

# THE WAY INTERNATIONAL

## CULT OR CHRISTIAN?

When examining The Way, we need to keep in mind Jesus' warning in Matthew 24:23-25, "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance." We need to examine the particular prophet of the particular cult.



Victor Paul Wierwille  
December 31, 1916 -  
May 20, 1985

Victor Paul Wierwille was raised in a strict fundamentalist atmosphere, attending Moody Bible Institute, the University of Chicago Divinity School and Princeton Theological Seminary, where he received a Master's Degree. Rather than remaining a fundamentalist, Wierwille decided to burn his theological library and set out on his own independent path to discover the meaning of Scripture. By

1953 he had formed the Power for Abundant Living course. By 1958 this course became the cornerstone of The Way International. Wierwille also describes an encounter he had with God: "I was praying ... and that's when He spoke to me audibly, just like I'm talking to you now. He said He would teach me the Word as it has not been known since the first century if I would teach it to others." (J. L. Williams, *Contemporary Cults*, p.3).

At this point we pause for these three warnings in Scripture:

1. **Test the spirits to see if they are from God.** (1 John 4:1).
2. **Watch out for some visions etc.** (Colossians 2:18,19).
3. **Watch out for some messages - not all are inspired of God.** (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2).

These Scriptural warnings were apparently ignored, and The Way began attracting adherents, mostly from middle-class backgrounds, most from the ages of 18-24, all looking clean-cut and non-hippy. They look good.

### GOALS OF THE WAY

The Way believes in aggressive evangelism. They have a WOW program (the Word over the World). New followers must pay \$100 for the initial Power For abundant Living course.

### HOW DO PEOPLE GET DRAWN INTO THE WAY?

Primary recruitment is directed at college campuses. Theological fellowship in a home or on campus stresses personal contact between believers and potential converts. Way followers appear as strongly visible "Christians", living their faith. The Way actively trains people for this outreach called "Witnessing and Undershepherding". Undershepherding is described as "watching over, not taking over" and has the appearance of genuine friendship.

In an interview with a former Way follower, Joel MacCollam reports that life in The Way was exercise, going to work and fellowship. This life-style also featured a high-starch, low-protein diet (said to help initiates reach "perfect health"), and only four hours of sleep a night. This cycle of deficient diet, exercise, work and fellowship led him to physical and mental exhaustion. "When you are at this point is when they really get heavy and start coming down on you, reading Scriptures to you, explaining to you what they mean. You are at the point where you are so physically and mentally fatigued that you take exactly what they say for granted. You get to the point where you



THE  
WAY

are so involved you are so brainwashed, that anything they tell you, you are going to believe. It took 'The Way' ministry about one month to accomplish this." (The Way of Victor Paul Wierwille, by MacCollam).

As in many groups built on fear, the fear of Satan is emphasised strongly during indoctrination. Way followers become so deathly afraid of the devil that they are drawn more strongly into their place of safety - the Way meetings. Compare this attitude with that of true Christians, found in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

For his \$100 donation (no freebies) the student is allowed to sit for twelve three-hour taped sessions of teachings by Wierwille. Note-taking is forbidden, and no questions may be asked until the final session.

### THE WAY THEOLOGY

Wierwille's interpretations of Scripture form the foundation for The Way's theology. He believes he is revealing truths hidden since the time of St. Paul. His claims sound suspiciously like those of Herbert W. Armstrong and Charles Taze Russell. In *Power for Abundant Living*, page 96, Wierwille says, "The Word says what it means, and it means what it says ... We must come to the Word, let the Word speak, and then adjust our thinking according to the integrity and accuracy of the Word. After we have let the Word speak, we must accordingly harmonize our beliefs, our actions and our living." In view of this strong statement, we shall now put the doctrine of The Way to the test, using the Word of God as our authority, as we are commanded to do in 2 Timothy 3:16,17: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

According to 2 Timothy 4:3,4 we must watch out for some teachers: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths."

### LET'S LOOK AT THE MAIN DOCTRINES OF THE WAY

#### JESUS CHRIST

2 Corinthians 11:4, warns us that there will be those preaching "another Jesus, another gospel and with a different spirit." The most important doctrine we can examine is that of Jesus Christ. *If you have the right Jesus Christ you are right for all eternity. If you have the wrong Jesus Christ, you are wrong for all eternity.*

Quoting *Time* of September 6th, 1971, page 54, Wierwille is reported as saying, "You show me one place in the Bible where it says He (Jesus) is God ... I don't want your raping, your double-talk, your triple-talk; all I want is Scripture." - Scripture you shall get!

The Father called Jesus God - See Hebrews 1:8.

Prophecy calls Jesus God - See Isaiah 9:6.

The Disciples called Jesus God - John 20:28,29.

Acts 20:28 says that God purchased the Church with His own blood. Jesus is truly God, and Scripture bears this out.

The primary error Wierwille makes is the denial of the Deity of Jesus Christ, a sure mark of a cult. In *The Word's Way*, page 26,

Wierwille states, "Jesus Christ's existence began when He was conceived by God's creating the soul-life of Jesus in Mary." But, did Jesus have a preexistence according to Scripture? Yes! Micah 5:2, prophecies of Jesus and says, "His going forth are from long ago, from the days of ETERNITY." (Certainly before Mary's day!) Jesus Himself sets the record straight in John 17:5, "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." (Certainly before Mary's day!) See also Colossians 1:13-17).

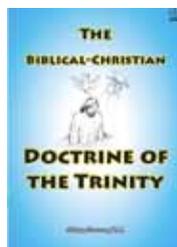
Of course, as with most cults, Wierwille could not accept John 1:1 as it was written: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Wierwille's interpretation is that Jesus was not "in the beginning" with God as part of the Godhead, instead the Word was preexistent with the Father only in His foreknowledge. "When Jesus was born, he came into existence ... Foreknowledge became a reality" (V.P. Wierwille, Jesus Christ Is Not God, pp. 119, 120).

As with other cult leaders, Wierwille has taken Bible translation unto himself and redone John 1:1 as follows: "In the beginning (before the creation) God was the Word, and the revealed Word was in God's foreknowledge."

So Wierwille makes God the Word and Jesus the "revealed word", an extra word. He had to add many words to the inspired text to do this despite the strong warning in Proverbs 30:5,6; "Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. DO NOT ADD TO HIS WORDS, Lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar." On page 84 of *Jesus Christ Is Not God*, Wierwille reveals that Jesus Christ is a Creature of God, rather than God Himself. If all this is beginning to sound familiar, it is, because it is the Jehovah's Witness doctrine found in the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society - another obvious cult.

### THE TRINITY

You can't deny the Deity of Christ and believe the Trinity at the same time. The One God of Scripture is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The three persons are the One God. The Hebrew word "Echad", used when Scripture says God is One, is a word meaning "composite unity" as well as solitary unity. Adam and Eve were one flesh; many grapes but one cluster; the Hebrew word for God, "Elohim" is a plural noun, but is used with a singular verb. (Space does not permit an extensive listing of Scriptures. Please download our free E-book on the Trinity from the "Free Stuff" part of our web-shop - see below)



"The Biblical-Christian Doctrine of the Trinity" (FREE E-Book)

### REDEMPTION

In the book jacket of Wierwille's, *Jesus Is Not God*, we find this statement, "If Jesus Christ is God and not the Son of God, we have not yet been redeemed." Wierwille makes a mistake common to all cults - the confusion of the Deity of Jesus Christ and the Humanity of Jesus Christ. Jesus is truly God, yet for a little while when He redeemed us, He was truly man. Hebrews 2:9 says, "But we do see Him who has been made FOR A LITTLE WHILE lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone."

Philippians chapter two tells how Jesus humbled and emptied

Himself and took the form of a man to redeem us. He never ceased to be God even during this time in the flesh, for Colossians 2:9 says, "For in Him [Jesus] is dwells ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD bodily."

Romans, chapter five, describes His faithful death as a Man, fully redeeming us. Jesus took the divine name of God to Himself; the "I AM", in John 8:51-59 (which was quoting Exodus 3:14). The Jews tried to stone Him for this, accusing Him of blasphemy. The followers of Jesus worshipped Him as deity (Matthew 14:33). Jesus Himself warns us that we will die in our sins unless we recognise Him as the I AM (John 8:23, 24). Indeed, we should not be found with those denying that Jesus is God.

### TONGUES

Wierwille insists that speaking in tongues is a manifestation of true worship. In *The New Dynamic Church*, page 90, Wierwille states, "To worship by the spirit we must operate a manifestation of the holy spirit. The manifestation of the spirit which produces true worship is speaking in tongues."

Nowhere does Scripture suggest that speaking in tongues is necessary for salvation or true worship. Salvation is by grace alone (Ephesians 2:8,9), and those worshipping God must conform to the standard in John 4:23,24 which says, "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Tongues are not mentioned.

However, speaking in tongues is Scriptural, providing the Holy Spirit does the infilling and gives the utterance (Acts 2:4). Wierwille, however, gives instructions in his *Power for Abundant Living* classes and teaches this method for speaking in tongues (V.P. Wierwille, *The New Dynamic Church*, pp. 122, 123). "I am ministering the holy spirit to you, teaching you exactly what to do ... sit quietly and do exactly as I instruct ... Open your mouth wide and breathe in ... You are now going to manifest the spirit's presence ... move your lips, your throat, your tongue. Speak forth ... the external manifestation is your proof in the sense world that you have (Christ within)." Nowhere is this method taught in Scripture - therefore do not fall victim to it. Remember that witchdoctors in Africa serving Satan can speak in tongues - counterfeits abound - tongues are not the test of a person's validity as a Christian. A true relationship with the Jesus Christ of the Bible is not to be found in *The Way*, with its counterfeit Christ, counterfeit salvation and counterfeit tongues. Acknowledge that Jesus is truly God, and invite Him into your life (John 1:12). Ask Him to forgive your error and help you to find the truth. Remember He said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."

**FIND JESUS AND YOU HAVE TRULY FOUND THE WAY.**

**"Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"**

(John 14:6)



**Jubilee Resources International Inc.**

**New Zealand**

**Web: [www.jubileeresources.org](http://www.jubileeresources.org)**

**[facebook.com/jubileeresources](https://facebook.com/jubileeresources)**

Adapted from an original tract by MacGregor Ministries of BC, Canada

Permission to copy this leaflet is freely given provided it is without amendment.