

The SERVANT

Newsletter of the Christian Awareness Fellowship, Inc. Volume 1 Issue 97

WHY STUDY THE CULTS?

By Duane L. Burgess

"Why should we study the cults? We're supposed to study the Bible. There are over 4000 religious groups in the world, and we can't possibly study them all. Besides, religion is a personal matter."

The Bible is very clear about the duty of the Christian. 2 Timothy 2:15 says, "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" We're called to thoroughly know the truth, not the error. Knowing God's Word enables us to recognize error when we come across it. We're also called to proclaim God's truth to others, so that the Spirit of God may use the Word of God to accomplish His purposes. In Romans 14 we read,

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? ... So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Satan is a deceiver, and the essence of spiritual warfare is a battle for the mind. People live their lives according to what they believe and Christians use the Word of God to challenge false beliefs. Therefore, one reason that we study the cults to enable us to better communicate the truth of God's Word to them, and to point out how their beliefs differ from the Word. We are to be "*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...*" (2 Cor. 10:5).

The simple definition of a cult is, "a system of religious worship." By strict definition, then, Christianity may be considered a "cult." But in common use the term, "cult," is negative. It usually refers to groups whose beliefs depart from orthodox Christianity, and often the cultists are considered strange in their beliefs and behavior. (We must bear in mind that to

many outsiders, Christianity is strange!) So another important reason to study the cults is to identify true and false groups.

While the term, "Cult," may be easily defined, the important issue is the "significance" of what a cult is: is it right or wrong, good or bad, evil or valuable? Many people would say this depends on one's point of view, but in reality it's not a matter of opinion at all. If there is a God who created us, then He owns us and He makes the rules. If the Word of God is absolute, authoritative truth, then the significance of a "cult" depends on how it compares to the Word of God. And that makes it a matter of eternal life and death.

People need a frame of reference for understanding the world and life's basic questions: Where did we come from? Why are we here? What does the future hold? What happens after death? Observing what

exists in creation is sufficient to indicate intelligent design in the universe. However, without revelation from the Creator we can only speculate about our world, its origin, and about our purpose and meaning in life. Diversity of opinions is fine for things like one's favorite food or color of clothing, but not for issues of ethics and morality. Only with a source of absolute authority and values can man understand what is true in the world, and attempt to successfully achieve lasting stability in society. The question is, what standards do we use?

A comparison of the world's religions shows many differing and conflicting ideas about God, spiritual things, and how to live. We cannot hope to discern which, if any, are valid unless we have revelation from the Creator. Many claim to have God's revelation. Which is correct?

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

If you think your spiritual vision is having problems recently it's probably not you. Distinctions between cults and Christianity are blurring. Have you seen the recent LDS ad on television? Now they're offering a free copy of the King James Bible (the Mormon Church doesn't believe in the Bible)! We may rejoice that the Word is getting out, but beware of wolves in sheep's clothing! Satan is a subtle enemy, and is always a step ahead of believers... and more... in his schemes to corrupt God's creation. We at CAF are constantly considering what we should be doing to uphold God's Word in the midst of the devilish deceit.

The blurring of biblical distinctions among Christians is a more significant concern. I'm hearing more and more of churches and ministries down-playing doctrines which are said to be "divisive." The result is not

greater unity in truth (Eph. 4). Dr. D. James Kennedy, author of *Evangelism Explosion*, remarked in a radio message that Christians in America have adopted a romantic notion about "love." Gone is God's holy wrath and judgment. Biblical love is now erroneously thought to mean one should avoid offending another's "personal beliefs." It used to be, "*Thus saith the Lord.*" Then it became, "*Thus saith Rome,*" and now it's, "*I feel,*" or, "*In my opinion.*"

Scripture, by its very nature, is "divisive" because it presents truth and exposes error. Tragically, doctrine and theology seem to be viewed negatively by many believers. Consider how few of the books on the shelves of Christian bookstores deal with a sound, biblical basis for the information presented. "Doctrine" is a word which means, "teaching," and "theology"

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CAF's HISTORY: In The Beginning...

by Scott Ladd

Some of our readers might enjoy a brief word about where CAF has come from and where it is going. Many of you have been supporters of CAF for years and can remember the days of ministry under the leading of Jack Gracie, I don't know about you, but that name brings back a flood of very fond memories.

At its inception CAF was a few dedicated souls, some of which had been graciously saved from non-Christian cults, and who now wanted to follow God by exposing the errors of cults such as these. The first of many meetings were held in the Gracie's home. Thinking back, I believe that this lead not only to dedicated Christians coming together to confront the cults and teach others, but also to the establishment of a tight knit group whose members were able to share the difficulties involved from coming out of a cult or, just being involved in a ministry of this kind. CAF has always been more than co-workers or even friends, we were able to find bonds in Christ that probably would not have been found in any other way.

One of the goals of CAF has always been to see the one involved in the cult come to

faith in Christ, not just to remove the person from the cult. Jack used to say "We're not doing a person any good if we get them to leave, Mormonism, for example, and not lead them to a relationship with Christ." So CAF was begun with evangelization of the cults as a foremost goal.

Some of our most exciting and memorable times have come when we were involved in one on one evangelism with those trapped in the deception of the cults. Year after year CAF would meet brothers and sisters from other ministries around the country to share with the people of Salt Lake City, Utah at the Utah State Fair. Watchman Fellowship, local churches, Utah Missions and others would spend the better part of a week or two sharing the gospel with literally thousands of people who do not know Christ, but are followers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Other times during the year CAF could be found passing out gospel tracts and sharing Christ with the Jehovah's Witnesses at the Tucson Convention Center during their annual Watchtower Convention. As with the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses we spoke with assured us that they were indeed

Christians, for after all, they very closely followed the gospel as taught to them by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. It became quickly apparent that while a lot of the words were the same, both of these groups were actually quite different from the faith that those of us in CAF held to, namely salvation by God's grace through faith in His son, Jesus Christ, alone. Our emphasis is as always to confront the error of the false teaching as compared to Holy Scripture, not to assault the person of the leader or followers of a group.

Since witnessing to the world of the cults about Jesus is a mission much too large for a few people in Tucson, a great part of our ministry has been to provide Christian brothers and sisters with the information and the knowledge in how to recognize and confront the error of the cults. Many times this was done through the showing of films discussing the differences between a certain group and biblical Christianity. Often CAF has held seminars and classes concerning a particular group or just emphasizing solid biblical doctrine. We are confident that the believer's priority is to study and know the

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The Christian begins with faith in the Word of God - the Bible. Archaeological research continually affirms the record of Scripture, and the number of predictive prophecies about Jesus (all of which came true) defies coincidental probability. Jesus claimed to be God, did things only God could do, and resurrected bodily from the dead, appearing to more than 500 witnesses. Although many wrongs have been done "in the name of Christianity," no other religion has the integrity or testimony of true, biblical Christianity.

The good news of Christianity is that God, the Creator, wants us to know Him. He doesn't want us to be confused by the many differing ideas in the world about Him, and He doesn't want us to be deceived into believing that all the world's religions are equally valid. God requires that He be worshipped in spirit and in truth. And Jesus declared that He is the only true way to God. To worship in truth one must come to God through faith in Jesus Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other mediator, and no other acceptable way to worship God.

God has also declared condemnation of all who fail to worship Him in truth, and He says that all have sinned. John chapter 3 not only holds the oft quoted promise of ever-

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lasting life to those who believe on God the Son, but it also declares condemnation to those who lack faith in Christ. God's love and mercy is coupled with His judgment, which is based upon His standard of holy righteousness. The same Jesus who is often portrayed as model of love, respect and tolerance, is the one who drove the money changers from the temple. He called the erring, Jewish religious leaders fools, blind guides and hypocrites, who prevented people from entering the kingdom (Mt. 23). He said they were of their father, the devil (John 8).

Studying the cults is a matter of eternal life and death. People of the world are not all worshipping the same God in their own way. Religion is certainly a personal matter but it's not a private one. We who by the grace of God have been shown the truth about Him are called to make His truth known to others that they also may repent and believe. And the truth of God is not a matter of what we believe, it's what God Himself has revealed and declared to us to be true. We study the cults that we may point them to God's truth.

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comes from two words meaning, "the study of God." Theology and doctrine are essential in our relationship to God by faith in Christ.

We at CAF covet your prayers for wisdom, discernment, and relevance as we seek to continue to stand against the war being waged by God's arch enemy through the cults and in the Church. For further reading I recommend, *Ashamed of the Gospel* by Dr. John MacArthur.

Duane L. Burgess, CAF President

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truth. The better one knows the genuine article, the more easily one can recognize an imitation. At other times our ministry has been able to supply written information to those wanting to study, and desiring to have God use them in a situation concerning a cult or false teaching.

Christian radio has been a very wonderful blessing. We were able to present, A CLOSER LOOK, short segments demonstrating the differences between some common false teachings and the teachings of the Bible. A CLOSER LOOK was heard on over 20 stations across the country. We also were featured in live call-in programs, in which listeners were able to ask questions concerning a particular group or teaching.

As the years went by God began to call some in CAF to other areas of ministry, whether within their local church fellowship, pastorship and even missionary work in Nairobi, Kenya. This is always a test of our faith because we know that we are losing a vital resource, maybe a director or officer, a prayer warrior and a friend. We praise God for those times. We have seen him work in mighty ways in the new ministries of the ones who have left and through those who have remained.

Since the days of meeting in the Gracie's home CAF has seen a few changes in our physical operation. For a time we were donated office space on west Prince Road. Now we're located in a wonderful office with great potential located at the Calvary Chapel of Tucson complex, just south of Interstate 10, off Palo Verde. CAF is an independent 501 (c) 3 ministry now under the spiritual accountability of the leadership of Calvary Chapel. This is something that many of us have felt was a much needed relationship for our ministry.

Through this, God has continued to bless the efforts of our ministry. He has continued to provide us with first rate leadership in Jack Gracie, Tom Perkins, and now Duane Burgess. We look forward to gaining a more clear focus and direction for CAF through Duane, and trust that God will show us the unique portion of his work that he designed our ministry to perform. As always we covet the prayers of our readers for strength and direction as we follow Christ.

It has been interesting to see the directions that the Lord has taken us through

different leadership of CAF. Under Jack, a great deal was focused on the more well known cults such as the LDS Church and the Jehovah's Witnesses, then later adding a focus on the New Age concepts which are so prevalent in our education systems.

With Tom Perkins as president, CAF continued a strong testimony against the New Age Movement and at the same time began presenting a biblical defense against the teachings of Satanism, Witchcraft and the Occult. Yearly visits to the Fourth Avenue Street Fair proved that this was an area of interest growing in popularity within the Tucson community. A biblical answer, based on a rock solid faith grounded in Christ through His Word, is the way to confront and wage war against the cults and the occult. A good foundation of biblical doctrine, resulting in the proper faith and a humble attitude, is God's example of a defender of the faith.

Christian Awareness Fellowship's newest president, Duane Burgess, has been active with the ministry for several years engineering our radio programs, writing articles and teaching. He also has been involved with other ministries dealing with strengthening the believers' faith. In particular, Duane has been involved in promoting the importance of supporting Biblical Creationism. For much too long the world has blindly accepted the theory of evolution as "fact". The Institute for Creation Research (ICR), Answers in Genesis (AIG), and Duane's new work, Sensible Faith Ministries, have been instrumental in getting the Christian community back on their feet in the battle against the false teaching of evolution. For far too long the war has raged against the idea of a literal creation, the scientific theory of evolution has bulldozed it's way into most non-Christian and even some Christian minds. CAF is joining the many Christian ministries confronting this lie.

From the response to seminars on Creationism by CAF and other ministries around the world, we see a Christianity that is ready to start fighting back in this area. We hope that CAF and like ministries will be able to provide the ammunition needed to win significant victories in this area.

As we continue the work that Christ has set before us we want to remind our readers of the importance of prayer concerning this

ministry. With new leadership, and the wise counsel of our dedicated Chaplain George Greene, comes a need for a clear vision and direction for our ministry. Other needs include God's continued provision of funds for literature, office supplies and equipment as well as a newsletter publication. We cannot express enough our appreciation for your prayers concerning these needs. Please continue to join with us in prayer for the work of CAF as we seek to follow the Lord Jesus and provide the Church with solid Biblical answers to defend the truth.

Have You Heard... of Swedenborgianism?

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688 - 1772) was a theologian but he departed from orthodoxy. His beliefs might well be described as New Age. Jesus Christ is considered our "higher power." Swedenborg taught that "Heaven is such that all people who have lived well, of whatever religion, have a place there" (Divine Providence #330. He also taught that "People are born to become angels" (Heaven and Hell #315). Tucson has such a "church," does your community?

Have You Read... Darwin's Black Box?

Author, Michael Behe, is Associate Professor of Biochemistry at Lehigh University. He is an evolutionist and accepts an ancient history for the world and the universe. However he recognizes that Darwinian theory cannot provide an answer regarding the mechanism for evolution. Biochemical machines, he argues, must have been designed. They are comprised of irreducibly complex mechanisms. Writes Behe, "we are left with no substantive defense against what feels to be a strange conclusion: that life was designed by an intelligent agent." *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* is published by the Free Press in 1996, a division of Simon & Schuster, 276 pages.

It's On My Heart

CAF CHAPLAIN George Greene



I have been asked, "Brother George, what keeps you going?" I have never given it much thought. I enjoy watching the Holy Spirit work through the volunteers at Christian Awareness Fellowship. It's a joy to watch them doing their work in love for God's glory.

We get many letters from mothers and fathers pouring out their hearts for prayer and help because their children have been caught up in the cults and the occult. We've received calls from schools, counselors, and hospitals for information on satanic and weird behavior. Pastors and laymen that are burned out are in need of counseling and prayer.

We enjoy sharing the Word of God with people, showing them that God loves them and wants them to have peace abundant and life eternal. We pray for each other to keep Christ the center of our lives. Believers in Christ must remember never to compromise the Gospel of Christ, and that the Word of God has power and shows sinners the way of salvation. We want to be ready when God calls us to share His love with someone.

I enjoy watching the volunteers give of their time, money, and prayer to keep the church informed. CAF's newsletter, *The Servant*, exposes how Satan is working through the cults and the occult. We must

also remember to give God praises of thanksgiving and worship, for He is the One that gives the increase. Pray for the pastors and servants of God that share the Gospel of Christ.

Love in Christ, Brother George
P.S. God's Word is complete. We need no other revelation in order to be saved.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

(2 Tim. 3:16, 17)

In the Next Issue: *The Celestine (False) Prophecy*

CLONING: From *Jurassic Park* to Cutting-Edge Science

Just imagine - your body is getting old, wearing out, and has some problems to be fixed. Why not just clone yourself, get a memory transplant, and start over? A little genetic repair on the DNA and you're better than new! Talk about a split personality! Is man finally approaching his solution for immortality?

Jurassic Park posed the scenario of scientists creating live dinosaurs through genetic engineering of dinosaur DNA. The concept is not all science fiction; cloning is upon us. News of researchers successfully cloning an adult mammal raises a lot of questions, and brings another idea of science fiction closer to real science.

Here's how it happened: 1) The nucleus of an adult sheep's mammary cell is starved

of nutrients to make it dormant and non-dividing. The nucleus contains the cell's DNA. 2) The nucleus of the adult cell replaces the nucleus of an unfertilized sheep egg. Therefore, the adult sheep's DNA replaces the egg's DNA. 3) An electric current jump-starts the egg into behaving like a fertilized cell. 4) The cell grows and divides to form an embryo, which is implanted in a surrogate mother.

Bioethicists are already on the alert: what are the implications? Can humans be cloned? If so, what does this mean for the future of humanity? Does a new soul come into being at the moment of cloning, or would the clone be a robotic zombie? Would a clone of me just *look* like me, or would it *be* another me? If I die in an accident could

I be cloned back into existence? Just think: adolescence all over again!

Of course, this is pure speculation, and Scripture doesn't address the matter of cloning. We know it is God who opens and closes the womb (Gen. 20:18; Ps. 127:3). And in Genesis 6:11 we read why God confounded man's language at Babel: "*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.*"

Much discussion will be forthcoming on this issue. Perhaps the power to clone is a sign that God will soon step in to put an end to man's usurping of His sovereignty. *Jurassic Park's* author Michael Crichton scripted the dilemma well: "Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they *could*- that they didn't stop to think *if they should...*"

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