

what *other* people say — as long as it doesn't *involve us*. It *does* matter! It matters when our children and grandchildren are becoming *accustomed* to hearing terms and words that — in and of themselves — are anti-Scripture and anti-God of the Bible. It matters when Christians don't know the Word *well* enough to *recognize* when television programming is either New Age inspired or includes topics, plots, words and/or phrases that are anti-Bible and anti-Christian in their very nature.

Celebrities like Oprah Winfrey aren't as *dangerous* IF Christians know the Word *well enough to recognize* when her guests are espousing philosophies that are not acceptable according to the Word. Christians who *educate* themselves in the Word are prepared to *react* when society begins to accept as normal that which is *not* normal where the Scriptures are concerned. Christians *should* read and make *every* effort to be *aware* of the direction society is taking them — because that direction may well be in opposition to God. Too many Christians today are either *completely* out of touch with what is going on in the world around them — or — they *are* in touch but don't know enough about the Bible to *know* they should react.

Aristotle wrote: "It is the mark of the educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it." Just *listening* to the Oprah's of the world isn't *necessarily* poison for those Christians whose minds are *well educated* in the Word. It might in fact, *help* keep them *aware* of the pitfalls that society is constantly presenting to believers. Christians *should be able* to identify the patterns being created by society and *discern* whether those patterns and trends are leading *toward* Christianity or *away* from Christianity. They won't be *able* to discern those patterns however *if* they don't stay in touch with what is going on around them and — more importantly, they won't recognize the *dangerous* ones if they aren't well educated in the Word. Isaiah Berlin stated: "To understand is to perceive patterns." Christians have a *responsibility* to understand — understand the trends going on in our society and understand that Oprah (no matter *how* "Christian" she *used* to seem to be) is *now* demonstrating a pattern that she has become immersed in New Age philosophies and is *dangerous* to Christians who aren't *aware* of the serious error of those teachings. Christians who are out of touch with what's going on around them in society are *easily influenced* by the Oprah's of the world. Keeping their heads buried in the sand *makes them vulnerable* to accepting the teachings of Pied Pipers latching on to society's latest trends.

The responsibility is on *us* — as Christians — to be sufficiently in tune with the Scriptures *and* with our current society to recognize "bad stuff" when we *hear* it — whether it's from Oprah, someone in our own congregation or anyone else! Christians must never allow an influential Pied Piper to lead them away from God.

*"Diligence" is a privately funded publication of:
Dennis and Sherri Owens — Cincinnati, Ohio
diligence@gorfsystems.com — <http://www.gorfsystems.com/diligence/>*



DILIGENCE

"We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure." — Hebrews 6:11

A ministry of Dennis and Sherri Owens

Volume 7

June 1, 2008

Issue 9

Influential Pied Pipers

In the May 1st issue of *Diligence*, we discussed Oprah Winfrey's New Age fetish involving her Monday night internet classes with Eckhart Tolle as well as the classes with Marianne Williamson using the book *A Course In Miracles*. We don't want to belabor the subject of how *very* dangerous Oprah Winfrey is to Christians — but we *will* — at least this one more time, since it has become obvious that she is *completely absorbed* in New Age — and *way* too many Christians are *still* not recognizing that fact.

We understand that it is her *job* to air challenging, controversial and thought provoking programing. That — we accept — and understand. *Her* focus is and always *has* been on ratings. *Anything* that will "up" her ratings and viewership is "fair-game" as far as she is concerned. *That's* the way she keeps her job! The danger she poses to Christians however is exacerbated because of two important factors.

First, by the fact that *she* has obviously *accepted* the New Age philosophy — and *left* the Christian beliefs that she supposedly espoused for many years — a lot of *unsuspecting* Christians *allow* themselves to be influenced and "dragged into" New Age beliefs right along *with* her — *because* they *trust* her. It's an "if Oprah accepts it, it can't be bad" mentality. *That's* dangerous thinking.

The second important factor that exacerbates the danger she poses is the fact that — *because* she *is* so trusted by so many people, *every* person, author and subject matter she "pushes" on her program or through her Book Club is immediately granted *tremendous credibility* because of the level of credibility *she* has established through the years. Now — it *may* be, eventually some of that credibility will be lost — especially among Christians *if* she continues in the vein she is now going and Christians begin to *realize* New Age beliefs are *not* compatible with the Scriptures. In the meantime however, her *established* credibility gives credence to *anyone* or *anything* she indicates is acceptable in *her* sight. Oprah's recommendation instantly translates to impeccable credentials — no matter *how* right or how wrong the book, subject, author, or etc. might be. For example: the book she chooses for her Book Club *always* moves to #1 on *all* "Best Seller" lists. *That* level of influence can be dangerous for Christians who fail to discern truth from error!

We have stated previously in *Diligence* that New Age philosophies often *seem* to be very much in tune *with* Christianity. New Agers often speak of "God" and of "Jesus Christ." While that may *sound* good, *they* mean something completely

continued on page 2

different from what *Christians* mean when using the same words. The *less* familiar a Christian is with the Scriptures, the more likely he or she is to fall victim to New Age ideas and not even *realize* that he or she *has* in fact drastically strayed — if not completely abandoned — the Word of God. Unfortunately, our society has become so busy that many Christians no longer study the Bible daily and are therefore prime targets for buying into New Age philosophies — and not even *know* it.

Oprah's television show on Tuesday, May 13th, focused once again on a New Age subject. Her guest was Dr. Brian Weiss. Dr. Weiss is the author of numerous New Age books — his most recent one being *Same Soul, Many Bodies*. The very title of the book tells us that Dr. Weiss believes in re-incarnation — a common New Age belief that has been gleaned from the Eastern Religions of Buddhism and Hinduism. The particular specialities Dr. Weiss practices are “Past Life Regression” as well as “Progression Therapy.”

What is “Past Life Regression” and “Progression Therapy”? Well, since Dr Weiss believes in re-incarnation — or that each of us has existed in numerous *past* lives — he hypnotizes his patients to “regress” to those *past* lives — supposedly for the purpose of better dealing with problems in *this* life. The “Progression Therapy” that Dr. Weiss refers to is the practice of hypnotizing his patients to “progress” them into their *future* lives. Yes — Really! That's what he *convincingly* claims to do. Christians who know God's Word should *immediately* recognize that the Scriptures *absolutely do not allow* for any such beliefs or practices?

Hebrews 9:27

• *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (KJV)*

Genesis 3:19

• *By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return. (NASB)*

Ecclesiastes 12:7

• *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. (KJV))*

II Corinthians 5:10

• *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, [one body — not many] according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (NASB)*

Part of the New Age belief is that life on earth *continues* for individuals — through re-incarnation — *until* one is able to reach total perfection and ultimately be “perfect enough” to go to heaven. So Dr. Weiss believes that the decisions we make *now* — in *this* life — determine the quality of one's *future* life on this earth.

James 4:14

• *Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes (NIV).*

Dr. Weiss even goes so far as to say in his book that “Jesus himself may have believed in [re-incarnation]”. He substantiates such a claim by saying that in Matthew 11:14 Jesus asked the apostles if they recognized that John the Baptist was in fact Elijah returned — or — in other words — re-incarnated. Well, we won't go into why that is a completely incorrect interpretation of that verse because it's much *easier* to simply go to John 1:19-23 and let John the Baptist answer for himself.

“Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, ‘I am not the Christ.’ They asked him, ‘Then who are you? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ Finally they said, ‘Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, ‘I am the voice of one calling in the desert, Make straight the way for the Lord.’” (NIV)

The really alarming part about all of this???? — Christians by the *millions* are buying into many New Age beliefs *because* — influential people like Oprah Winfrey are *promoting* them — *and* — telling Christians that such practices and beliefs *are compatible* with Christianity — but — *they are not!*

If you went to the link (<http://diligence.gorfsystems.com/links.html>) listed in that previous issue of *Diligence* and watched the video, you saw a young lady ask Oprah; “How do you reconcile these spiritual teachings with your Christian beliefs?” Now, think about that *question* for a minute. That young lady *still* considered Oprah to be a Christian even though she has obviously *left* the teachings to which that young lady subscribed and considered to be “Christian.” When Christians (whether by *our* definition *or* by the worlds definition) don't even *recognize* that a person has *completely rejected* Christianity — *that's* dangerous!

Many New Age philosophies are steadily creeping into the New Testament church and Christians aren't even alarmed about it. Why? Because they don't *recognize* them as New Age. New Age is becoming mainstream in our society and Christians are slowly becoming “conditioned” to terminology that is not according to the teachings of the Bible. In recent weeks, we have heard *numerous* television personalities use the term “channeling” in a very casual way — as if it is an *accepted* method of communication with those who are deceased. The Scriptural account of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-31) makes it very clear that the dead do not communicate with the living. (For more discussion of that subject please visit the web address listed at the bottom of page 4 and read *Diligence* Vol. 4, Issue 15). As Christians, we should wince when we hear words like “channeling” and other New Age terms so casually being used by so *many* public figures. But — before *that* will happen, several things must happen.

First, each of us must be *aware* of the *meaning* of such terms. We must *recognize* that the words *are* of the New Age philosophy before we will *react* to them. We can't bury our heads in the sand of Post Modernism and think it doesn't matter