



Volume 6, Number 1 January/February 1995

SPIRITUAL DECEPTION

Travers van der Merwe

When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith...? (Luke 18:8)

The urgency of the moment compels me to write in defense of the Word of God and address several subtle and sometimes quite blatant heresies eroding the Church of Jesus Christ. The situation has reached alarming proportions and at stake is not only a departure from Christian values, but a departure from the *"...simplicity that is in Christ Jesus."*

Satan is actively using all his seductive resources to brainwash Christians with a view to stifle their most holy faith. Minds are being bombarded by a volley of unbiblical concepts, humanistic philosophies and "every wind of doctrine", which, for the most part are being disseminated via television and radio. Unfortunately some of our most prominent preachers and televangelists are unwittingly a part of this bombardment.

This is indeed a critical hour in the history of the Church. The faith of millions of people is on trial. Their faith and their strength depends on the position the spiritual leaders take amidst the avalanche of apostasy. Therefore we cannot watch complacently while warped doctrines are deceiving the multitudes. Now is the opportunity for all Bible believers to cry out. "Enough is enough!" It is time we aggressively contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons." (I Tim 4:1)

I will endeavor to deal with six aberrant religious concepts that are steadily perverting certain fundamental biblical doctrines and, *"will not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord."* (Acts 13:10)

These perversions can best be defined or exposed as nothing less than "New Age" philosophy which is really only an extension of old lies. The six aberrant religious concepts are:

- The perversion of "Experience"
- The perversion of "Love"
- The perversion of "Faith"
- The perversion of "The Voice of God"
- The Perversion of "Self"
- The perversion of "Jesus"

The insidious and perverse objective of the New Age is to infiltrate Christianity with subtly defined religious concepts designed to progressively diffuse and confuse basic biblical doctrines. Its aim is to subvert the inspired Word of God by providing experiential substitutes for the sacred manifestations of the Word of God in the daily life of a Christian. The subversion and conquest of Christianity is their immediate priority. Their ultimate objective is the revelation of the New Age Christ (the antichrist) and the establishment of Lucifer's (Satan) New Age world order.

Pervasive substitutes have their roots in the sensual, carnal and mystical nature of man... *"having a form of godliness but denying the power (reality) thereof".* (II Timothy 3 :5). Sometimes substitutes are ostensibly so good that it is almost impossible to discern the counterfeit from the real. Spiritual substitutes always masquerade as being "Light" and, like a parasite, will eventually sap whatever life remains if not checked in time.

Unfortunately, the theme of several popular heresies currently being bandied about such as: Teachings on self, prosperity, hyper-faith, mystical voices, new revelations and emotional experiences, all find their justification in the perversion of truth.

The vulnerable entry points into the soul of man are through the faculty of the intellect and the emotions, i.e. the affections, desires, feelings and senses. The carnal gates to the soul are: The sense of touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste. Satan knows this, and this is why he has spent six thousand years developing the most sophisticated religious system that not only caters to every degenerate human desire and capacity, but assumes his ultimate control over the souls of the human race. Satan's conspiracy to manipulate man first began in the Garden of Eden when he subtly appealed to Eve's intellect and sensual desires. Ever since that time he has maintained the same basic strategy in his quest to enslave the human creature to his sovereignty.

As Christians we are not ignorant of his (Satan's) devices. The Holy Scriptures provide a child of God with a graphically detailed account of Satan's modus-operandi. His diabolic strategy and design to gain control over the souls of men and planet earth is clearly analyzed and exposed in the inspired, written Word of God. Satan and the "New Age" leaders know this all too well. In order for the New Age to succeed in its ultimate objectives it must undermine credibility in the Bible. This has been Satan's offensive strategy ever since the beginning of the human race. His aggressive campaign is not against any alleged "faith in God," but is rather against any faith in God according to the Holy Scriptures. The entire Christian faith is contingent on the veracity of the written Word of God. Here it stands or falls. Satan knows this and therefore is dedicated to the subversion of the authority of the Bible.

This brings me to the purpose of this writing. Today, throughout the evangelical, pentecostal and charismatic movements, Satan is reeking havoc. Just as he conned Eve into accepting his devious doctrine in opposition to the Word of God, so the church is being conned into accepting devious substitutes in place of the doctrines of the Bible.

THE PERVERSION OF EXPERIENCE

Whenever and wherever spiritual perversion raises its ugly head, Satan is readily recognized as its author. Spiritual perversion is rampant and blatant in Christian theology today. Hence an exposition of the following subject entitled, "The Perversion of Experience".

The object of this study is to expound the term "experience" from a religious perspective and to reveal its inappropriate usage and its dangers. Its hidden meanings add another dimension to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which, by all accounts, is another perversion master-minded by the enemy.

The word "experience" in the occult (New Age) sphere is interrelated with the words, "knowledge and mysticism". The three terms are inseparable as the following dictionaries well prove. According to the Websters New World Dictionary, experience derives its meaning from the word "experiment". A good dictionary will substantiate the fact that experience is, "knowledge as a result of experience."

The word "mysticism" according to Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia is as follows: "an immediate, direct, intuitive knowledge of God or of ultimate reality attained through personal religious experience." According to the occult dictionary, Mysticism and the Occult, the word "mysticism" is defined by Thomas Aquinas as: "the knowledge of God through experience". Thus, the only logical conclusion to be drawn is: Experience=knowledge and knowledge=mysticism.

The term "experience" is probably one of the most used and abused words in the vocabulary of the religious sector today.

Hardly will you read literature, hear a sermon, teaching, discussion, talk show or a testimony without that word being used profusely. In fact, it is almost impossible on the part of some to communicate spiritual knowledge effectively without the use of the term.

By no means is it being suggested that Christians refrain from its use because it does have a legitimate meaning and usage when it is appropriately used. However, it is suggested that Christians use it discretely and in a manner so as not to subvert faith in God. The inappropriate use of the term could lead to erroneous theological concepts and shift the emphasis of the Word of God to eccentric beliefs based on experience.

After 35 years in the ministry I am under no delusion to believe that most Christians equate a spiritual experience with: "feeling, emotion, affection, sentiment, passion, deep sense, sensation and impression". According to Rogets International Thesaurus, all these terms are synonymous with experience.

Unfortunately, many Pentecostal and Charismatic members perceive their relationship with God not on the basis of Faith in God according to the Holy Scriptures, but rather on the basis

of experience, feeling, affection, sensation, impressions, etc. Therefore, their "assumed" relationship with God is at best, a mystical one with its source in the flesh, the imagination, in seducing spirits and in doctrines of devils (II Corinthians 5:16; I Corinthians 1:29; Hebrews 11:6; II Corinthians 5:6,7).

Because of the dawning of the New Age philosophies with strong emphasis on religious experience, siphoned through the obsession of the world for entertainment and pleasures, the term "experience" in religion is predominantly evolving to where it, for the most part emphasizes "mysticism".

It is an undisputed fact that many Pentecostals and Charismatics thrive on emotional experiences and mysticism. For this reason the New Age considers "Charismatic Congregations in main-line churches entry points into the Aquarian frontier" (New Age).¹ It has been said that if you were to take away the Pentecostal and Charismatic religious experiences, the foundation of their pseudo-faith would crumble.

In fact, religious experiences are such common denominators between the New Age and many Christians today that David Spangler, a leading New Age proponent, held a meeting in Colorado involving New Age leaders and various Evangelical leaders. The purpose of this meeting was to explore ways the Evangelicals and the New Agers could join hands to cooperate in bringing their mutual goals to pass.

The term "experience" is too often used to purport evidence in support of an intangible concept or claim. It is this connotation of the word that renders it a mystical term.

New Agers believe a mystical experience is a "direct communion with ultimate reality". Marilyn Ferguson in her book entitled, "The Aquarian Conspiracy" intimates that, "direct communication with ultimate reality is vague and incomprehensible to those who have not experienced it" and therefore this, "is a central problem". Yes, she is perfectly correct, it "is a problem" and a devilish one at that.

All this is hocus-pocus, pie in the sky, the reality of which will ultimately starve its victims to death in hell! It has been called the true "illusion" or possession.

Satan and his demons always skillfully use religious experiences as a smoke-screen in their attacks on the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a tool he uses to subtly change the meaning and interpretation of the written Word of God to buttress his world of "make believe" in experience. Johanna Michaelsen put, what I am endeavoring to say, so succinctly: "We have ever so subtly, allowed our base to shift from the solid objective grounding of God's Word and have come instead to place our focus on our experiences as the standard for our beliefs"²

1 "Unfinished Animal" The Aquarian Frontier and the Evolution of Consciousness by Theodore Rosak

2 "Beware of Counterfeit Spiritual Gifts", Johanna Michaelsen, Ministries Magazine, Spring, 1985.

...to be continued

WORLD/CHURCH

Julie Leo

The World says "New Age" "New Era" "New Sign"
The Church says "New Thing" "New Breed" "New Wine"

The World says "One World" "One Order" "One Plight"
The Church says "Join Forces" "Network" "Unite"

The World says "Mystic Powers" "Metaphysics" "Open Mind"
The Church says "Experience Supernatural" "Leave Faith Behind"

The World says "Symbols" "Idols" "Spiritual Ties"
The Church says "Close your eyes and visualize"

The World says "Transcendental Meditation"
The Church says "Further Revelation"

The World says "Revive the Age Old Tradition"
The Church says "Prophecy, Dream, Have Vision"

The World says "Astrology - your future intent"
The Church says "The Spirit-Filled Temperament"

While World chants their mantra faithfully
The Church laughs out hysterically

The World says "Bad Karma - Reincarnate"
The Church says "Psychology Determines your Fate"

The World says "Man is God and God is Man"
The Church says "How Great I am, How Great I am"

The World says "Apostasy - A Great Falling Away"
While the Church builds a kingdom and plans to stay

The World says "Maitreya is soon to Appear"
While the Church turns a blind eye and a deaf ear

The World says "The Man of Peace is here now"
While the Church in bending did finally bow

RACING TOWARD THE NEXT MILLENNIUM...

Dorothy Bauss

With the start of a new millennium only five years away, secular books, magazines and television programs are analyzing future trends and presenting them to the general public. The Wall Street Journal reports that-investing in the 21st century promises to require a whole new way of thinking. Now is the time to start planning for it."

Government and world leaders are forging mergers that will best benefit their interests in the International Market. Social change groups like Planned Parenthood, Gay and Civil Rights Activists, Education Lobbyists and Euthanasia Advocates are promoting their agendas to be utilized by the 21st century. Everyone's thoughts seem to be directed toward the year 2000 and what it will bring. Bible-believing Christians know a great delusion is coming upon those who reject the Truth of Salvation. "...*God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie.*" (II Thes. 2: 11)

The Scriptures, which are the Christian's only reliable roadmap to the future, have very specific things to say about prognosticating or foretelling what's ahead. (Isa. 47:13; Mic.5:12) The Lord, Himself, warned the people to "*take therefore no thought for the morrow...*" (Matt. 6:34) "*Boast not thyself of tomorrow for thou knowest not what a day may bringforth.*" (Prov. 27:1)

Further, "*The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God for it is written He taketh the wise in their own craftiness and again the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise and they are empty.*" (I Cor. 3:19)

Just how does the wisdom of this world compare with the Wisdom of God's Word? Here's a brief sample:

WORLD: Leaders of world superpowers must unite to build a utopian peace on earth through man's cunning wisdom and ingenuity under the auspices of the United Nations.

WORD: "*The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed...He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.*" (Ps. 2:2)

"Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (Jer.6:14a) "For when they say Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child and they shall not escape. But ye brethren are not in darkness that those days should overtake you as a thief" (I Thes. 5:3, 4)

"Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket and are counted as the small dust of the balance...all nations before Him are as nothing and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity". (Isa.40:15, 17)

Spirituality

WORLD: New Age Global Spirituality says an world religions are paths which lead to the same God

WORD: *"Enter ye in at the strait gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat; Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it."* (Matt. 7:13, 14)

Jesus said: *"I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but by me."* (John 14:6)

Also, *"I am the Door...if any man enter in he shall be saved..."* (John 10:7-10)

Global Transformation

WORLD: Global transformation is taking place. The Berlin Wall is down. Communism has failed. Mid East Peace pacts are signed. Borders and dividing lines are being removed. Nations in Europe are coming together in a confederacy. Computers will translate languages eliminating confusion between nations.

WORD: *"And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech...and the Lord said, Behold the people is one and they have all one language and this they begin to do and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do...So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth and...the name of it was called Babel."* (Gen 11:1-9)

"Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind; that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2)

Multiculturalism

WORLD: Multiculturalism is the brotherhood of all men. By studying and participating in other cultural activities we will advance understanding and empathy for other races and religions.

WORD: *"They mingled among the heathens and learned their works."* (Ps. 106:35)

"My son, fear the Lord...and mingle not with them that are given to change for their calamity shall rise sudden/y." (Prov. 24:21)

Jesus said; "Who is my mother or my brothers? And he looked round about on them which sat about him and said; Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God; the same is my brother and my sister and mother." (Mark 3:33-35)

"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil and the lust of your father ye will do." (John 8:42-44)

Abortion

WORLD: Pro-abortion rights activists declare fetuses are products of conception, tissue masses, not human beings

WORD: *"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."* (God to Jeremiah in Jer. 1:5)

Feminism

WORLD: Feminism says a woman has a right to choose to abort her baby. It's her body.

WORD: *"Choose you this day whom you will serve, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."* (Jos. 24: 15)

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live." (Deut.30:19)

"Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents;...yet thou sayest. I am innocent...I have not sinned." (Jer. 2:34, 35)

Global Citizens

WORLD: Children, a precious "commodity" in the 21st century will not be trained by parents but will be "Wards of the state" and Global Citizens.

WORD: *"Lo children are a heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man so are children of the youth."* (Ps. 127:3, 4)

"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6)

"And the child (Jesus) grew (in the home of his parents) and waxed strong in the spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke 2:40)

Health Care

WORLD: Health care is a universal right whereby all citizens will receive a card for medical treatment administered through social agencies and ultimately through World Health Organizations. Government will provide healing for the masses.

WORD: *"I am the Lord that healeth thee."*(Ex. 15:26)

"And a certain woman which had an issue of blood twelve years and had suffered many things of many physicians and had spent all that she had and was nothing better but rather grew worse, when she heard of Jesus came in the press behind and touched his garment and straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague...Jesus said Daughter thy faith hath made thee whole.. " (Mark 5:25-34)

"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord and the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that ye may be healed. " (James 5:14-16)

Cashless Society

WORLD: Currency and plastic cards will be obsolete as a cashless society goes into international banking.

WORD: *"And he causeth all both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast or the number of his name."* (Rev. 13:16.17)

"Ye have sown much and bring in little; ye eat but ye have not enough; ye drink but are not filled; ye clothe but there is none warm and he that earneth wages earneth to put it into a hag with holes." (Hag. 1:6)

Population Control

WORLD: If the current population trend continues without sufficient control the world will be grossly overcrowded and depleted of resources by the year 2000. Abortion, homosexuality and euthanasia of elderly will help keep overpopulation in check.

WORD: *"Be fruitful and multiply."* (Gen 1:22, 28; 8:17; 9:1, 7)

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:19)

"The grey head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness." (Prov. 16:31)

"Even to your old age I am He and even to gray hairs will carry you; I have made and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you." (Is. 46:4)

One World Government

WORLD: A Paradigm Shift or change in thinking is necessary for all people to have a New World View and begin to synchronize their efforts toward a One World Government, One World Monetary System and One World Religion.

WORD: *"Behold I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep but we shall ALL be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed..." (I Cor. 15:51)*

Change

"Change" is the most important word being used today. When the Paradigm Shift takes place on earth, every person will co-exist in complete, absolute harmony, ready to compromise, reach consensus, resolve conflicts, co-operate and be ecumenical. Each one will integrate into the mainstream, the middle road. All will be moderate, non-judgmental, tolerant and united as a whole. They will be interconnected and interdependent. Every brain will be part of this Collective Consciousness, this Universal Mind.

Everyone, that is, except Bible-believing Christians, who are called to separation. While New Age calls for change, one brain at a time, the Lord calls for change, one heart at a time, each heart united with other believing hearts in total unity. As the Scriptures say, *"We shall ALL be changed..."*

In Benjamin Creme's book "Reappearance of the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom" the word "change" means metamorphosis. It is the Third Initiation of Transfiguration or "changed from" in the New Age.

Could God's final and total act of unity for His church be the Second Coming of Jesus for His Bride in the Rapture? While the people on earth are experiencing unity and oneness under the direction of the Universal Mind of the anti-christ, believers will be ONE WITH JESUS. When ALL the world has experienced the Paradigm Shift or Change in Thinking, is it possible at that very moment we Christians too shall be changed in His Image and Likeness. Could the Paradigm Shift be Satan's counterfeit for the Rapture? Could the Rapture be the Greatest of all Separations and Changes???

Psychology

Psychology is the religion of the 21st Century. The High Priests of this religion are the Doctors of Philosophy, psychologists and social workers who promote their doctrines and creeds in books, magazine articles and television talk shows.

Under the guise of counseling, clients are taught how to cope with family problems, personality disorders and interpersonal relationships in this age of high technology and super stress. The God of the Bible has been replaced by a "higher power" of one's own choosing, often the deity within.

How does the advice of these "wise ones" line up with the Word of God? *"The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God for it is written He taketh the wise in their own craftiness and again the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise and they are empty."* (I Cor 3:19)

Comparison:

WORLD: Believe in yourself.

WORD: *"...believe on the name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life."* (I John 5:13)

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved and thy whole house." (Acts 16:31)

WORLD: Trust your instincts; Take control of your life.

WORD: *"Trust in the Lord with all you heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thy paths."* (Prov. 3:5)

WORLD: Be open to new experiences.

WORD: *"Keep (guard) thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life."* (Prov.4:23)

WORLD: Have an open mind; link your mind with other minds in the universe for a Collective Consciousness.

WORD: *"These have one mind and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb and the Lamb shall overcome them for he is Lord of lords and King of kings and they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful."* (Rev. 17:13, 14)

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." (I Cor. 2:16)

WORLD: Follow your feelings. (Feelings are not Facts)

WORD: *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised (trained) to discern both good and evil."* (Heb.5:14)

"How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time who should walk after their own ungodly lusts...sensual, having not the Spirit." (Jude 18, 19)

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:14)

WORLD: Imagine your human potential.

WORD: *"Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* (II Cor. 10:5)

"Because that when they knew God; they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." (Rom. 1:21, 22)

WORLD: Stay centered, meditate by emptying the mind. Become enlightened through focusing.

WORD: *"Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."* (Isa. 26:3)

"I will meditate in thy precepts (Word) and have respect unto thy ways." (Ps. 119: 15)

"I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands." (Ps. 143:5)

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."(Eph. 1:17, 18)

WORLD: One must cultivate self esteem for success in life

WORD: *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; Who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men."* (Phil. 2:3-7)

Much of what is being promoted today as spirituality is Eastern philosophy which has, as its central doctrine, reincarnation. Because one must experience many lives here on earth, environmentalism is important. Ecology, also, plays a vital role as the person may come back as an insect or animal. Evolution from animal to man becomes revolution when man may someday be reincarnated as animal. The cyclical, circular doctrines seem to have advocates "going around in circles" trying to attain godhood through good works and karma.

This spirituality is based on a series of "Re's" as in (1) Reincarnation (2) Recycling of people and things (3) Revolving on an earthly, cyclical, circular plane (4) Redefining Reality (5) Reunion with the dead through spiritism (6) Reconstructing earth as a permanent dwelling place for all eternity (7) Recalling past lives through hypnosis and meditation (8) Reshaping man's view of God (9) Reconciliation of all Religions as one (10) Rebirthing as personal transformation.

The God of the Old and New Testaments is a God of "Pre's". He is (1) Pre-existent (2) Pre-eminent (3) His Word prevails and will be preached (4) He has pre-destined us as His own. (5) Pre-ordained our walk with Him and (6) His Son is preparing a place for us in heaven (7) His precepts give understanding (8) His presence lives among us and (9) He is a Preserver of men. While Eastern Mysticism tells us to "empty" ourselves by "centering" within, the Christian is told to "fill" with the Word of God and "Center" on Jesus. They pray toward the "rising sun" while we pray in the name of the "Risen Son." Eastern spirituality calls for "wholeness" of mind, body and spirit and unity of all things while we believe the flesh wars with the spirit and "holiness" is separation unto the Lord. Their silent meditation is opposite of our command to *"speak the Word in season and out of season."* They worship the creation; we worship the Creator.

Only as the Christian reads and studies the Word of God will he be able to identify the subtle lies that are being told in the world today. Satan is the Father of Lies, the Great Pretender who will bring about a reign of terror known as the Tribulation Period just before the Thousand Year Reign of Jesus. (Rev 20) This is the only Millennium worth waiting for. READ ALL ABOUT IT.

The following from The Bulletin, The Official Magazine of Central Bible College, Winter 1995, is reprinted with permission.

I BELIEVE IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Dr. Harold R Carpenter

An angry mob of high school and university students with stones in hands stood in the street in front of the small building in Coronado, Costa Rica, where we were endeavoring to plant the first Evangelical church in this staunchly Roman Catholic city. As I confronted the angry crowd one of the students shouted, "You don't believe in the Virgin!"

There was amazement and disbelief when I shouted back, "Of course I do!"

This incident is a small way 'typifies a much larger debate which has been going on between Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Evangelicals for years and brings us to the question, "What should be the proper attitude of a born-again believer toward Mary, the mother of Jesus?"

There are several areas of agreement between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics. These in a qualified sense include 1) the virgin birth of Jesus; 2) the fact that Mary was the mother of the humanity of our Lord; 3) the godly life and character of Mary; 4) Mary's role as a model and example for all believers.

While there is general agreement in these areas there is wide disagreement in at least seven other areas. These include: 1) the perpetual virginity of Mary; 2) the belief in her immaculate conception; 3) the belief that she lived a sinless life; 4) the announcement of her bodily assumption into heaven; 5) the belief that she plays the role of Co-Redemptrix with Jesus

Christ in procuring the believer's salvation; 6) the veneration that is to be given to Mary by believers; 7) the belief that she is the Mediatrix between man and Jesus Christ as Jesus is between man and God.

Mary in Scripture

In view of the great attention that is accorded to Mary by Roman Catholics, surprising little is said about her in the Bible. Of the Gospel writers only Matthew and Luke record the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. Matthew seems to give more emphasis to the role and thinking of Joseph while Luke gives more attention to the role and thinking of Mary. Following the two birth narratives found in Matthew and Luke, Mary appears only four times in Scripture and speaks in only one of these occasions. The last recorded words of Mary were spoken at the marriage feast in Cana (John 2:1-11). She appears only once in the public ministry of Jesus (Matt. 12:46-50). We are told by John (19:25-27) that she was present at the crucifixion and by Luke (Acts 1: 14) that she was present in the upper room gathering on the Day of Pentecost.

Mary in Roman Catholic Dogma and Tradition

None of these passages can be construed to lend support to the titles given to Mary by the Catholic Church which include: Mother of God, Queen of the Apostles, Queen of Heaven, Queen of the Angels, The Door of Paradise, The Gate of Heaven, Our Life, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, and Mother of All Saints. Neither can they be construed to lend support to the veneration (worship) accorded to Mary by the Catholic Church. The term utilized by Catholics to describe this veneration is *hyperdulia* which is less than the *latria* or worship that is accorded to God alone. It is greater than *dulia* which is veneration given to saints, angels, and relics.

The gulf between Protestant and Catholic teachings concerning Mary does not arise from Scripture but from the fact that the Roman Catholic Church accepts *tradition* and the *magisterium* as sources of revelation along with the Bible. Among the more notable declarations of the dogmas of Mary are those of The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, The Syllabus of Errors, Vatican Council II: the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, and the ex cathedra dogma of the bodily assumption of Mary announced by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

When the Council of Trent issued its decree concerning original sin in its fifth session celebrated on June 17, 1546, it specifically excluded Mary from the contamination of original sin:

"This holy council declares, however, that it is not its intention to include in this decree, which deals with original sin, the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, but that the constitutions of Pope Sixtus IV, of happy memory, are to be observed under the penalties contained in those constitutions, which it renews.¹

As a basis for this dogmatic position the Council simply stated:

“...the holy, ecumenical, and general Council of Trent, lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost, the same three legates of the Apostolic See presiding, wishing now to

reclaim the erring and to strengthen the wavering, and following the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures, of the holy Fathers, of the most sacred councils, as well as the judgment and unanimity of the Church herself, ordains, confesses and declares these things concerning original sin. 2

Each of the five dogmas proclaimed on this date contains the same pronouncement upon the person who does not accept it, "let him be anathema."

In its 25th session which began on December 4, 1563, the Council of Trent decreed concerning the veneration of relics, the images of saints and the image of Mary:

"The holy council commands all bishops and others who hold the office of teaching and have charge of the *cura animarum*, that in accordance with the usage of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, received from the primitive times of the Christian religion, and with the unanimous teaching of the holy Fathers and the decrees of sacred councils, they above all instruct the faithful diligently in matters relating to intercession and invocation of the saints, the veneration of relics, and the legitimate use of images, teaching them that the saints who reign together with Christ offer up their prayers for men...Moreover, that the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints are to be placed and retained especially in the churches, and that due honor and veneration is to be given them...But if anyone should teach or maintain anything contrary to these decrees, let him be anathema.³

Chapter Eight of the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents of Vatican Council II on the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church deals with "Our Lady." Extracts from this dogma issued on November 21, 1964 include the following pronouncements:

"It is no wonder then that it was customary for the Fathers to refer to the Mother of God as all holy and free from every stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature."⁴

"Committing herself wholeheartedly and impeded by no sin to God's saving will, she devoted herself totally, as a handmaid of the Lord, to the person and work of her Son, under and with him, serving the mystery of redemption, by the grace of Almighty God. Rightly, therefore, the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely cooperating in the work of man's salvation through faith and obedience."⁵

"This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to His death. Finally the Immaculately-Conceived Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory when her earthly life was over, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, that she might be the more conformed to her Son, the Lord of Lords."⁶

"Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix."⁷

"The sacred synod teaches this Catholic doctrine advisedly and at the same time admonishes all the sons of the Church that the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed Virgin, be generously fostered, and that the practices and exercises of devotion towards her, recommended by the teaching authority of the Church in the course of centuries be highly esteemed, and that those decrees, which were given in the early days regarding the cult images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, be religiously observed."⁸

Mary in a Biblical and Evangelical Perspective

It is quite understandable that Martin Luther would demand that doctrine should be based upon Scripture alone and that the battle cry of the Reformation would continue to ring to this day, "*Sola Scriptura*."

Scriptural statements are quite clear that Mary was a chosen vessel of God to bring forth His Son into the world. She was a Godly woman who provided a model for obedient believers through the Church age. She was, none-the-less, a sinner saved by grace as any of the descendants of Adam.

Jesus said, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me.*" (John 14:6)

Luke declared in the Acts of the Apostles, "*And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.*" (4:12)

Paul adds, "*For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*" (I Tim. 2:5)

We must never sacrifice basic Scriptural principles nor accept the addition of tradition nor the decrees of councils as a foundation of truth. We are Pentecostals and we are Protestant Evangelicals!

Yes, I believe in Mary! However, that belief is limited to Scriptural declarations, no more and no less!

Harold Carpenter. B.A., Southwestern College; B.A., University of Arkansas; M.A., M. Div., AGTS; D. Miss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

1 H. J. Schroeder. *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (Rockford, III: Tan Books, 1978), 23.

2 Ibid., 21.

3 Ibid., 216.

4 Ibid., 416.

5 Ibid., 416.

6 Ibid., 417-418.

7 Ibid., 419.

8 Ibid., 412-422.

For more information, see:

Flannery, Austin. Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1987.

The Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God issued a position paper on the topic, "Is Mary a Mediatrix?" on January 21, 1982. This six-page tract is available from the Gospel Publishing House.

Letter received from one of our readers:

"Of growing concern, I feel, is the amazing trend toward reunification with the Roman Catholic Church. It's stunning to see evangelical leaders ignoring the devastating and heretical doctrines of this church, as they encourage Christians to cease trying to evangelize Catholics, and instead work together as brothers and sisters in Christ. Certainly, there are real believers in this false church, but the church itself is an evil and powerful political-religious body bent on regaining the authority she held during the dark ages. Once she has that power, her mask will come off, and real Christians will again become the objects of her wrath. Perhaps voices such as yours will help awaken some to the deceit being perpetrated on the Church in the name of unity.

Thanks again,
LH
Lynwood, WA

In Memory

*We gratefully acknowledge the memorial gift from
Donna Anderson in memory of Kathryne Swisher.*

A Tribute

On January 3, 1995 my mother, Mary Edna (Chaney) DeVries went on to be with her Lord. She had a fall on December 5th from which she never recovered. She had hit her head severely and bled internally thus causing an irreparable injury. She was 82 years of age and had lived a very full life to the glory of God. Her early years had been spent as a pioneering missionary in the Kentucky Mountains. According to a leaflet from 1935, the call that went out for missionaries asked that, "Each new station must have a cabin built, or secured and put in condition, for the housing of the workers. To help in this building program, we ask each one as he enters the work to bring with him fifty dollars for this fund, and to secure ten dollars a month pledged support for himself besides his transportation to the field. It is a great blessing for a worker to own a horse...this takes an extra six dollars a month for its upkeep". How far removed we are from the time when it cost almost as much to keep a horse as the missionary's support!

My mother answered that call and spent some years in Kentucky before marrying my father (Folkert DeVries), an Assemblies of God minister from South St. Paul, Minnesota. They served the Lord together until my father's homegoing in 1981. It is a wonderful heritage to have parents who dedicated their lives to the Lord and prayed earnestly for each of their children by name every day.

Update on Travers van der Merwe

The same day my mother was taken to the hospital (December 5, 1994), my husband, Travers also entered the hospital. He has had a very difficult year battling cancer. The pain has been severe as the cancer has penetrated his bones. By December he was having great difficulty walking and the pain was constant. The cancer had spread to his brain causing seizures. Through it all, he has proclaimed his faith as long as he has had the ability! At the present his speech has been affected, but he is still conscious and can express his love for the Lord and his courage in the face of all he is going through. He has been an encouragement to his family and all who have visited him.

I came across a tape of his testimony which he presented at a Michigan District meeting about eleven years ago. This testimony has blessed many and we know you will be blessed by it also. If you would like a copy, please let us know.