

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

Do You Believe in the Trinity?

by Lynnford Beachy

(The following article by Brother Beachy was first published in the November 2002 issue of Present Truth. Shortly after its publication, one Trinitarian reader wrote, "I read the last newsletter. ... Overall I thought ... your statements of what Trinitarians believe was very well done. I have read it at least three times. I have been thinking and praying about what you have stated therein." I believe that you too will find Brother Beachy's article to be fair and accurate, and I believe that it will cause you also to think. Editor)

"Do you believe in the Trinity?" is one of the most common questions asked to determine orthodoxy. Yet, when this question is really understood, you may be surprised at your answer. Many people think that if a person believes in the "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," they believe in the Trinity. However, there are many people who believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who do not believe in the Trinity, even though some of them think they do. There is much more to understanding the issue than just believing in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The majority of Christians in the world today claim to believe in the Trinity, even though most will admit that they cannot understand it. With this widespread confusion regarding this doctrine, it is no wonder that among Trinitarians there are many different views about God. Much of this confusion results from the relative ignorance of what the doctrine of the Trinity really is. Many pastors and church leaders avoid preaching on this subject because they say that they cannot understand it themselves and therefore they feel incapable of expounding upon it to others. The confusion regarding this subject is heightened by the often-repeated saying that, "The Trinity is a mystery beyond our understanding, and should not be investigated." This has caused many people to ignore the subject of knowing God, and settle for some unknowable mystery in His place.

From my own experience I have witnessed some of the confusion on this subject. I have met several people who quickly claim that they

Prayer Requests

"Dear Friend." Don't you like being addressed in such a manner. I am sure that we all do. Most likely we all know someone, and perhaps several people who are widely recognized as a dear brother or sister to the cause; someone, like Dorcas whom we feel the church just can't function without.

One modern day Dorcas that has recently fallen seriously ill and is in need of prayer is Dr. Beverly Grant of Kingston, Jamaica. Sister Grant has always been such a blessing to all whom she comes in contact with. She is always making sacrifices to somehow help others. Perhaps she is transporting several to church, or taking the time out of a very busy schedule to speak words of encouragement to others.

Please remember Sister Beverly, not only for her sake, but
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believe in the Trinity but, upon investigation, I have found that their views do not line up with the doctrine of the Trinity. Even more surprising, there are some, even ministers, who openly denounce the doctrine of the Trinity, but the doctrine they promote is, in reality, the Trinity itself, or some very close variation of it, even though they wish to call it by another name, such as “Godhead.” You can call a cat a dog all you want, but it will never change the fact that the cat is still a cat and will meow, not bark.

Because of the confusion that people have about God, and the implications this can have upon the gospel, we would like to examine some of the most popular views about God and compare them with Scripture. With this information you will be readily able to identify the Trinity doctrine as well as some other views about God that are sometimes called by that name, regardless of what the propagators of those doctrines wish to call them, and what terms they use to describe them. I pray that after reading this study you will be prepared to accept the truth of Scripture and reject all man-made theories about God, and that you will “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason” for what you believe. (1 Peter 3:15)

The four primary teachings about God that exist among Christians are Trinitarianism, Modalism (also called “Jesus only”), Unitarianism, and Tritheism. As we look at the details of these false teachings about God, keep in mind that each one is calculated to deny the literal sonship of Christ and His complete, divine death on the cross, leaving us with nothing more than a human sacrifice for sins, and no real conception of God’s love.

The Official Catholic View

The main points of the official Catholic view of God, also known as the “orthodox Trinity,” are accepted by most Protestant denominations with little variation. This is the only view that can rightfully be called “the Trinity” since they are the first ones to have defined this doctrine. On page 11 of the book, *Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, we read,

“The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church...

“The Church studied this mystery with great care and, after four centuries of clarification, decided to state the doctrine in this way: in the unity of the

Godhead there are three Persons,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...”

The fundamental teaching of the orthodox Trinity is the idea that there are three distinct persons in one Being (substance), called God. You will notice that with this usage of the words, “person” and “being” cannot mean the same thing, because it takes three “persons” to make up this one being. It is very important to understand this distinction in order to comprehend the different views of God. A being is all that comprises an individual—the spirit, soul, mind, consciousness, will and body. Person, on the other hand, can have several different meanings in theological circles, which we will discuss in more detail later in this study.

To help define the orthodox Trinity, I will quote from the Athanasian Creed, which is accepted as truth by the Catholic Church and most Protestant Churches. (See Philip Schaff’s *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 132, p. 696.) The author of the Athanasian Creed is unknown, but portions of it seem to have been taken from the writings of Augustine. The Athanasian Creed says, in part:

The Athanasian Creed

“1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith;

“2. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

“3. But this is the catholic faith: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity;

“4. Neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance.

“5. For there is one person of the Father: another of the Son: another of the Holy Ghost.

“6. But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal...

“15. So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God;

“16. And yet there are not three Gods; but one God...

“19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord

“20. So are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, there are three Gods, or three Lords...

“25. And in this Trinity none is before or after another: none is greater or less than another.

“26. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.

“27. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

“28. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.”

(The Athanasian Creed as quoted in Philip Schaff’s *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 132, pp. 690-693)

The Orthodox Trinity

The orthodox Trinity teaches that there is one Being called God who is composed of three persons. Each of these persons are said to be distinct, self-conscious persons who are the same age (“none is before or after another”), and they are said to be exactly equal in rank and power (“none is greater or less than another”). However, the definition goes much deeper than this because, according to the orthodox Trinity doctrine, the three persons are not persons in the normal sense. Ordinarily, we would think of a person as an individual being, but this is not what is meant by the use of the word “person” in the orthodox Trinity. The propagators of this doctrine say the word “person,” when applied to God, is really inadequate because there is no concept that can be expressed by the word “person” that is equivalent to the idea that is meant when it is applied to God. That is why most theologians prefer the Greek term *hypostasis* rather than person because it is a word that refers to the theological concept of “person” that is half-way between mere personality and an individual being. This concept is explained in the following way:

“The doctrine of a subsistence in the substance of the Godhead brings to view a species of existence that is so anomalous and unique, that the human mind derives little or no aid from those analogies which assist it in all other cases. The hypostasis is a real subsistence, — a solid essential form of existence, and not a mere emanation, or energy, or manifestation, — but it is intermediate between substance and attributes. It is not identical with the substance, for there are not three substances [or beings]. It is not identical with attributes, for the three Persons each and equally possess all the divine attributes ... Hence the human mind is called upon to grasp the notion of a species of existence that is totally *sui generis*, and not capable of illustration by any of the ordinary comparisons and analogies.” (Dr. Shedd, *History of Christian Doctrine*, vol. i. p. 365 as quoted in Philip Schaff’s *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 130, pp. 676, 677)

This strange conception of God is so difficult to understand that Augustine, the most influential Catholic Church writer, did not even understand it. Ironically, Augustine is greatly respected as an authority among Trinitarians. Philip Schaff wrote, “Of all the fathers, next to Athanasius, Augustine performed the greatest service for this dogma [the Trinity].” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 131, p. 684) Yet Augustine said, “If we be asked to define the Trinity, we can only say, it is not this or that.” (*Ibid.*, Section 130, p. 672)

Athanasius, one of the earliest and very influential propagators of the Trinity, “candidly confessed that whenever he forced his understanding to meditate upon the divinity of the Logos, his toilsome and un-availing efforts recoiled on themselves; that the more he thought, the less he comprehended; and the more he wrote, the less capable was he of expressing his thoughts.” (Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapter 5, paragraph 1, as quoted in Alonzo T. Jones’ *The Two Republics*, p. 334)

Athanasius and Augustine, the two men who did more to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity than anyone else, both admitted that they did not understand it and could not define it.

The Orthodox Trinity Illustrated

An illustration of the orthodox Trinitarian doctrine is the triquetra symbol.

**The orthodox Trinity:
three persons (hypostases)
united in one being**



The orthodox Trinity is the official Catholic teaching that the one God of the Bible is one being composed of three self-conscious hypostases. Hypostasis is the Greek word used by Orthodox Trinitarians to describe a supposed species of existence unique to the Trinity that is halfway between attributes and a being, and cannot be defined further than to say it is not attributes, nor is it a being. This concept of God, as confusing as it is, is the most commonly accepted view among Christians.

The orthodox Trinity denies the literal sonship and the complete death of Christ. It denies the death of Christ, because it is claimed that the divine Son of God is part of God and therefore cannot be separated from Him in death because God cannot die. Let us allow Augustine to demonstrate this:

“No dead man can raise himself. He [Christ] only was able to raise Himself, who though His Body was dead, was not dead. For He raised up that which was dead. He raised up Himself, who in Himself was alive, but in His Body that was to be raised was dead. For not the Father only, of whom it was said by the Apostle, ‘Wherefore God also hath exalted Him,’ raised the Son, but the Lord also raised Himself, that is, His Body.” (*Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, volume 6, page 656, St. Augustine, “Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament”)

It is true that a dead man cannot raise himself from the dead. It is also true that Christ died. The divine, glorified Jesus Christ said, “I... was dead.” (Revelation 1:18) Since Christ was truly dead, then He could not have raised Himself. The Bible does not teach that Christ raised Himself from the dead. Instead, it says at least thirty times that the Father raised Him from the dead. For example, Galatians 1:1 says, “Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.)”

I find Augustine’s conclusion that Christ “was not dead” to be repulsive to reason, contrary to Scripture, and injurious to the power of the gospel. Yet, this is the logical conclusion that must be reached if we believe that Christ is a part of the Being of God, the Father. The believers in this doctrine are left with the conclusion that the death of Christ was nothing more than the death of a human that had been temporarily filled with the “second person” of the Trinity. No matter how exalted the pre-existent Son was; no matter how glorious, how powerful, or even eternal; if the manhood only died, the sacrifice was only human. Without believing that Christ died, how can anyone appreciate the love of God in giving His Son to die for our sins?

The orthodox Trinity doctrine denies the sonship of Christ, for if Christ, the Son of God, was some type of projection from the one God, and part of the being of God, then He could not properly be called a Son of the Father, as was demonstrated by the Catholic invention of the doctrine of “eternal generation.”

Modalism (“Jesus only”)

Modalism, also called “Jesus only,” is the concept that God is one person who operates in three different modes of existence. Please notice number 4 of the Athanasian creed. This has specific reference to modalism and tritheism. It says, “Neither confounding the persons [modalism]; nor dividing the

substance [tritheism].” According to orthodox Trinitarians, modalism confounded the three persons into one person, claiming that God is one person who manifested Himself in three different modes at three different times. This idea is sometimes called Sabellianism because a man by the name of Sabellius is credited as the one who invented this theory. Here is what Dr. Philip Schaff had to say about this theory:

“His [Sabellius’] fundamental thought is, that the unity of God, without distinction in itself, unfolds or extends itself in the course of the world’s development in three different forms and periods of revelation and, after the completion of redemption, returns into unity. The Father reveals himself in the giving of the law or the Old Testament economy (not in the creation also, which in his view precedes the trinitarian revelation); the Son, in the incarnation; the Holy Ghost, in inspiration. The revelation of the Son ends with the ascension; the revelation of the Spirit goes on in regeneration and sanctification.” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 2, Section 152, page 582)

This idea, according to orthodox Trinitarians, confounds the three persons of the Trinity into one person who acts in different modes at different times—sometimes He acts like a Father, sometimes a Son, and sometimes the Holy Spirit.

Modalism Illustrated

A way to illustrate modalism would be to draw one circle:

Modalism:
one being who is
one person with
three consecutive modes or personalities



As noted earlier, modalism is the idea that there is one God who is one being who manifests Himself in three different modes at different times (some teach simultaneously) so that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not really three persons, but are merely three manifestations of the same individual person. There are some who believe in modalism who claim that there are three *persons* in God, but to them the word *person* means “personality, characteristic, emanation, or manifestation” rather than a being or an hypostasis.

With this concept, there is no real, literal, Son of God. The only concept of a Son of God would have to be limited to the incarnation of Christ or to God revealing a manifestation of Himself, pretending to be

His own Son. Either of these comes far short of portraying the love of God in giving His Son to die for sinners. In addition to denying the sonship of Christ, this theory also reduces the death of Christ to that of a mere human, for if Christ was only a manifestation of the one God, then He could not die, for the Bible says that God cannot die. (1 Timothy 6:16) So with this concept, the believer is left with the idea that God so loved the world that He came to earth pretending to be His own Son, and He pretended to die to reveal His great love for us. It is no wonder that there is a lack of genuine love for God in this world, when the regenerating power of God's love, the heart of the gospel, is removed from God's people.

Unitarianism

Unitarianism is similar to modalism in that it teaches that God is one individual person, but it differs in that Unitarians do not believe God has different modes in which He manifests Himself. Unitarians believe that Jesus was just a man, a prophet endowed with the Spirit of God rather than a divine being. They also deny that Christ died as a substitute for sinners. For evidence of this, visit the Unitarian website www.americanunitarian.org. Also see William Channing's work entitled "Unitarian Christianity" at: www.channingmc.org/unitarianchristianity.htm.

Unitarians generally call themselves Christians but, perhaps ironically, the basis of Unitarianism is the teaching that is believed in the Muslim religion, which is so openly opposed to Christianity.

The Muslim "holy book," the Koran, says, "*Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him: So believe in Allah and His apostles. Say not 'Trinity': desist: It will be better for you: For Allah is One God: Glory be to Him: (Far Exalted is He) above having a son.*" (Koran 4:171)

With this concept Jesus could fully die, but since they reduce Christ to a mere man and deny that Christ's death truly atoned for our sins, they have less than a human sacrifice for sins; they have no sacrifice at all, either on the part of God or Christ. This concept, like the other false concepts we have examined, eliminates from its adherents any concept of God's love in giving His Son to die for their sins. It is no wonder that the Muslim world demonstrates such a cold and hate-filled religion, when their *god* has never revealed

love to them. It is sad that some who falsely use the title, "Christian," adhere to this same concept of God.

Tritheism

Tritheism is the concept that the one God of the Bible is really composed of three separate beings who are "one" because they are perfectly united in their goals, plans, purposes, and unified work. In this concept God is not an individual, but rather a group of three individuals, or a committee.

Again I would like to refer you to point number 4 in the Athanasian Creed. It says, "Neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance." The term, "nor dividing the substance" has direct reference to what is termed "tritheism." According to orthodox Trinitarians, tritheism divides the substance of God into three separate beings, which would be three gods, hence it is labeled tritheism. Notice the following definition of the "orthodox Trinity" in which the definition of tritheism is brought out.

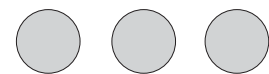
"...the term person [hypostasis] must not be taken here in the sense current among men, as if the three persons were three different individuals, or three self-conscious and separately acting beings. The trinitarian idea of personality lies midway between that of a mere form of manifestation, or a personation, which would lead to, Sabellianism and the idea of an independent, limited human personality, which would result in tritheism. In other words, it avoids the... tritheistic trinity of three distinct and separate beings." (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 130, pp. 676, 677)

Notice here that tritheism is defined as the idea that God exists in three persons who are "three different individuals, or three self-conscious and separately acting beings."

Tritheism Illustrated

Tritheism could be illustrated by drawing three circles in the following way:

Tritheism:
three persons who are
three separate beings
who are called "one"
because they are one in
purpose and character



As noted earlier, tritheism is the concept that the one God of the Bible is not an individual being, but rather a committee of three separate beings who work

together in perfect unity, while modalism, on the other hand, is the idea that the one God of the Bible is one person who manifests Himself in three different ways. The orthodox Trinity seeks to find a middle road between these two extremes, by inventing a species of existence called hypostasis, which is neither a manifestation, nor an individual being.

With the concept of tritheism, there can be no real Son of God. Instead, one divine being plays the role, or pretends to be the Son of another one of the divine beings.

An example of this theory of role playing is well illustrated by the following statement written by Gorden Jenson, then the president of Spicer Memorial College in Pune, India, in the special “Week of Prayer” issue of the *Adventist Review*. He wrote:

“In order to eradicate sin and rebellion from the universe and to restore harmony and peace, one of the divine Beings accepted, and entered into, the role of the Father, another the role of the Son. The remaining divine Being, the Holy Spirit,... By accepting the roles that the plan entailed, the divine Beings lost none of the powers of Deity... The divine Beings entered into the roles they had agreed upon before the foundations of the world were laid.” (*Adventist Review*, October 31, 1996)

Tritheism, like modalism, denies the death of Christ, for it claims that all three of these divine beings are exactly alike, and none of them could die or be separated from the other two. Again, the believer is left with a cold perception of God’s love, thinking that God (the committee of three) so loved the world that they sent one of them down here to pretend to be the Son of one of the others who had stayed behind, and to pretend to die, to reveal the love of all three, including the two who had stayed behind. This concept falls far short of revealing the wonderful love of the true God in giving His Son to die for our sins and has nothing more than a human sacrifice for sin.

Applying the Knowledge

As we look at these four views of God, we see that Modalists, Unitarians, and Tritheists all understand the word *person* to mean “a being,” while the orthodox Trinitarians are adamantly opposed to this definition, and claim that the three persons of the Trinity are some mysterious, undefinable species of existence called hypostasis. Philip Schaff says, “The word person is in reality only a make-shift term, in the absence of a more adequate term.” (Philip Schaff,

History of the Christian Church, Volume 3, Section 130, p. 677)

Orthodox Trinitarians are adamantly opposed to the idea that God is made up of three beings. They say that anyone who says this is a Tritheist.

Unitarians say there is only one divine person, God the Father. The Modalist will say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the same *person*, the Trinitarian will say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the same *being*, while the Tritheist will say the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are *three separate beings*.

With the information contained in this study, it should be easy for you to identify a person’s understanding of God. Yet, Satan is always busy inventing new angles on these concepts, and using different words to describe them, in an effort to confuse God’s people, even the very elect. I believe we will see this confusion increase as the time of Christ’s return comes closer.

One way Satan has confused people is by having different people use the same word with different meanings. Some ministers and theologians, when expounding upon God and His nature, use the word “person” to mean one of the modes, emanations, or manifestations of an individual, so that one being can have several of these “persons” or modes in which to manifest himself. Others use the word “person” to mean a complete being, so that three persons would be three separate beings. Still others use the word “person” to mean, a mysterious form of existence that is half-way between a characteristic and a being, so that one being can have three separate self-conscious “persons” or “hypostases.”

To add to this confusion, the word “being,” at times, is used with any of the above three definitions in mind, most rarely with the first definition, a mode of existence; and most often with the second definition, that of the complete individual; but it has also been used with the third definition, hypostasis. So, as you can see, if you want to understand what is being taught by an individual, not only must you understand what they are saying, but you must know what they mean when they use the words “person” or “being.”

Some Questions for Consideration

Here are a few questions that can be asked to help clarify what a person believes about God:

❧ When did Jesus Christ become the Son of God?

- ❧ Is Jesus Christ the literal Son of God?
- ❧ Was the Son of God begotten of the Father other than when He was born in Bethlehem?
- ❧ Does the Son of God have a separate mind, will, and consciousness from God the Father?
- ❧ Can God be tempted with sin?
- ❧ Was Jesus tempted and could Jesus have sinned during his incarnation?
- ❧ Can God die?
- ❧ Was the Son of God conscious during the three days and three nights He lay in the tomb?
- ❧ Can God have something revealed to Him, that was hidden?
- ❧ Do you pray to the Holy Spirit? If *not*, why neglect him? If *so*, where is your biblical example?
- ❧ Does the Holy Spirit have a spirit of his own like the Father and the Son?

These questions will go a long way to help clarify what a person believes or teaches about God.

The Biblical View

Now that we have examined some of the prominent false teaching about God it would be good for us to see what the Bible actually says on this subject.

In Isaiah 44:6 God said, “beside me there is no God,” and in verse 8 He continued, “Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.” This is very precise language to indicate that the speaker is alone. All of the pronouns are singular, indicating that only one person is speaking. Who is this one person? The New Testament clarifies this.

Paul wrote, “We know... that there is none other God but one.” (1 Corinthians 8:4) To make it abundantly clear who he was referring to as the God beside which there is none other, Paul continued. In verse 6 he wrote, “to us there is but one God, the Father.” Paul understood the one God of the Bible to be God, the Father, and no one else.

Jesus had the same understanding. After Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4 a scribe told Him, “Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he.” (Mark 12:32) Who is the one God the scribe was referring to? Was he referring to Jesus as the one God? Certainly not! He was referring to God, the Father, and Jesus knew it.

At another time, while Jesus was talking to the scribes and Pharisees, He said, “If I honour myself,

my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God.” (John 8:54) Jesus knew that when the scribes and Pharisees said “God,” they were referring to His Father. When this scribe said, “There is one God; and there is none other but he,” Jesus knew that he was talking about His Father.

Did Jesus correct the scribe by saying, “You’ve got it wrong, I am really the one God of the Bible”? Absolutely not! To the contrary, Jesus complimented him for his good answer by exclaiming, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” Jesus knew that this man was correct, that there is one God, the Father, and there is none other God but He.

The Father is called “the only true God” (John 17:3), “the Most High God” (Mark 5:7), “the only Potentate [the only supreme ruler]” (1 Timothy 6:15), and the “one God and Father of all who is above all” (Ephesians 4:6). The Scripture also says that “there is none other but He.” (Mark 12:32) The Bible is very clear that the “one God” of the Bible is “God the Father.” (1 Corinthians 8:6)

In the Bible, the Father says that He is the only God, and there’s none other god beside Him. Yet, in the New Testament we find that Christ is also called God. (Hebrews 1:8) How can that be?

The word “God” has several different meanings. In a limited sense, men are called gods. Both the Greek word *theos* and the Hebrew word *elohim*, which are most often translated “God,” are used in reference to men. (See Exodus 7:1; Psalm 82:6; John 10:34) When the word “god” is used in that sense, then there are hundreds and thousands of gods.

In a more limited sense, angels are called gods. David wrote about man, “For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels [*elohim*].” (Psalms 8:5) The word “angels” in this verse comes from the Hebrew word *elohim*. The way *elohim* is used here it denotes a type of being that is higher than man, but it is still used in a limited sense, and with this definition there would still be many gods.

In reference to Christ, the word “God” is used in a much more limited sense, to denote His nature as being on the *same level* as His Father’s—something that cannot be said about any other being in the universe. The Bible says that Christ was “in the form of God.” (Philippians 2:6)

But even when the word “God” is used of Christ, it is used in a limited sense, because Christ has a God who is “the head of Christ,” “above all,” and “greater

than” He. (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 4:6; and John 14:28) When the word “God” is used in its absolute and unlimited sense, there is only one person to whom it can apply, and that is God, the Father, alone. Jesus said that His Father is “the only true God.” (John 17:3) Paul said, “There is none other God but one... God, the Father.” (1 Corinthians 8:4, 6)

So to clarify, there are many gods when the word “god” is used in a limited sense, to include men and angels. When the word “God” is used as an adjective to describe the nature of God, as in John 1:1, then there are only two divine beings, God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. The Son of God is completely divine by nature because His Father is divine, just as I am completely human, because my parents are human.

When the word God is used in its absolute sense, to denote “the most High God,” “the Sovereign of the universe,” or “the only true God,” then there is only one individual that is referred to. That being is God, the Father, beside which there is no God.

The Sonship of Christ

The Bible refers to Christ as God’s Son at least 120 times. The Bible does this by using the phrase “Son of God” forty-seven times. Regarding the genuineness of Christ’s sonship He is called “the only begotten” five times, “the firstborn” three times, “the firstbegotten” once, God’s “holy child” twice. Four verses say He was “begotten” prior to His incarnation. Four verses say that He “proceeded forth from,” “came out from” or “camest forth from” the Father. The evidence on this subject is overwhelming. Christ truly is the literal begotten Son of God, brought forth from the Father before all creation. If God expected us to believe anything different He did a poor job of presenting it in the Bible. In fact, if God had wanted us to believe differently, He purposely confused us by making so many clear statements indicating that Christ is literally the begotten Son of God, without the slightest clarification to indicate that we should not take His words in their common meaning. Yet, “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.” (1 Corinthians 14:33)

Good writers are careful with the choice of words they use. Each word is weighted for clarity and accuracy. Writers know that when they use a word or a phrase that could be easily misunderstood, clarifications need to be made to avoid people coming to the wrong conclusions. Jesus allowed each and every

word of Scripture to have its place and bearing. He said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4) However, throughout the New Testament, where Christ is said to be the begotten Son of God, there is never any type of correction or clarification so that these words would not be taken in their natural sense. Jesus said that He is “the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18)

Jesus, speaking of Himself under the symbol of wisdom said, “When there were no depths, I was *brought forth* [Hebrew: born]; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I *brought forth* [Hebrew: born]... Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.” (Proverbs 8:24, 25, 30)

According to the Bible, Jesus Christ was begotten, which literally means born, before anything was created—long before God sent Him into the world. (See Hebrews 1:1-9; Colossians 1:15; John 3:16, 17; 18:37; and 1 John 4:9.) *How* He was begotten is not for us to know, but God wants us to realize that the Father and His Son have a close, genuine, father-son relationship that is not just a role or an act.

Some people think that God is beyond the possibility of having a Son, but Jesus said, “With God all things are possible.” (Mark 10:27)

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is continually referred to as “the Spirit of God,” or “the holy Spirit of God.” (Ephesians 4:30) As we noted earlier, the one God of the Bible is the Father, so the Holy Spirit of God is the Spirit of the Father. This is precisely what Jesus taught when He said, “For it is not ye that speak, but *the Spirit of your Father* which speaketh in you.” (Matthew 10:20) In Luke’s account of the same conversation this statement is recorded like this: “For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.” (Luke 12:12) When we compare these two verses we find that “the Spirit of your Father” is used interchangeably with “the Holy Ghost.”

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit “proceedeth from the Father.” (John 15:26) The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father, and He sends His Spirit to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. Paul expressed it this way: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of *the Holy Ghost; Which*

he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” (Titus 3:5, 6) In this process we gain the added benefit of receiving the Spirit of Christ, who was “in all points tempted like as we are,” and is able to help us when we are tempted.” (Hebrews 4:15; 2:18) We find this truth proclaimed in Galatians 4:6, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” When we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, we receive both the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of Christ. (Romans 8:9-11)

Summary

The idea of one God in three persons is contrary to Scripture regardless of which theory is promoted to try to harmonize these contradictory ideas. modalism, orthodox Trinitarianism, and tritheism are all equally dangerous in that they all deny the Bible truths that Christ is truly the Son of God and that He truly died for our sins. The Catholic invention of the eternal generation of the Son is merely an attempt to harmonize the Bible truth that Christ is the only *begotten* Son of God with the false theory that He is the same age as His Father. It is neither biblical, nor consistent with reason. It does away with the sonship of Christ as thoroughly as modalism or tritheism. There are many other aspects that are affected when one accepts these false theories. As we have noted, the sonship and death of Christ are affected. Also, the nature of Christ at His incarnation is severely affected, along with the atonement made for our sins and the personal presence of God and Christ by the Holy Spirit.


These false theories about God leave their adherents with, at best, a shallow picture of God’s love, that is unable to allow them to have the deep, genuine love for God that can endure every hardship, especially the conflict over the mark of the beast, which we shall all face very soon.

Remember that no lie is safe, no matter how innocently it is believed. Paul wrote that those who “believe a lie” will be “damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12) Also, keep in mind that the majority are seldom right in religious matters. Jesus said, “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.” (Matthew 7:13, 14) The councils of men, and the man-made creeds that are so often esteemed by Christians, are not the

“... the more he thought, the less he comprehended; and the more he wrote, the less capable was he of expressing his thoughts.” (Gibbon, on Athanasius’ contemplation of the Trinity doctrine)

standards by which we can determine truth. There is only one standard, and one alone, that we can trust as an infallible guide to truth, and that is the Word of God. We must not trust men to lead us into truth, for God said, “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. (Psalms 146:3)

I pray that you will hold firmly to the truth of the Bible, that “there is but one God, the Father” and “one Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 8:6), who is “the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18), who “proceeded forth” and “came out from God” “before the hills” (John 8:42; 16:27; Proverbs 8:25), who “died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3), and “the Father... raised Him from the dead.” (Galatians 1:1) I pray that you will also believe the truth that the Holy Spirit is “the holy Spirit of God” (Ephesians 4:30), which “proceedeth from the Father” (John 15:26) and comes to us “through Jesus Christ.” (Titus 3:5, 6)

Keep the faith—the true faith! “Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 1:3) 

Prayer Requests

Continued from page 1

for the sake of the brothers and sisters of Jamaica who have been so blessed by her ministry.

Last month we informed you of the new arrival of Rebekah Beachy, the daughter of Lynnford and Kendra Beachy, and of her respiratory problems. We asked you to pray for her. Many cards, letters, and e-mails were received demonstrating that many people around the world were concerned and praying for her recovery. Lynnford and Kendra would like to thank each of you very much for all of your prayers which they are thankful to report have been answered. The latest test results of her lungs revealed that they are now normal. Praise God, He deserves all the credit!
Editor

Youth's Corner - Idols of the Heart

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.” (Genesis 20:3, 4)

But it is not alone in denying the existence of God, or in bowing down to idols of wood and stone, that this first commandment is broken. By many who profess to be followers of Christ, its principles are infringed; but the Lord of heaven does not acknowledge those as his children who are cherishing in their hearts anything that takes the place which God alone should hold. With many the gratification of appetite holds sway, while with others dress and love of the world are given the first place in the heart. But in his word, God has shown us that these things must not hold the first place. He says, “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” (1 Peter 3:3, 4)

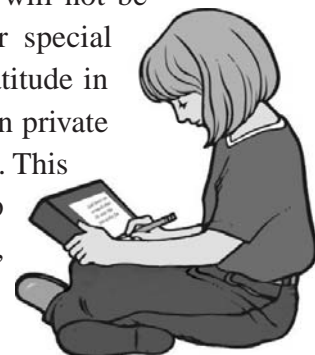
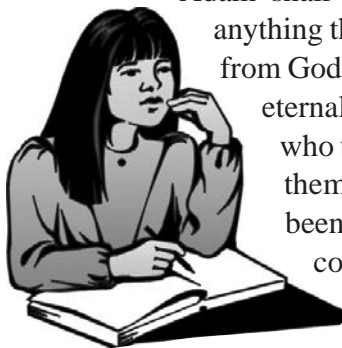
God has given us many things in this life upon which to bestow our affections; but when we carry to excess that which in itself is lawful, we become idolaters. The law of God requires that every son and daughter of Adam shall love him supremely, and anything that separates our affections from God, and lessens our interest in eternal things, is an idol. Those who use the precious time given them by God—time that has been purchased at an infinite cost—in embellishing their homes for display, in following the fashions

and customs of the world, are not only robbing their own souls of spiritual food, but are failing to give God his due. The time thus spent in the gratification of selfish desires might be employed in obtaining a knowledge of the word of God, in cultivating our talents, that we might render intelligent service to our Creator.

Can we look into the mirror of God's law, and feel no condemnation in this respect? Let each look over his past experience, and inquire of his own heart, How much of the precious time granted me by God might I have saved and used in doing good, in learning of God, in seeking to become a pillar in his house, and a light and blessing to the world?

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” (Matthew 4:10) God will not share a divided heart. If the world absorbs our attention, he cannot reign supreme. If this diminishes our devotion for God, it is idolatry in his eyes. God will not excuse the transgressor in this respect. He is “a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation” of them that hate him; and “showing mercy unto thousands” of them that love him, and keep his commandments. Just as surely as a life of devotion, of respect and reverence for him, will redound in blessings to ourselves, so surely will indifference to his requirements result in the ruin of our souls.

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24) When our hearts are tuned to praise our Maker, not only in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, but also in our lives, we shall live in communion with Heaven. Our offering of grateful thanks will not be spasmodic, or reserved for special occasions; there will be gratitude in the heart and in the home, in private as well as in public devotion. This constitutes the true worship of God. (Ellen G. White, *Youth's Instructor*, December 31, 1896)



Report on Missionary Work in Kenya

Pastor Maurice O. M. Anyango

Our brothers from Uganda (Brothers Mukhooli and Israel) arrived on Monday, together with Brother Luvita from Nambale (western Kenya). We had planned to travel on Tuesday but the vehicle which we had arranged to hire failed to come so we hired another vehicle the next day. We left for Isebania on Wednesday, 25th September, 2002. We traveled together with four choir members from Homa Bay. When we reached there we found about thirty-eight brothers and sisters waiting for us.

It was a joyful moment and we were warmly welcomed. Everybody was happy and they sang praises to God as they helped us carry our luggage from where we alighted to the rented place where we were to conduct the seminars and crusade. This happy moment reminded me of a song which goes, "Oh when the saints go marching in... Lord, I want to be in that number."

After some two hours of rest and taking baths, Brother Mukhooli opened the day with the Word of God. The congregation, which gathered during this first sermon, was about fifty people. News of our arrival soon spread. The public address machine and speakers that we had made this possible. The words were clear and audible for as far as two kilometers (1¼ miles) away. Thanks to the brothers from Uganda who came with the machine, we only hired a generator and fueled it.

At night, after we had our supper, Brother Israel gave a Bible study. This time the hall was full and, since it was not a big hall, I can estimate the congregation to be about sixty-five people. We heard the last prayer from Brother Maurice and then people departed to their various homes at about 10:00 p.m. We could read from the faces that many people were blessed by the message. They were happy and we all sang, "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

The next day, Thursday, started well with a morning devotion presented by Brother Luvita. Then Brother Mukhooli taught about "The God of the Bible." It was so powerful, to an extent that many people came to notice that they have been worshipping a God who is not presented in the Holy Scriptures. It was good to see people writing scripture verses as Brother Mukhooli was quoting from the Bible. There was a short break and, thereafter, the choir from Homa Bay sang two songs. After that, Brother Maurice presented a topic on the Sabbath. After introduction he taught and gave out copies of the tract, "100 Bible Facts on the Sabbath Question." The majority of the congregation, and I can say almost all the people who were there, go to church on Sunday. It was a blessing to them to receive this message and to accept to keep the Sabbath day holy. To the glory of God, today there is a church with a small congregation there who worship on

Sabbath. This reminded me of what Ellen G. White saw: "I saw that God has honest children among the nominal Adventists and the fallen churches, and before the plagues shall be poured out, ministers and people will be called out from these churches and will gladly receive the truth." (*Early Writings*, p. 261)

The people departed for lunch and in the afternoon Brother Luvita taught about the prophecy in Daniel chapter 7. Many people wondered since they were hearing this prophecy for the first time. Some even said that they never knew the meaning of these prophecies. Most pastors in the Sunday worshipping churches do not teach prophecy. The people were touched with the message. At night Brother Israel finalized the program with another powerful message.

On Friday Brother Israel presented the morning devotion and thereafter Brother Mukhooli taught the truth about God. Many people confirmed from the Bible as Brother Mukhooli was teaching that God does not exist in a Trinity, but we have only one God. We could notice from their prayers that these people were Trinitarians because when we asked one of their pastors to pray he often referred to God as "Mungu wa Utatu" a Swahili word for the Trinity god. Brother Mukhooli's lesson was a blessing to the congregation and brought a lot of light to them.

After this Brother Luvita finalized the lessons of the day by teaching the prophecy in Revelation 13. It was powerful and people really understood the truth. People later went for lunch and we gave them time to go and prepare for the Sabbath. On that day Brother Sarara and his wife Sabina invited us for lunch and we had a good

discussion with the family after lunch. Later in the evening Brother Maurice and Brother Luvita went to pray for the patients in the nearby health center. Brothers Mukhooli and Israel went to visit other members of the congregation who invited us to their homes. We could not move all together due to the limited time and so we had to divide ourselves into two groups.

On the Sabbath day, we conducted the usual Sabbath program with Brother Israel presenting the sermon. In the afternoon Brother Mukhooli taught about the Holy Spirit. I will not forget to mention that before every subject was presented the choir sang a beautiful song.

On Sunday we wanted to travel back to Homa Bay in preparation for our journey to Mombaza but members of other churches, who had attended, arranged with their pastors for us to go and speak to them in their churches. May the name of the Lord be praised, for it is not easy to get such an invitation. Brother Mukhooli and Brother Israel went to a certain church just near the Tanzania/Kenya border and they presented a wonderful message about the God of the Bible. The response was positive and the people were willing that they stay for another day.

The same Sunday, Brothers Maurice and Luvita remained at the crusade site teaching brothers and sisters who were not willing that the meetings end. Early on Monday morning we traveled back from Isebania to Homa Bay. On Wednesday we traveled to Mombasa to start our programs. The attendance was low, but thank God we had a public address machine. Even those from very far could hear the message.

After three days' presentation of the truth, we got a letter warning us that if we didn't move out of Mombasa the next day we would be killed. This letter was written by Muslims who claimed that they were defending their faith. It was brought at night and dropped at the door and we found it early in the morning. It all started because Brother Mukholi was teaching about the true God. Somewhere in the sermon he taught about Jesus Christ as the Son of God who possessed the real character of God. God is love and Jesus taught love and forgiveness. He compared this to another messenger claiming to be God's prophet (Mohammed) who

“One [Sunday] pastor is at war with Pastor Edward who was our host because the majority of his congregation has joined the Sabbath and accepted the truth.”

taught war and revenge. The explanation was too straight and clear so that people could not miss the difference between Christ and Mohammed. Mombasa is a Muslim dominated city and everywhere one can see mosques. Well, we had to leave since we were not prepared for physical confrontation. Brothers and sisters in the Lord wept as they saw us off.

We came back to Homa Bay and then later traveled to Sorore. While in Sorore I was not able to conduct a crusade because of insecurity in the area. It is election time and politically our nation is not peaceful, and holding a public meeting can be dangerous. So we organized a seminar in a house where people came and we taught them. What I realize is that most of them were longing for a big crusade and they

still need it to date. God willing, we shall conduct one in the future. Many people accepted the message. One pastor is at war with Pastor Edward who was our host because the majority of his congregation has joined the Sabbath and accepted the truth.

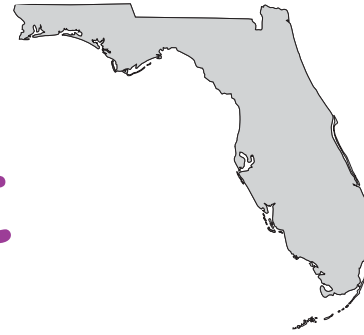
We thank God so much for His goodness, for He allowed us to do the missionary work as we had planned here in Kenya. God was able to provide funds for this work at the last minute when we were almost losing hope. I have to thank all brothers and sisters who were praying towards the success of this work and who also contributed financially towards its success.

Mrs. White points out, “God has deposited with His people in this world enough to carry forward His work without embarrassment, and it is His plan that the means which He has entrusted to them be used judiciously.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 197)

We hope that in the future we shall also travel to Siaya as we had arranged with them. Keep on praying for the work in Kenya and Africa as a whole. May God bless the work that we have done so far. May God bless you all as you continue giving for His work. ✍

(Pastor Maurice O. M. Anyango writes from Kenya. His postal address is: P. O. Box 132, Homa Bay, Kenya. His e-mail address is: maurice@racham.westernet.co.ke)
Editor)

FLORIDA Revival Retreat



Brother Ed Cyrus of the church in Orlando, Florida, has asked us to announce that the brethren in Florida will be hosting a “February Revival Retreat,” February 26th to March 2, 2003, at the River Forest Campground located in the southeast corner of the Ocala National Forest, on the scenic St. Johns River. All are invited to attend. While brothers and sisters from the Georgia—Florida area will be coming, many others from areas further north will be coming also.

The River Forest campground is 25 miles southwest of Deland and 25 miles northeast of Eustis. It is located near the St. Johns River on Rt. 542, about 1/4 mile west of Crows Bluff, off of Rt. 42.

The theme of the meetings will be, “Repairers of the Breach.” There will be much time for prayer, and possibly a communion service. Please bring a towel and basin.

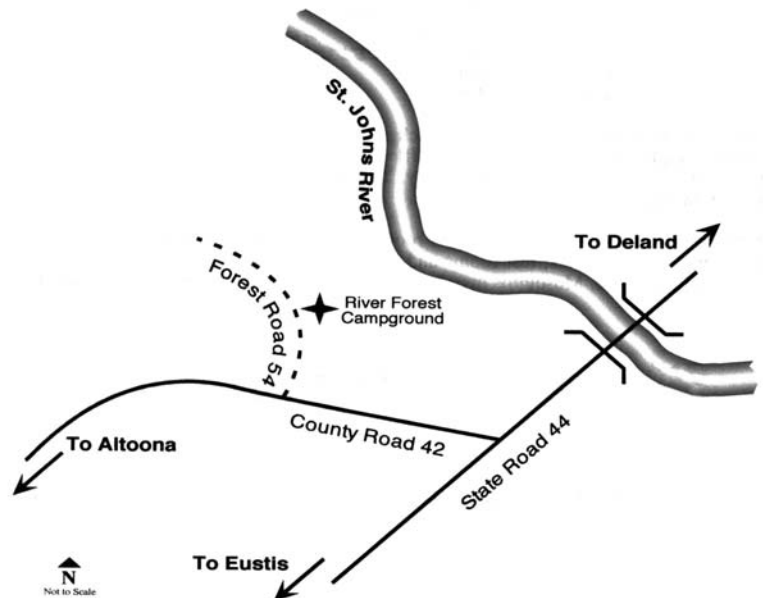
Scheduled Speakers are:

Bill Fry (Anchorstone Int.)
David Clayton (Jamaica)
Allen Stump (West Virginia)
Lynnford Beachy (West Virginia)
Willis Smith (Ohio)
Malcom McCrillis (Tennessee)
Arthan Wright (Florida)
Benjamin Vela (Tennessee)
Bill James (Florida)
Jim Pendley (Florida)

Meals will not be provided, but a nice kitchen is available. You might wish to consider bringing simple fruits and pancakes or waffles for breakfast, and simple salads and bean dishes for dinner, enough for your family. This way, if you choose to combine your meals with others, they will be compatible.

There are no RV hook ups, but plenty of room for RVs and tents. There is a main building for meetings, showers, rest rooms and, as mentioned earlier, a kitchen. If you can make it, please come. Mosquitos may be present, so be prepared. for more information, contact:

Ed Cyrus
666 W. Holden Ave. Apt. 245
Orlando, FL 32839



Directions to River Forest Campground

Letters

Old Paths

Thank you so much for the *Old Paths*. They have a lot of good articles in them. Keep spreading the truth about God. God Bless. **WV**

I hope you are blessed this day that the Lord has made. I am writing to share two requests for free subscriptions to *Old Paths*.” Our little group has been greatly blessed by your work, and we pray that God will continually bless you. **KY**

Thank you for sending me *Old Paths*. I look forward to receiving each issue and receive a blessing from reading each article. May God continue to bless your work for Him. As I follow each month’s news from Smyrna Gospel, I see that Satan is working to cause you trouble, first Brother Stump’s son’s illness, then Brother Beachy’s daughter. Be of good cheer, God is on your side and He is always triumphant. I shall continue to unite my prayers with the hundreds of others who are praying for your families specifically and your ministry in general. May His healing hand rest on little Rebekah. **FL**

(As noted in the “Prayer Request” section, the Lord has answered the prayers of His people and Rebekah is doing very well now. Editor)

I am blessed by your ministry. Both the *Old Paths* and *Present Truth* are looked forward to every month. May our Father in heaven continue to bless your efforts to spread the truth—of the Father and His Son—to a darkened world. **UT**

I’m on my third *Old Paths*. I’m impressed. Most of what I subscribe to is over my head. I could actually follow what I was reading. (I’m not through with Vol. 9 No. 3. I may have to eat my words.) On page 16 Vol 9, No 3 a reader thanks you for an article on Hebrews 9. I would really like to see that. **WY**

(Back issues are available upon request while supplies last. Editor)

I have been reading your newsletters and been blessed. The European trip by Br. David and Br. Stump has been very inspiring and surprising, even to

know the message has reached as far as Poland. May God continue to bless you all is my prayer. I would like a copy of *What Did the Pioneers Believe?* Thanks in advance. I am your brother in Christ. **WI**

Videos & Cassettes:

I was happy to receive “The Roots of the Trinity” video by David Clayton. I wish everyone could receive its message. Thank you, Allen, for taking the time to visit with me on the phone, sharing your knowledge with me. I’m truly grateful for your patient guidance. I appreciate the kindness of all of you at Smyrna. You are in my prayers. **KS**

Thank you for your help especially this year, a funeral, wedding and camp meeting. This has proved to be a great blessing. The tape “Roots of the Trinity” is excellent. R____, is translating “The Roots of the Trinity” into Hungarian and will send it soon to Hungary. She will be doing more soon. I talked to Sr. B____ recently and encouraged her to take a decided stand for present truth. There are others in the Reform that also believe [the truth about God]. May God bless the work there as it grows. **WA**

Thank you so much for your kindness over the phone last Friday. Please accept this humble donation for the video materials that you have sent. May God richly bless you and your ministry, and please remember me in your prayers. **FL**

Thank you again for the camp meeting videos. Also David Clayton’s article, “The Heart of God” in the November *Old Paths*. Very good. We pray health will permit us to attend the next camp meeting. Would love to meet some of those faces we see on the videos. Anxious for your directory to come out. **FL**

Encouragement

I just want to thank you and give praise to the Lord that I was led into contact with you. Your ministry has been such a blessing to me, that it is hard to put into words. I thank God that He has people who love Him so much that they are willing to put out and share His truth no matter what. I have had a lot of questions and concerns about our church that I have not been able to get straight answers to until I came in contact with you (Internet). I have not been properly fed with the spiritual nourishment that my soul needs, at my church in a

long time. Our minister seems more interested in being a standup comedian and making people laugh, than giving his sheep what they need to stand up to what is coming soon. Your literature, tapes, newsletters, and staff have fulfilled the dire need that I had to be fed. Ann and Esther have been dear sisters and have been very patient with all my requests, and my few talks I had with Allen were very pleasant. NC

A Special Letter of Encouragement and Challenge

We received the *Old Paths* for October 16, 2002. In this we noted your call for more workers in the field. We have felt for some time a desire to spread this truth and we are planning to widely distribute the following booklets *The Spirit of Antichrist* and *Who is Telling the Truth About God* to our SDA church friends and acquaintances. The following may be of assistance to others seeking those unaware of the issue and why “we have more to fear from within than from without.” (Please circulate this if you think it may help others.

For some time now we have felt a great need to learn more of our great God and Saviour. Our ideas of God had previously been those we had been brought up with, and although we were sincere in our beliefs and wished to follow in Jesus footsteps, we did not fully appreciate His sacrifice on our behalf.

For the past eleven months, since we were re-baptized, we have been studying the concept of who God is, and who Christ is. It has been a subject on which we had thought we had the answers, but when we tried to explain our conceptions of God, especially in relation to the “trinity,” we found that these were unclear. An honest appraisal forced us to admit that we needed to clear up any uncertainties we held in regard to this and try to unravel the “mystery” of the Godhead.

Our study has led us into God’s Word like nothing before! We have discovered many treasures and glimpses into God’s plan of salvation, which have brought deeper meaning and relevance for us personally. We have also been challenged to revise our unclear concepts of God and learn of how He has revealed Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ.

As a result of this study, we feel impressed to share some of our experience with you. All we wish to do is to allow others to gain a deeper experience of God’s redeeming love, and to help them confirm/re-evaluate their concept of God. We believe this issue is vital for our personal salvation which depends upon it, and in identifying the antichrist and the form he may use to deceive many Christians in the future.

We have come to the conclusion that Satan has always done his best to undermine God and His authority, and what better way to do this than to confuse God’s people on who He really is, His love for them and the enormous sacrifice made on their behalf?

We have enclosed two pamphlets, which have largely corresponded to what we have been reading in God’s Word. We would invite you to read them and tell us what you think of them. If you detect any error in the contents, we would appreciate your comments. The ideas presented may be very confronting, but necessary. Our spiritual experience has become very important to us, and we are earnestly seeking to learn more of God and prepare our family for Christ’s soon return. We think that maybe this material could be latter rain material, which may bring on “the shaking” within the church and the wider Christian community, and bring God’s people out of their slumber and energize them to fulfill the gospel commission of the Three Angels.

Just in closing we’d like to direct your attention to a quote we recently discovered by Ellen White in the *Testimonies*:

“The truths of the Bible have again become obscured by custom, tradition, and false doctrine. The erroneous teachings of popular theology have made thousands upon thousands skeptics and infidels. There are errors and inconsistencies which many denounce as the teaching of the Bible that are really false interpretations of Scripture, adopted during the ages of papal darkness. Multitudes have been led to cherish an erroneous conception of God, as the Jews misled by the errors and tradition of their time, had a false conception of Christ.... The evils that have been gradually creeping in among us have imperceptibly led individuals and churches away from reverence for God, and have shut away the power which He desires

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to give us.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol 5, pp. 710, 711)

Our intention is to continue to learn of God’s marvelous ways and to be aware if there is any danger of being caught in any of Satan’s snares. We care for our church and pray that if there has been any departure from truth that we all will come to the knowledge of our need for repentance. May God bless you always!

“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.”(Romans 16:25-27) **Australia**

“The track of truth lies close beside the track of error, and both tracks may seem to be one to minds which are not worked by the Holy Spirit, and which, therefore, are not quick to discern the difference between truth and error.” (RH, October 22, 1903 par. 2)

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