

Southwestern Pastoral Conference
of the Western WI District at Tomah, WI.
February 8, 1994
by Rev. Kenneth Wenzel of Wonewoc, WI

A CHRISTIAN STUDY OF
SPIRITUALISM AND ITS WONEWOC CAMP

Whether Spiritualism and the spiritistic medium is a fraud or genuinely in touch with the spirit world, it does not really matter. But what does matter is the end result. The goal of this paper is to clearly show that Spiritism promotes a theology which denies the good news of Jesus in its totality as well as being in itself a clear violation of the law of God. While some think that Spiritism is a respectable religion and others view it as a way of entertainment, the Bible warns of its teachings as a way to eternal death.

The Lord God, the Creator of heaven and earth, calls Himself, "spirit" Jn 4:24. God is an infinite spirit who lives from everlasting to everlasting (Ps 41:13), is all powerful (Genesis 17:1), and is all knowing (John 21:17), and present everywhere (Jer 23:24).

In the beginning God created celestial finite beings whom the Bible calls angels or spirits. While their number is too numerous to count (Rev 5:11), they are a fixed number (Matt. 22:30). They are powerful spirits (2 Pet 2:10-11). While they do not have a body, they can appear in the form of a human. Abraham saw them (Gen 18); Lot saw them (Gen 19); Mary saw Gabriel (Luke 1); the shepherds saw a host of them (Luke 2); the women at the tomb of Jesus saw angels (Lk 24:4); and the disciples saw them at Jesus' ascension. The Lord tells us that we may very well have unknowingly met an angel during our earthly life (Heb 13:2).

However, from almost the very beginning many of these spirits sinned against the Lord (2 Pet. 2:4). These were then condemned to eternal judgment in hell (Jude 6) yet at

body and soul inspite of sin (John 3:16, Rev 21:3-4). Christians therefore worship Jesus as their King and Lord along with God the Father and the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14).

Yes, then as always, God is the infinite Spirit in the Trinity. Since the days of creation angels and fallen angels are created finite spirits. People are created by God to be of finite spirit and body now and someday forever in heaven. However, there is a "temporary" separation of the finite body and immortal spirit at the time of a human's bodily or earthly death. The body returns to the dust of the ground from which it was created and the spirit returns to God for eternal judgment (Eccl 12:7, Mt 25:31-46). The souls of believers are immediately purged of sin to live with Christ and the souls of unbelievers are locked away for judgement (I Pet. 3:19-20; Lk 23:46, Phil. 1:23). But finally on Judgment Day all bodies will rise from their graves (Jn 5:28-29), and be reunited with their souls for eternal life in either heaven or hell (I Cor 15).

Like Adam and Eve, people are still tempted to doubt God and His word and to try to get into forbidden areas. Many reject the warnings about Satan and his demons. Many want to be their own god. Many still want to act like God who rules over the spirits (angels, demons, souls of people) whom He has created. Some even go so far as to think they can get into God's business even though He forbids it. Thus the religion of Spiritualism rises in many forms.

Apart from Holy Scriptures, modern researchers view the growth of modern Spiritism as coming from groups alienated from the traditional patterns of life and of religious behavior and belief. They see it as a by-product of the secularization that appears to be the consequence of our industrial urbanization. Psychological analysis of the individual is urged for discovering the ultimate reasons.

Webster defines "Spiritualism" as "a belief in the frequent communication of intelligence from the world of spirits, by means of physical phenomena, commonly manifested through a person of special susceptibility called a *medium*." Webster only mentions "physical phenomena," subsuming under this term the "mental manifestations (automatic writing, clairvoyance, ect.)"

A *medium* is a person susceptible, according to the definition, to "spirit" influences. A modern Spiritist writes: "A medium may be described as a 'go between' the two worlds, a sort of psychic bridge; and, just as certain kinds of material are required for ordinary bridges, so they are necessary for this kind. This material is the

Hydesville, N.Y. One night a sound of bumping and rapping was heard in various parts of the room. None could be explained. Noises were heard again through out the house, at first only at night but then even during the day. Things began moving about the house without human agency. Mr. Fox was bothered by raps and violent rocking in his chair at his time of prayer. At first no meanings were given to these uncanny noises.

Modern American Spiritism dates its existence from the night of March 31, 1848, when, according to the recital of Mrs. Fox, the mother, her youngest child, Katie said, "Mrs. Splitfoot, do as I do," clapping her hands. The sound instantly followed. Then Margaretta, the next oldest, said, "No, do just as I do; count one, two, three, four," striking one hand against the other at the same time, and the raps came as before. This aroused Leah, the eldest, and she then conversed with the spirit. Soon they arranged a code of signals where by they asked questions and received in reply a series of answers given by means of ghostly taps. Leah was prompted to get a large alphabet, and, by pointing to the letters and having them identified by raps on the table, had spelled out to her this message: "Dear friends, you must proclaim these truths to the world. This is the dawning of a new era, and you must not try to conceal it any longer. When you do your duty, God will protect you, and good spirits will watch over you."

News about these events spread fast and the children became known for their talking with spirits. The family moved to Rochester, NY, where seances were given. The old belief that spirits of the dead could contact the living revived. In America a wave of spiritistic belief began and it quickly spread over the whole world.

New York City saw many demonstrations and were attended by some famous people such as William Bryant, Harriet Stowe, and James Cooper. Some very prominent people tried to prove that it was all a fake but failed. The Fox sisters visited Europe and Spiritism took its strongest hold in England. It became a fad for some and a religion for others.

At the Academy of Music in New York in October 1888, Margaretta made public confession that everything was a fraud. She seems to have become frightened about the evil it was creating. A confession of fraud was documented and witnessed. But Spiritualists all over the world denounced this confession. Many continued to be mediums, and strangely even Margaretta later retracted her confession and again entered into the Spiritualistic fold.

After the First World War, Spiritism again began to

potentially verifiable. But channelers often relay only on generalities that, intentionally or not, defy verification. Little investigation has taken place in comparison to what to Spiritualism has experienced.

In 1989, our congregation, St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church - Wonevok, WI., hosted a special Reformation festival and the public was invited to attend. Soon after a man from a nearby town came to my door and asked if he could speak to the congregation at our Reformation Festival. I got the feeling he had the idea that he might like to have "real" contact with Luther or proclaim a new reformation as Spiritualists use the term, "reformation." He eventually identified himself as a Spiritualist and attended actively at the Wonevok Spiritualist Camp. He told me that his wife had had a most serious kidney disorder (maybe cancer but I don't fully remember). But at the Wonevok Spiritualist Camp he claimed, she had been completely healed at the "healing tree." She also had at one time been a Lutheran and so he felt sort of "Lutheran." I got the impression that his wife was dead at the time of our meetings. I spoke the law and gospel to the man with no apparent reaction returned. However, I began to wonder if the man was insane, or was there something happening before me which was not natural. He was dressed in old clothes but the terminology from the scientific world which he was using was impressive. He talked wildly with excitement yet with a language that seemed way past his common education. He claimed to be doing a private research on a mold found mostly in dairy products. It was his goal to show that it was one of the triggers for cancer. He was counting on getting help to find this cure from the forces of nature and the spirits which were bearing down on Wonevok.

The man came back for several visits and between visits he would write letters to me. In these writings many letters of every word were hand written and almost an inch in size. But what was even more odd was the fact that inside many of the letters were also hand-drawn pictures. The writing was also quite scribbly. I read the letters but they made me uneasy, and so I threw them away not realizing at the time that such letters were probably authentic "automatic writings" from a Spiritist. In the letters he usually talked about drawing from the spirit forces of Wonevok to find a cure for cancer and world peace. He even drew some strange maps to show me how the Spiritualist camp at Wonevok could hope for such cures.

At our last meeting (a year or two after our first meeting) I again witnessed to him about Jesus without seeing how his heart really responded. I invited him also to worship but he never returned or wrote again. He was an old man and I have never heard what happened to him.

Hello, spirits! It's Wonewoc

Spiritualists holding annual retreat

By Richard W. Jaeger

Regional reporter

WONEWOC — "New Age" and "harmonic convergences" are old stuff for people like Al Brazzoni, the Rev. Lena Tharp and the Rev. Kattie Mahan.

The three are practicing spiritualists. They have been for longer than "new agers" like Shirley MacLaine, the actress, and Jose Arguelles, a reknowned Colorado art historian, have been on Earth.

And spiritualism, the credo they follow, has been flourishing for more than 100 years on a wooded hilltop overlooking this tiny Juneau County village 70 miles northwest of Madison.

"New age is just another name given to what we have been doing for years," Brazzoni said with a smile. "But, unlike Shirley MacLaine and her associates, our people aren't getting \$300 to \$500 a reading," the retired Milwaukee area stone mason continued.

Spiritualism is the science, philosophy and religion that believes in life after death. It is based upon communication with the spirit world by means of a medium and a belief in an "Infinite Intelligence called God by some, and Spirit by others."

Modern spiritualism, often considered a third religion, began in 1848 in Hydesville, N.Y.

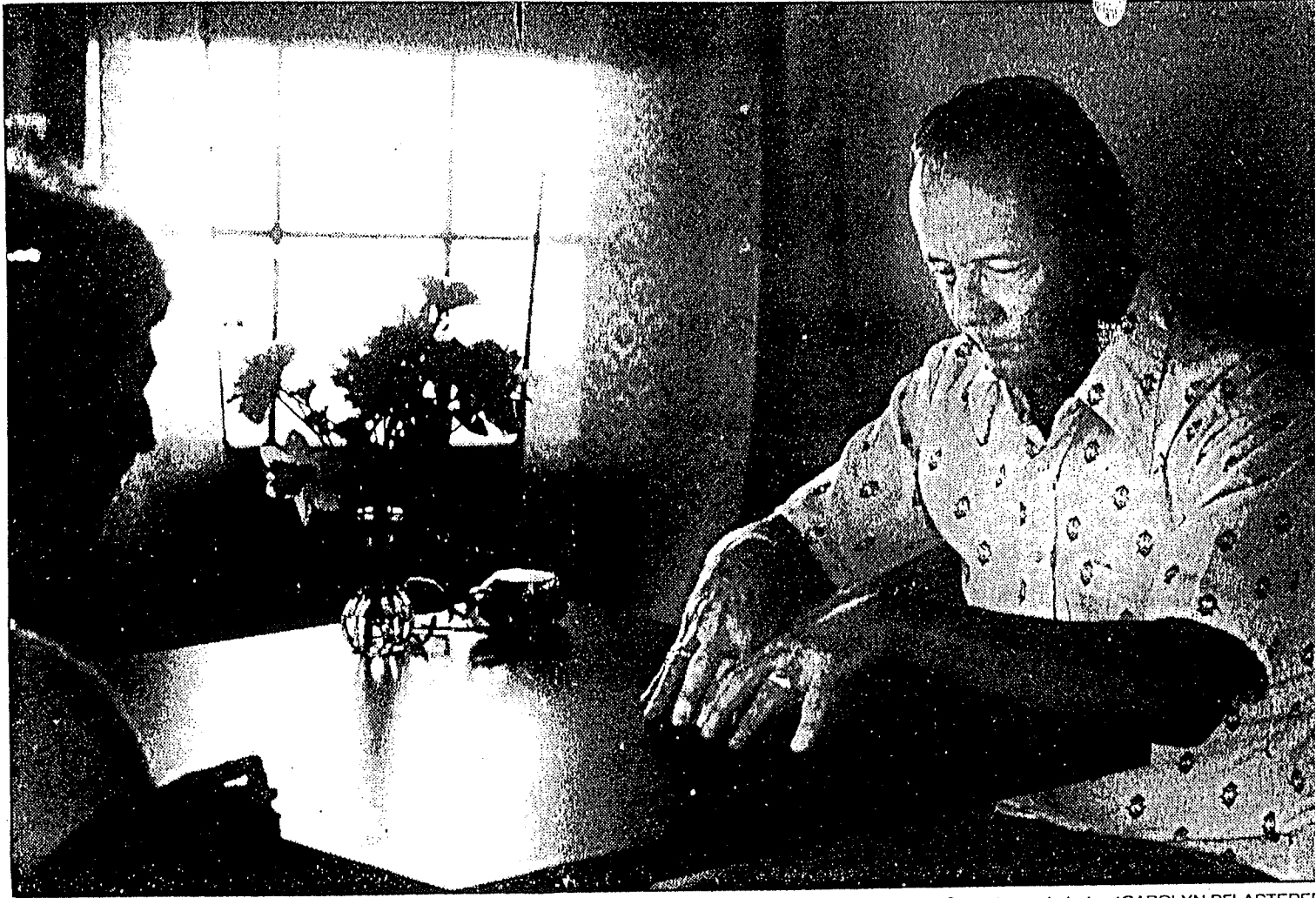
"New Age," which has flourished the past several years, is sort of a catch-all phrase for out-of-body experiences, astral (second body) projections or psychic phenomenon using such things as crystals or meditation. It gets its tag from the '60s and '70s as the world was said to move into the astrological "Age of Aquarius."

The practice of spiritualism is carried out in many forms from prophecy and clairvoyance to healings and levitations. Spiritualists claim there are 92 types of scientifically documented phenomenon showing contact with the spirit world.

Documented or not, for each of the past 89 years, spiritualists, mediums, healers and those in quest of communication with the spirit world have gathered under the towering white pines on the Wonewoc hilltop for the annual summer retreat camp of the Western Wisconsin Camp Association.

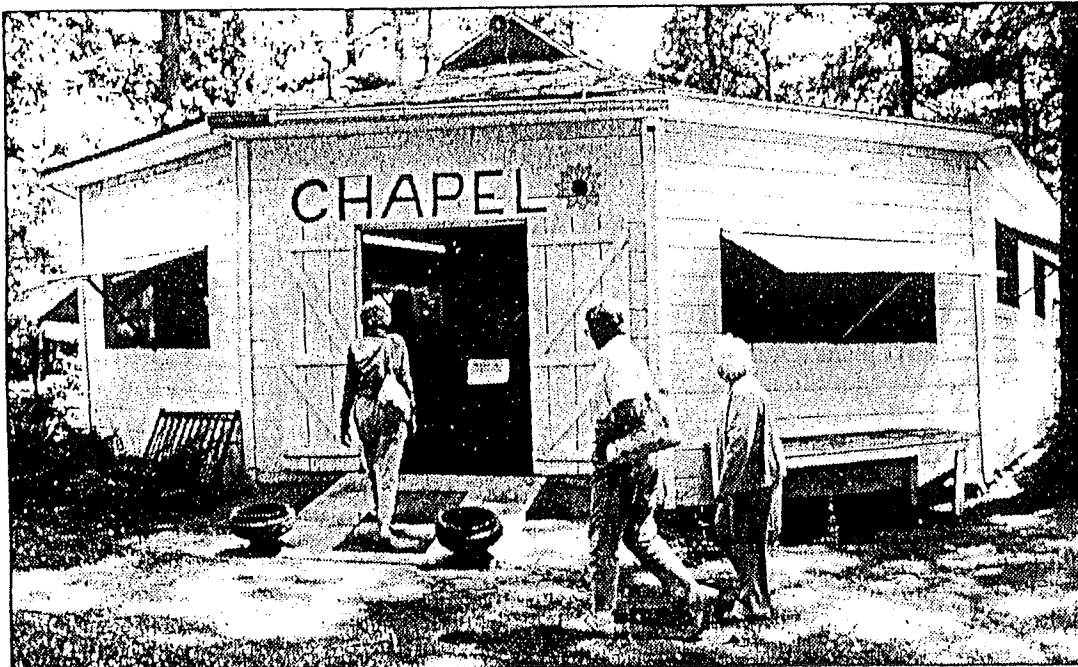
Many are there for this year's camp which will run through Aug. 27. The nationally recognized spiritualist camp is open to the public and attracts as many as 4,000 throughout its eight-week season.

Psychics or mediums at the Wonewoc camp receive only half of the \$12 "love offering" given for personal readings they make. The remainder goes to the camp. The offering is



State Journal photos/CAROLYN PFLASTEREI

Medium Si Baynes of Florissant, Mo., concentrates during a reading in his cottage at Wonewoc hilltop spiritualism camp



The quaint wooden chapel serves as the focal point for group meetings of visitors.



Camp leader Al Brazzoni talks

longed for has become a horror to me. They set the tables, they spread the rugs, they eat, they drink! Get up, your officers, oil the shields!" This verse is said to talk about preparing the seance tables to be used for spirit manifestations. In Acts 8:26-30 Philip is said to have been transported by a control spirit to speak to the Ethiopian eunuch. In Galatians 1:11-12 we read: "*I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.*" In his handbook for Spiritualists, Hull concludes from this text that the Apostle Paul received the gospel by spirit revelation through the mediumship of Jesus. II Peter 1:21 speaks of "holy men of God' producing prophecy "by the Holy Spirit." Spiritualists say this means that the prophets were inspired by the spirits.

It is noteworthy, that to both the Spiritualist and the Christian, Satan is God's archenemy. If Satan or an evil spirit is suspected at a seance, the Spiritist is urged to end the meeting. Satan is openly honored, of course, by some practitioners of the so-called "black arts" or "black magic." Spiritualists claim to follow God and contact only "good spirits."

The Spiritualistic medium is the person who serves as the alleged instrument for the manifestation of another personality or of some supernatural agency. In the seance it is the control spirit who takes possession of the medium. This spirit is not the same as the familiar spirit. In Spiritualist teaching, the familiar spirit is a spirit from God who is with us from birth and on into eternity. One may have many of them. The goal is to progress with them to moral goodness. Individuals departing from this life are said to migrate to the spirit world and develop there with the help of other spirits. Theoretically, a person could advance in the world to the level of God himself. However, Spiritualists believe that God also is evolving to higher and higher planes. Therefore, the best the spirit of the departed can do is reach a plane where God once was. This is very similar to what the Mormons believe.

What you do in your earthly life, determines where you will begin in the spirit world according to Spiritism. Those who do not drink alcoholic beverages or smoke tobacco, for example, will begin on a higher plane than others. People who lived very sinful lives will be earthbound until other spirits help them out of that plane.

The doctrinal position of this cult is described most often by its seven principles. Spiritualist G. Hey

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

p15

Taken from
Wonewoc
brochure
1993

Do we believe in God? Yes, we definitely do! We often refer to God as Infinite Intelligence. We do not believe in a personal God. Infinite Intelligence means to us an all pervading mind and intelligence. It consists of infinite vibrations that are in all things animate and inanimate. It is a dynamic and creative force and power that governs all things by immutable and unchangeable law.

Mind is the vehicle given to humanity on this physical plane. It is the avenue through which we are able to communicate with infinite intelligence. To make this connection, it requires that we utilize both hemispheres of the brain in a balanced and harmonious manner.

Do we believe in Jesus? Yes! We consider Him the greatest teacher and Medium that the world has ever known, a God-man who knew and applied the Spiritual Law to a greater extent than any human soul who has ever walked the earth. We hold His name Sacred in every way.

Do we believe in the Bible? Yes! We believe that God-truth has been given to mankind down through the ages and that these truths have been recorded in books known as Bibles.

Does Spiritualism recognize other churches? We emphasize the fact there is good in all religions. Truth is truth, whatever form it may be presented. Right living is still the key note to all religions. Religion is the process through which you recognize, understand, and demonstrate your spirituality. Spirituality is living your belief as a way of life, not something applied only on the Sabbath.

MEMORIAL LIST

Rev. Birdie Torgeson of Minneapolis, MN.

Transition 1/25/1993

Janet Lamping of Antigo, WI.

Transition 2/19/1993

Fran Pomykala of Brussels, WI.

Transition 11/29/1992

Do not stand at my grave and weep, I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow, I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on the ripened grain. I am the gentle autumn's rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush, I am the soft stars that
shine at night. Do not stand at my grave and cry, I am not there. I
did not die.
author unknown

is the great institution of the next life, and that every person has an affinity who will be his or her spouse for eternity; but in this present time there are frequent mistakes, and that, consequently, those who are not spiritual affinities being joined together are unable to agree and live in union. This they affirm to be the cause of all misfortune in wedded life.

In some of their books the victim of an unsuitable marriage is exhorted to bear his calamity, and to comfort himself with the certainty of receiving his own spouse in the next world, though hints that relief may come in the present life are occasionally given. Many Spiritualists, however, go much further, and declare that marriage should last only so long as the contracting parties may be disposed to live together. Spiritualist Mr. Noyes writes: "The adventitious sanctity of marriage derived from ecclesiastical ceremonies is doomed to be ignored by coming generations. The true sanctity of marriage relations, based on the Divine laws of human nature, must come to be recognized in its place, when the future race are fully initiated in the mysteries of Will."

How different does our Lord Jesus teach when He calls for marriage to be honored and life-long on earth (Heb 13:4& Matt. 19:5-6). In addition, Jesus indicates that there will be no marriages in heaven (Matt. 22:30).

At Spiritualistic meetings for worship, there is generally a demonstration of mediumistic powers, generally by clairvoyance and clairaudience, some hymns are sung, prayers spoken, readings (even from the Bible), and generally a lecture is delivered on some teaching of the cult. Some Christian hymns have even been reworded to fit their worship and faith while other Christian hymns seem to be used as they are.

The apparently supernatural phenomena connected with Spiritualism are many and varied, as in the practice of magic, with which they could also be classified. Harry Houdini who became involved in Spiritualism claimed that he could reproduce any of the phenomena by slight of hand, and he did expose many frauds. Many investigated Spiritualists, even famous ones, have been caught practicing fraud. In some books there are even lessons on how the phenomena is done. Thus many investigators say that 85% of the spirit phenomena is of trickery and the remaining percent is unexplained or real.

The Ouija Board is probably one of the best known and most common Spiritistic tools. This so-called toy has been the snag for many people into the religion of Spiritualism. It is a smooth board on which are printed the letters of the alphabet and the words, Yes, No, and Goodbye. A small

be from Him or have His blessing (Mt 7:21-23).

Seance is the most common feature of Spiritism. It is a French word which means "sitting" or "session." Usually the room is dark or only with very dim lighting. Often an object in the room moves to indicate the presence of a spirit. The medium then often goes into a trance to contact the spirits. Not all go into a trance. A change in tone or pitch of voice Control spirits or spirit guides who are often alleged to be Indian introduces the various spirits who identify themselves as spirits of the dead. It is generally agreed by Christians that if spirits really speak at a seance they are not the spirits of the departed but evil spirits impersonating the dead. For the Bible brings to our attention that a departed soul does not return to this world (Lk 16:27-31) and that departed souls are ignorant of what is happening on earth (Is 63:16). One also cannot wonder why the spirits in seances give only trivial information even though some of them were very famous and intelligent persons while they were alive on earth. Truly some of the above phenomena may not be evil in itself, but the spirit- way to these things and how they are sought, and promoted is clearly forbidden.

BIBLICAL WARNINGS

The Bible gives us one detailed account of what would today be called a Spiritualist's seance. It is the story of Saul and the witch of Endor (I Sam. 28:1-25). Today we would call her a medium.

As a believer King Saul had expelled mediums and spiritists from the Promised Land but upon wrecking his faith and failing to receive further directions from God, he turns to this forbidden art. It is interesting that the men around King Saul immediately knew where to look for such a forbidden medium.

King Saul disguises himself so that she would not recognize him and soon after his arrival she contacts the alleged spirit of Samuel who had recently died and had served as Saul's pastor. She seemingly sees more than she expected as she cries out in fear and now knows that it was King Saul who was visiting her. It is clear that this woman had access to supernatural knowledge.

The medium describes to Saul the spirit of the man she saw and while King Saul did not see anything, he assumes it must be Samuel. The spirit castigates Saul for his sins and echoes the previous messages of Samuel when he had been alive.

What really happened is impossible for us to say upon the

The term *spiritist* is related to the word for "know"; perhaps the difference between a spiritist and a medium lay in the medium's claim to be able to call up any spirit, while a spiritist engaged a "familiar spirit" through whom he could contact the dead. *One who consults the dead* may summarize the practices of the medium and the spiritist, or it could refer to a necromancer, someone who tells fortunes by consulting the dead, possibly by visiting their graves." It should be noted that the NIV does not use the terminology, "familiar spirit" but just "spirit." Dr. Becker comments on this word by writing: "It is not completely clear exactly what is meant by a "familiar spirit." This is the AV's translation of the Hebrew word OB, concerning the exact meaning of which there is some doubt. Perhaps all that we can say is that it is obviously an intelligent spiritual being with which a "witch" can establish contact. The Greek translators understood those who have familiar spirits to be ventriloquists. ...The possessed person or the medium very often speaks in a completely different voice."

Isaiah 8:19-20 reads: *When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living: To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.*" In other words the practice of consulting the dead is a rejection of God's revelation given to us in Holy Scriptures.

Spiritualists try to justify their sinful practices by calling the Old Testament prophets and Jesus himself mediums and/or they limit the prohibition to just the Old Testament people. However, in the Deut. 18 passage we note that God would drive out the nations that followed such arts. God's hatred of Spiritism was not limited to just amongst his chosen people. In addition for us New Testament people God has continued his prohibition in these arts by warning us that such practices are with Satan. In Acts 13 the Apostle Paul calls Elymas the sorcerer "a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?" (verse 10). In Gal. 5:19-20 St. Paul writes: *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft....* These passages may be only indirectly connected to Spiritualism and there are none that point directly to Spiritualism in the New Testament.

However, the most directive New Testament passages about Spiritism would involve those passages which warn about false teachings. For when one learns about their denials of God being a person and Jesus being the Son of God,

and did not inquire of the Lord. So the Lord put him to death. (I Chron 10:13-14).

Jesus help us ring the warning! To God be the glory!

Psychics see bright future for this writer

Appendix B p25

from
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7-31-1988

By Richard W. Jaeger

Regional reporter

Watch out Frank Denton. Step aside Ernest Hemingway. Dick Jaeger is on the move.

If the psychic readings I received at the Western Wisconsin Spiritualist Camp in Wonewoc come true, I am going to replace Denton as editor of The Wisconsin State Journal and I am going to write a book "that the world is waiting for."

Of course, psychic healer Si Baynes and medium John Serena, had a distinct advantage when they gave me those personal predictions. Both knew I was a reporter.

Serena also predicted I would be involved in weight loss and warned me to watch out for red meats and eat more green vegetables. He just happened to be sitting down the dinner table from me when I told camp director Al Brazzoni I had lost 50 pounds the past year.

Baynes, a veteran medium from Florissant, Mo., did hit a couple of things in my life on the head. He said I was thinking about building something and that I was worried about one of my children.

Now what father of four doesn't worry?

As far as building, yes, I am thinking of building a cabin, but not for a couple of years. Good guess?

Baynes, with the rapid fire lingo of a truck driver answering a CB call, went on to describe my mother speaking to me from the spirit world — at least he said she wore an apron. He only identified her after I confirmed she was dead.

I thought for sure he would tell me my mother-in-law, who died this past February, wanted to talk to me. If there is anyone in the spirit world who would have some choice words for me, it would be her. She was Irish.

Baynes was off base on other spirits he said were wanting to get through to me. Most of the names he rattled off were not familiar. Those that were, are still alive. He gave only first names and I think tried to pick those he believed were from my era. Wrong guess.

He said my son would have a happy marriage, my other son would drop his ideas of making lots of money and go on to school, that my daughter would become a success in creative ventures, and my other daughter would become a head nurse (after I told him she was a nurse and not a teacher.)

Now who can argue with success.

That is probably why those who give their \$12 "love offering" for such readings, go away happy and smiling. There are no dire predictions.

As for me, I like the prediction John Serena made. He said I will get a chance to sit back and relax and "do things for Dick" and maybe even travel.

Amen.

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