final authority provides a safeguard superior to almost any other. Cultic groups which reject or seriously water down the authority of Scripture almost always open themselves to additional "supernatural revelation" of a demonic nature. Therefore, any genuine scriptural revelation and truth such a group may have had in the beginning becomes increasingly mixed and diluted by an even higher percentage of error until the truth is totally lost in a plethora of subjective demonic revelation.

*Cultic Characteristic 5: Teachings in cultic groups tend to reject or suspect all authority except their own and promote paranoia among their followers that "everyone else is an enemy."* Healthy Christians recognize that even secular authority is to be respected since it serves the purposes of God.

*Cultic Characteristic 6: Cults tend sooner or later to abandon basic Christian morality for various forms of sexual perversion or exploitation among their members to serve the goals of the group.* Young women in the Children of God movement are encouraged to sell sex to raise money for the group, a practice they themselves refer to as "flirty fishing." Jim Jones was a known sexual pervert who demanded depraved sex practices among his followers, later securing signed confessions of their deeds to strengthen his hold over them by threat of exposure. Spiritual perversion will inevitably lead to sexual perversion. The very fact that God intended sex to be used within the covenant of marriage is reason enough for Satan to plot a myriad of ways to degrade and pervert God's holy gift.

In summary, we must keep a close watch on ourselves for attitudes and practices which would indicate any movement on our part toward cultism. Cults are Satan's counterfeits designed to deceive or discredit God's covenant people. If we can learn to recognize and avoid the major cultic pitfalls and maintain the integrity of our Christian walk, we will be drawn increasingly into the rich blessings and righteous maturity God has destined for His covenant people in the earth. ♣



# Why Study the Bible?

by R. C. Sproul

IT MAY SEEM odd and foolish to raise this question since you probably would not be reading this unless you were already convinced that Bible study is necessary. Our best intentions, however, are often weakened by our moods and caprice. Bible study often falls by the way. So, let us review some of the compelling reasons for studying the Bible at all.

## TWO MYTHS

First, we will look at some of the reasons people give for not studying the Bible. These "reasons" often contain myths which are passed off as truisms through much repetition. The myth that claims first place in our hall of excuses is the idea that the Bible is too difficult for the ordinary person to understand.

*Myth 1: The Bible is so difficult to understand that only highly skilled theologians with technical training can deal with the Scriptures.*

This myth has been repeated many times by sincere people. People say, "I know I can't study the Bible, because every time I try to read it, I can't understand it." When some people say that, they may want to hear, "That's all right. I understand. It's really a difficult book, and unless you've had seminary training, maybe you ought not to tackle it." Or perhaps they want to hear, "I know, it's too heavy, too deep, too profound. I commend you for your tireless efforts, your strenuous labors in trying to solve the mystifying riddle of God's Word. It is sad that God has chosen to speak to us in such obscure and esoteric language that only scholars can grasp it." This, I am afraid, is what many of us want to hear. We feel guilty and want to quiet our consciences for neglecting our duty as Christians.

When we express this myth, we do it with astonishing ease. The myth is so often repeated that we do

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Taken from *Knowing Scripture* by R. C. Sproul. © 1977 by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press. This book is available in most Christian book stores.



not expect it to be challenged. Yet we know that as mature adults, living in the United States of America, having a high-school education or better, we can understand the basic message of the Bible.

*Myth 2: The Bible is boring.*

If we press people for an explanation for what they mean when they express the first myth, usually they respond by saying, "Well, I guess I can understand it, but frankly the book bores me to death." This statement reflects not so much an inability to understand what is read as a taste and preference for what one finds interesting and exciting.

The preponderance of boredom that people experience with the Bible came home to me several years ago when I was hired to teach the Scriptures in required Bible courses at a Christian college. The president of the institution phoned me and said, "We need someone young and exciting, someone with a dynamic method who will be able to 'make the Bible come alive.' " I had to force myself to swallow my words. I wanted to say, "You want me to make the Bible come alive? I didn't know that it had died. In fact, I never even heard that it was ill. Who was the attending physician at the Bible's demise?" No, I can't make the Bible come alive for anyone. The Bible is already alive. It makes me come alive.

When people say the Bible is dull it makes me wonder why. Biblical characters are full of life. There is a unique quality of passion about them. Their lives reveal drama, pathos, lust, crime, devotion and every conceivable aspect of human existence. There is rebuke, remorse, contrition, consolation, practical wisdom, philosophical reflection and, most of all, truth. Perhaps the dullness some experience is due to the antiquity of the material that may seem foreign. How does the life of Abraham—lived so long ago and so far away—relate to us? But the characters of biblical history are real. Though their life settings are different from ours, their strug-

gles and concerns are very much like ours.

## THE CLARITY OF SCRIPTURE

In the sixteenth century, the Reformers declared their total confidence in what they called the perspicuity of Scripture. What they meant by that technical term was the *clarity* of Scripture. They maintained that the Bible is basically clear and lucid. It is simple enough for any literate person to understand its *basic message*. This is not to say that all parts of the Bible are equally clear or that there are no difficult passages or sections to be found in it. Laymen unskilled in the ancient languages and the fine points of exegesis may have difficulty with parts of Scripture, but the essential content is clear enough to be understood easily. Luther, for example, was convinced that what was obscure and difficult in one part of Scripture was stated more clearly and simply in other parts of Scripture.

If you have been one of those who have clung to the myths of dullness or difficulty, perhaps it is because you have attributed to the whole of Scripture what you have found in some of its parts. Maybe some passages have been peculiarly difficult and obscure. Other passages may have left you bewildered and baffled. Perhaps those should be left for the scholars to unravel. If you find certain portions of the Scripture difficult and complex, need you insist that the whole of Scripture is boring and dull?

Biblical Christianity is not an esoteric religion. Its content is not concealed in vague symbols that require some sort of special "insight" to grasp. There is no special intellectual prowess or pneumatic gift that is necessary to understand the basic message of Scripture. You may find that in Eastern religions where insight is limited to some remote guru who lives in a shanty high in the Himalayas. Maybe the guru has been thunderstruck by the gods with some profound mystery of the universe. You travel to inquire and he tells you in a hushed whisper that the meaning of life is "one-hand clapping." That's esoteric. That's so esoteric that even the guru does not understand it. He cannot understand it because it's an absurdity. Absurdities often sound profound because they are incapable of being understood. When we hear things we do not understand, sometimes we think they are simply too deep or weighty for us to grasp when in fact they are merely unintelligible statements like "one-hand clapping." The Bible does not talk like that. The Bible speaks of God in meaningful patterns of speech. Some of those patterns

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He has written four other books—*The Symbol*, *The Psychology of Atheism*, *Discovering the Intimate Marriage* and *Objections Answered*.



may be more difficult than others, but they are not meant to be nonsense statements that only a guru can fathom.

## THE PROBLEM OF MOTIVATION

It is important to note that there is a great deal of difference between *reading* the Bible and *studying* the Bible. Reading is something we can do in a leisurely way, something that can be done strictly for entertainment in a casual, cavalier manner. But study suggests labor, serious and diligent work.

Here then, is the real problem of our negligence. We fail in our duty to study God's Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it is dull and boring, but because it is work. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence or a lack of passion. Our problem is that we are lazy.

The problem of slothfulness has been with us since the curse of the Fall. Our labor is now mixed with sweat. Weeds are easier to grow than grass. Newspapers are easier to read than the Bible is to study. The curse of labor is not magically removed simply because it is the study of Scripture that is our task.

I frequently lecture to groups on the theme of studying the Bible. Usually I ask the group how many of them have been Christians for one year or more. Then I ask those people how many have read the entire Bible from cover to cover. In every instance, the overwhelming majority answer in the negative. I would venture to guess that among those who have been Christians for a year or more, at least eighty per cent have never read the whole Bible. How is that possible? Only an appeal to the radical Fall of the human race could begin to answer that question.

Biblical ignorance is not limited to lay people by any means. I have sat on church boards responsible for the preparation and examination of seminarians preparing for the pastoral ministry. The degree of biblical ignorance manifested by many of these students is appalling. Seminary curricula have not done much to alleviate the problem. Many churches are ordaining men every year who are virtually ignorant of the content of Scripture.

I was shocked when I took a test in biblical knowledge for entrance to the theological seminary from which I graduated. After I completed my exam, I was deeply embarrassed, ashamed to hand in my pa-

per. I had taken several courses in college that I thought would prepare me for such a test, but when the test came I was not ready. I left question after question blank and was certain that I had failed. When the grades were posted, I discovered that I had received one of the highest grades in a group of seventy-five students. Even with the grades scaled there were several students who scored less than 10 out of a possible grade of 100. My score was poor, yet it was one of the best of the bad.

Biblical illiteracy among the clergy has become so prevalent that we often find pastors getting annoyed and angry when their parishoners ask them to teach them the Bible. In many cases the pastor lives in mortal fear that his ignorance will be exposed by his being thrust into a situation where he is expected to teach the Bible.

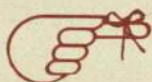
## THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR BIBLE STUDY

The Bible itself has much to say about the importance of studying the Bible. Let us examine two passages, one from each testament, in order to catch a glimpse of these mandates.

In Deuteronomy 6 we find a passage that was familiar to every Jew of the Old Testament. Its words were used to call the assembly together for worship. We read: "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (vv. 4-5). Most of us are familiar with these words. But what follows them immediately? Read on:

And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (vv. 6-9)

Here God sovereignly commands that his Word be taught so diligently that it penetrates the heart. The content of that Word is not to be mentioned casually and infrequently. Repeated discussion is the



**Don't forget: May 4th is a national day of prayer and fasting**



order of the day, every day. The call to bind on the hand, the forehead, the doorpost and gate makes it clear that God is saying that the job must be done by whatever method it takes.

Looking at the New Testament we read Paul's admonition to Timothy:

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:14-17)

This exhortation is so basic to our understanding of the importance of Bible study that it warrants a careful scrutiny.

*Continue in the things you have learned.* This part of the admonition lays the accent on *continuity*. Our study of Scripture is not to be a once-for-all matter. There is no room for the proverbial once over lightly. Consistency is necessary for a sound basis of biblical studies.

*Sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation.* Paul refers to the Scripture's ability to give wisdom. When the Bible speaks of "wisdom," it refers to a special kind of wisdom. The term is not used to connote an ability to be "worldly-wise" or to have the cleverness necessary to write a *Poor Richard's Almanac*. In biblical terms, wisdom has to do with the practical matter of learning how to live a life that is pleasing to God.

*Knowing from whom you have learned them.* Who is this "whom" Paul is talking about? Is he referring to Timothy's grandmother? Or to Paul himself? These options are doubtful. The "whom" refers to the ultimate source of the knowledge Timothy has acquired, namely, God. This comes out more clearly in the statement, "All Scripture is inspired by God."

*Scripture inspired by God.* This passage has been the focal point of volumes of theological literature that describe and analyze theories of biblical inspiration. The crucial word in the passage is the Greek term *theopneust* which is often translated by the phrase "inspired by God." The term more precisely means "God-breathed," which refers not so much to God's breathing something "in" as to his breathing something "out." Rather than the term "inspira-

tion," we may be better advised to render the Greek by the English "expiration." In that case we would see the significance of the passage not so much in providing us with a theory of inspiration—a theory of how God transmitted his Word through human authors—but rather a statement of the origin or source of Scripture. What Paul is saying to Timothy is that the Bible comes from God. He is its ultimate author. It is his word; it comes from him; it carries the weight of all that he is. Thus, the injunction to remember "from whom you have learned them [these things.]"

*Scripture is profitable for teaching.* One of the most important priorities Paul mentions is the pre-eminent way in which the Bible profits us. The first and indeed foremost profit is the profit of teaching or instruction. We may pick up the Bible and be "inspired" or moved to tears or other poignant emotions. But our greatest profit is in being *instructed*.

**The Christian who is not diligently involved in a serious study of Scripture is simply inadequate as a disciple of Christ.**

*Scripture profitable for reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.* In these words Paul articulates the practical value of Bible study. As fallen creatures we sin, we err and we are inherently out of shape with respect to righteousness. When we sin, we need to be reproofed. When we err, we need to be corrected. When we are out of shape, we need to go into training. The Scriptures function as our chief reprover, our chief correcter and our chief trainer. The bookstores of this world are filled with books on training methods to acquire excellence in sports, to lose weight and get our physical figures into shape and to acquire skills in all areas. Libraries have stacks of books written to teach us financial management and the nuances of wise investment policies. We can find many books that will teach us how to turn our losses into profits, our liabilities into assets. But where are the books that will train us in righteousness? The question still remains, "What shall it profit a man if he wins the whole world and loses his soul?"

*That the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.* The Christian who is not diligently involved in a serious study of Scripture is simply inadequate as a disciple of Christ. To be an adequate Christian and competent in the things of God one must do more than attend "sharing ses-



sions" and "bless-me parties." We cannot learn competency by osmosis. The biblically illiterate Christian is not only inadequate but unequipped. In fact, he is inadequate because he is not equipped. Lee Trevino may be able to put on incredible exhibitions of his prodigious skill by hitting golf balls with a taped up Dr. Pepper bottle. But he doesn't use a Dr. Pepper bottle off the tee in the U.S. Open.

## THE BIBLE AS REVELATION

One of the most important advantages the Bible gives us is that it provides information that is not available anywhere else. Our universities provide us with a wealth of knowledge acquired by human investigation of the natural world. We learn by observation, analysis and abstract speculation. We compare and contrast varied opinions from notable scholars. But with all the skills of knowledge that we have at our disposal in this world, there is no one who can speak to us from a transcendent perspective, no one who can reason with us, as the philosophers say, *sub species aeternitatis*.

Only God can provide us with an eternal perspective and speak to us with absolute and final authority. The advantage of the equipment provided by Scripture is that knowledge is made available to us that can be learned from no other source. The Scripture does, of course, talk of matters that can be learned by other means. We are not utterly dependent on the New Testament to learn who Caesar Augustus was or how far it is from Jerusalem to Bethany. But the world's best geographer cannot show us the way to God, and the world's best psychiatrist cannot give us a final answer to the problem of our guilt. There are matters contained in Holy Writ that "unveil" for us that which is not exposed to the natural course of human investigation.

When we speak about the concept of revelation, we are talking about the basic principle of self-disclosure. The Scriptures come to us as divine self-disclosure. Here the mind of God is laid bare on many matters. With a knowledge of Scripture we do not have to rely on secondhand information or bare speculation to learn who God is and what he values. In the Bible he reveals himself.

## THE SENSUOUS CHRISTIAN

I often have been tempted to write a book by the title *The Sensuous Christian*. *The Sensuous Woman*,

*The Sensuous Man*, *The Sensuous Couple*, *The Sensuous Divorcee*, ad nauseum, all have become best sellers. Why not *The Sensuous Christian*?

What is a sensuous Christian? One dictionary defines *sensuous* as, "pertaining to the senses or sensible objects: highly susceptible to influence through the senses." The sensuous Christian is one who lives by his feelings rather than through his understanding of the Word of God. The sensuous Christian cannot be moved to service, prayer or study unless he "feels like it." His Christian life is only as effective as the intensity of present feelings. When he experiences spiritual euphoria, he is a whirlwind of Godly activity; when he is depressed, he is a spiritual incompetent. He constantly seeks new and fresh spiritual experiences and uses them to determine the Word of God. His "inner feelings" become the ultimate test of truth.

The sensuous Christian doesn't need to study the Word of God because he already knows the will of God by his feelings. He doesn't want to know God; he wants to experience him. The sensuous Christian equates "childlike faith" with ignorance. He thinks that when the Bible calls us to childlike faith it means a faith without content, a faith without understanding. He doesn't know that the Bible says, "In evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature" (1 Cor. 14:20). He doesn't realize that Paul tells us again and again, "My beloved brethren, I would not

One of the most important advantages the Bible gives us is that it provides information that is not available anywhere else.

have you ignorant" (see, for example, Rom. 11:25). The sensuous Christian goes his merry way until he encounters the pain of life that is not so merry and he folds. He usually ends up embracing a kind of "relational theology" (that most dreadful curse on modern Christianity) where personal relationships and experience take precedence over the Word of God. If the Scripture calls us to action that may jeopardize a personal relationship, then the Scripture must be compromised. The highest law of the sensuous Christian is that bad feelings must be avoided at all cost.

The Bible is addressed *primarily* though not *exclusively* to our understanding. That means the



mind. This is difficult to communicate to modern Christians who are living in what may be the most anti-intellectual period of Western civilization. Notice, I did not say anti-academic or anti-technological or anti-scholarly. I said anti-intellectual. There is a strong current of antipathy to the function of the mind in the Christian life.

Christianity is supremely intellectual though not intellectualistic. That is, Scripture is addressed to the intellect without at the same time embracing a spirit of intellectualism. The Christian life is not to be a life of bare conjecture or cold rationalism; it is to be a life of vibrant passion. Strong feelings of joy, love and exaltation are called for again and again. But those passionate feelings are a *response* to what we understand with our minds to be true. When we read in Scripture, "Take courage; I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33), "ho hum" is not an appropriate response. We can be of good cheer because we understand that Christ has indeed overcome the world. That thrills our souls and sets our feet to dancing. What is more precious than to experience the sweetness of the presence of Christ or the nearness of the Holy Spirit?

God forbid that we should lose our passion or go through the Christian pilgrimage without any experience of Christ. But what happens when there is a conflict between what God says and what I feel? We must do what God says, like it or not. That is what Christianity is all about.

Reflect for a moment. What happens in your own life when you act according to what you feel like doing rather than what you know and understand God says you should do? Here we encounter the ruthless reality of the difference between happiness and pleasure. How easy it is to confuse the two! The pursuit of happiness is regarded as our "unalienable right." But happiness and pleasure are not the same thing. Both of them feel good, but only one endures. Sin can bring pleasure, but never happiness. If sin were not so pleasurable, it would hardly represent a temptation. Yet, while sin often "feels good," it does not produce happiness. If we do not know the difference, or worse yet, do not care about the difference, we have made great strides to becoming the ultimate sensuous Christian.

It is precisely at the point of discerning the difference between pleasure and happiness that knowledge of Scripture is so vital. There is a remarkable relationship between God's will and human happiness. The fundamental deception of Satan is the lie that obedience can never bring happiness. From the primordial temptation of Adam and Eve to last

night's satanic seduction, the lie has been the same. "If you do what God says, you will not be happy. If you do what I say, you will be 'liberated' and know happiness."

If there is a secret, a carefully guarded secret, to human happiness, it is that one expressed in a seventeenth-century catechism that says, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." The secret to happiness is found in obedience to God. How can we be happy if we are not obedient? How can we be obedient if we do not know what it is we are to obey? Thus, the top and the tail of it is that happiness cannot be fully discovered as long as we remain ignorant of God's Word.

To be sure, knowledge of God's Word does not guarantee that we will do what it says, but at least we will know what we are supposed to be doing in our quest for human fulfillment. The issue of faith is not so much whether we believe in God, but whether we believe the God we believe in.

## A MATTER OF DUTY

Why should we study the Bible? We have mentioned briefly the practical value, the ethical importance and the way of happiness. We have looked at some of the myths that are given why people do not study the Bible. We have examined something of the spirit of pragmatism and the anti-intellectual climate of our day. There are many facets to the question and countless reasons why we ought to study the Bible.

I could plead with you to study the Bible for personal edification; I could try the art of persuasion to stimulate your quest for happiness. I could say that the study of the Bible would probably be the most fulfilling and rewarding educational experience of your life. I could cite numerous reasons why you would benefit from a serious study of Scripture. But ultimately the main reason why we should study the Bible is because it is our duty.

If the Bible were the most boring book in the world, dull, uninteresting and seemingly irrelevant, it would still be our duty to study it. If its literary style were awkward and confusing, the duty would remain. We live as human beings under an obligation by divine mandate to study diligently God's Word. He is our Sovereign, it is his Word and he commands that we study it. A duty is not an option. If you have not yet begun to respond to that duty, then you need to ask God to forgive you and to resolve to do your duty from this day forth. ♥



# UPDATE UPDATE

*This issue marks the beginning of an informative new feature that will appear on a regular basis in New Wine. In each report we will bring you news on recent or upcoming activities of one of the teachers regularly featured in New Wine. We hope you will find this ministry update page a helpful tool in praying for these men and in staying abreast of significant events in the Body of Christ at large.*

Ern Baxter is spending six months of this year on the faculty of the Morris Cerullo School of Ministry in San Diego, California. In February, after returning from several weeks of ministry in Australia, he embarked on a time of concentrated systematic teaching which is part of a program designed to help prepare men of God for more effective ministry.

In order to provide you with a close-up view of what the School of Ministry is and what it is designed to do, we asked Ern to answer a few questions for us.

**NW:** Ern, how many students are there at the School of Ministry?

**EB:** We've got 500 students registered. Another 700 would have come if it hadn't been for visa problems. I think there are twenty countries represented in all.

**NW:** Where are most of the students from?

**EB:** I would say the largest number are from the States, but significant numbers also came from South America, Africa, India, Indonesia. Of course, when I say, "Africa," that includes the various individual countries: Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya.

**NW:** Who, besides yourself, is involved in the teaching?

**EB:** Well, I'm having a chance to associate with Morris Cerullo and Alex Ness. Then we have Dr. Charles Monroe and a Dr. McKinney who is a black full-gospel pastor. There are also some men coming in on a part-time basis. Larry and Nordis Christenson were here a few weeks ago, and Derek Prince was here one week.

**NW:** Besides the time together in the classroom, are you able to spend time with the students on a more personal basis?

**EB:** Yes, I spend several hours a week in private consultation with the students. We usually take two or three students a day and spend some time together personally.

**NW:** What sort of teaching are you personally involved in at the school?

**EB:** I'm teaching five days a week to the whole group. I'm also sharing the Sunday morning ministry to the students and others attending from the area.

**NW:** What topics are you teaching on?

**EB:** Well, in the classes I've finished teaching the first principles, and now I'm teaching on maturity. Then I'll go on into Kingdom teaching and so on. The Sunday morning meetings, though, are more inspirational than instructional.

**NW:** Do you anticipate the School of Ministry spreading from California into other locations?

**EB:** I think I'd like to see it reproduce globally. I'd like to see something very strategically placed in, say, Indonesia and Africa.

**NW:** How long has the school been in operation?

**EB:** It started the first of February and will run through the middle of July.

**NW:** And will there be other similar schools in the future?

**EB:** Yes. Hopefully we will do two a year. My idea, which seems to be working out, is that six months per school is too long for students to be in a foreign culture. I'm trying to get it reduced to four, so what we'll probably do next year is have two four-month sessions. We're working out the rest of the bugs, but at least we're into it now. This is sort of a trial run, but it's very exciting because it's providing us with a challenge of the dimension that I think we've needed.

*We also want to mention that a wide selection of Ern's tapes, as well as his books, are available through Integrity Publications, P.O. Box Z, Mobile, Alabama 36616.*





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**To order check box on page 35.**





# True Leadership

by Jim Hamann

**AT THE BEGINNING** of the Revolutionary War in 1775, American soldiers were no more than rag-tag farmers who took potshots at the British troops from behind trees. They had no training, no discipline, no uniforms, no officers, no supplies, and no real weapons to speak of with which to overcome the efficient enemy forces.

When George Washington was made general, his first priority was to train officers who could in turn transform raw recruits into some semblance of an army. Only when the independent Yankees submitted to their leaders were they in a position to defeat the enemy.

Jesus Christ came to earth to captain an army of redeemed men. Gathering around Him a small core of rough recruits, He trained them diligently as "officers" who could train others to conquer the world for His cause. And conquer it they did; so much so that they were dubbed "these that have turned the world upside down!"

Today, however, instead of a disciplined army prepared to attack the defenses of the enemy, we as a church have gone AWOL. When we hear the call to rejoin the ranks and shape up, our reply is, "We'll submit to God, but we'll never submit to men!"

Just as an army cannot function effectively without each soldier coming under the authority of his

superior, so the army of God—the Church—can make no real impact or concerted thrust in spiritual warfare without each member being directed by his leader.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERS

In the early 1930's, the world sat gingerly on the powder keg that later exploded into World War II. At that time, the number of combat-ready American troops was only about three times the number of policemen in New York City. Even so, certain leaders of Congress blindly advocated, in the interests of economy, cutting two thousand officers from the army payroll.

In quiet desperation, General Douglas MacArthur wrote to a congressional leader:

An army can live on short rations, it can be insufficiently clothed and housed, it can even be poorly armed and equipped, but in action it is doomed to destruction without the trained and adequate leadership of officers.

An efficient and sufficient corps of officers means the difference between victory and defeat.<sup>1</sup>

The efficient corps of officers which General



MacArthur later trained spelled victory for the Allied forces in the Philippines in 1945.

One such officer was Lt. General Eichelberger, whom MacArthur commissioned to rescue two thousand American and Allied prisoners of war from a prison camp fifty miles within Japanese lines in a swampy, treacherous area called Los Banos, Philippines.

A detachment of thirty-two American and eighty Filipino guerillas infiltrated by native canoes and then slogged for seven hours through swamps and rice paddies to the prison camp where they set up phosphorous markers for waiting paratroopers and a flotilla of troop-carrying amtracs.

The coordination in timing of the leaders of the three converging units was faultless and at the designated time, guerillas penetrated the gates of the prison camp and killed the sentries. Simultaneously the amtracs deployed their load of readied soldiers, and the paratroopers dropped from the sky into position.

Through this united action, all two thousand prisoners were safely evacuated, and approximately two hundred and fifty Japanese guards were killed, with a total loss to the Americans of two dead and one wounded.<sup>2</sup>

Disciplined men following disciplined leaders made this victory possible.

## DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Spiritual authority is the expression of God's will through delegated leaders to a group of people, revealing His love, discipline, and concern for their highest good. Christ told His disciples that the Father had given Him all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt. 28:18). Yet, since His ascension, how can He express this authority as supreme ruler of His church? I feel that He has chosen to rule today by delegated authority, those whom He has set under Him.

Jesus has chosen to guide His people through delegated authority and He expects us to recognize and submit to those leaders as we would to Him in person. He said to His disciples, "He who receives whomever I send receives Me and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me" (Jn. 13:20, NAS). In

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other words, "When people receive a man whom I send—his ministry, his gifts, his message—they are in fact receiving Me and My eternal Father."

Christ's parable of the owner of the vineyard focuses on delegated authority. The owner of the vineyard did not come personally to gather his due from its tenants, but rather, on three different occasions he sent his servants, and finally his own son as his delegates. He could have come and collected for himself, but he wanted to see if the tenants would be subject to his delegated authority. From God's viewpoint, those who reject His servants reject Him (Lk. 20:9-18).

Who are these leaders that we are to obey? Scripture points out four different kinds:

First of all, we are to submit to our leaders in civil government, both on national and local levels. In a day when Christians were persecuted by a corrupt, totalitarian government, the Apostle Peter wrote,

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right (1 Pet. 2:13-14).

We may consider ourselves law-abiding citizens, but what is our reaction when a policeman tickets us for speeding, or the Internal Revenue Service taxes us, or a teacher seems unfair to our child? Are we able to look upon these government employees as God's agents for our good?

Secondly, we are to submit to our employers. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesian church:

Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ (Eph. 6:5).

Today, Paul would say, "Employees, be obedient and submissive to your employers." We must regard the boss over us as being in the stream of God's delegated authority. This could also apply to students submitting to their teachers or men in military service obeying their officers.

Thirdly, wives are told in Scripture to submit to their husbands:

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord (Eph. 5:22).

The reason for such submission is not because a wife is unequal to her husband, but because God has



given him the function as head of the home.

Larry and Nordis Christenson state in their book, *The Christian Couple*, that headship and submission are the superstructure upon which marriage is built. If a wife refuses to submit to her husband, she loses her unity with him. Furthermore, if a husband will not take his place as head of the home, he strikes at the core of his God-given relationship with his wife.

Likewise, children are told to come under parental authority:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right (Eph. 6:1).

Children become more responsive to discipline when they realize that their parents are part of the divine chain-of-command and are obeying God by issuing punishment for rebellion or disobedience.

Fourthly, we are to submit to delegated leadership in the church. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

We request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

The writer to the Hebrew Christians said:

Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account (Heb. 13:17).

In light of these verses, we would do well to ask ourselves the following questions: Who are the leaders who rule over us in the church? Do we know them? Do they know us? Do we have a good relationship with them?

## MARKS OF A GOOD LEADER

What kind of man should be in leadership in the church and what are some safeguards which prevent the abuse of authority?

First of all, a good leader should be under authority himself. Only a man under authority has authority.

A Roman army captain seeking healing for an ailing servant declared to Jesus:

For this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

For indeed, I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another, "Come!" and he comes; and to my slave, "Do this!" and he does it (Lk. 7:7-8).

This captain formed part of a chain of command which began with the Roman emperor himself. Every directive he gave was invested with the emperor's authority. He recognized the same principle in the life of Jesus, that Jesus had authority because He was under the authority of His Father.

Thus, the degree to which a man has put himself under authority determines the amount of authority he can legitimately exercise. That makes any man in leadership who is a spiritual "Lone Ranger," answerable to no one, a potentially dangerous man.

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## *Disciplined men following disciplined leaders makes victory possible.*

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Secondly, a good leader should have an attitude of serving others. He does not dominate or control others, or assert himself selfishly.

Someone has aptly said, "If you find a man reaching for authority, he will hurt you, but if you find a man reaching for responsibility, he will bless you."

All scriptural authority is based on servanthood. When the disciples were arguing among themselves as to who was going to be the greatest in the Kingdom of God, Jesus stepped in and declared, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mk. 9:35). In the idiom of our day, Jesus might have said, "Fellows, listen, the authority structure in My Kingdom is not like that of the world. It's not a top-sergeant domination. It's the authority of servanthood. I came not to be served, but to serve. The greatest man among you will be the one who becomes the servant of others."

This type of servant-leadership was beautifully depicted by Moses in Old Testament times. When God had gotten fed up with the Israelites' constant rebellion, He said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people. Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them." He declared His intention to destroy them and create a new nation from Moses' descendants (Ex. 32:9-10).



"Oh, no, Lord! You can't do that!" Moses pleaded. "Why, you love those people and so do I." In a most amazing way, Moses stood up for the needy people of God.

One very cold morning during the Revolutionary War, General George Washington went out to inspect a camp which he had ordered to be fortified. His face and uniform were concealed by a hood and long cape.

General Washington came to a group of soldiers who were trying to raise a heavy log to the top of a wall they were erecting. A corporal was supervising and giving orders. "Up with it, now! All together—heave-ho!" he shouted. The men lifted with all their might, but the log was too heavy.

Just then, Washington got under the end of the log and helped them roll it into place.

Facing the corporal, Washington said sternly, "You should have helped your men with this heavy lifting."

"Oh, I should, should I?" answered the officer. "Can't you see that I am the corporal?"

"Indeed!" replied Washington evenly, throwing back his cape to display his uniform. "Well, I am the commander-in-chief. Won't you send for me the next time a log proves too heavy for your men to lift?" With that, the general turned and walked away.

A servant-leader, then, is one who is gracious and loving, always desiring the highest good of others. He does not wield authority with a loud voice or a big stick. He loves the people of God, yet will fearlessly confront them with the truth when necessary, no matter what the consequences.

Thirdly, a good leader should never demand submission. Scriptural submission begins with a person voluntarily submitting to the one over him. A man should never demand his wife to submit. Elders can never force submission from the people under them. True submission is the free response to loving care and ministry.

Submission should be an attitude of the heart, not just external obedience. In fact, it's possible to be submissive in attitude and yet refuse to obey on matters of conscience. The apostles felt that they had to obey God in preaching Christ publicly, even when ordered not to by the authorities (Acts 4:16-21).

It is our responsibility to get to know our spiritual leaders. We should never grant authority to someone we don't know well. Paul exhorts us to know and appreciate those who labor among us (1 Thess. 5:12-13). This does not mean that we should try to discover their shortcomings so that we feel justified in not

submitting to them. But we are to know them well enough to perceive that God is working in them and that their hearts are toward the Lord.

## THE BENEFITS OF SUBMISSION

Some say that authority dominates, robs, squelches and imposes legalism. On the contrary, I believe that true spiritual authority releases men and women to become all that God has planned for them as believers.

Let us look at some of the benefits that come with heartfelt submission to proper authority:

First of all, submission to the right authority brings inner peace. Sheep who follow their shepherd can lie down and rest contentedly, knowing that all is well as long as the shepherd is protecting and caring for them.

The prophet Isaiah links inner peace with the government of God:

There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace (Is. 9:7).

We will experience God's peace in the same measure that we know His government in our lives.

Futhermore, Jesus spoke of peace as a benefit of accepting His authority, for He said:

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you *rest*. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find *rest* for your souls (Mt.11:28-29).

In other words, if we will submit to Christ's lordship, we will have inner peace.

Secondly, submission to true authority brings growth in wisdom and character. When Jesus was twelve years old, He had to choose between following His own spiritual calling by learning from the rabbis, or remaining subject to His parents' delegated authority. His choice was clear:

He went down with them, (His parents) and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them. . . And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Lk. 2:51-52).

Thirdly, submission to right authority gives protection from destructive temptations. Bill Gothard, the noted Bible teacher, likens authority to a protec-

**Continued on page 27**



# CHOOSING THE RIGHT GROUP

by Derek Prince

IN THE GREEK vocabulary of the New Testament there is one very important word which describes the distinctive life-style into which we are initiated through the New Covenant. It is *koinonia*. The noun *koinonia* is derived from the adjective *koinos*—"common." Literally and basically, *koinonia* is "having in common." Insofar as two or more persons have things in common, they have *koinonia*. If there are any areas where they do not have things in common, in those areas they do not have *koinonia*. It was said of the early church in Jerusalem, "all things were *common property* to them" (Acts 4:32). That was *koinonia*.

*Koinonia* is the outworking of true unity . . . the sharing of your life with God's people. For true spiritual fulfillment you need this kind of relationship. Without it, you can never be all that God intends you to be. This is equally true for single people and for married couples. All of us need to be part of something larger than ourselves.

In 1 Corinthians 12:13-27 Paul compares individual believers to the various parts that make up a single body. He explains that no part can function effectively on its own. Each needs the others. "And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of

you;' or again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you' " (verse 21). As individual believers, we can only achieve true fulfillment and wholeness by entering into a committed relationship with other believers in such a way that we can, together with them, function as a single body.

A relationship of this kind is not optional. It is essential for our own spiritual well-being. Let us look at a verse from 1 John 1: "But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship (*koinonia*) with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (verse 7).

The introductory "if" confronts us with two related facts of spiritual experience. First, the primary evidence that we are walking in the light is that we have *koinonia* with one another. If we do not have this relationship of *koinonia* with other believers, it is normally evidence that we are not walking fully in the light. Second, if we are not in the light of *koinonia*, we no longer experience the continuous cleansing of the blood of Jesus, which alone can keep us pure and free from sin.

Our responsibility for regular fellowship with a group\* of committed believers is stated again in Hebrews 10:24-25:

And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,  
not forsaking our own assembling together, as is

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the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

Here again, we have two related truths: the first, we are responsible to stimulate and encourage one another; the second, we can do this only if we do not forsake "our own assembling." This last phrase obviously takes it for granted that all of us will be related to a group which we can properly call "our own assembly."

The essential step which brings us into this kind of relationship is the same that brings us into proper relationship with God or with our mate. It is *commitment*—not just to another individual, however, but to a group who are themselves united in mutual commitment. If you have already made a commitment to God and to your mate, you should follow that with this third form of commitment—to a group of fellow believers.

Unfortunately, it is not always easy, in contemporary Christendom, to find a group who are practicing real, mutual commitment on a sound scriptural basis. However, if you acknowledge to God your need to identify with such a group, and then go on to seek Him diligently for His direction, you can be confident that He will show you what to do. Remember that God has promised to reward those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). If you are sincere and earnest in seeking Him, you will receive your reward.

As a guideline to recognize the kind of group that will fulfill your need, here are nine questions you should ask before you make any definite commitment:

1. Do they honor and uplift the Lord Jesus Christ?
2. Do they respect the authority of Scripture?
3. Do they make room for the moving of the Holy Spirit?
4. Do they exhibit a warm and friendly attitude?
5. Do they seek to work out their faith in practical day-to-day living?
6. Do they build interpersonal relationships among themselves that go beyond merely attending services?
7. Do they provide pastoral care that embraces all your legitimate needs?
8. Are they open to fellowship with other Christian groups?
9. Do you feel at ease and at home among them?

If the answer to all or most of these questions is "yes," you are "getting warm." Continue to seek

God, however, until you receive definite direction from Him.

Remember that you probably will not find "the perfect group." Furthermore, even if you did, you could not join it, because after you did, it would no longer be perfect!

Finally, here is a word of encouragement, but also of warning, from Psalm 68:6:

God makes a home for the lonely;  
He leads out the prisoners into prosperity,  
Only the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

If you are "lonely," God will place you in a spiritual "home"—a family of Christian brothers and sisters, united in mutual commitment to one another. If you are a "prisoner" of circumstances or evil forces, God will deliver you and bring you out into freedom. But—and here is the warning—if you are "rebellious," you will continue to "dwell in a parched land."

Ultimately, the only barriers that can keep you from finding the kind of *koinonia* you need will be your own inner attitudes of pride, or selfishness, or unyielding individualism. Ask God to show you if there are any such barriers in your life; and if there are, to break them down.

In Psalm 27:4, David gives utterance to the deepest longing of his soul:

One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek;  
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life. . . . "

Do these words of David express the deep longing of your soul? If so, why not echo them in a prayer of your own?

If you feel able to pray in your own words, do that. But if you prefer a prepared prayer, you may use the following:

*Lord, I am lonely and unfulfilled, and I acknowledge it. I long to "dwell in your house"—to be part of a spiritual "family" of committed believers. If there are any barriers in me, I ask you to remove them. Guide me to a group where this longing of mine can be fulfilled, and help me to make the needed commitment to them. In the Name of Jesus.*

*Amen.* ☞

*\*I use the word "group" because it has a broad meaning. Such a group may be what would normally be called a "church." Or it may function in a different way. There is room for considerable variety.*



# FORUM

*In this forum on cults, New Wine interviews Elliot Miller, Research Consultant with the Christian Research Institute, and Neil Duddy, a member of the research staff at Spiritual Counterfeits Project. Christian Research Institute, located in San Juan Capistrano, California, is under the directorship of Dr. Walter Martin, one of evangelical Christianity's leading experts on cultic groups. Spiritual Counterfeits Project in Berkeley, California, is in the vanguard of the attack against the influx of Eastern religions in the U.S. Twice they have won court cases against the teaching of Transcendental Meditation in public schools on the basis that TM is a religion.*

**NW:** In recent years cultic activity has taken a sharp rise. What factors have contributed to this increase?

**Miller:** One factor is the breakdown of the family in America. The need for love and authority normally provided by the family is unmet and people with that unfulfilled need are frequently drawn to cults where there is an authoritarian figure and some form of love. Although it's not genuine, it's a kind of love and acceptance—a false family feeling—that lures them into joining the cult.

Another factor which has contributed to the rise

of cults is the deadness of much of traditional Christianity—the breakdown of a spiritual basis within western society. People are not finding their spiritual needs fulfilled by traditional Christianity, and cults offer something novel. Quite often people in cults are involved in the occult as well, and can by occult means offer spiritual experiences for which people hunger. This appeals to people who are unfulfilled in traditional Christianity.

Another thing that draws people to cults, especially the communal type, is the basic unwillingness to accept the responsibilities of life such as making decisions for themselves and providing for themselves. You'll find great numbers of people in cults who prefer to have someone else tell them what to do with their life and decide for them what is right and wrong.

Another factor in cults becoming popular is the rejection of the Bible as an authoritative guide of truth combined with the drift toward existentialism and experience-oriented beliefs; that is, determining beliefs by inner feelings rather than by some objective guide to truth. Those are a few reasons that come to mind.

**Duddy:** Throughout history there have periodically been times where for a hundred years or so there is a rise of new-age religions which point to the future or



regressive types of religious movements which point back to the past as the real source of life. The Renaissance and Reformation both produced a number of these. During the development of Christianity and the fall of the Roman Empire, a number of unusual religious movements sprang up in the Mediterranean. Periodically it does happen.

Today the situation is very similar, particularly in American culture, where views of morality have changed dramatically. In the past 15 years we've gone from a cloaked permissiveness to a very blatant permissiveness.

Presently there are movements, particularly in the new liberal theological centers, to exchange the transcendent biblical view of God for a monistic view of god. Instead of viewing God as the author of creation who exists apart from it, this movement sees God completely within creation, having His identity totally inside the material universe. That is one major religious transition that has allowed Eastern thought to become pervasive and influential.

Technology has changed. People's roles, particularly in the family, are changing, too. As a result, people are exploring self-realization to try to establish what their potential is and what their responsibilities are, because there is no longer a pattern to guide them. That's why "est," dayspring and a number of other self-realization groups are springing up.

**NW:** Which of the new cults that have come on the scene in recent years would you most want to warn Christians about?

**Miller:** There is one particular cult that is growing rapidly which Christians really need to be on the look-out for because it uses the terminology of evangelical Christianity. It talks about being "born again," "filled with the Holy Spirit," "speaking in tongues," and other terms which the undiscerning Christian may take as indications that this is a Christian group. This is "The Way International" which was founded by Victor Paul Wierwille. They deny the doctrine of the Trinity and the deity of Christ. In fact Wierwille wrote a book called *Jesus Christ Is Not God*. They deny eternal punishment, the eternal nature of the soul, and they have a strange doctrine of salvation.

This group is growing very fast and proselytizing a lot, and Christians need to be especially cautious of them.

Another group, which, although mainly composed of Christians, is very dangerous, is "The Walk" or "The Church of the Living Word." It goes by both of those names, and was founded by John

Robert Stevenson. They have some very dangerous doctrines, and they evangelize Christians, especially charismatics.

They teach that the church is becoming God and that the prophecies they receive are equal if not superior to the Bible. Consequently they read their prophecies as though they *were* the Bible, allowing them to take the place of Scripture.

**Duddy:** Actually I think the collective effects of people in the Eastern movements are much greater than any one single group. These people, called Satgurus, are philosophers who, with their devotees, have affected secular culture, not so much by converting people to direct Eastern thought as by allowing their teaching to just filter into the culture at large. Their philosophies reach such a generalized state that they are disassociated from the Eastern school of thought and become incorporated into culture in general—that's where we feel the real danger lies.

One specific Eastern thought group that is really popular is Transcendental Meditation, which has probably initiated around 3,000,000 people in the United States. Rather than presenting themselves as a religious group, they disguise their direct Hindu philosophy and roots and claim to be a scientific kind of relaxation, self-realization therapy group—but they really *are* religious. Twice now, the final word from the courts has been that TM is a religious organization, and can no longer sell itself as a scientific group.

**NW:** When a person becomes involved in a cult, are there stages he goes through in being deceived and falling into error?

**Miller:** Yes. He will go through a period at first where he may have doubts about some of the things he is hearing, yet be drawn into the cult by its appealing factors. Maybe it's the love and attention he receives from the cultists that he hasn't received anywhere else. Maybe it's the power that seems to be available through the beliefs. Even though the beliefs themselves are somewhat objectionable to him, the demonstration of power draws him into it. The factors of appeal vary from cult to cult, but they all draw a person to the meetings, despite his own reservations.

Though he may feel that something is wrong, as he continues to expose himself, a demonic influence comes in—the deception. At that point he begins to fall under the power that has hold of the group, and will make a commitment to the group or identify with it.

As he exposes himself to the group's teachings,



which amount to a brainwashing, he begins to give up his right to be objective and to think for himself. He begins to fall into the mind-set of the group. In most cults individuality or objectivity is greatly discouraged. People are encouraged to merge into a group mind.

Next, he begins to take on the characteristics and personality traits common to the cult. Different cultists have different kinds of spirits or behavior, and most often these parallel the personality traits of the leader of the cult.

At this point he may be brought into bondage in various ways. Though he may begin to be fearful or even displeased with some of the things going on in the cult, he's locked in. The fear of leaving keeps people in because it is constantly drummed into them that if they do leave, they will incur some kind of judgment from God.

Also, a dependence upon the group develops as they give up their ability to think for themselves and let the group supply their every need. The thought of going out into the world again on their own and providing for themselves becomes a very fearful thing.

**NW:** Would you touch on how a cult develops from a leadership standpoint?

**Duddy:** Usually there is some type of false religious experience or "revelation" that launches a cultic leader. For example, Paul Wierwille of "The Way" claims that in 1953 he had a revelation from God that he would be the one true teacher to bring people back to the real meaning of Scripture for the first time in two thousand years.

In addition there are some hucksters that are just out to gather people around them. The Guru Maharaj Ji is pure huckster, and a number of people know it.

The leader usually establishes a small group of disciples to whom he gives a chance to exercise authority and get people to work for them. This gives these "lieutenants" opportunity to express their loyalty and usefulness to the main man. Usually these lieutenants take a hardline approach which produces an atmosphere of strong discipline and commitment.

SCP has a simplified model which is characteristic of most cults of how a leader begins to exercise social control. People become interested and begin to invest their time by going to meetings after work and becoming involved in special projects. Jim Jones was a master at getting people to work in areas of expertise after they got off of their regular jobs.

Once they begin to invest their time, they slowly

but surely become committed, renouncing their old hobbies, their friends, family, jobs, sometimes even moving to a new location closer to the house of worship. Others move to communes or ashrams (small study centers of Eastern groups), divesting themselves completely of their old life. Many times they get new names, and discontinue the celebration of national holidays or sentimental holidays such as birthdays—a process of stripping down the old life.

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### Another factor which has contributed to the rise of cults is the deadness of much of traditional Christianity . . .

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Then there are positive demands of what you need to do for the group, and negative demands as to what you cannot do outside the group. The psychological barrier between the inside and the outside is instilled in people continually and becomes very strong, the idea that: "We are the special, chosen messianic people who will change the world. People not in our group are under satanic dominion, and we will save them."

The person being initiated into the cult goes through two psychological phases. The first one is a *burial stage* where he begins to see himself as valuable only when he participates in group activities. In a cult, you are only valuable when you're at a meeting or out proselytizing with another member or taking donations. Very few groups encourage individual piety, so psychologically your only value is being a part of the group.

The second phase is a dramatic psychological transformation. Once the person really believes he is worthless as an individual—that group success is more important than individual success—and he is willing to sacrifice everything for the group, he is *resurrected* into a kind of group ego. At that point, any attack on the group is blocked out entirely, so much so that it is very difficult to talk rationally with the person about the negative aspects of his group unless the Lord really touches his heart. There are different intensities in the resurrection stage, and not all people in cults actually make it to that point, but that's basically what takes place.

**NW:** What attitude should a Christian take toward these groups?

**Miller:** Well, I think there has to be a balance. First of all, we need to recognize that the cultist is someone for whom Jesus Christ died, and that we



are commissioned to do all we can to lead them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. When you're dealing with a cultist, you want to reflect God's love for him by showing a genuine concern for him as an individual rather than just a desire to have another soul saved for your church. When they see that your intention is not to try to win an argument or forcibly extricate them from the cult, but to show them love and concern as an individual for whom Christ died, it has a real impact upon them.

But there also has to be a balance of truth. Some Christians show them love to the point that they don't challenge them with the fact that their beliefs are wrong and are leading them to hell. There has to be the confrontational aspect of dealing with a cult. We must not give them the impression that, "We are all into the same thing. We all believe in God; we're all with God. There are just different ways of expressing it." Instead we have to insist that there is only one way to God, through Jesus Christ and what He did on the cross for us. We must have a "no compromise" attitude about truth, "speaking the truth in love," as Paul said.

Also, we need to know *what* we believe and *why* we believe it if we're going to present the truth to

them. The person who feels a burden to reach out to the cults needs to know how to answer the objections that cultists invariably raise to the Christian faith, and that takes some study.

**Duddy:** A confrontation with someone in a cult should include two approaches. The first is theological—pointing out where they are doctrinally opposed to Scripture. But then we need to push beyond that to the sociological dimension: "Are you being treated lovingly in your group?" People rarely leave cults for doctrinal reasons. Almost ninety percent of the time they leave for sociological or psychological reasons. Many of those who experienced love and warmth when they enter the cult later discovered animosity and wrong attitudes in the group. Often, this happens after it is too late to back out because they have burned all their bridges behind them, and they end up being bruised and battered in these groups.

If we as Christians can genuinely touch them where they have been hurt, pointing out not only the deception of the group but its specific unloving acts which are the scriptural mark of false teaching (1 Jn. 4:8-21), many times this will promote them to leave the group and come out of their deception. ♡

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### *True Leadership*

Continued from page 21

tive umbrella. When we get out from under it, we expose ourselves to overpowering temptations. Gothard explains that this is why Scripture says that rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft (1 Sam. 15:23), because in both instances we are subjecting ourselves to the realm and power of Satan.

Refusing to come under the authority of our leaders is like a buck private dashing out into the thick of the battle to confront the enemy on his own. By not waiting for his officer's command to charge, he disregards the protection of the united front of his own forces and quickly becomes a "sitting duck" for enemy fire.

Fourthly, submission to authority brings true freedom. Jesus put a mixture of clay and spittle on the blind man's eyes and commanded, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." This man chose to come under the government of Jesus Christ and when he obeyed Jesus' command to go to the pool and wash, his blind eyes were opened (Jn. 9:1-7). Freedom from blindness was the result of submission to Jesus' authority.

On another occasion a man with a withered hand hid himself in the crowds of the synagogue one Sabbath day, hoping that no one would see his deformity. But Jesus commanded loudly, "You with the

withered hand, stand up!" The man obeyed. Then Jesus issued another order, "Now stretch out that withered hand!" The man stretched it out for all to see, and by so doing, came under the authority and government of Jesus Christ. He was instantly healed and walked away truly free (Lk. 6:6-11).

In both of these instances, submission to authority brought freedom, release, and healing.


### THE CHALLENGE

Today, there is a challenge before us. As we increasingly recognize the spiritual warfare going on in the heavenlies between good and evil forces rather than wringing our hands in despair, let us be challenged to accept the call to join King Jesus' army and get into the fight. True, we may feel like raw recruits, but as we submit ourselves to the officers over us for disciplined training, we too can be transformed into crack troops, ready to turn the world upside down in Jesus' name! ♡

#### Footnotes:

1. Frazier Hunt, *The Untold Story of Douglas MacArthur* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1954), p. 140.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 372-373.





# FALLING FROM THE WAY

by Bob Mumford

**LIFE IS CONTINUAL** warfare. The only choice we have is who we will fight—God or Satan. The moment a man makes his peace with God through Jesus Christ, he is at war with Satan.

The further we go on in the Lord, the more useful we should become to God and His Kingdom; and that very usefulness makes us dangerous to our enemy, Satan. The devil is not nearly as nervous about a score of people who come to salvation as he is about one believer who earnestly sets his course toward the Kingdom of God and determines, no matter what the cost, to allow the Lord to accomplish His will in his life. That person then becomes

the target of the one whose purpose it is to seduce, beguile, and eliminate him from his calling and purpose in God.

It is a daily battle, one to which we are often at least partially oblivious because of our ignorance of the tactics, strategy and weapons of our enemy. This article will deal with one aspect of that conflict—*deception*—and how it relates to the life of the believer. Rather than a thorough study of the subject, this is an introduction and teaching aide for group or family study, intended to open this vital area of biblical truth.

The scriptural definition of “deception” is “to



wander from the way." To be deceived is to wander out of the way of truth that God has designed for you to walk in. "Wandering from the path" had a very graphic meaning for anyone living in the Middle East, for if a person wandered from the well-trodden path, he went off into a trackless desert where there was no water, no path, and no landmarks. Often, wandering meant perishing. Spiritually, wandering from the path of truth has similar results. This is why deception is a favorite tactic of the enemy.

Webster's Seventh Collegiate Dictionary says deception is, "the imposing of a false idea or belief that causes bewilderment or helplessness or furthers the agent's purpose." A practical, working definition which is very graphic to me is, "*being wrong when you think you are right.*" That is why deception is so deadly to the believer. Unlike other more obvious weapons in the enemy's arsenal, it ensnares the believer without his awareness of it. A believer trapped in some form of deception usually is totally oblivious to having deviated from the way of truth, and if questioned, would reassure you that he *knows* he is on the right path. Such is the nature of deception.

If you think that is dirty fighting, you are right! The guerilla war between the Kingdom of God and the dominion of darkness is not fought in the open with rules and restrictions. There are no white hats and black hats and no holds barred.

It's like the new soldier arriving in Viet Nam who asked the tested veteran, "How do you know the enemy?"

"When he tries to kill you," the experienced soldier replied.

The casualties of deception in our war are as real as those in Viet Nam, Korea, or World War II. For example, the man I knew who, on the strength of "a word from God," lived 13 years with a woman, unmarried. Although he loved the Lord, his life and ministry were practically ruined. Or the girl I coun-


selled whose marriage was destroyed by one of "God's little helpers" who told her God had given her a revelation that her marriage would not last. The insecurity and fear brought on by that deception ruined her life. And the lady in a church I once pastored who had been deceived into making a deal with God to give half of her salary to Christian work for the rest of her life. Her insistence to try to live by that vow eventually caused her to backslide and to literally lose her mind.

These are real casualties. Satan means business. Deception may not always take as great a toll as it did in these three examples, but the enemy will at least seek to twist and distort our walk in truth enough to neutralize or render less effective our service in the Kingdom of God.

No one is exempt from deception. It can come to an individual, a family, a group, a church, a denomination, a movement or a nation. All are vulnerable—no one can ever be 100 percent free from its presence. Everyone who has ever walked with the Lord, with the exception of Jesus, has had some degree of deception mingled with their understanding of the truth. Some may approach 100 percent clarity or, conversely, 100 percent deception, but for the most part, our lives are a process of coming by degrees out of the darkness and deception of unbelief before we knew the Lord, into a fuller and fuller knowledge of Him each step of the way.

### FACTORS THAT LEAD TO DECEPTION

Deception is not some terrible force that sneaks up on us and suddenly devours us like a creature in the night. Deception begins in our own hearts as an aspect of our fallen nature. Almost all deception can be traced to tiny "seeds" that lay dormant in our hearts until at some point, under proper conditions, they begin to grow and take root in us.



*Deception begins in our own hearts  
as an aspect of our fallen nature.*



Deception is rooted in and feeds on our egos. By ego, I do not just mean pride, but everything in a person that drives him to promote or preserve his own life and well-being. Every situation I have ever dealt with in which any degree of deception was present was always rooted in some selfish desire, aspiration, or motive rather than in God, His Kingdom and purpose.

Seeds of deception are motives and attitudes which we may not be totally aware of. Motives and attitudes are the measuring sticks I use for life. They are the inner workings of my being that cause me to act and react as I do in a given situation. When the enemy finds motives and attitudes in us which are not consistent with biblical truth, he stimulates and waters and nurtures those seeds until they sprout and grow to accomplish his purposes.

For example, if an attitude of self-reliance and independence remains unchanged and undealt with in a man's heart, it could open him to all sorts of deceptions about his own abilities and his capacity to function without other believers.


A subtle motive in another's heart might be the desire for wealth. If not truly subjected to the light and discipline of God's word, this could make him vulnerable to error concerning prosperity and God's provision. He might even come to the point of going against the plain teaching of Scripture about honesty and integrity in finances, all the while actually believing he is acting in accordance with the blessing and favor of the Lord.

Often these motives and attitudes do not come to our attention until they have taken root and grown.

## Just Around the Corner

The theme for next month's issue of *New Wine* will be:

**Encouragement**



Thanks  
I needed that!

Then we realize that somewhere in our walk we departed from the clear direction of God's word. When we do find ourselves off the path, we can be sure that in our return to the way of truth, we will have to deal with whatever it was in our hearts that allowed us to go astray in the first place.

## KINDS OF DECEPTION

There are basically three kinds of deception we will have to cope with in our lives: self-deception, being deceived and deceiving others.

### *Self-deception:*

Galatians 6:3 tell us, "If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he *deceives* himself." James 1:22 adds, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." These two verses precisely define self-deception for us: It is *living life outside of reality* . . . believing and acting like something you are not. There are two sides to self-deception. One makes a person think *too highly* of himself and give an exaggerated importance to his life and ministry. The other, which ironically is also rooted in the ego, makes a person think *so little* of himself that he cannot even function in what God has legitimately given him to do. "I'm no good. No one in this church cares about me." A brother very close to me calls this the "wart complex"—"I am the wart on the Body of Christ!" Self-deception causes people to justify open sin, rebellion, immorality, hatred, factions and a host of other sins Christians get into but don't want to get out of. They simply line up Scriptures, "leadings," circumstances and council from other Christians to agree with their predetermined ideas and justify their position. The tragedy is, they actually believe they are right.

### *Being deceived:*

Being deceived, which is rooted in self-deception, is when Satan or one of his agents gets into the act and generates impressions, dreams, visions, prophecies, circumstances and rationalizations to lead us away from the truth.

### *Deceiving others:*

Deceiving others can take place in three degrees.

First, there is *slight deception*, which is allowing false impressions about ourselves to remain uncorrected when they put us in a flattering position. We don't actively deceive anyone; we just allow false impressions to remain uncorrected.

The second type is *mild deception*. This usually means projecting myself into a level of spirituality



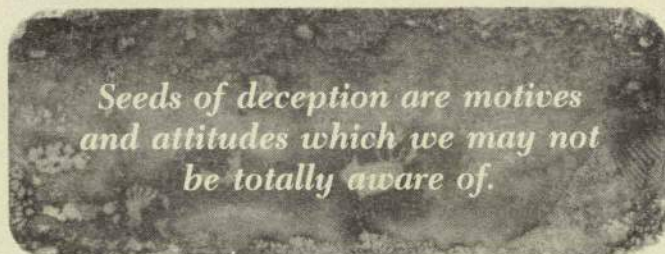
that is really beyond my growth. I quote Scripture and drop names and talk about “deeper truth” to make people think I am up there with my pastor, when in reality I can’t qualify to teach Sunday school!

*Serious deception* means that I draw people into my private revelations and crusades, actively seeking followers for what I believe is the right way, after I have first been deceived myself.

## AREAS OF DECEPTION

All forms of deception can usually be placed in one of the following nine categories.

1. *Religious deception*. This is one of the most common. It is brand of living that puts the emphasis on external actions and appearance rather than on the qualities of the heart. It is the affected voice that



sounds spiritual, the overly plain attire, religious stickers and paraphernalia all over the place that make a show of spirituality.

2. *Doctrinal deception*. This is departure from the plain meaning of Scripture. Someone takes an isolated verse out of context and says, “The Lord showed me that it is no longer necessary for us to pray.” It is a departure from the clear teaching of the Scripture.

3. *Ethical deception*. Error in this area is usually cheating, stealing, or lying with the supposed sanction of the Lord. “Everyone cuts corners on their income tax. The government doesn’t deserve that much anyway; it’s the system of the Antichrist.”

4. *Moral deception*. This is marked by a tendency to shift the responsibility for our actions to someone else. “My mother never loved me,” or “The pastor won’t help me.” In extreme situations people commit grossly immoral acts and claim the Lord either gave them special permission or directed them to do it.

5. *Intellectual deception*. One form of this deception is putting a premium on ignorance. “No education, no teaching, just the leading of the Holy Spirit.” It sets aside the mind God gave us and urges

us to live on leadings and impulses. Or, it can over-emphasize reason to the point of totally ruling out the leading of the Spirit or revelation from the word if it does not fit into a certain doctrinal pattern or scheme.

6. *The zealot or fanatic*. He is a self-appointed defender of the faith. Nothing is more important than his concept of truth. He will contradict, trample, and destroy other people just to see to it that his banner keeps flying. This is the kind of deception that motivated the Crusaders and the Spanish Inquisition. The zealot forgets that God and His word stand alone and do not need our defense.

7. *Mystical error*. This is the “deeper life” group who steep themselves in revelations, dreams, prophecies and other experiences as an end in themselves. They usually have a “spooky” quality about them and give the impression of walking a little above daily life and existence.

8. *Sexual deception*. This is more prevalent than most people could ever imagine. It is finding a justification for the gratification of sexual desires outside the scriptural limits of marriage. It ranges all the way from “special permission from the Lord” to “experiences in a higher form of relationship where there is no marriage.”

9. *Spiritual deception*. This includes forms of extremism on any one teaching or truth. It is born out of a sincere desire to do the will of God, but carries the commands and requirements of the word of God beyond what the Lord intended for them.

## SYMPTOMS

It is no surprise that deception is one of the most difficult problems for the believer to diagnose in his own life. Since deception is being wrong when you *think* you are right, you don’t bother to check if you’re wrong, because you’re sure you are right.

Here are a few symptoms of deception that can surround an individual or group.

*Staleness or loss of joy*. Anytime we get sidetracked from the way of truth, the spontaneous joy and satisfaction of the Christian life begins to wane.

*Compulsiveness*. “The Lord *made me* do this” or “I’ve *got* to do this or that.” Being driven by compulsion is neither the liberty of the Holy Spirit nor God’s legitimate government. Under God’s reign, there is the freedom to question, wait and be sure that you are being led by the right spirit. Whenever there is compulsion, it is a mark of a spirit other than God’s



**Fixation.** This again is the crusader mentality. It is an inability to talk about anything other than your pet doctrine or experience. Everything revolves around it. Although the doctrine or experience may not necessarily be wrong, the imbalanced approach to it is.

**Exclusivism.** Fellowshiping around an experience, doctrine, person, or group to the exclusion of others is a deception. There is a legitimate place for a "family" meeting in a fellowship, where only members of the fellowship are included. However, the mark of deception is the elitist mentality that says, "if you are not a member of our group or haven't had our experience, you don't measure up."

**Dogmatism and intolerance of opposing views.** Whenever a deceptive viewpoint is challenged, there is usually a reaction along with an unwillingness, even after prolonged consideration, to give place to opposing views.

These five symptoms occur in varying degrees depending upon the extent of deception. But if they are present in the life of the believer with any strength, it is most likely that deception is present in some form.

## THE WAY OUT

If we should find that symptoms of deception are present in our life, and we identify an area where we need freedom, what do we do to return to the way of truth? There are seven steps that I have seen work effectively if an individual is determined to return to the right way.

1. *Recognize the possibility of our being deceived.* 1 Corinthians 13:12 tells us that we only know "in part." None of us has full knowledge, so mixture and partial deception reside in each of us. We must not be so intolerant and bigoted as to believe no one else can be right but us. We have to be open to the possibility that our views and ways of doing things might need some adjusting or correcting.

2. *Determine to come clean.* Often we are faced with a choice at this point. It is called, "Dignity or deliverance." We may find we are more concerned with our image and "saving face" than we are with coming clean with our problems. When King Saul's sin was pointed out by Samuel, Saul cried, "I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel." Saul was more concerned about his image of spirituality than he was about the state of his soul. That concern eventually cost him his life.

3. *Properly relate yourself to spiritual authority.* The very nature of spiritual deception dictates the necessity of being properly related to spiritual authority. Individual and corporate input from those who are over you in the Lord is probably the most effective means of coming out of deception. In the life of the Apostle Peter, Jesus had to back him down and say again and again, "Look Peter, this is the way it is," before Peter began to see himself as he really was and walk in reality.

4. *Come to an understanding that anointing, signs, visions, prophecies, dreams, fleeces, circumstances and leadings are not the final criteria for validity in the realm of guidance.* All of these are always subject to judgment and the scrutiny of the word of God. Anything that contradicts either the word of God, either in spirit or in letter, is error and deception. (A helpful book for further study in this area is *Take Another Look at Guidance*. May be ordered by using form on p. 35.)

5. *Be prepared to embrace pruning.* Religious activity that does not yield fruit will be subject to pruning. Nine prayer meetings a week and three hours of evangelism a day may be wonderful disciplines, but unless they are born of the Spirit of God and yield lasting fruit, they are what the Scripture refers to as "wood, hay and stubble."

Fruit, as the Scripture teaches it, is *character development* in the fruit of the Spirit as well as ministry development. Character fruit requires a balanced combination of time and investment in both the natural and spiritual areas of life in five areas:

**Mental and intellectual**—Allowing your mind to stretch and grow. If you involve yourself only in spiritual matters, you become lopsided and dry.

**Spiritual**—Not becoming so heavenly minded you are no earthly good.

**Social**—Getting to know those in your neighborhood who are not Christians and fellowshiping in circles of believers other than your own.

**Physical**—Exercising, eating right, and getting proper rest.

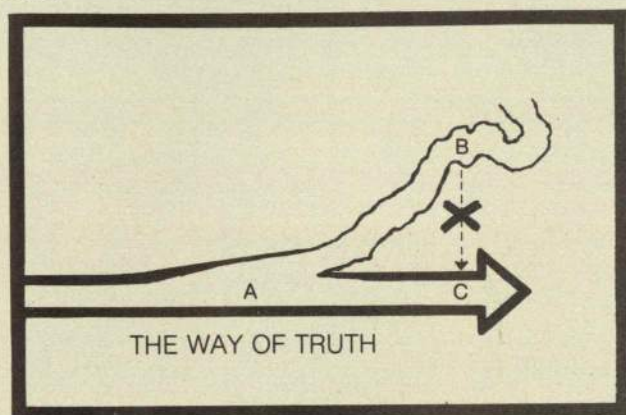
**Family**—Alloting time for recreation with your family, and learning to play together and enjoy your relationships with each other.

6. *Bring your home and marriage into biblical priority.* The root of all viable and vital ministry is a balanced home life. On this point Scripture is clear.



1 Timothy 3:1-13 indicates that deception works according to the demands of human need, but true spirituality always moves according to the revealed will of God. Failure to implement biblical priorities is a *basic* cause of spiritual failure and deception. Our priorities are: God and His Kingdom, *family* (both natural and spiritual) and *marriage*, and then ministry or vocation.

7. *Prepare for the sensation of walking against the light.* This little illustration will explain what I mean:



At some point in our walk, we will come to point A where we are confronted with a choice of walking in the way of truth—toward point C—or wandering from the way—toward B. Let's say that because of some wrong motive, we choose to move out of the path of truth, following deceptive leadings, prophecies and counsel that lead us away from truth.

When we finally get down the road to point B, we realize we have missed the road and want to get back. We think we should be able to go directly from point B to point C. However, it will not work. We are required to go back to the point where we left the road and start over. In the process of doing so, we are going to face the sensation of "walking against the light." We had believed that all the guidance we received that led us up that road, was from the Lord, and now, to go against that guidance back down the road leaves us with the feeling that we are acting in disobedience to God. This is where most people fail when they try to come out of deception, and it is where the strong and loving hand of the spiritual is needed most.

## PREVENTION AND CURE

There are certain steps we can take and qualities we can cultivate in our lives which will help to keep us walking steadily on the path of truth.

1. *Have a sure foundation.* There are three stones in a Christian's foundation—a solid relationship with the Lord Jesus, water baptism, and baptism in the Holy Spirit.

2. *Learn to abide in your calling in the Lord.* Don't try to be something you are not.

3. *Keep a single eye.* Jesus told us in Matthew 6:22 that if your eye was single, or healthy, your whole body would be full of light. He later explained this as singleness of purpose and motive. Our sole purpose must be to follow the commands of our Lord Jesus no matter the cost.

4. *Learn to be natural and preserve your simplicity in Christ.* There is a great temptation to become "spiritual." We like to get all spooky and give the impression we are up there with Elijah. What God does is simple and straightforward. It is rarely complicated and mystical.

5. *Let God purify our motives and attitudes.* Ask Him to—He will!

6. *Judge yourself—before God gets a chance.* Keep measuring yourself by the word of God. If you find areas where you fall short, especially in motive and attitude, then make the correction yourself before the Lord has to discipline you to correct you.

7. *Speak the truth in love.* Learn to confront and be confronted. Invite and welcome the confrontation of those around you and over you in the Lord. (That includes your mate as well!)

8. *Learn the still small voice.* There is a voice inside our spirits that we need to hear. It is the voice of the Spirit and if we are honest, we have to admit that most of the time when we went the wrong way, that voice warned us ahead of time. Ask the Lord to teach you to follow that voice, and then pay attention to it.

9. *Know those who minister among you.* Never follow a minister who doesn't measure up to the standard of the word or carry a recommendation that you can trust. Failure to follow this rule has caused more hurt and ruin in the Body of Christ than can be imagined.

10. *Hold to the primacy of the word* in relation to signs, prophecies, dreams and leadings. I don't care if you say Michael the Archangel told you it was all right to lie on your income tax, it goes against the word of God, and that is always the final judge in every situation.

In conclusion, deception is one of the enemy's primary weapons for putting us out of commission in the Kingdom of God. I trust and pray we will give ourselves to understanding it and guarding against it. ☞



# A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

## JESUS '79

An extraordinary national event is being planned for June 2, 1979. On that day many thousands of Christians in cities across the United States will be coming together in regional *Jesus '79* festivals and local *Day of Pentecost* rallies. The goal of these gatherings is to bring Christians together under Jesus' Lordship to commemorate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

We have been informed that the cities listed be-

low have been confirmed for Jesus '79 festivals. If you desire to participate in the meeting closest to your home, please contact the person designated for that area.

In addition to these Jesus '79 festivals, other Day of Pentecost rallies are being sponsored by local groups in other cities—and your area may be one of them. We encourage you to participate if possible in any of these celebrations of Jesus' Lordship.

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