

Exposing false workers

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 2 Pt 2:1-2

In 2012 I wrote a paper called, '*Rules For Wolves: How to identify predators on the platform*'. This explained some features that revealed the characteristics of false teachers, apostles and prophets. Many of these features had to do with character. I also wrote a paper in 2008 called, '*How to Identify False Works and Workers*'; but this one was more historical in nature, focusing on the nature of deceit. It has a useful flow chart as an appendix. Why then consider writing another one?

One reason is that things are no better today than then; in fact they are worse. As a result of false workers and false works, the Christian church is now in a steep decline in the west; some pundits are saying that the decline is terminal, as paganism has become the fastest growing UK religion. At a subjective level, church leaders that I know are depressed as they see congregations falling, disciples falling away, people flocking to deceitful churches and a shocking lack of converts amongst the young.

When I look back over my life at the huge number of believers that I have known well, some of them having been commendable young people with huge potential, I am shocked at how many have committed gross sin (such as adultery or homosexuality) and how many have completely apostatised. Some of them were once exemplary leaders. This needs to be admitted and reckoned with. The reason why they fell is that they were not evangelised correctly, not edified with good teaching and not counselled properly. It was a failure of leadership.

The second reason is that this is ever an important topic. One must consider that the NT contains a huge number of warnings about deceit and false workers. Since deceit can ruin a life or a church in short measure, warnings of its dangers are always necessary.

Finally, despite many writers warning on this matter, church folk just do not seem to have taken any notice at all. Over and over godly leaders are having to pick up the pieces of someone who has been damaged by a wolf in the pulpit. More and more people continue to leave the church, while more and more false ministries dominate the media. In the past we only had to contend with books and audio-tapes at a cost; today false ministry is freely available at the push of a button on the TV, computers, tablets and even smartphones. One can find any kind of heretic to tickle the fancy of any kind of itchy ear.

So, teaching how to expose false workers is still a vital issue and worth examination in a different manner.

I will list the main headings alphabetically in dictionary format. This paper is an encyclopaedia identifying how to spot false leaders.

Antinomianism

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love. Jn 15:10

This is the teaching that God's law does not have to be obeyed and followed ('anti' and 'nomos' – Greek for law). It is a common strand of many perfectionist and mystical movements which misunderstand Biblical texts that speak of the believer being dead to the law.

What always results when antinomianism is preached is libertarianism – the freedom to do anything you want without penalty. Charismatics like Creflo Dollar preach that Christians are always righteous; this is a license to do anything and still be righteous. This is antinomianism.

Now antinomians do not usually declare themselves to be such and avoid the title, yet their doctrines are clearly antinomian. Thus, for example, the famous British Charismatic 'apostle' who recently proclaimed on Twitter that Christians are never guilty. Clearly he has never read Gal 2:11, 'Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed'. 'Blamed' is the Greek word *kataginosko* meaning: 'to find fault with', 'blame', 'to accuse', 'to condemn'. If Peter was condemned it was because he was guilty. If Peter could be guilty, then all of us can be.

Ananias and Sapphira were an object lesson to the early church and their punishment brought fear on the believers.¹ There is no reason to believe that they were anything but genuine Christians. Indeed, they sold their land and gave a part of it to the church; something entirely commendable. However, they lied to the Holy Spirit and the church, saying that the money was the entire value, when they had kept part of it back for themselves. As a result both were immediately struck dead. Both were guilty of lying and both were condemned for it. Christians today should give thanks that their sins are not met with immediate punishment today. Many are guilty of many things, including lying.

Antinomians, like the aforementioned 'apostle', deny this. They believe that Christians can never be guilty because they are saved and regenerated.

What such people do not understand is firstly theological – the difference between definitive, legal sanctification in heaven (1 Cor 6:11, something done to us) and progressive sanctification on earth now (2 Tim 2:22, something we do under the Spirit's guidance and power).

Secondly they do not understand practical doctrine: the difference between the old and new natures and the necessity, in progressive sanctification, of actively putting off the old man and putting on the new. Anything we do in the old nature is guilty because it grows in sin (Eph 4:22-24). The ever-present old nature is always guilty and is not removed until Christ returns. When you fail to put off the old nature, you stand condemned because it is full of sin.

Apart from that, the NT is filled with commandments and Jesus tells us that we must obey them to abide in him (Jn 15:10). John tells us that people who do not obey Jesus' commandments cannot be saved at all (1 Jn 2:4). Furthermore, the believer is the person who obeys the Law of Christ (Gal 6:2). Do these people never read their Bibles? Christians

¹ Acts 5:11, 'So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.'

must always obey God's law; they are just dead to the Old Covenant, the external Mosaic Law.

Any church leader who teaches antinomianism is a false teacher, pure and simple. There are very many of these.

Associations

He who walks with wise *men* will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed. Prov 13:20

Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits'. 1 Cor 15:33

The associations a false teacher keeps can be an indication that he is not safe. Examining these helps us to spot the early signs of a possible problem.

What organisations is he formally identified with?

Identify what organisations, churches, seminaries, denominations and fellowships the man is connected to. Who ordained him?

If the man is associated with a known false ministry then he must immediately be suspect and worth further investigation. Many wolves appear to have no problem identifying with rogue ministries, apparently presuming that people are too gullible to be interested; and sadly that is too often true.

We must be fair since not every graduate of a certain seminary will be a wolf. But if he graduated from a theologically suspect college then it behoves further investigation.

One key issue will be, is he on the payroll of a denomination or organisation that is in error? If he is then he must be committed to that organisation, complete with its errors. This means that he either supports those errors or he is a hypocrite.

Example: the person in question appears to be a nice man but he is a member of the Church of England (e.g. vicar, rector, bishop, reader etc). Since the Anglican Church is guilty of enormous apostasy and has abandoned God's word completely,² then the individual is either a heretic and supports Gay marriage, women priests, women bishops, liberal doctrines and so on, or he has reneged on his oath to the Synod's laws, sworn before God. Either way, that person cannot be supported at all.

What people is he identified with?

This is often found in his statements in writing and speaking. Thus he will commend this or that teacher. Sometimes they will openly state that such and such a person is their friend or mentor.

If the colleague / friend is known heretic then one must beware. It means that, at least, the man is unwise in his choice of friends. While he may not share the heresies, one must check to see if they appear in his ministry.

Sometimes the man quotes or declares a passion for a dead writer that is a known heretic. Again, this should ring alarm bells.

² For instance even in the 1960s bishops were pronouncing that God is dead and that the Bible is a book of myths and superstition.

On occasion one finds a man who mentions being a friend of a publicly known sinner. Again we must be slow to judge but it raises questions. Bad company ruins good morals (1 Cor 15:33).

Very often you can quickly spot a wolf by the sorts of people he runs with. Wolves run with wolves.

Example: a popular speaker claims to be Biblical yet only attends Charismatic conferences, has liberal friends, is associated in ministry with a known heretic and co-authored a book with a false teacher. This is sufficient to have grave doubts about this man that must be followed up.

For example: there was a time when RT Kendall was considered by many Reformed people to be a safe pair of hands because he had followed Martyn Lloyd-Jones into the ministry at Westminster Chapel. [However, the doctor later regretted this and forbade Kendall from attending his funeral.] In due course Kendall appointed the Charismatic, Latter Rain, heretical prophet, alcoholic, homosexual Paul Cain to join him in ministry. That told me that Kendall was false, whatever my friends said. Eventually, it came out that Kendall was indeed false and books were written about how he destroyed the work at Westminster Chapel,³ which is now connected to an 'apostolic' Charismatic denomination and is a poor shadow of its former glory, with most members having resigned. He also wrote a completely fallacious book fabricating history and slandering the scholastic followers of Calvin.⁴ Why the doctor appointed a man from Nazarene roots is beyond me. Lloyd-Jones later admitted that he made a mistake.

What books does he read and quote?

Again, we must tread carefully because a person can quote a bad author for a good reason. However, if the person quotes only bad authors then one must be wary. If the person is a writer, check the bibliography of his books. What sort of authors does he quote? What theological authorities does he refer to?

Example: a popular author is flavour of the month but you discover that he constantly quotes Roman catholic mystics, Charismatics, liberal authors and heretical academics. You check and find that not a single evangelical or Reformed author is in his bibliography. At the very least this should raise awareness of danger. It is not even uncommon today to find church writers quoting multiple pagan sources and few evangelical ones.

Example: there are many leaders in the American New Calvinist Movement that widely quote from Roman Catholic mystics and endorse such mysticism under the guise of things like 'Contemplative Prayer'. Not only are some of these people heretics, but most of them are not Calvinists at all, being Amyraldians at best.

What platforms does he share with?

Preaching engagements can be an accurate sign that there is something wrong with a certain teacher. This includes the sorts of people he invites to his own platform and also the conferences, seminars and churches that he himself is invited to speak in.

³ I had personal conversations and correspondence with a Westminster Chapel leading deacon at the time who explained the whole situation to me.

⁴ He falsely claimed that Calvin was a free offer Amyraldian (four-pointer) and that it was his followers (like Beza) who brought a stern, formal doctrine of particular election, predestination and limited atonement. Clearly Kendall had never read Calvin's treatises on predestination. [See, 'Calvin's Calvinism', John Calvin, PRPA.]

The big example of this was the campaign ministry of Billy Graham in the 50s in England. People should have understood that he was an Arminian from the start and questioned his credentials. They should have also considered the massive amount of money that was expended by very questionable media sources to boost his popularity artificially. Failing that, folk should have been very worried about the people that Graham invited to share his platforms and those who received ‘converts’ into their churches. These included all sorts of false teachers: Roman Catholics, liberals, modernists, Jews, and sectarians. Some UK church leaders wisely castigated this and kept away from the jamboree; indeed several wrote books and articles about it. We now know that Graham is a very major heretic, Freemason and student of a rabbi who even believes that pagans can get to heaven without knowing the name of Jesus. We also now know that 90% of his campaign converts fell away (as all campaign converts do since the time of Finney).

Behaviour

My eyes *shall be* on the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he who walks in a perfect way, he shall serve me. Ps 101:6

Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. Matt 4:48

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Rm 12:2

But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. Jm 1:4

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Rev 3:2

Is the man righteous in his words?

God’s word is not going to be faithfully taught by an unrighteous man; God will not bless such.

God commands us to be careful about our use of words and demands that no foul words should come out of our mouth (Eph 4:29).

There is also a levity and coarseness that can pervade someone’s speech. He may not swear outright but there is innuendo and coarse jokes. This is also forbidden by God (Eph 5:4)

Example: Many times I have met famous church leaders only to find that their behaviour was questionable, or worse. It was not uncommon, for example, to find leaders that swore. One famous Pentecostal leader, who was supposed to be able to raise the dead, had no qualms about swearing whatsoever and even did so from the pulpit.

Example: A famous New Calvinist church leader in America has such a foul mouth, talking frequently about sex and his own intimate relations, that he was called ‘potty-mouth’ by the secular press. When you checked his teaching it was riddled with errors and he wasn’t even a Calvinist.

Is the man righteous in his deeds?

Needless to say, homosexuality and fornication are absolutely forbidden to a Christian let alone a church leader (Eph 5:3). Sad to say there have been scores of supposed leaders that have fallen into this sin, sometimes with huge publicity attending. Despite this many of them have been almost immediately put back into the place of authority as if nothing had

happened. It is not enough to say a quick apology and carry on as if nothing had happened. There are so many cases of this that I need not give an example.

Others managed to hide their sins for decades, despite many insiders knowing what was going on.

Example: One famous Charismatic prophet was a closet homosexual and alcoholic for decades. He had been in gross sin throughout his famous preaching ministry. When I confronted this man's gross theological errors in the 90s I was told that I was attacking one of the greatest servants of God.

We could list many examples of unrighteous behaviour: lying, slander, greed, fornication, alcoholism, drug abuse and so on; and church leaders have been found guilty of all of them. Needless to say, you should not follow a person who is obviously unrighteous, no matter what gifts he may express.

I once knew of a church leader who had been discovered committing multiple adultery with many of the women in his church. Multiple lives messed up and the cause of Christ brought into local disrepute. Despite this, some of his former church members were anxious for him to finish writing a book he was working on and supported him in it.

Is the man righteous in his counsel?

A man's counsel will be indicative of his level of wisdom. It takes gifting and skill to be able to apply God's truth to a person's life so that they can overcome a problem.

A basic foundation of good counsel is righteousness. Only righteous people can truly understand God's word and apply it to a conscience.

Sad to say that many men in ministry have seen a counselling situation as an opportunity. Being faced with vulnerable people, it is easy to take advantage of them. The most obvious matter is counselling a young woman (or even a boy) and using the opportunity to sexually abuse them. It is incredible that this has happened many times in churches right up to this day. For this reason there should be couples involved in treating opposite sexes or vulnerable people (though this hasn't stopped some wicked people).

Examples: a famous young pastor in Sheffield used one-to-one counselling of women as an opportunity to take sexual advantage and even intercourse. A perverted married couple in ministry in London used supposed deliverance counselling as an opportunity for sexual manipulation (heavy penetration petting) of young women. A famous American Charismatic prophet used counselling times to sexually abuse a large number of people.

But it is not just sexual abuse that is the problem. There are multiple sins that use the opportunity of counselling sessions. One is to charge people money for the advice and comfort, and then frame the counsel to ensure that patients keep coming back and keep paying up.

Is the man righteous in his desires?

How can we know a man's heart? Well someone's desires are often made known through their speech and their requests.

For instance, it has been very common in certain circles to express a desire for money. Though this may be covered up around claims for ministry funds, the way that it is said, and the number of times it is repeated, make it clear that the person desires money. This is especially clear when people threaten their followers with bad things if enough money is

not forthcoming. If they are prosecuted by the tax-office this is also a sign that they are greedy; and very many church leaders have been investigated by the revenue office.

Example: One famous Pentecostal preacher took up a collection for his 'costs'. When it was counted he said that it wasn't enough and he had the stewards lock the doors of the large concert hall to stop anyone leaving and had another collection to rake in more money. Where was faith in any of this – yet his message was about faith. In fact, his behaviour may have broken the law.

Desire can also be ascertained by the affluent trappings a man may have. When church leaders today have multiple million pound homes; yachts, fleets of limousines, or even their own Lear Jets, then it is clear that the person likes money.

[God] loves righteousness and justice. Ps 33:5

Business models

For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ. 2 Cor 2:17

But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 2 Cor 4:2

It is now very common that rogue leaders run organisations, ministries and even churches on pure business models; indeed, some even boast about how the use of marketing can boost a church's membership and finances.

Thus they have a board like a commercial enterprise that includes marketing strategists, sales managers, conference managers, bookstore managers and so forth. Ministry (in tapes, CDs, MP3s, DVDs, streaming etc.) becomes a means of financial gain on the profit sheet. National conferences can make hundreds of thousands of pounds in profits.

Let me tell you this; no teaching done in the name of Christ should ever cost the church anything at all; absolutely nothing. The only time money should ever be involved is if a local church has some members who are too incapacitated to attend meetings and thus rely upon recorded teaching. This should not cost the sick people anything, but the money to supply the necessary equipment should come from freewill offerings by those who care.

Ordinarily there is no need to record teaching in a church because it does not centre upon sermons or one man. Teaching in church meetings is by mutual edification and the ministry of Bible teachers should always involve questions and discussion (which is necessarily difficult to record properly).

Generating business strategies in order to make money or increase members (to make more money) are anathema. Yet many large American churches are run this way. Localities and demographics are exploited by certain types of strategies and advertising just as commerce does. Indeed, marketing managers even dictate what sort of teaching should be undertaken in order to captivate a certain market.

Seeker Sensitive churches go even further by insisting that no visitor could ever be offended by the truth. Thus sin, conviction, repentance, condemnation, hell and judgment

are never spoken about. Instead, an easygoing atmosphere is created with entertainment as worship and coffee tables on the side to make the church a social club. This is a business model – and it is heresy.

Any leader that bases his ministry of a worldly business model in order to increase sales and profit is a wolf.

Character

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Gal 5:22-23

Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Jm 1:12

We have covered some aspects of this in the section on behaviour; however, there are other features to consider.

Does the man have suspicious pursuits?

This is something that may be hidden to most people and may show an inner problem. However, sometimes the hidden factor becomes public and you can make a judgement.

Example: a greatly respected church leader and excellent teacher had a penchant for going to the movies to see soft-pornographic films; albeit it with his wife, who went against her will. This should have been enough for his members to see a serious problem. However they did nothing and it was only years later that a terrible problem arose in the church with him and wrecked the church.

Does the man have suspicious books in his library, odd music or questionable paintings on his wall?

I have known church leaders have books that verged on pornography in their library, or for them to like certain types of artwork that involved artistic pornography (such as the works of Egon Schiele or Aubrey Beardsley). This is disturbing. In some cases they later fell into open sin.

I will not say that a church leader should not read fiction, but if their library were filled with fiction and little else then I would be concerned.

I have also known church leaders have a great liking for very questionable recordings. Now my own range of music taste is very broad and I cannot criticise someone for that; however, I did once know a famous church leader whose favourite band was one that had a reputation for being committed to Black Magic and whose records demonstrated that. That shocked me. I believe this person to now on a false course, and have told him so.

Does the man have too much of a fondness for drink?

This, of course, is a subjective matter. However, if a person has a clear over-enthusiasm for drink, especially spirits, and especially at odd times of the day (such as early morning), then there is a problem.

Now we are not talking about someone liking their wine with a meal or enjoying a beer with their friends, we are talking about what appears to be a dependence on drink, or at least the early stages of alcoholism.

Example: there was a famous church leader and writer who was known to have a fondness for drink, but at first it was only known by his co-workers in the ministry. No action was taken about this as the man had so much authority. No one rebuked him in love. In time the alcoholism got out of control, the man's ministry became compromised and in the end there was scandal and the denomination was forever damaged. But what about all the sermons, all the books, and all the counsel he had produced over the years whilst drunk?

Does the person show unusual familiarity with others of the same sex?

This is so appalling that it doesn't bear thinking about; but we must because problems in this areas have happened time after time in the church.

Example: there was man with an exceptional church ministry. He was considered as a national evangelical leader and was a popular conference speaker of great depth and a good writer. Yet he never seemed (to me) to be part of the crowd. Despite being a family man with several children, eventually the man resigned his church ministry, left his wife, left his children and went to live with another man, having felt that he had lived a lie for many years.

Example: I have known three women, wives of minor leaders, that left their husbands (and children in one case) in order to run off with another woman.

Is the man arrogant or authoritarian?

No good leader can afford to be arrogant and puffed-up.

Now we need to be careful here because some leaders are jolly sorts of characters that can be vociferous and boisterously friendly, or passionate and forthright, and can appear to be pushy – but they are not arrogant. Exuberance of character does not necessarily indicate a lack of meekness and humility.

However, proper arrogance, that is putting oneself above everybody else and demanding to be treated specially, having an exaggerated sense of one's own importance, is a clear case of unqualified ministry. The leader must be submissive to God and also able to get underneath people so as to support them. Dominant authoritarian leaders cannot do this.

Example: there have been many cases of leaders who demanded to be called by a certain leadership name and not as one of the fellowship by their Christian name. This is a clear example of arrogance. Other leaders insist that the whole congregation stands when they enter the building. This is worse than arrogance.

Do they fail to trust people?

Many church leaders lead very closeted lives. They fail to trust people and do not delegate church responsibility – which leads to a host of evils. Some have no local peer fellowship of any sort and live like some sort of king within a small pond. Consequently, they do not like to be out of their pond and exposed to bigger things. Thus they do not fellowship with regional or national leaders either.

There is no option to question such people who are actually very insecure people who should never have been in leadership at all. Sometimes such people demand a certain pomp and ceremony in connection with their ministry.

Example: a certain well-known UK church leader and author was, in reality, leader of a cult. Neither he, nor his members, had any meaningful fellowship with other believers. When this man walked into the church on Sundays, he was adorned in full old-fashioned professorial gown and all the congregation had to stand up in silence in respect of his

entrance as he made his way to the pulpit. This shows real authoritarian character problems with his man.

Covetousness

I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. Rm 16:17-18

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of gain*. From such withdraw yourself. 1 Tim 6:3-5

For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. Titus 1:10-11

By covetousness they [false teachers] will exploit you with deceptive words. 2 Pt 2:3

They have a heart trained in covetous practices, *and are* accursed children. 2 Pt 2:14

Of course all leaders will deny that they are covetous, but here the Bible specifically tells us that some false teachers are. They use their doctrines in order to deceive people out of their possessions and money so that they can live the high life.

Many false teachers today use Bible teaching and claimed prophecies in order to ‘deceive simple people’ as a ‘means of gain’; and they are doing such a good job of deceit that they earn millions every year.

Paul tells us in Titus that this especially occurs with Jews who seek ‘dishonest gain’. I can think of current Jewish false teachers who are fleecing the flock today. Amazingly, despite many obvious failings and sins, these people continue to have followers. One of these, on a ministry trip abroad, demanded all sorts of perks – that his supporters paid for this and for that. The shocked supporters paid out unexpectedly large amounts of money. Only much later did they come to their senses; but the false teacher had, by then, moved on to other pastures.

No godly minister is covetous; indeed a lack of this is a requirement for being an elder. Any teacher who demonstrates covetousness is false; pure and simple. Indeed, Peter tells us that such are cursed.

Doctrine

They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. Acts 2:42

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine. 1 Tim 1:3

If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. 1 Tim 4:6

This is a huge subject that could occupy several books; I will try to make some brief points.

Does he teach false doctrine?

This is the most obvious sign of a false leader – he does not teach the truth but preaches deception that causes people to fall astray.

Now people can make mistakes, and a small doctrinal mistake in an exhortation just requires a mild admonition. If the leader responds well, that is a good sign. For example: I once knew a good teacher who, when he was young, preached on apostleship and spoke only about calling, using the apostles as an example. A wise old lady afterwards took him aside and explained that the word ‘apostle’ meant ‘to be sent’, not ‘to be called’. He accepted this rebuke and from then on made careful note of Greek meanings in his teaching. That was a good result.

However, if a leader espouses a completely false theology then nothing good will come of his ministry. Likewise, if a leader constantly brings a variety of false doctrines to the church, that too will be disastrous.

In this matter one cannot go by names the leader calls his teaching. Many today claim to be Calvinistic, for example, and yet are nothing of the sort.

Example: a certain famous Charismatic church leader calls himself (and his church) Calvinistic. By this he chiefly means that he believes in election but has no understanding of its ramifications. I wrote a long letter to this man explaining, tactfully, that he was not Calvinistic at all but was Amyraldian. His response was warm, but he refused to consider what I said. This man is now on a dangerous path that will lead to more errors.

Is the leader just ignorant of true theology?

Many church leaders today do not want to have a false theology but are just too ignorant about what constitutes good theology. They should not be teaching.

Example: I once had a friend who was a very sincere godly man but had been promoted to eldership before he was ready (in my opinion). Being called on to preach regularly, when he was untrained, he often brought errors into his messages. On one occasion he preached on hell and said a number of unbiblical things. I spoke to him afterwards and asked him about this. He simply said that he was asked to preach on the subject, knew little about it, and so bought the first paperback book he could find in the shops, and preached from that. The book was in error. This is appalling. Leaders should only teach what they know and have researched for themselves from study and life experience in submission to God.

Does he understand Biblical truth?

There are some leaders who are not good theologians but are very faithful Biblical expositors. While they cannot teach doctrine in a methodical academic manner, they can apply Biblical truth quite well.

God will bless such ministry because it sticks to the truth of his word, even though the preacher is limited in understanding.

However, there are many church leaders who cannot even do this. They use a verse of Scripture merely as a peg to hang their thoughts upon. They come to the message with an agenda and then preach on that agenda as if it is Biblical instruction. Others just use a verse for a bunch of woolly, wistful thoughts. This is disastrous and will lead to problems.

Only the truth will actually build people up and bring them freedom. Ministry that is not right, that is not Biblical, that is not sound, will only damage people. Such teachers are wolves; even they are nice wolves.

For the word of the LORD *is* right, and all His work *is done* in truth. Ps 33:4

Example

I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Jn 13:15

Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. Phil 3:17

Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 1 Tim 4:12

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 1 Pt 5:2-3

Obviously this section is closely connected to behaviour and character already discussed; however, it particularly concerns the public example set by the man.

What is his persona during preaching?

Every man has a specific personality when he is preaching from a platform. It is what sets him apart from other people. The characteristics expressed in public ministry should be examined and problems here can be signs of a wolf.

For example, does the man use coarse language and jesting in his preaching? Does he express a lack of control? Is he of an agitated, nervous, febrile, pushy disposition? Does he shout? Is he disrespectful to people? Does he curse God's people? Is he narcissistic? All these things have been seen on church platforms.

Examples: One famous Charismatic preacher expressed a desire to kill his critics with a gun. This alone tells you that this man is false. Another famous Charismatic Jewish Root preacher called his critics (who were godly men) insane liars, mentally impaired, and other slanders, and even called down God's judgment on some to kill them (nothing happened). This also tells you that such a leader is false.

What is his appearance in preaching?

Now I am not one who believes that a suit or shirt and tie are required to teach the Lord's people. However, there is a sensible decorum that is socially necessitated by convention and respect for others. There are also men who dress to appeal to a certain strata of society for effect; this is questionable.

Examples: people who wear a singlet and shorts on the platform. Men who wear head-coverings, such as bandannas or hats. Men who wear biker-gear to appeal to certain young types (biker boots, leathers, emblazoned tee-shirts etc.). Men who are full of tattoos and piercings.⁵

⁵ If tattoos were from their pre-conversion days, they could be covered up instead of flashed around. If they are recent then it shows they have no respect for God's word (Lev 19:28). Tattoos and piercings are pagan signs.

What is his personal history?

Does he have convictions for wrongdoing? Has he abandoned a wife and family? Has he a history of drug abuse or alcoholism? Does he have a history of violence? Is he well thought of by his peers or not? Is he in trouble with the tax office? Has he been expelled from a church or organisation? Has he had a public argument with another minister?

Sadly, church history is replete with people who have failed in all these areas.

Now we need to be careful in making evaluations in this matter since problems may not be what they seem if you do not have all the information. Also, a person may have sinned long ago and may have properly repented. However, well-documented extreme issues (such as adultery) probably identifies a wolf.

Failures

He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.

Prov 28:13

For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Jm 3:2

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1 Jn 1:8

All men make mistakes but it is how we deal with them that show character. One of the characteristics of false teachers in recent decades has been the cover-up of failures in many areas and a refusal to admit any sort of error to the people, even when it is a public issue. Leaders that do not own up to their failures and say sorry cannot be trusted.

Examples: many so-called prophets have made repeated errors in foretelling the future. In some cases these were serious when people, and even regions, took precautions as a result of the prophecy (such as evacuations before a foretold earthquake; which never occurred). The list of leaders who have made predictions that never happened is very long; yet not one of them has been disciplined for this (because there is no one above them to do so in their organisation). In the OT this was worthy of death.

Many leaders have made certain strategic decisions, such as reorganising their church to follow some fad, and the outcome was debilitating to the people. One famous leader reorganised his church and lost 110 of his best people (including elders) in 10 months as a result. Nothing was done, no apology was made; things just carried on as if nothing had happened.

God

You shall fear your God; for I *am* the LORD your God. Lev 25:17

Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always. Deut 11:1

Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. Ps 29:2

Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind'. Matt 22:37

I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! Lk 12:5

How does the man refer to God?

One of the surest tests of a ministry is how the man refers to God in general and in specifics.

A man's prayers can tell you a lot about the spirituality of the person.

A bad leader is someone who is over-familiar with God and shows no reverence.

However, the worst type of false teacher is one who asserts equality with God. Yes. It is that bad. These are the radical Charismatics who aver that they have become God or a little god as a result of their faith. What they are in actuality is a charlatan. Such folk teach appalling blasphemies about God.

At the other end of the scale are people who treat God with superstition; hiding under a false reverence. Such are the Jewish Root and Messianic Christian teachers who insist that the word 'God' must be spelled as 'G-d'. Even worse are Judaism influenced folk who will not mention the divine name 'Yahweh', nor write it down, for fear of evil consequences.⁶ This is the realm of magic and superstition which derives from the very Pharisees that Jesus condemned for their traditions of men.⁷

Worship God. Rev 22:9

How does the man refer to Jesus?

Irreverent and blasphemous leaders call the Lord Jesus a 'bloke', or a 'buddy', or a 'pal' and tell stories as if the Lord were their travel companion on various adventures.

There are also Dominionist Charismatics who teach that the end-time church will be so holy and powerful that Jesus will not need to return to the earth; the church has done that job through powerful apostles and prophets. This is just as blasphemous as the above. Avoid such men.

Some Word Faith fanatics have gone even further and stated that Jesus became cursed after the cross in his supposed descent into hell. These are the worst kind of blasphemous heretics.

Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor 12:3

Does the man dominate the church?

Most people utterly fail to understand the concept that the church is the body of Christ. There is a great need for respect, worship and humility in how we conduct business in the church. It is not a human institution.

⁶ Rabbis would not write down the name on paper in case it fell to the floor and they stepped upon it. They believed the name had magical powers.

⁷ In actual fact, traditions that were spawned in Babylon and which were filled with occult and pagan ideas. These traditions were later written down as the Talmud.

Thus when men dominate the church and act like despots over it, accumulating authority to themselves and lording it over the flock, what they are doing is blaspheming Christ, who is the Head of the body.

This is why Biblical church leadership is a team of equal elders only with no single person in supreme authority. Any man that has full authority over the church, whether local or regional, is a blasphemy against Christ, the Head.

He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. Col 1:18

Heresies

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. 1 Tim 4:1

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*. 2 Tim 3:13-14

There were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 Pt 2:1

This subject would take a whole book or more. Any man that teaches heresies must be avoided. Without any discussion (I have done that many times before) I will simply list some main heresies that are being propounded today in churches.

- Antinomianism.
- Arianism (the modern form is found where churches deny the godhead of Jesus).
- Arminianism.
- Amyraldism.
- Authoritarianism.
- Charismaticism (multiple heresies).
- Deism.
- Dispensationalism.
- Dominionism (triumphal eschatology).
- Ebionism (extreme Jewish Root theology).
- Federal Vision.
- Fullerism (extreme Amyraldism).
- Gnosticism (multiple heresies and blasphemies; common in some Charismatic and Liberal movements).
- Grotianism (moral government theory).
- Humanism.
- Hyper-Calvinism (including eternal justification, denial of duty faith, denial of progressive sanctification etc.).
- Idolatry.
- Jewish Root theology (multiple heresies and blasphemies).

- Latter Rain theology (multiple heresies and blasphemies).
- Liberalism (and modernism).
- Man worship (in authoritarian churches and sects).
- Messianic Christianity (multiple heresies and blasphemies).
- Mysticism.
- Occultism (a characteristic of various movements, such as Charismaticism).
- Oneness Theology (anti-Trinitarianism, common in certain Pentecostal circles and Latter Rain).
- Open Theism.
- Pelagianism.
- Pentecostalism (multiple heresies).
- Postmillennialism.
- Postmodernism.
- Preterism.
- Revivalism.
- Roman Catholic doctrines (which include multiple heresies, such as Mariolatry, purgatory, Transubstantiation, sacramentalism).
- Semi-Pelagianism (e.g Arminianism, Roman Catholic salvation).
- Signs and Wonders (multiple heresies).
- Socinianism.
- Territorial Spirits (and Charismatic spiritual warfare doctrines).
- Unitarianism.

In order to identify heretics you need to have at least a basic understanding of these doctrines.

Hypocrisy

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron. 1 Tim 4:1-2

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Jm 3:17

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking. 1 Pt 2:1

Hypocrisy is very common amongst false teachers; indeed it is endemic because they teach one thing but do another.

The hypocrisy can take many forms. It can be of character, so that the leader teaches righteous behaviour but is himself unrighteous in life; or it can be academic, where a leader teaches a certain thing but actually believes the opposite.

Often leaders do hypocritical things, just like politicians, to get what they want. For example, a leader seeks to bring in an unbiblical strategy that he knows is unpopular. So he proclaims a new strategy as being the opposite of what it truly is. The people are usually gullible enough to believe this and the unpopular strategy is brought in.

For instance, one famous ‘apostle’ wanted to centralise the five local churches he controlled in an urban area to gain a better reputation. This was at a time when the five churches sought even more self-autonomy. He then publicised a strategy promising to give more local autonomy by providing about a dozen smaller congregations, but these would only meet mid-week once a month; the main Sunday meeting would now be a centralised big gathering in a cinema. This strategy was promoted as decentralisation when it was really centralisation! The local congregations were unsuccessful and were later abandoned altogether. The people lost their local churches and all sense of mutual fellowship in order to sit in a cinema staring at the back of people’s heads. However, the ‘apostle’ could now boast that he had a single church meeting of 600. This process was sheer hypocrisy.

The great Biblical examples of hypocrisy were the Pharisees who were condemned by Jesus for hypocrisy multiple times (e.g. Matt 23:28; Mk 12:15; Lk 12:1). Now it is worthwhile bearing in mind that the religion of the Pharisees that Jesus condemned to hell (Matt 23:15) is now enshrined in the Jewish Talmud. Modern Talmudic Judaism is the formal religion of the Pharisees.⁸ Old Testament Judaism no longer exists as Jesus foretold.⁹

When modern Jewish Root false teachers bring their heresies into the church these often come with traces of Talmudic Pharisaism; sometimes overtly so. Some bring rabbinic (Pharisaic) novelties into their teaching, or talk about the need of rabbinic Midrash and other nonsense. Many call the apostle Paul, ‘Rabbi Shaul’, which is something he categorically repudiated as ‘dung’ (Phil 3:4-8).¹⁰ Worse still, some bring Jewish Kabbalah¹¹ superstitions, which is why they insist on spelling the word ‘God’ as G-d’. All of this is condemned by Jesus as hellish.

When you see a leader behaving in hypocrisy, you know that he is false.

Intrigue

LORD, how they have increased who trouble me! Many *are* they who rise up against me. Many *are* they who say of me, ‘*There is* no help for him in God’. Selah But You, O LORD, *are* a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. Ps 3:1-3

Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; speak the word, but it will not stand, for God *is* with us. Isa 8:10

What do you conspire against the LORD? He will make an utter end *of it*. Nahum 1:9

Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. 2 Tim 4:14-1

This is perhaps not a universal quality, but I have noticed that it occurs in very many false teachers that I have investigated.

False teachers tend to intrigue. What does this mean?

⁸ For details see either ‘The true position of Jews’, or ‘The Depths of Deception’.

⁹ It cannot operate without a temple and all the temple furniture, an approved Levitical priesthood and the blood offerings. This is the reason why God destroyed the temple, through the instrument of the Romans, just as Jesus prophesied, no stone left upon another.

¹⁰ As in KJV. ‘Rubbish’ in NKJV. The Greek word ‘*skubalon*’ means rubbish, dung, excrement of animals, refuse, dregs, worthless things etc.

¹¹ Jewish mysticism and occult.

Intrigue has two meanings. The first is to arouse curiosity; this does not concern us here. The second meaning is to make secret plans to do something illicit or detrimental to someone. The word comes from the French word meaning to plot or to tangle, deriving originally from a Latin word. Thus the word means to conspire, to plot, to make secret plans against someone.

John Wesley was a great example of this (see 'Popularity'). He engaged in imaginative intrigues, often illegal in nature, to work against his critics (usually eminent godly church leaders). When he used fraud to conspire against Toplady, he was fortunate to avoid the death penalty, which was the sentence for fraud in those days.

Men hate to be criticised and false teachers will attract criticism. You can tell a great deal from how someone deals with such criticism. Godly people will not overreact and will try to calm the waters or will get to the heart of the problem under view. They will not conduct character assassinations and slander of their critics as a means of getting back at them. [However, the use of harsh but true words in dealing with the heresies of a false teacher is justified and Biblical; but this is in defence of God not in self-defence.]

For example, friends and I have criticised (privately to his face) a certain Jewish Root false teacher and very nasty person, taking the theological issues head on. Instead of dealing with the issues this person was completely unable to defend his position and so retaliated by calling us wicked names and telling lies about us. Thus a notable theological college professor was called: un-academic, theologically incompetent, a deceiver, ignorant, an inventor of defamatory lies, ignorant, dishonest, a false witness, a professional charlatan and a sloppy researcher. I was called: mentally ill, blatantly wicked, vicious, writer of bogus nonsense and so on. He then published tracts to try to get hundreds of his followers to think badly of us. None of us responded and let him get on with it. He never did debate the issues we raised. This is the only church leader I know that has ever been taken to court by a church denomination for lies and slander and putting people's lives in danger. On one occasion I was told that he reacted to critical question in a public meeting by calling down the wrath of God to kill the man there and then.

In the past false teachers have gone to great lengths to conspire against people they did not like. False reports have been published in various forms of media. Lies have been spread about them by word of mouth. People have been organised to protest and lobby against them. The false Jewish Root teacher I just mentioned once arranged for his followers to protest outside the doors of a certain church denomination up and down the country. What does this man have to do for people to see that he is a false teacher and who cannot be a Christian at all?

Enough has been said.

Some false teachers engage in intrigue and this is a sign that they are a wolf.

Jail

Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 1 Tim 3:7

Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding *them* to judgment, but those of some *men* follow later. 1 Tim 5:24

Has the leader ever been convicted of a crime and put in jail?

Now although this sounds extreme and unlikely in church situations, it has actually happened very many times.

Now we have to be careful because a person can be wrongly convicted and serve time on false pretences. They can also sin briefly, pay for it and then truly repent and change.

Nevertheless, if a man has been jailed for something, it certainly warrants investigation at least.

I was tempted to list some examples but I will refrain. However, I will mention that a large number of Pentecostal leaders have been imprisoned for a variety of crimes from the very beginning of its history, including for: sodomy, fraud, deception, theft, tax-evasion, embezzlement, perjury and so on.

Kleptomania

You shall not steal. Rm 13:9

Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labour. Eph 4:28

‘Kleptomania’ means a recurrent urge to steal and it arises from the Greek word for thief. Do we really have thieves in church leadership? Well, sadly, yes we do.

What else can you call men who use fraud and heresy to take millions of dollars from largely poor people on the basis of false promises? The drive for money can be clearly seen in their speeches, their TV programmes, their sermons, their videos, their pamphlets and so on. One Pentecostal pastor even said once that if his followers did not give more money to a certain cause of his then God would take him. The money rolled in.

Many Charismatic ministries are just a money-spinning bandwagon. Each week there is urging to give sacrificially because the ministry needs it. Even meetings that attract outsiders are filled with men imploring for money, even from people who are not church members or not even Christians.

I once asked some visitors to a very famous large Charismatic church what they felt the focus of the meetings were that they attended. In every case they all said, ‘Money’.

If money is the obvious focus of a ministry then the leader is a kleptomaniac – he wants money and he repeatedly fleeces the flock to get it.

Lying

Therefore, putting away lying, *‘Let each one of you speak truth’*. Eph 4:25

Do not lie to one another. Col 3:9

Is the person under view guilty of lying? Again this seems unlikely in a Christian and again it has happened on multiple occasions. I have seen leaders lie at a local level many times and there are many examples in history of leaders committing this sin.

The most obvious example is when they lie about doctrine. Though they know the truth, they don't like it and so they teach their people lies.

However, it is also sadly common that leaders lie in public discourse and social situations.

One aspect of lying is duplicity; such as when a leader says one thing about a matter to one person and then a completely different thing about it to someone else (often to avoid some sort of confrontation). This is just plain lying; and it is very common.

If a leader is caught out lying then he is a wolf, pure and simple. No godly man could ever lie in public and an ungodly man should not be in ministry.

I once worked with a Baptist pastor and regional moderator because I thought he was a godly man; and from a distance he appeared to be so. He was also winsome and popular. However, the longer I worked with him the more I saw that he was extremely duplicitous, not wanting to tell people things they didn't want to hear. Sometimes he just plain lied to get himself out of difficult situations. I was truly shocked and the partnership was severed by him after my confrontation.

Madness

I am the LORD, who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens all alone, who spreads abroad the earth by Myself; who frustrates the signs of the babblers, and drives diviners mad; who turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness. Isa 44:24-25

For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. Matt 24:5

Some false teachers are just mad; that is, they are mentally ill, insane or psychotic [a severe mental disorder in which thought and emotions are so impaired that contact is lost with external reality].

Now is this an extreme thing to say? No it is not. There are always some false teachers that are simply insane, and this has always been true.

When false teachers accrue to themselves so much authority that they begin to take the place of Christ in the church they are on the verge of madness (many Charismatic apostles have done this). When such a person actually calls himself Christ or God or God-like then they are nuts, plain and simple. Has this happened? Yes it has; many times.

Example: Mother Anne Lee [1736-1781] leader of the Shakers (now very much in fashion in radical Charismatic circles) had multiple insane doctrines, such as: the sex act was the cause of human depravity. However, she must have been completely mad to declare that she was the Messiah and was known as 'Anne the Word'. Despite the fact that she had many false doctrines, including a rejection of the inspiration of the Bible and a denial of the resurrection of Christ, she gained thousands of followers. These enjoyed the wild and exuberant worship times that included shaking and dancing (sometimes naked), as well as fake Charismatic gifts.

However, lesser forms of madness incite people to do things that are typical of insane people. Again there are multiple cases of this.

Example: one of the groups exhibiting exuberant behaviour in the Reformation was based in meeting in Amsterdam in 1535. One member fell into a trance then prayed and preached

for four hours. After this he stripped and threw his clothes into a fire, commanding all present to do the same. Everyone obeyed him immediately. He then ordered them to follow him into the street, which they did, howling and preaching. After being arrested, they refused clothes from the magistrates stating that they were the 'naked truth'.¹²

Example: It is recorded, by the historian Mosheim, that some Eastern Christian mystics were so enraptured that they lived among wild beasts and ran naked through deserts in a frenzy, defending these actions as true piety.

Example: James Davenport [1716-1757] was a Congregationalist minister who gathered a big following in the Great Awakening revival who led crowds in singing praise, sometimes for hours. In 1742 Davenport began to hear inner voices, and then became a leader in what became familiar as the New Light Prophets. Manifestations occurred as members began to fall to the ground, shake and see visions. Then Davenport himself went to extremes when he claimed the gift of discernment as the ability to see who was truly elect. Churches were split as he pronounced that leaders were not really believers.¹³

A seminary was started which did not use the Bible, in favour of subjective 'spiritual' revelation to train prophets. Music was used to enhance the atmosphere of meetings and preaching became theatrical and dramatic as fresh revelations interrupted meetings. Some of his hymns celebrated the lack of self-control in God's service, much like modern charismatic choruses of the Toronto school. In 1743 a bonfire was organised to burn Puritan books. At a second bonfire, led by the 'spirit', Davenport began removing his clothes and burning them. When an observer condemned Davenport of having the Devil in him, Davenport came to his senses and accepted the charge. Gradually the movement dissipated as Davenport now declared the work to be evil and sought forgiveness for corrupt actions.

Without a doubt, Davenport had been a victim of temporary insanity – and yet gathered a large following.

Other false teachers may not promote insane behaviour but they promote insane doctrines.

Example: William Branham, the Latter Rain Pentecostal heretic, is very popular today in Charismatic circles; indeed some writers claim that he is the greatest ever modern prophet. Yet this man's heresies are not only serious but are mad. For example:

- He held a modalistic view of the Trinity.
- He held that Hell is not eternal punishment.
- He demanded rebaptism in the name of Jesus only (like the Oneness Pentecostals).
- He equated the Bible with the Pyramids and astrology.
- He was a severe misogynist who said that women are '*not worth a good clean bullet*'.
- He claimed that Satan had sex with Eve making Cain the 'serpent's seed' and blamed women for evil in the world.
- healed by clairvoyancy or channelling (via 'his angel', i.e. demon, on whom, he depended). He always obeyed this 'angel' whom he disassociated from the Holy Spirit. He once met an occultist whom he said looked exactly like his 'angel'.
- He believed that he wasn't ageing and would not die (he did).

¹² Rev William Hamilton, *An Enquiry into the Scriptural Character of the Revival of 1859*, Alexander Mayne, Belfast, (1866), p14-15.

¹³ See G W McHale & Michael Haykin, *The Toronto Blessing, A Renewal from God? Vol 1*, Canadian Christian Publications, (1995), p82+.

- He taught that his followers were ‘the Seed of God’.
- He taught that he was the angel of Rev 3:14 and 10:7.

Just one or two of these heresies should convince someone that Branham was mentally impaired, but to consider all of them – well he must have been completely insane. Yet he is the darling of many Charismatics – what does this tell us?

Other Latter Rain teachers promoted equally insane doctrines; such as that perfected saints and apostles would be able to fly, pass through walls, and be invulnerable to bullets.¹⁴ One believed that he didn’t need to wash his clothes again but that his spiritual experience would constantly cleanse them (it did not). Many people in the New Apostolic Reformation aver that the modern apostles and prophets are going to rule the world. Some go further and say that they will be so powerful that Jesus will not need to return.

Enough of this garbage. Anyone teaching insanity or behaving psychotically needs to be shunned as an impostor. They are false teachers.

Negligence

Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: ‘Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, *but* you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. So they were scattered because *there was* no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered’[. Ezek 34:2-5

False teachers frequently demonstrate that they are negligent in varying ways.

Because they are self-centred (in the main) they are negligent about the needs of other people, or even about simple politeness and respectful behaviour. Sometimes they are negligent about their duty or negligent about the law. Often they are negligent about the needs of their flock.

Examples:

- Putting a congregation under constant pressure by making demands of them without any consideration of their situation and pressurised lives.
- Getting in trouble with the tax office and becoming a victim of a tax evasion investigation. This has occurred to many American Charismatic and Pentecostal leaders.
- Asking for money for a certain charitable reason and then failing to give the money to that charity. I have heard of very respectable ministries that have done this.
- Being negligent of God’s word and teaching multiple erroneous doctrines.

When you see examples of a leader being negligent, it is worth investigating further to see if he is a wolf.

¹⁴ This emerged at the same time that the original Superman comic strip began!

Occultism

You shall not permit a sorceress to live. Exod 22:19

Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God. Lev 19:31

There shall not be found among you *anyone* ... who practices witchcraft, *or* a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer. Deut 18:10

Also, many of those who had practised magic brought their books together and burned *them* in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and *it* totalled fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. Acts 19:19

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: ... idolatry, sorcery. Gal 5:19-20

What is the occult?

In the normal; sense¹⁵ it means the supernatural, mystical, magical, secret beliefs associated with strange phenomena and the seeking of spiritual power; beliefs and practices above the range of ordinary experience and empirical knowledge. The root Latin meaning of the word is 'hidden', 'concealed' or 'secret' and refers to the secret society nature of occult practitioners.

The study of the occult is usually classified into three areas:

- Spiritualism [American: 'spiritism'.]
- Fortune-telling
- Magic.

Magic is the Ability to control or manipulate nature and the environment in order to serve a particular purpose; the power of influencing the course of events by using mysterious or supernatural forces.

Now occultism is the very opposite of serving God. Its disciplines were developed after Babel in Babylonia as part of the rebellious deified king worship which developed into all essential forms of pagan false religion: idolatry, magic, astrology, demon worship, Black Magic (Satanism), fortune-telling (divination¹⁶), channelling of spirits (spiritualism), clairvoyance and so on.

Thus the occult, in all its forms, is at the heart of the satanic rebellious worship of pagans that seek to be like God but refuse to obey his word.

The idea that any Christian activity could be in any way connected to the occult is anathema, and yet this is what has happened in the last 150 years. The chief source of this has been Pentecostal and Charismatic mysticism.

Now this is a huge subject and it is impossible to sufficiently cover it in a small space. I have delved into this in other papers.¹⁷ The main root of this has been the seeking of power

¹⁵ It also has some technical, e.g. medicinal, meanings.

¹⁶ Of which there are many forms: using crystal balls, Tarot cards, augury, horoscopes, palmistry, rod and pendulum, numerology, omens, I-Ching etc.

¹⁷ Such as 'Charismatic Catastrophe', 'Occult inroads into the Charismatic Movement'.

to effect miracles and healing or a special sort of spiritual experience. This is seeking the effect rather than the source of the effect (God). It is blasphemous.

Any attempt to gain spiritual power instead of focusing on serving God will lead to occult corruption. All I can do here is give some examples of occult practices that have emerged in the church in recent decades.

- **Sacramentalism:** historically found in the Roman Catholic church (such as holy water, nails from the cross, wood from the cross, relics of saints) but latterly very common in Charismatic churches. This is the belief in the spiritual power of material objects. Charismatics have upheld the power of: gemstones for healing; knighting with a sword for spiritual power; burning written down problems for deliverance; blowing ram's horns to initiate revival; removing pointed signs from Westminster to overcome local demons; pouring communion wine over genitals to get rid of unclean spirits; throwing a bottle of oil into a river as an expression of 'prophetic symbolism' in order to encourage an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Australia etc. Other items and actions regularly used to symbolise or impart spiritual power include: flag waving, banners, candles, marching round the room, crosses, pendants, medallions and so on. Pentecostal leader AA Allen even distributed 'miracle saw-dust' from the floor of his 'miracle valley' tent.¹⁸ Sacramentalism has more to do with magic than Christianity. The idea that charms or talismans have magical power or contain a helpful spirit is a pagan idea that is thousands of years old. 'Fetish' is the term usually applied to West African cults who believed that spirits could possess certain objects or ward off evil spirits. This belief was taken to America and later developed in Voodoo and Santeria.¹⁹ 'Charm' can be an object or an incantation which has supernatural powers, and is a term used in many occult religions. A 'talisman' is an object on which is engraved a character or picture that can harness supernatural power to protect the wearer. This differs from an 'amulet', which was worn to ward off evil spells; a practice going back to the ancient Egyptians. Regarding sacramental rites, there is no end to the variations of these in occult religions.
- The ability of people to do certain supernatural things: such as astral travelling (out of the body experiences); effect healing from great distances; see coloured auras on people; read other people's thoughts. Examples: Agnes Sanford; many disciples of John Wimber.
- Necromancy, or communing with the dead. This has been done recently by Benny Hinn²⁰; Rick Joyner²¹; and Morton Kelsey (recommended by Wimber).²²
- Being slain in the Spirit (falling over backwards in a comatose state). This has been common since the early days of the Pentecostal Movement, but also occurred in rogue revivals (such as Cane Ridge, 1801), the early Mormons (1830+), the Shakers (1770+), the New Light Prophets (1742+), or the French Prophets (1688+) and the Holiness Movement. Falling over in a trance, usually backwards, has long been evidenced in all

¹⁸ *Contending Earnestly For the Faith* Journal, 5.2, p21.

¹⁹ Voodoo and Santeria are syncretistic cults based in the Caribbean. They are a combination of Roman Catholicism (learned from Spanish missionaries) and African witchcraft. Santeria is located in Cuba mainly founded upon Nigerian religions; voodoo (properly, Vodun) began in Haiti being inspired by the witchcraft cults of Dahomey (now Benin), but both have spread.

²⁰ *I heard Kathryn's voice and suddenly there she was ... she said "Ask! We're waiting for you to ask! We're praying with you to ask." ... A week later the anointing hit my life.* [Sermon preached at Blaisdale Arena, Honolulu, 28.2.97 quoted in R Liichow, *The Two Roots of Today's Revival*, p193.]

²¹ Joyner claims to regularly see William Branham in heaven and converses with the apostle Paul [*The Final Quest*, Morning Star Publications, 1996, pp. 131-132].

²² Morton Kelsey, *Christo*, p39, 148-149; *Afterlife: The Other Side of Dying*.

sorts of occult groups. Almost any shamanistic type of ritual will involve such trance inducement (e.g. by repetitive drumming, drugs, dancing etc.) and falling backwards unconscious. Examples of this can be seen going back to ancient orgiastic fertility rites and demon worship. Modern occult cults also saw this, such as the original Divine Light Mission (Guru Maharaj Ji) in the 70s.

- Angelic prompted healing or healing by words of knowledge. This is when a leader is inspired by a certain 'angel' that has appeared to him and then goes on to declare a 'word of knowledge', which is information received by prescience. On calling out this information, healing is then effected to people responding to the information. Some people use this supposed 'word of knowledge' without any specific angelic (demonic) prompting. The word of knowledge in 1 Corinthians means teaching as a gift to the church through elders. Prescient knowledge is never called a 'word of knowledge' in the Bible. Heretic William Branham is the main modern inspiration for this which has been copied by multitudes of Charismatics. When Paul Cain 'healed' by words of knowledge or Todd Bentley was led by an 'angel' called Emma, they were following in the footsteps of William Branham, whom they publicly revered. This ministry is today called channelling by occultists; it used to be called clairvoyance and was usually performed by a medium. Spiritualism is slightly different in that the demonic spirit communicating a message pretends to be a dead person. Clairvoyance refers to the effect while spiritualism refers to the means.
- Visualisation. This centres on the idea of having a clear goal or objective and imagining this as a distinct image in the mind. This image is then cultivated, developed in detail and grown to support faith until the wanted item is received. Some have called this 'imagineering'. In its modern Charismatic form it was developed chiefly by the teachings of Paul (now David) Yonggi Cho of Korea. Cho was clearly influenced in his teaching by the local variant of Buddhism, Soka Gakkai (Value Creation Society). What he teaches is exactly what is taught by this Japanese Buddhist sect [the lay organisation of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism founded in 1930, but based on the teaching of the 13th century teacher Nichiren, comprising of over 16 million people].
- Prophecy used as divination; this is commonly experienced as personal predictive prophecy. The chief precursor is in Latter Rain practices and amongst other radical Pentecostals. *The [Pentecostal] Apostolic Church* today formally appoints people to the prophetic office who are used to determine ministerial strategies. Historically this appeared in rogue movements such as: the Montanists (2nd century), the French Prophets (Camisards or Cevenols, 1686+), the Zwickau Prophets (*Storchites*, 1520s) and the appalling millennial Anabaptist uprising in Munster (1530s). The recent explosion of supposed prophetic ministry emerged with the Signs and Wonders Movement in the late 80s. There had always been prophecies in the Charismatic Movement, and even more in the Restoration Movement, itself an outgrowth of Latter Rain, but there was not a great deal of personal prophecy. However when Paul Cain attached himself to John Wimber this changed and, indeed, it led to the promotion of the Kansas City Prophets (KCP), which even Wimber eventually distanced himself from, in 1992, after confessing that he had turned off his brain for years (after meeting Cain)! Other famous proponents of such prophecy, such as KCP mentor Bob Jones, were subsequently exposed for 'gross sexual sin' and expelled; the personal prophecies were used in order to gain an authoritative hold over vulnerable people who were then exploited. John Paul Jackson was also taken out of ministry by Wimber. Cain himself was later exposed as an alcoholic and homosexual at the time he was ministering in the UK. Mike Bickle, leader of the KCP, confessed to serious errors of teaching and practice when ministering in England. Divination is one of the three branches of the occult.
- Inner healing is completely based on occult mystical principles; it has no Biblical basis but is found in false (Jungian) psychoanalytical procedures, hypnotism, witchcraft and

paganism. It is a technique, based upon visualisation, that is supposed to help people with emotional problems that are not being resolved and seeks to take the patient, through 'imagineering' (engineering the imagination, i.e. visualisation), into their past to change what happened in their mind. Some teach that this process actually changes what happened in history since God transcends time, while others merely claim that it changes the historical effect on the patient.

- PP Quimby and New Thought. This was the syncretism of the occult with Christianity in a new denomination. Though little known now, it was the inspiration for Word of Faith and the disciples of Quimby: EW Kenyon, Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, Rodney Howard-Browne and many more. These movements have multiple examples of the occult in their teaching and practice.
- Deliverance ministry. The exorcism of evil spirits (demons) from believers by the use of various means and, chiefly, the authority mediated through the spoken name of Jesus. This is used almost like a spell or ritual incantation and often involves shouting it repeatedly. In some Pentecostal and Charismatic ministries the vehemence against the evil spirit is directed against the sufferer with physical blows. On many occasions this has resulted in bodily damage and, on some occasions, death. Exorcism has a long history amongst heathen religions and occult groups. It is a basic part of shamanism, seen in the ritual services of a medicine man. When sickness or bad things happen, animists blamed evil spirits and sought the help of good spirits to vanquish the demons and bring good luck. Thus exorcism was a natural part of any animistic religion.

Space requires me to cease at this point. Whenever you see a leader bringing occult items like these into his ministry, run a mile; he is a wolf.

Officious behaviour

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 1 Pt 5:2-3

Officious means: asserting authority in a domineering way, especially with regard to petty or trivial matters. It differs from authoritarianism, which is despotism; real domineering control of a group of people. Officious behaviour is lower down the scale. It is acting with an inappropriate authority that doesn't exist in order to dominate people.

False teachers can be officious. For instance, a false teacher may not actually lead a church at all but be a member of a parachurch organisation or an independent leader and thus have no ecclesiastical authority of any sort. Yet in his ministry he asserts a dogmatic authoritative quality that makes demands of people. This is being officious.

Or it may be a man who is a church leader somewhere in the world but who comes to large gathering and conferences somewhere else and makes many demands of people to follow his direction.

Example: in the Toronto Blessing charade, foreign leaders came to the UK and made constant demands of British people. Rodney Howard Browne, for instance, constantly told audiences to '*drink not think*' and demanded that people react to his preaching and not bother to test what he was saying by the word of God. This, in itself, is unbiblical behaviour (1 Thess 5:21), but it is also officious. Charismatic preachers frequently make demands of

audiences, demanding them to do this or that and it takes great courage and character to resist the peer pressure to oblige them.

Godly leaders do not need to be officious; they trust that God will do his work his way. Their job is to preach the truth and let the Holy Spirit work that truth into a person, promoting right action.

Paganism

I [Nehemiah] cleansed them of everything pagan. Neh 13:30

When you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Matt 6:7

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 1 Cor 10:14

The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. 1 Cor 10:20-21

What is paganism or heathenism?

In the modern, secular, wider sense it is a religious belief that is not one of the main world religions (Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism). In its original sense it meant any religion that was not Christianity; this is the meaning that I adopt here. Thus, paganism is a religion or a religious belief that is opposed to Christianity.

Surely it cannot be possible that a false teacher in the church can teach paganism? I'm afraid that it is all too possible and has frequently occurred.

To understand this one must first know what sorts of doctrine pagan religions teach, and then see if any of those doctrines have emerged in church teachings. There have been many.

- The Quaker seeking of divine light by being silent in a service and waiting for someone to come under the power, shudder, and begin an utterance is straight out of mystical paganism. Before you dismiss this as not directly Christian (The Society of Friends is considered as a sect) a number of former Quakers have exercised a direct influence on Christian churches bringing Quaker mysticism with them. Two examples are John Wimber and Richard Foster (Renovaré).
- The idea of universalism, that all men are saved and that there is no hell is a pagan concept.
- The idea that ghosts exist. Examples of men teaching this: John Wesley, John Wimber.
- Belief in dryads (tree spirits), water spirits, mountain spirits, nymphs²³ etc. Example: many aspects of Territorial Spirits teachings; John Wimber.
- Transmigration of souls (reincarnation); amazingly some supposed Christian leaders have taught variations of this.
- Soul sleep; the idea that after death you just sleep instead of face an eternity in heaven or hell. Some teach that this is an everlasting state; others that it is temporary for the

²³ A mythological nature spirit imagined (by Greeks) as a beautiful maiden inhabiting rivers, woods, or other locations.

duration of the dead until Christ returns. This has been taught for centuries by small rogue groups but some prominent American Baptists, sadly such as Jon Zens, have recently taught this.

- Pantheism: the idea that God is in everything; the cosmos and nature is God. Unbelievably, there have been many supposed Christian teachers that taught forms of this.
- Aberrant behaviour resulting: in barking, shouting, crowing, shrieking, screaming, laughing continuously, jumping, running on the spot, running around the room, baying, mimicking birth pains, repeatedly shouting something irrational, marching in ranks round the room, dancing. Example: multiple examples in Azusa St revival, the Toronto Blessing and the Pensacola Revival. It also occurred occasionally in historic revivals, such as early Methodism. It is extremely common in various pagan religions and cults and is prominent in Hindu kundalini yoga.
- Speaking and singing in tongues that are gibberish, not known languages. This has been common in pagan religions from the start of ecstatic demon worship rituals. Plato (429-347 BC) mentions several cases. Virgil gives the example of the Sibylline priestess on Delos. Chrysostom cites the Pythoness of Delphi. The ancient mystery religions manifest many examples of tongues, such as the cults of Mithras, Osiris and others. In the modern world tongues have been evidenced in many cults, Christian sects and occult religions. Iranian dervishes, certain Muslims, Eskimos, Tibetans, Chinese and many others have demonstrated tongues. Mormons, witches, Hindu sects and various New Age groups speak in tongues. It is now common in Pentecostalism and Charismaticism.

Agnes Sanford is worth a second look. Her writings and healing ministry influenced thousands, directing them into adopting visualising techniques that are straight out of shamanism (witchcraft, see later). Leaders directly influenced by Sanford include: Francis MacNutt, Leanne Payne, John & Paula Sandford, Richard Foster, Morton Kelsey and John Wimber. Her outright paganism is astonishing; for instance:

- She taught pantheism and monism, God is in everything, everything is God, everything is connected. Jesus is identified with nature or as 'primal energy'.
- She taught that people can create virtue in others by mental power alone.
- She taught that we can project the power of God into another person.
- She taught that we can heal at a distance.
- She taught that we can forgive the sins of others.
- People's minds are connected and can travel back and forth through time touching minds from history or even angelic minds.
- She supported the animistic faith of aboriginal tribesmen.
- She supported mind sciences and Christian Science.²⁴

All these features are pagan and occult and the churches that grew out of the mind sciences (mental healing) movement are syncretistic combinations of Christianity and the occult, such as PP Quimby's New Thought, Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science and Charles Fillmore's Unity School.

This is sufficient to show that paganism is alive and well in certain sections of the church. Leaders who demonstrate such teachings are false.

²⁴ See Sanford's *The Healing Light*, pp10, 28, 30-37, 60, 63-68, 74, 94-95, 112, 125-126, 137-147, 146, 165; *The Healing Gifts of the Spirit*, pp48, 140-141, 152.

Popularity

Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. Jn 15:20

That none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 1 Cor 4:6

Heretics are popular.

Right now there are appalling heretics pretending to be church leaders and Bible teachers who teach blasphemous and damaging doctrines and yet attract millions of viewers to their television broadcasts and millions of dollars to their very large coffers.

Today the prevailing Christian theology regarding salvation is Arminianism. Yet this is a major heresy, which contradicts vital Scriptures on many subjects, but which, worst of all, promotes a caricature of God, demeaning many of his attributes. Most Arminians know nothing about Jacob Arminius himself, and even less about his followers, the Remonstrants, who took his deviations further still, bringing us to where we are today.

Thus Arminius is popular in a round about way. However, if people knew about his serious character flaws, his lies, his influences and worse, if folk knew about the appalling heresies of his followers, they would be mortified.

Pelagius gave birth to the heresy known by his name ('Pelagianism') and huge numbers have been influenced by him without knowing anything about him. His doctrines are truly evil, being an elevation of man above God in salvation. Yet his disciple, CG Finney is very well known; though his Pelagian heresies are less well understood.

John Wesley is an automatic favourite of just about every Christian leader. Yet this man was an appalling false teacher who opposed vital doctrines of salvation such as election, justification, sanctification, limited atonement, irresistible grace and many more. He also taught pagan doctrines and superstitions, such as belief in ghosts and spirits. He even advocated that pagans can get to heaven without God and stated at the end of his life that he did not love God and never had. In addition he vehemently attacked godly Christian leaders (such as Augustus Toplady) and even committed fraud and plagiarism. None of these have stopped Wesley being adored by almost the whole church.

These are just a few of the false teachers that have proved to be very popular. It seems that if any heretic does the right things with the right sponsors, getting public exposure, he will gain a following fairly quickly.

It is just a plain fact that most heretics are popular.

Then, it is equally well documented that good teachers will attract a great deal of opposition, slander, lies, and false witness. John Calvin is reviled everyday in the most appalling terms by people who know nothing about his godly life and faithful ministry. One Roman Catholic persecutor of Calvin wrote that the problem with Calvin was that he cared nothing for money and could not be trapped with it. He is the only church leader I know that asked for a cut in his wages and gave most of his royalty earnings away. He was so hard working that he continued to work from his sick bed with a secretary up to his death. Calvin even ensured that he was buried in an unmarked grave so that it did not become a shrine to his disciples. Such was his godliness.

Why is all this?

It is because we have an enemy of the Gospel – Satan the accuser; and he will promote those who teach false doctrines and attack those who teach the truth. The sad fact is that this temptation is taken up by those in the church who should know better.

Jesus himself warned us that this would happen, so we should not be taken by surprise.

It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more *will they call* those of his household!
Matt 10:25

Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. Jn 15:20-21

Important identifying factor of false teachers

Note that Jesus says that those people who persecute true disciples in his name do not know God. When supposed Christians attack a godly man, perhaps a historic good teacher like Calvin, then they are in danger of proving that they are not converted at all.

Therefore, this becomes another factor in identifying a false teacher – he castigates godly men. This is a very important pointer.

Quandaries

God is not *the author* of confusion. 1 Cor 14:33

For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there. Jm 3:16

A quandary is a state of perplexity or uncertainty; something that causes confusion or a dilemma.

Many false teachers preach absurdities and cause great confusion. Indeed some tend to a constant state of perplexity when faced with rational investigation.

Quandaries are caused by a lack of rationality. All those false teachers that centre on mysticism (e.g. many Charismatics) tend to being irrational, and this causes quandaries. Unfortunately, when mystics demand that their listeners throw their brains out of the window, many victims comply with no rational thought about it.

For example, why is it considered normal and Biblical to expect lots of people to fall over backwards in a meeting. Where is there any Biblical precedent for this (there is none at all but there are many examples in paganism and the occult). Why do people not see a quandary and question it?

Thus when false teachers stray from teaching Biblical doctrines and veer into mysticism or worse, there is not only no Biblical texts to base teaching on but often no rational evidence either. This causes a quandary.

Examples of teaching / phenomena that cause a quandary are:

- Claiming that God had immediately filled people's teeth in a meeting with gold fillings. This was perplexing because: a) there is no Biblical precedent for this; b) there appeared to be no rational reason for it (the person did not need a new filling); c) there was no evidence whatsoever that it ever happened. When tested, claimants were found to have no gold in their mouths at all. What is perplexing here is why did people believe this?
- Claiming that a gold mist, aura or dust appeared on people. Again, there is no evidence that this ever actually happened. These sorts of claims are typical of people in a mystical state who imagine such things.

False teachers who encourage such quandaries are very suspect. When you see a quandary you need to be suspicious and investigate.

Many false doctrines taught by heretics are themselves very perplexing and make no sense at all.

For example: Amyraldism is based upon a contradictory premise. It teaches that God loves all men, that Jesus died for all men and that God desires the salvation of all men (universalism). However, it also teaches that men do not believe the Gospel and so God elects men to salvation (particularism).

This causes a real quandary. How can a perfect God want the salvation of all and then only choose some? This posits contradiction in God. How can anyone subscribe to such nonsense; and yet this is the common position of many modern Calvinists, who are Reformed in theory but Arminian in practice and preaching.

This is but one example; many modern teachings are perplexing in the extreme. I'll give two more examples.

Holiness leader B. H. Irwin taught a third blessing baptism of fire, to distinguish the Pentecostal-type baptism of the Spirit from the second blessing of entire sanctification (a common doctrine in Wesleyanism and Holiness groups). Irwin later differentiated several baptism experiences, after being firstly sanctified and then baptised in the Holy Spirit and fire. These were delineated under various explosive names: 'dynamite', 'lyddite', and 'oxidite'. Demonstrations of shouting and ecstatic behaviour attended Irwin's meetings and his Fire Baptised Holiness Association grew rapidly until Irwin's moral failures in 1900.

A small American Pentecostal group of serpent handlers still exists in the Appalachians. They believe that handling snakes, drinking poison and holding fire, without harm, is a result of being baptised in the Spirit.

One has to question why, facing teachings like these, people did not see a quandary and make a rational examination and then walk away.

Rebellion

Rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. 1 Sam 15:23

Those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, bound in affliction and irons -- Because they rebelled against the words of God, and despised the counsel of the Most High. Ps 107:10-

Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will cast you from the face of the earth. This year you shall die, because you have taught rebellion against the LORD.' Jer 28:16

Many false teachers have a deep strain of rebellion. By nature they are authoritarian and do not submit to human authorities, whether in the church or outside. The way this rebellion is expressed varies enormously, but some examples are:

- Some false teachers have been polygamists, even when it is clear that the NT forbids this and human societies have outlawed it. This is rebellion against the code of marriage and faithfulness.
- Some have taught that fornication with many women is acceptable or have taught women to be promiscuous to seduce new disciples into the fold. The Children of God in the 1970s did this.
- Some have been rebellious against national governments and have believed that they were above human laws. Thus some failed to pay taxes or have broken various social laws.
- Some have started uprisings against the social order or have started a national rebellion. One example is the disaster at Munster in the Reformation.
- Any teacher that is antinomian is rebellious against God's moral law.
- Any teacher that takes on titles and offices of Christ is a rebel. Examples would include Anne Lee and William Branham.
- Any teacher that produces a new set of Scriptures (e.g. the Mormons) is a rebel.
- Any teacher that promotes behaviour that is opposed to common decency is a rebel. This would include many of the disturbing facets of the Toronto Blessing.
- Any teacher that takes advantage of the people of God and abuses them is a rebel against the body of Christ.

We could go on ad infinitum, but this is sufficient. Many false teachers are rebellious.

Roots

Look to the rock *from which* you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit *from which* you were dug.
Isa 51:1

One of the ways to spot a potential false teacher is to see what roots he has. Now we must be judicious in this since a man can repent of his background and turn away from it; however, they usually do this very vocally and testify about the turnaround.

If a man has a long background in something heretical then there is likelihood that he will be a heretic. What faith did his parents hold? Who brought him to faith? What church (if any) was he brought up in as a child? What seminary did he go to (if any)? What was his initial ministry? What para-church organisations has he been part of? What denomination does he work for? These can often give you a flavour of what sort of ministry he will have.

For instance, if the man went to one of the main Dispensational seminaries in America and has never repudiated that, then it is almost certain that he will be a Dispensationalist, even if he never directly mentions it. Dispensationalism is incompatible with Calvinism and the

roots of it are deeply heretical and appalling.²⁵ Yet in America there are many who believe that it is acceptable to be a Dispensational and Reformed. John MacArthur is one such pastor; the result is utter theological confusion, and this is clearly seen in his teaching. Though he has many good things to say, he has been utterly confused on major dogmatic subjects, such as election, eschatology, limited atonement and Christology – though he has repented of some of these; but the errors are still in his printed books. His study Bible has many good technical aspects (written by others) but demonstrates serious theological problems and will cause confusion.

Example: I once knew a locally well-known UK minister who was trained at the Methodist Cliffe College. He went on to be a pastor of an FIEC church, and superintended a region, that was publicly Reformed (Calvinistic); for a time in the 70s he was supported by Martyn Lloyd-Jones. In fact, this man was not only a free-offer Amyraldian, but was virtually Arminian; this is not surprising considering his training college. This theology then led to a number of other ministerial problems.

The rock from which true Christians are hewn is Abraham; or rather the faith and calling of Abraham, something he illustrated by his life. ‘Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you; for I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him’ (Isa 51:2). Everything else is rejected, just as Paul repudiated all his Judaic training (Phil 3:5-8). Nothing counts for the true Christian, as a foundation for his life, except the calling and faith that God gives which results in the New Covenant in Christ – the fulfilment of the covenant promise to Abraham..

Sin

Do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin. Rm 6:13

Awake to righteousness, and do not sin. 1 Cor 15:34

Do not sin. Eph 4:26

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin. Jm 4:17

We have partly covered this earlier in looking at character. However, sin is very frequently a prominent characteristic of false teachers and needs a special mention.

Gross public sin is a fruit of character and it demonstrates that a man is false in his ministry.

If a prominent leader is clearly guilty of gross public sin, then he is false and that is the end of it. Thus if a leader commits adultery and remarries, that is enough for you to cease all involvement with the person. He is a sinner, not a good teacher. However, there are many other flagrant sins that leaders commit on a regular basis.

The Charismatic false prophet Todd Bentley once boasted to an audience how he committed two great sins. The first was that he kicked a lady in the face as she came to the platform. The second was that he punched a Chinese man so hard in the stomach, on the platform, that his teeth fell out. These were done in the nonsensical pursuit of exorcising evil spirits.

²⁵ See my ‘Origins of Dispensationalism’.

I ask you, if anyone cannot see that this is gross public sin, then I doubt if that person can be saved at all. Yet millions of churchgoers both saw this and heard his story – and they continued to proclaim that he was a prophet of God. Other big church leaders also supported him as a man of God.²⁶ I tell you that they are all wrong; Bentley is a false prophet and these sins (amongst many other problems, including adultery) show it.

Bentley is not alone. Smith Wigglesworth, the great British Pentecostal preacher, also punched a man hard in the chest on the platform. The man died of his injuries a few days later.²⁷ If killing someone isn't a pointer to the fact that they are a wolf, then I do not know what is.

Now, while we are all sinners and all make many mistakes, there is a difference between the normal weakness of the flesh and an occasional lapse into the old nature, for which we all repent and confess, and gross public sin, sometimes that is not repented. When someone is on a platform acting as a prophet of God and making all sorts of claims, and yet at the same time is committing adultery (as Bentley did), then that man is false.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Matt 7:15-16

Truth

The word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth. Ps 33:4

We have covered some aspects of this earlier but the matter is so important that it needs a mention here.

There are some theological principles that must be established first.

A key element is that all God's work is done in truth. God does nothing that does not involve truth. Therefore, any supposed Christian work that has no truth in it, or has lies and falseness in it, is a demonic work. False doctrines are the work of demons to undermine the church.²⁸

Now Paul tells us that the end times is a period when doctrines of demons will be especially notable. The days we are in now are filled with heretical doctrines and lies in churches. We need to take note. The key fight today is for the truth of God's work against the words of men and demons.

Another element is that the truth is Christ:

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'. Jn 14:6

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Jn 1:14

Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Jn 1:17

²⁶ Such as Terry Virgo.

²⁷ It is noteworthy that even a well-conditioned, strong man like Harry Houdini died as a result of a punch to the stomach.

²⁸ 1 Tim 4:1, 'Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.'

Thus anything that Christ does in the church is full of truth. This will be mainly seen in being the expression of God's word, which is also the truth since it is the manifestation of Christ:

The entirety of Your word is truth. Ps 119:160

Therefore, anything that occurs in the church which is not full of truth cannot be of Christ. Anything that contradicts God's word is not of Christ. Anything that is a lie is not of Christ.

The is perhaps the most important litmus test of any ministry; is it full of truth; is it full of Christ; is it a work of God?

Thus it goes without saying that any teacher whose work is not full of truth is a false teacher. There is no point in listing examples for this because the list is endless, involving every historical heretic and every false teacher around today (of which there are thousands).

Ululation

Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry. Rm 13:13

Let all things be done decently and in order. 1 Cor 14:40

For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your *good* order. Col 2:5

What is ululation?

It means to hoot, screech, howl or wail as an expression of strong emotion.

Now when the church was more sensible, it taught the importance of self-control, which is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23).

Paul mentioned it when explaining the Gospel to Felix: 'he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come', (Acts 24:25).

Paul explains that everyone who runs the race of faith should be self-controlled: 'Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things', (1 Cor 9:25); 'temperate' here means self-controlled.

One of the qualities necessary for being a church leader is self-control:

For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled. Titus 1:7-8

But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience. Titus 2:1-2

However, that time has passed and churchgoers are no longer self-controlled. They have been encouraged to throw away being temperate and instead to be wildly expressive of emotion, whatever that emotion is.

In the Toronto Blessing, and other such false movements of enthusiasm,²⁹ the first thing to be jettisoned is self-control (and brains); after that anything can happen. Thus people in these movements behave in the most stupid, facile, puerile and wicked manner. If you abandon self-control you can then believe that any ululation is serving God and expressing the Spirit. I once knew a famous church worship leader / pastor who, during the Toronto Blessing madness jumped up and down on the spot for a long time shouting, '*I am a piece of toast*'. The devil was laughing his metaphorical socks off!

Now we have mentioned the behaviour that occurred in the Toronto Blessing, Azusa Street, Pensacola and other places already, and it is familiar to all, so we do not need to develop this here. Suffice to say that all such behaviour, where self-control is lost, is indecent³⁰ and is disorder. It is to be condemned as pagan and sinful.

One of the evil fruits of the 1904 Welsh revival was the appearance in churches of the 'Hywl', which was similar to the later singing in the Spirit. But this was a corporate howling noise that was supposed to be an expression of the Spirit. People would feel that God was meeting with them if there was a hywl even if there had been no teaching message or hymn singing. It was a giving over to emotionalism instead of decent behaviour.

So when a church leader either screeches or howls himself he is to be condemned. Any church leader that encourages a congregation to behave in this pagan manner is also to be condemned.

The devil's purpose is to try to ruin the testimony of God and he does that partly by trying to ruin churches. It is preferable to Satan to ruin a church rather than kill it off completely. Thus he seeks to reverse the testimony of God in churches by getting saints to be and do the opposite of what God wills. Wild expressive behaviour and ululation is sheer paganism; it is what happens in heathen rituals. Getting churches to behave like pagans is a victory for the devil.

Thus ululation is a sign of a false teacher.

Unitarianism

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matt 28:19

God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts. Gal 4:6

Whilst there is a liberal denomination that goes by this name (the Unitarian Church), unitarianism is a chief doctrine of a number of heretical movements and churches. In essence, unitarianism is a theology that rejects the Trinity and denies the deity of Christ and/or the Holy Spirit. In addition, most unitarians believe in the goodness of humanity (i.e. deny total depravity), undermine the atonement and deny hell.

²⁹ Enthusiasm was the historic name for outbreaks of mystical Charismatic wildness and emotionalism.
³⁰ 1 Cor 14:40, 'Let all things be done decently and in order'.

Historically there were many unitarians in the early church centuries that formed parts of various heretical theologies (such as Monarchianism).³¹ Later in history the Socinians were unitarian.

Most famous are the Oneness Pentecostals that developed shortly after the beginnings of Pentecostalism. This anti-Trinitarian group received a boost during the influence of Latter Rain and Manifest Sons of God theologies (1948 onwards) since William Branham despised the Trinity. These folk baptise in the name of Jesus only.

The Christadelphians are anti-Trinitarian and do not believe in the godhood of Jesus Christ, while the Spirit is impersonal, being the expression of the power of God.

The Quakers (Society of Friends) are also unitarians and also became completely liberal by the 20th century.

However, there are groups who may not call themselves unitarians but come very close to it. Any group that downplays Christ as the eternal Son come close to unitarianism. Messianic Christian teachers come close to this by emphasising God the Father and downplaying the ministries of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Any person who denies the godhead of Christ or the Holy Spirit is a false teacher.

Vanity

Therefore let no one boast in men. 1 Cor 3:21

That you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 1 Cor 4:6

Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head. Col 2:18-19

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the pre-eminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church. Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God. 3 Jn 1:9-11

Being vain is having an excessively high opinion of one's abilities, or worth; an excessive pride in one's achievements, and showing it.

We do not need false humility and grovelling about how rubbish we all are in order to be acceptable, but neither should we boast about how important or great we are.

Sadly, we see many false leaders guilty of this, both in demonstrations of pride in the way they carry themselves on the platform and in their expectations of obedience to people beneath them in their authoritarian church hierarchy.

³¹ Monarchianism, modalism: A heresy which seeks to protect the unity of the Godhead. Two types: a) Dynamic Monarchianism – denied the personality of the logos, making it a mere power of God. This power operated in Jesus, a mere man, and eventually deified him. Both Christ and the Spirit are attributes of God. [This is seen today in Unitarianism and Socinianism as well as Oneness Pentecostals.] b) Modalistic Monarchianism – The names, 'Father, Son Holy Spirit' are just titles for different modes or manifestations of the same person. It denies the Trinity. In the West this was known as Patripassianism (the 'Father suffers' and became incarnate); in the East it was known as Sabellianism (after Sabellius).

Some people are just vain on the platform and act with arrogance. Others have an appearance of humility and yet are worse by also having expectations of being obeyed in their church leadership.

I once knew a famous church leader who was exceptionally winsome and appeared to be a quietly spoken, humble man. Indeed, I joined with him for a time because I saw this as a godly trait. However, over time this man became accepted as an apostle and began to lead a new denomination in a totally authoritarian manner. Fully accepting ideas (false ideas) of apostleship,³² he dominated a denomination that ended up containing hundreds of churches around the world. As he began to consolidate this despotic empire decades ago and centralise his church groups I left his movement that I had helped to prosper.

What was really worrying was that this man fully believed that God spoke to him and he then spoke to people below him, who then implemented that counsel in churches. As I have explained elsewhere this is blasphemy by taking on a mediatorial role in the body of Christ. Such problems always arise when churches follow human (demonic) structures instead of a simple Biblical home church plan.

Worse still was his centralisation plan to gather several churches together in order to have a large church (which it still is). When several leaders reacted against this we were put down rather squarely (and later resigned) and he stated that the large church was necessary to authenticate his apostolic ministry! What he meant was that he wanted to have a large church like the people he was fellowshiping with internationally. The idea that a church of hundreds is necessary to authenticate a man is blasphemy. The head of the body is Christ.

My point here is that this man was, to all outward appearances, a really nice, humble fellow. But the practice of his ministry was full of vanity. This accusation would shock him, even today, and it would shock his supporters, but it is true. No man dare say the things he said and demand the submission he expected.

However, more commonly we see false teachers on the platform act in the most extraordinary vain ways. It is pointless to list all these, as it is easy to see however I will mention one.

When Benny Hinn (and others like him) stroll around a stage and blow the Holy Spirit on to an audience and see waves of people fall down, that is arrogant vanity and blasphemy. The idea that a man can dominate the Spirit and throw him around to knock men down is arrogance of the first order. This does not demonstrate the spiritual power of the man, he is a false leader. What it does is demonstrate his ability to use occult manifestations, based upon hypnotism and passive suggestibility; something that has happened in paganism (and even stage illusionists and hypnotists) for centuries. If Derren Brown can do this for entertainment, then Benny Hinn does not need God to help him do it. There is no precedent for this behaviour in Scripture.

When you see a leader behave in an arrogant and vain way, know that he is false.

³² That is, that NT apostleship means one man having authority over a number of churches. This is a lie. Biblical apostleship in the church is essentially being a missionary. It is being sent from a home church to establish a new one. Evangelists may spread the Gospel message in a new area but apostles lay the foundations of a new church. When the church is up and running, they walk away to return to what they were in the home church. Apostles have no regional authority – that is an archbishop.

Witchcraft

And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people. Lev 20:6

He ... practised soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists [spiritualists] and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *Him* to anger. 2 Kg 21:6

I will be a swift witness against sorcerers. Mal 3:5

We have covered some aspects of this earlier in the section on the occult, but it is worth examining this factor in more detail.

Witchcraft is the practice of magic, especially black magic, by the use of spells and the invocation of spirits. It is the essence of selfishness because it seeks to make the world fit into what one wants. The dominant factor in witchcraft is to get what you want and to achieve this by magic without effort. In fact the motto of Black Magic is, 'Do what thou wilt'.

For centuries witchcraft was outlawed in Britain until the witchcraft act was repealed in the early 1950s. After this there was a huge resurgence of interest in all forms of witchcraft, leading to it being prominent in the New Age religions and sects that grew up after 1960.

Now I do not need to delineate the rise of witchcraft as that is a separate subject, which I have covered before. What is important here is to show that there are forms of heretical behaviour in the church that are very close to it.

Remember, the essence of witchcraft is to get what you want by spiritual power; it is selfishness added to casting spells. Spells are incantations that are used to summon supernatural help, often in the form of summoning a demon of some sort. So spells are knowing the right form of words to use to get spiritual help.

All these features are found in churches that are founded upon the Word of Faith and earlier New Thought models. These promote selfishness by advocating that God wants you to have all your desires fulfilled, when in fact God promises tribulation and persecution to saints in this life (Jn 16:33; Acts 14:22, 20:23).

The Gospel is not about 'me' it is about God and his testimony on earth; and this testimony is fought over (hence persecution). The full benefits of the Gospel hope are for the new world ('treasure in heaven') not this life. When someone complains that this is 'pie in the sky when you die', yes it is; that is the Biblical teaching. Abraham sought for a heavenly city not an earthly one. We are only sojourners passing through earth in this life; the benefits of salvation are for the life to come. Who would want the passing, temporary, superficial fancies of this world anyway?

Word Faith prosperity teaching also has its own hidden knowledge ('occult') and spells (certain types of prayer). Thus they teach forms of 'name it and claim it'. This is gaining possession of something you want, whether health, healing, prosperity or even material goods like a car, as a result of praying in a certain way and having what they call faith. This is but another form of witchcraft.

Some Charismatics go even further and try to invoke an angel to help them achieve some sort of ministry. William Branham did this and could not 'heal' or have words of knowledge unless his spiritual guide was with him. This was no angel but was a demon. Angels do not

perform this sort of activity in the New Covenant and no elect angel would support a man who denied the Trinity. Today there are many Charismatics who seek to channel spirit guides of one sort or another.

Now all this is witchcraft. It is the summoning of a spirit in order to help you get what you want supernaturally without work.

Yonggi Cho's visualisation is also a form of witchcraft and the practice derived from pagan religious doctrines (see earlier). The use of guided imagery is now a widespread tool of US health care practitioners, mainly to relieve stress levels through visualising peaceful scenes in conjunction with ambient music. In Christian circles it goes by many names: 'Visualising', 'Possibility Thinking', 'Incubating Prayer', 'praying with the imagination', 'Mind Power', 'New Thought', 'Mental Healing' and so on.

Without any doubt witchcraft is operating in Charismatic churches. And this is not surprising as witches were involved from the very beginning of the Pentecostal movement. William Seymour's meeting in Azusa Street had mediums and witches present doing their invocations and no one threw them out. There was so much witchcraft that some people were scared off and wrote about it. Even Charles Parham, the Pentecostal pioneer was so incensed by what he described as '*animalism*' and '*all kinds of spells*' that he said, '*God is sick at His stomach*'. Spiritualists and mediums from all over Los Angeles began to attend the meetings and even contributed their seances and trances to the meetings. Although this disturbed Seymour, he could not control it. Frank Bartleman said that there were so many spiritualists, hypnotists and crooks involved in the meetings that people were afraid that the devil would get them, and Bartleman was a Pentecostal supporter.

There is also a strand of feminism in the church that is very close to witchcraft.³³

Hand in hand with the promotion of a feminist goddess is the worship of the serpent. An esteemed Lutheran printing house has published a reworking of Genesis by an 'eco-feminist' to rehabilitate Satan as the wisdom giving serpent and show Eve's temptation as the maturing of the human race. Feminist commentators have even said that their strategy was the slow execution of Christ and Yahweh. A recent 'Christian' systematic theology even said, '*The Ultimate is responsible for the evil in nature as well as the good ... The independence of creatures places some limitations on her style of action.*'³⁴ So God is responsible for sin and is female!!!

The editor of a leading Christian academic journal also stated that the serpent must now be seen as a liberator, Eve as a heroine in her quest for wisdom and God as a tyrant.³⁵ Another theologian stated that Jesus was, '*Very Goddess and Very Man*' seeing the Lord as the incarnation of the feminine Wisdom figure which will bring in a new lease of life for Christianity today.³⁶

This is all clear Gnosticism and paganism; feminism leads to blatant heresy on so many occasions. You can find web sites such as 'Goddess Aware Christian Women'³⁷ where 'Charismatic Christians' share pages with avowed pagans - feminism being the common

³³ What follows is an adaptation from 'Charismatic Catastrophe'.

³⁴ Ninian Smart & Steven Konstantine; *Christian Systematic Theology in a World Context*; Fortress (1991), p143.

³⁵ Francis Watson, 'Strategies of Recovery and Resistance: Hermeneutical Reflections on Genesis 1-3 and Its Pauline Reception'; *Journal for the Study of the NT*; 45 (March 1992); p79-103.

³⁶ James M Robinson; *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, ed. Karen L King, Fortress (1988); p113-127.

³⁷ <http://groups.msn.com/GoddessAwareChristianWomen>

ground. On the home page the assistant manager says, ‘*May the Holy Spirit shine Her light upon you*’. Associated topics include: magic, Gnosticism, Christian mysticism, a mystic rosary, witchcraft, healing spells and Masonry.

The Charismatic Movement is the main cause of the rise of feminism amongst modern evangelicals. Before this it was the Pentecostal and Holiness movements that featured many famous women leaders, from the Holiness voodoo priestess Maria Woodworth-Etter, to Pentecostal Kathryn Kuhlman.³⁸ [See my ‘Charismatic Catastrophe’ for further details.]

Radical Christian feminism has a severe agenda. Feminist theologian Naomi Goldenberg writes,

God is going to change...We women are going to bring an end to God. As we take positions in government, in medicine, in law, in business, in the arts and, finally, in religion, we will be the end of Him. We will change the world so much that He won't fit in anymore. ... Every woman working to improve her own position in society or that of women in general is bringing about the end of God. All feminists are making the world less and less like the one described in the Bible and are thus helping to lessen the influence of Christ and [Jehovah] on humanity.³⁹

This has very close connections to the aims of the Jewish Talmud and Kabbalah⁴⁰ and the conspiracies of modern Jewish political agendas: destroy Christianity, kill Christians and establish a new world order under a totalitarian government based on serpent religion.

We must understand the close connection between feminist political activism, eco-feminism, lesbianism, goddess worship, Wicca (witchcraft) and radical Charismatic feminism. This shouldn't surprise us as the feminist agenda is sheer paganism reborn; which is why so many feminists become goddess-worshippers, Gaia worshippers and witches.

Miriam Simos (known as Starhawk) openly stated as long ago as 1979 that, ‘*The feminist movement is a magico-spiritual movement as well as a political movement ... it changes consciousness ... It is also magic by another definition: the art of causing change in accordance with the wil*’.⁴¹ This witch has been a speaker in St James' church, Piccadilly.

I must avoid the temptation to develop this further; the point is made. Whenever a leader demonstrates features of witchcraft you can be sure that he / she is a wolf.

Womanising

Flee also youthful lusts. 2 Tim 2:22

Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.1 Pt 2:11

This need not occupy too much space; it is a sad feature of history that everyone is aware of.

³⁸ The Methodists had a few women leaders, but not many.

³⁹ Naomi R. Goldenberg; *Changing of the Gods: Feminism and The End of Traditional Religions*; (1979).

⁴⁰ See ‘Depths of Deception’ and ‘The true position of Jews’.

⁴¹ Miriam Simos, (Starhawk), *The Spiral Dance, : The Rebirth of the Ancient Goddess*, Harper & Row (1979), p196.

Sex is a fundamental temptation and one that the devil uses frequently to get someone off guard.

Sadly, many church leaders have fallen into serious levels of womanising and even frequenting prostitutes. Every generation sees examples of this. However, it has to be said in a clinical fashion, that Pentecostalism has seen far more of this going on than other denominations. Some of the stories were so extravagant that movies were made of them; such as that of Aimee Semple McPherson.

It is not even uncommon to find that a church leader has fornicated with almost every female member of his church. I have known such a situation locally where this happened. It is also common that one church leader runs off with the wife of another church leader. I have also seen this locally.

I will avoid making list of examples of church leader womanisers, but such a list is not short.

If you see that a leader is guilty of womanising, then avoid him; he is false.

Worldliness

For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption. Gal 6:8

You died with Christ from the basic principles of the world. Col 2:20

A true Christian minister has died to the world (Gal 6:14). That being the case he is prepared to endure hardships and does not seek what the world seeks – expensive foreign holidays, a new car annually, a big house, the trappings of modern gadgets and so forth.

I once heard of a supposed church minister who insisted on taking 14 vacations a year. The person who told me this was a good pastor friend who had not had a holiday for years. My friend was a true shepherd; I doubt the validity of the other guy.

When I was a young believer, pastors of small Baptist and Independent churches struggled to maintain an existence. However, most of them were good men and reasonably effective as leaders. Despite straightened affairs, they did not starve and had manses and cars.

Today, after the doctrinal changes made by the Charismatic Movement, many church leaders today are wealthy by comparison with ordinary folk. The larger Charismatic churches have leaders that have new cars every two years and large houses. Sometimes these houses are given to them outright on the back of gift days from the congregation. I have seen folk who are poor and struggling, contribute to some bloke get a free up market house. Gerald Coates used to live in Clive of India's stately home.⁴²

Leadership salaries are also pegged to certain professions. One Charismatic leader boasted that he was worth the huge salary he earned because he was the equivalent of a company CEO. I doubt that man could run a small business effectively let alone a corporation. This is how ridiculous Charismatic churches have bloated leadership wages and privileges.

⁴² Robert, 1st Baron Clive of Plassey (1725–74), British general and colonial administrator; known as Clive of India. In 1757 he recaptured Calcutta, following the Black Hole incident, and gained control of Bengal. He served as governor of Bengal 1765–7, but was implicated in the East India company's corruption scandals and committed suicide. [Oxford Ency.]

Of course, in America TV evangelists have fleets of limousines, Lear jets, boats and multiple mansions. They have had their reward.

In comparison Jesus was born poor, lived on offerings, had no home of his own and often slept rough; in fact he needed a miracle to pay his temple tax.⁴³ Paul could have been rich with his natural gifts but he also lived poor and also had no home of his own.

When you see a leader living in opulent conditions and clearly loving living in this world and demanding the fruits of it, you are looking at a false teacher.

Xanthippe

For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled. Titus 1:7-8

This word was the name of a historic woman and came to be used as a description of a scold or shrew. Xanthippe was the wife of the philosopher Socrates [5th century BC]. Her bad-tempered behaviour towards her husband has made her proverbial as a shrew, or a bad-tempered or aggressively assertive woman [N.B. Shakespeare's 'Taming of the Shrew'].]

I will use the term here to mean bad-tempered and aggressive.

It is surprising, considering the clear fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23,⁴⁴ that any church leader could manifest bad temper or anger and still be considered godly. Yet there have been many cases of bad-tempered men in church leadership that have gained multitudes of followers.

One example is John Nelson Darby, who could be remarkably impatient and abusive when he felt thwarted. It was his emotional insecurities that led him to build an exclusive new church denomination (Plymouth Brethren) that fulminated against everyone not with him, even former friends (like George Muller). However, the classic example of his bad-temper was seen during one of his several preaching tours of America. In this he was thwarted by someone asking quite reasonable questions and interrupting his talk. Losing his temper he shouted at the man, in public, '*I am here to supply exposition; not brains*'.

I have noticed that many false teachers are guilty of aggressive nasty behaviour and losing their temper when they fail to answer direct questions from critics. In recent years we have seen various Charismatic leaders talk about killing their critics even on the platform.

Example: Benny Hinn who said, regarding his critics, '*I wish I could just ... find one verse that says, "If you don't like 'em, kill 'em" ... don't attack God's servants ... you stink... I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machine gun – I blow your head off.*'⁴⁵

Any leader who demonstrates aggressive, nasty, bad-tempered, impatient behaviour, or who issues threats, cannot be a true Christian.

⁴³ Matt 17:27.

⁴⁴ 'The fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, **peace**, longsuffering, **kindness**, **goodness**, faithfulness, **gentleness**, **self-control**.'

⁴⁵ TBN's *Praise The Lord Show*, 9.11.90.

Yagger

For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ. 2 Cor 2:17

We have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 2 Cor 4:2

What is a yagger? It is a Scottish word for a peddler (also jagger, hawker).

The idea of peddling is anathema in the church and the preaching of the Gospel. The Gospel is freely given to the elect to receive and God's grace is given to men as a free gift. Thus when churches start to peddle the Gospel to make money this is an act of great iniquity.

There are various aspects to peddling the Gospel.

The first does not involve money but makes the Gospel presentation something like an offer to lap up. It emphasises selfishness and an offer you cannot refuse. It ignores any cost (despite Jesus' warning to count the cost) and presents the Gospel as a free offer, as if someone were selling soap.

Very often this sort of Gospel presentation is surrounded by advertising and big events, such as campaigns and crusades; and the whole thing is bundled up like some jamboree. All this carry on is hustling the Gospel. Those leaders that present such offers, emphasising what God can do for you, are yaggers. They ignore the fact that God commands men to repent (Acts 17:30).

The second aspect is worse and this involves men, churches and organisations seeking to make money out of preaching the Gospel. American TV evangelists are the very worst of this sort of heresy. There is little difference between such charlatans and Tetzels selling papal indulgences in Reformation Germany.

Money should never even be mentioned as part of the Gospel message. In fact, neither should it ever be mentioned in church, apart from giving it away for some purpose. Churches do not need to hustle for money if they are operating in a Biblical fashion. Even full-time workers (a rare thing) should never mention money; they should live by faith if they are truly called to full-time work or they should support themselves as Paul did most of the time.

So, being a yagger, or hustling and hawking for money is indicative of a false leader.

Zionism

Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you [Israel] and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. Matt 21:43

There is no distinction between Jew and Greek. Rm 10:12

There is neither Jew nor Greek. Gal 3:28

This applies to one sort of false teacher from many backgrounds. It concerns the modern heresy of demanding support for Zionist Israel and Zionist political policies. This stems first from the false doctrine in Dispensationalism that separates the Jews from the church, claiming that God's purpose was first for the Jews and only temporarily for the church as a stopgap in God's plan. It avers that fleshly Jews are God's people whether they are in Christ or not, and that the future millennium kingdom is Jewish. None of these things are Biblical.

Out of Dispensationalism a number of other aberrant movements sprang up which amount to Judaizing the church, such as Messianic Christianity and the Jewish Root Movement, the errors of which we have no time to enter into here.⁴⁶

Thus there are churches and false teachers who insist that Christians fully support Israel and are completely dominated by Zionism. In itself, Zionism is a modern political movement that has been complicit in fomenting two world wars and the Russian Revolution in order to steal Palestine for a people who claim to be Jews but are not.⁴⁷

As a result of this we see the blasphemous waving of multiple Israeli flags throughout the whole congregation in John Hagee's church; pledging support for Israel even when the state is killing innocent women and children in Gaza and attacking hospitals and schools with missiles from American supplied fighters. Other churches have had Zionist terrorists and murderers speak in their church and pledged support for Israeli terrorism.

Calvary Chapel's Chuck Smith has been involved in a conspiracy to fund terrorists devoted to blowing up Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem.⁴⁸ Smith admitted that he had no compunction about unleashing a holy war that could possibly lead to the extermination of millions of Jews and Muslims because, '*it is all part of Biblical prophecy*'. That is, the building of a new temple on the holy mount, followed by a war on Jews would supposedly usher in the Dispensational millennium.

Smith then praised Stanley Goldfoot, founder of the 'Temple Mount Faithful', whom he called '*a wonder*' ... *His plan for the temple mount is to take sticks of dynamite and some M-16s and blow the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosques and just lay claim to the site*'.⁴⁹ Goldfoot is a mass murderer and recognised international terrorist. He helped plan the bombing of the King David Hotel that killed 100 Christian, Jewish and Muslim people in 1946 amongst other crimes. Smith even invited Goldfoot to speak in his church and admitted that he financed him.⁵⁰

Even if Zionism was a righteous political movement, the church is not called to support such things but to focus upon serving Christ, preaching the Gospel and building the church. Any spare time should be used in doing good to your neighbours. But Zionism is neither righteous nor peaceful. Zionism has been a murderous terrorist movement from

⁴⁶ See my papers: 'The Veil of Moses', 'The true position of Jews' and others.

⁴⁷ The vast majority of modern Jews are not even Semitic but are from Mongol / Turkic stock; thus they do not even have a material claim on the Abrahamic covenant (which is actually on for those in Christ; Gal 3:29). This is also the ruling party in Israel, which controls a strict apartheid policy against, not only Christians, Arabs and Muslims, but also the minority Jewish people the Sephardim. See my papers: 'The Depths of Deception' and 'The True Position of Jews'

⁴⁸ Executive Intelligence Review, 'Temple Mount fanatics foment a new Thirty Year's War', 3 November 2000.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ 'Evangelical Christians and the building of the temple', The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 11 November 2005.

the start. The history of the state of Israel is testament to that; note the many massacres of Palestinians after 1948, plus the forced evacuations of whole villages, tortures, kidnappings, shooting of children and stealing of land.

Any teacher who openly supports, and calls others to support, Zionism is a false teacher.

Conclusion

Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. Rm 16:17-18

Such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers. 2 Cor 11:13

There are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. Gal 1:7

False brethren secretly brought in ... that they might bring us into bondage. Gal 2:4

We should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting. Eph 4:14

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit. Col 2:8

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron. 1 Tim 4:1-2

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of gain*. From such withdraw yourself. 1 Tim 6:3-5

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words. 2 Pt 2:1-3

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 Jn 4:1

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 1:4

Apostolic teaching is full of warnings about deception, heresies, false workers, false teachers, false prophets, false apostles and false christes. There is almost more on this topic than any other except eschatology. This means that the church is always in danger of facing deception and must confront false leaders.

The following NT books contain clear warnings about false teachers:

- All four Gospels.
- Acts.
- Romans.

- 1 Corinthians.
- 2 Corinthians.
- Galatians.
- Ephesians.
- Philippians.
- Colossians.
- 2 Thessalonians.
- 1 Timothy.
- 2 Timothy.
- Titus.
- 2 Peter.
- 1 John.
- 3 John.
- Jude.
- Revelation.

Thus it is unusual for a NT book not to mention false teachers. However, even those that do not directly do this mention in passing the dangers of false doctrine.

In the face of such overwhelming warnings, it is clear that the church in every age should be very proactive in exposing false workers and fighting heretical doctrine. Sadly, this is not the case today. In an age where tolerance is the greatest virtue, acceptance of false teaching is now fully rampant in the church. The obvious result is that the modern church is in an absolute mess and under the judgment of God.

The warning throughout the NT is to identify the errors and the teachers and then withdraw from them. There is no choice. If your church does not expel them, you must withdraw. You will answerable to God on the Day of Judgement regarding this matter.

Brethren, do not let this fault afflict you. Make a stand for the truth.

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