

This article first appeared in April 1, 2002 issue of Christianity Today. Used by permission of Christianity Today International, Carol Stream, IL 60188.

‘Jesus Only’ Isn’t Enough. Where exactly do “Oneness” Pentecostals stand in relation to orthodoxy? Are they in or out?

By J. Stephen Lang | posted 04/01/2002

Where exactly do “Oneness” Pentecostals stand in relation to orthodoxy? Are they in or out?

—Fred Askins, Commerce City, Colorado

The decisive word in the origins of “Jesus only” (or Oneness) Pentecostals is probably apostolic. Beginning about 1913, certain Pentecostal ministers began to ask, “What is the correct apostolic formula for baptizing believers?” Several ministers concluded that the correct formula, the one used by the apostles themselves, was found in Acts 2:38, where Peter proclaims, “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.”

Attentive Bible readers will immediately ask, “But didn’t Jesus command the disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?” Indeed, that formula is found in Matthew 28:19. But Oneness Pentecostals have chosen to focus on the Acts 2:38 formula because, they say, that is the actual formula used by the apostles. In fact, they are correct in observing that the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19 is never again mentioned, while several references are made to baptism in the name of Jesus (see Acts 10:48, 19:5). The earliest Oneness Pentecostals felt so strongly about the baptismal formula that many of them chose to be rebaptized in the name of Jesus only, which led to splits in congregations and denominations. The greatest divide among Pentecostals today is between orthodox Pentecostals and Oneness Pentecostals.

This difference in the matter of words used during baptisms represents something far more important: a different view of the nature of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—what orthodox Christians refer to as the Trinity. If asked if they believe in God the Father, Son, and Spirit, all Oneness Pentecostals would answer yes. Like all Pentecostals, Oneness Pentecostals place great emphasis on the role of the Spirit in the Christian life. But to them, the traditional Christian view of the Trinity is dangerously close to tritheism—belief in three distinct gods. Their view is, as one of their authors has put it, “Christian monotheism.”

But orthodox Christian theologians believe Oneness theology is guilty of the heresy of modalism. While orthodox Christian theologians often refer to the three “Persons” in the Trinity, Oneness authors speak of the three “manifestations” (or “offices”) of the one God. They tend to connect the term person with the modern conception of the word—that is, a person is a distinct individual—which is why they see the orthodox view as being

close to tritheism. Believing strongly in one undivided God, Oneness authors teach that the whole essential Godhead is present in Jesus (an idea supported by Colossians 2:9 and other passages). God, the one divine Being, is the Father in the Son, and is Spirit through the Son. Fairly early in Christian history this belief was condemned as heresy. Mainstream Christian theology continues to reject modalism because it does not do justice to the Bible's view of God as three distinct Persons.

This view of the Trinity is connected with Oneness Pentecostals' Christology. They place much emphasis on the name of God. They believe that the name of the Lord Jesus is, under the new covenant, God's means of self-revelation and salvation. They cite Colossians 2:9, with Paul's declaration that "in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." In their view, traditional Trinitarianism minimizes the full revelation of God in Christ. Their aim is to elevate the Son to his proper place in the Godhead. Consequently, Jesus is elevated to the point that one might as well say, "God is Jesus."

Are these differences in belief enough to qualify Oneness Pentecostals as a cult or sect? For most orthodox Christians, the Oneness movement occupies a kind of cloudy no man's land between orthodox Christianity and the various groups that, because of their beliefs and practices, are decidedly not orthodox (e.g., Mormons, Christian Scientists). Unfortunately, it's likely that most Christian laypeople, if they were presented with the orthodox view and the Oneness churches' view, would either shrug off the differences as extremely minor or would not even be able to grasp them. For the leading conservative ecumenical groups, however, the differences are not cloudy at all: the National Association of Evangelicals, Pentecostal World Fellowship, and Pentecostal Fellowship of North America rightly find Oneness Pentecostals too far removed from classical orthodoxy to include in their ranks.

J. Stephen Lang is a full-time writer and the author of several books, including *1,001 Things You Always Wanted to Know About the Holy Spirit*.

Copyright © 2002 Christianity Today. Click for reprint information.

April 1, 2002, Vol. 46, No. 4, Page 60

I got the following from a quick google search for "oneness + heresy,"

from <http://users.stargate.net/~mrt/web/Trinity1.htm>

"Oneness Doctrine" (Jesus Only) vs. Trinitarianism

Part 1: The Early Church Fathers Declared "Oneness" (Sabellianism) Heresy

The Oneness Doctrine Defined

The Oneness Doctrine appears to be biblical because only Scripture is used, though wrongfully, to support its tenets, declaring that Jesus is not only the Son but also the Father and the Holy Spirit, that is, he is the only person in the Godhead. But, it is a fairly new movement (1913), built on heresies of the past. The basic definitions of Oneness vs. Trinitarianism is as follows:

1. Oneness - God is One, but not a plurality of three persons, and that the one God is Jesus Christ. In other words, God is absolutely one with no distinction of persons (Deut. 6:4; Gal. 3:20) because Jesus Christ is all the fullness of the Godhead incarnate (John 20:28; Colossians 2:9). The Father, the Son (Word) and the Holy Spirit are only three manifestations or modes or titles that Jesus manifests Himself as. I have read elsewhere that Oneness believers do not believe God is limited to these three manifestations, though.

2. Trinitarianism - The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. But, the Father is not the Son or the Holy Spirit, the Son is not the Father or the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father and the Son. These three in the Godhead are not three Gods, but are One, of one substance, power, and eternity.

The word "Trinity" is not found in Scripture and has been defined as a mystery. For the finite mind to fully understand He who is infinite is really an impossibility. God is beyond anything we can comprehend, but upon close examination, the Scriptures do indicate that God is three in One, not three Gods. In other words, the Scriptures speak of God as the Father, but also as the Son and the Holy Spirit. Yet, the three are One. So, the word Trinity is not in Scripture, but the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are a reality in the word. It is interpreting these terms and how they relate to the One God that confusion arises causing false doctrines concerning the Trinity to be taught.

Reviving Heresies Of The Past

In the middle of the third century, Sabellius was excommunicated and declared a heretic because of proposing the idea that there was only one "person" in the Godhead manifesting himself in different offices: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This heresy was named Sabellianism (and later modalism) after him, though the heretical doctrine did not last for very long.

Gregory the Wonder-worker was one who spoke out against Sabellianism:

“But some treat the Holy Trinity in an awful manner, when they confidently assert that there are not three persons, and introduce (the idea of) a person devoid of subsistence. Wherefore we clear ourselves of Sabellius, who says that the Father and the Son are the same [Person] . . . We forswear this, because we believe that three persons--namely, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit--are declared to possess the one Godhead: for the one divinity showing itself forth according to nature in the Trinity establishes the oneness of the nature” (A Sectional Confession of Faith 8 [A.D. 262]).

“But if they say, ‘How can there be three Persons, and how but one Divinity?’ we shall make this reply: That there are indeed three persons, inasmuch as there is one person of God the Father, and one of the Lord the Son, and one of the Holy Spirit; and yet that there is but one divinity, inasmuch as . . . there is one substance in the Trinity” (ibid., 14).

Others also spoke out against Sabellius:

Council of Rome

“We anathematize those also who follow the error of Sabellius in saying that the same one is both Father and Son” (Tome of Pope Damasus, canon 2 [A.D. 382]).

Fulgence of Ruspe

“See, in short you have it that the Father is one, the Son another, and the Holy Spirit another; in person, each is other, but in nature they are not other. In this regard he [Christ] says, ‘The Father and I, we are one’ [John 10:30]. He teaches us that ‘one’ refers to their nature and ‘we are’ to their persons. In like manner it is said, ‘There are three who bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one’ [1John 5:7]. Let Sabellius hear ‘we are,’ let him hear ‘three,’ and let him believe that there are three Persons” (The Trinity 4:1 [A.D. 513]).

Novatian

“. . . and thus by such as these, as we have said, the sacrilegious heresy of Sabellius is embodied. Since Christ is

believed to be not the Son, but the Father; since by them He is asserted to be in strictness a bare man, in a new manner, by those, again, Christ is proved to be God the Father Almighty” (A Treatise Of Novatian Concerning The Trinity, Chapter 12).

Modalism Resurfaced In 1913

Modalism resurfaced in the twentieth century in the American Holiness movement, later infiltrating Pentecostal Trinitarian believers. In a revival meeting in Arroyo Seco, California (Los Angeles) on April 15, 1913, R.E. McAlister began baptizing converts in the name of Jesus, rather than by the command in Matthew 28:19:

Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

He did so saying that Acts 2:38 was the fulfilling of the command given in Matthew 28 because Jesus was not the unique Son of God, distinct from the Father, but the final expression of God, who was one “person” manifesting in three different offices.

Also at this meeting was evangelist Frank Ewart (among hundreds of preachers attending), who would begin preaching the same message a few years later. From here, the message moved into Pentecostal churches, the Assemblies of God included. But, it was here that the message was rejected and the orthodox teaching on the Trinity upheld. This stand, however, did not stop the Oneness doctrine to continue its advancement through Pentecostal circles. (See the following if you’d like to read more on the history of this movement: Let Us Reason

The Early Church Fathers In Support Of The Triunity of God

Justin Martyr Justin was a writer around the end of the first century. His first voluminous work (Justin’s First Apology) was a massive defense of Christianity written to the pagan Romans, in an attempt to explain Christianity and distinguish it from the pagan religions and Judaism. Here are a couple of interesting quotes. Justin also wrote a second Apology, as well as a lengthy dialogue with a Jew named Trypho.

The second quote below is very revealing, since Justin clearly distinguishes Jesus from the Father, and indicates that it was the Son who appeared to Moses in the burning bush. Furthermore, he condemns the Jews for NOT distinguishing between the Father and the Son! Hardly appropriate if Justin believed “oneness” (Warner):

“...Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ, who also was born for this purpose, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judaea, in the times of Tiberius Caesar; and that we reasonably worship Him, having learned that He is the Son of the true God Himself, and holding Him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third, we will prove. For they proclaim our madness to consist in this, that we give to a crucified man a place second to the unchangeable and eternal God, the Creator of all; for they do not discern the mystery that is herein, to which, as we make it plain to you, we pray you to give heed” (First Apology 13:5-6, Christians Serve God Rationally [A.D. 151]).

And all the Jews even now teach that the nameless God spake to Moses; whence the Spirit of prophecy, accusing them by Isaiah the prophet mentioned above, said “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know Me, and My people do not understand.” And Jesus the Christ, because the Jews knew not what the Father was, and what the Son, in like manner accused them; and Himself said, “No one knoweth the Father, but the Son; nor the Son, but the Father, and they to whom the Son revealeth Him.” Now the Word of God is His Son, as we have before said. And He is called Angel and Apostle; for He declares whatever we ought to know, and is sent forth to declare whatever is revealed; as our Lord Himself says, “He that heareth Me, heareth Him that sent Me.” From the writings of Moses also this will be manifest; for thus it is written in them, “And the Angel of God spake to Moses, in a flame of fire out of the bush, and said, I am that I am, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of thy fathers; go down into Egypt, and bring forth My people.” And if you wish to learn what follows, you can do so from the same writings; for it is impossible to relate the whole here. But so much is written for the sake of proving that Jesus the Christ is the Son of God and His Apostle, being of old the Word, and appearing sometimes in the form of fire, and sometimes in the likeness of angels; but now, by the will of God, having become man for the human race, He endured all the sufferings which the devils instigated the senseless Jews to inflict upon Him; who, though they have it expressly affirmed in the writings of Moses, “And the angel of God spake to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush, and said, I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” yet maintain that He who said this was the Father and Creator of the universe. Whence also the Spirit of prophecy rebukes them, and says, “Israel doth not know Me, my people have not understood Me.” And again, Jesus, as we have already shown, while He was with them, said, “No one knoweth the Father, but the Son; nor the Son but the Father, and those to whom the Son will reveal Him.” The Jews, accordingly, being throughout of opinion that it was the Father of the universe who spake to Moses, though He who spake to him was indeed the Son of God, who is called both Angel and Apostle, are justly charged, both by the Spirit of prophecy and by Christ Himself, with knowing neither the Father nor the Son. For they who affirm that the Son is the Father, are proved neither to have become acquainted with the Father, nor to know that the Father of the universe has a Son; who also, being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God. And of old He appeared in the shape of fire and in the likeness of an angel to Moses and to the other prophets; but now in the times of your reign, having, as we before said, become Man by a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, for the salvation of those who believe on Him, He endured both to be set a nought and to suffer, that by dying and rising again He might conquer death. And that which was said out of the bush to Moses, “I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and the God of your fathers,” this signified that they, even though dead, are let in existence, and are men belonging to Christ Himself. For they were the first of all men to busy themselves in the search after God; Abraham being the father of Isaac, and Isaac of Jacob, as Moses wrote” (Chapter 63, How God Appeared To Moses).

“We do indeed believe that there is only one God, but we believe that under this dispensation, or, as we say, *oikonomia*, there is also a Son of this one only God, his Word, who proceeded from him and through whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made. . . . We believe he was sent down by the Father, in accord with his own promise, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the Sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father and the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. . . . this rule of faith has been present since the beginning of the Gospel, before even the earlier heretics” (Against Praxeas 2 [A.D. 216]).

Tertullian

“Keep always in mind the rule of faith which I profess and by which I bear witness that the Father and the Son and the Spirit are inseparable from each other, and then you will understand what is meant by it. Observe now that I say the Father is other [distinct], the Son is other, and the Spirit is other. This statement is wrongly understood by every uneducated or perversely disposed individual, as if it meant diversity and implied by that diversity a separation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (ibid., 9).

“Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct One from Another. These Three are, one essence, not one Person, as it is said, ‘I and my Father are One’ [John 10:30], in respect of unity of Being not singularity of number” (ibid., 25).

Origen

“For we do not hold that which the heretics imagine: that some part of the Being of God was converted into the Son, or that the Son was procreated by the Father from non-existent substances, that is, from a Being outside himself, so that there were a time when he [the Son] did not exist” (The Fundamental Doctrines 4:4:1 [A.D. 225]).

“No, rejecting every suggestion of corporeality, we hold that the Word and the Wisdom was begotten out of the invisible and incorporeal God, without anything corporal being acted upon . . . the expression which we employ, however that there was never a time when he did not exist is to be taken with a certain allowance. For these very words ‘when’ and ‘never’ are terms of temporal significance, while whatever is said of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is to be understood as transcending all time, all ages, and all eternity” (ibid.)

Novatian

“For Scripture as much announces Christ as also God, as it announces God Himself as man. It has as much described Jesus Christ to be man, as moreover it has also described Christ the Lord to be God. Because it does not set forth Him to be the Son of God only, but also the Son of man; nor does it only say, the Son of man, but it has also been accustomed to speak of Him as the Son of God. So that being of both, He is both, lest if He should be one only, He could not be the other. For as nature itself has prescribed that he must be believed to be a man who is of man, so the same nature prescribes also that He must be believed to be God who is of God . . . Let them, therefore, who read that Jesus Christ the Son of man is man, read also that this same Jesus is called also God and the Son of God” (Treatise on the Trinity 11 [A.D. 235]).

Pope Dionysius

“Next, then, I may properly turn to those who divide and cut apart and destroy the most sacred proclamation of the Church of God, making of it [the Trinity], as it were, three powers, distinct substances, and three godheads. . . . [Some heretics] proclaim that there are in some way three gods, when they divide the sacred unity into three substances foreign to each other and completely separate” (Letter to Dionysius of Alexandria 1 [A.D. 262]).

Gregory the Wonderworker

“There is one God . . . There is a perfect Trinity, in glory and eternity and sovereignty, neither divided nor estranged. Wherefore there is nothing either created or in servitude in the Trinity; nor anything superinduced, as if at some former period it was non-existent, and at some later period it was introduced. And thus neither was the Son ever wanting to the Father, nor the Spirit to the Son; but without variation and without change, the same Trinity abides ever” (Declaration of Faith [A.D. 265]).

Ignatius

Here is an excerpt from Ignatius’ Epistle to the Trallians you might find interesting, where he is describing some of the heretics, INCLUDING (Warner):

“For they speak of Christ, not that they may preach Christ, but that they may reject Christ; and they speak of the law, not that they may establish the law, but that they may proclaim things contrary to it. For they alienate Christ from the Father, and the law from Christ. They also calumniate His being born of the Virgin; they are ashamed of His cross; they deny His passion; and they do not believe His resurrection. They introduce God as a Being unknown; they suppose Christ to be unbegotten; and as to the Spirit, they do not admit that He exists. Some of

them say that the Son is a mere man, and that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are but the same person, and that the creation is the work of God, not by Christ, but by some other strange power.” (Epistle to the Trallians, Ch. VI).

Ignatius is giving a quick summary of some of the heresies about Christ. Notice the trinitarian formula, “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” In the underlined section above, he gives three separate heresies. First, those who say Jesus was just a man. Second, those who say the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are the same person. (like Noetus, Praxeas, Saballus). And thirdly, the Gnostics (like Marcion, Valentinus, Ptolemaus) who claimed that the creator god (YHVH) of the Old Testament was not the same God as the “Father” in the NT (Warner).

(The above was written from a forum message by Tim Warner.)

from <http://users.stargate.net/~mrt/web/Trinity1.htm>

The following 60 questions are from a website advertised on the flyer mailed in Steinbach last week (www.upci.org). This is the website of the United Pentecostal Churches International and explains their views on the trinity. Although they use “Pentecostal” in their name, my friend who pastors a Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada church in Winnipeg was quick to ensure that there’s no connection or affiliation to other mainstream Pentecostal groups, something that was verified by a Christian History Magazine Article not enclosed here as I don’t have it in electronic format.

“The Assemblies of God expelled Oneness Pentecostals in 1917 because of conflicts on two issues. First, Oneness Pentecostals pushed a different wording of baptism. Citing Acts 2:38, they insisted that people should baptize only in Jesus’ name. Second, they developed a theology that many evangelicals would say is akin to the heresy of monism: that the Godhead is only Jesus—the Son trumps both the Father and the Spirit.”

- From an article in the February 7, 2000 issue of Christianity Today. Used by permission of Christianity Today International, Carol Stream, IL 60188.

“Read the answers to sixty questions concerning the Godhead as found in the Bible.

1. Is the word trinity in the Bible? No.

2. Does the Bible say that there are three persons in the Godhead? No.

3. Does the Bible speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Yes.

4. Do these titles as used in Matthew 28:19 mean that there are three separate and distinct persons in the Godhead? No, they refer to three offices, roles, or relationship to humanity.

5. Does the Bible use the word three in reference to God? Only one verse in the entire Bible does so-I John 5:7. It speaks of the Father, the Word (instead of Son), and the Holy Ghost, and it concludes by saying, "These three are one."

6. Does the Bible use the word one in reference to God? Yes, many times. For example, see Zechariah 14:9; Malachi 2:10; Matthew 23:9; Mark 12:29, 32; John 8:41; 10:30; Romans 3:30; I Corinthians 8:4; Galatians 3:20; I Timothy 2:5; James 2:19.

7. Can the mystery of the Godhead be understood? Yes. Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9; I Timothy 3:16.

8. Has the Christian only one Heavenly Father? Yes. Matthew 23:9.

9. Then why did Jesus say to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9)? Because Jesus is the express image of God's person. Hebrews 1:3. The Greek word for person in this verse literally means "substance."

10. Does the Bible say that there are two persons in the Godhead? No.

11. Does the Bible say that all the Godhead is revealed in one person? Yes, in Jesus Christ. II Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:19; 2:9; Hebrews 1:3.

12. Is the mystery of the Deity hidden from some people? Yes. Luke 10:21-22.

13. Who is the Father? The Father is the one God, particularly as revealed in parental relationship to humanity. Deuteronomy 32:6; Malachi 2:10.
14. Where was God the Father while Jesus was on earth? The Father was in Christ. John 14:10; II Corinthians 5:19. He was also in heaven, for God is omnipresent.
15. Did the prophet Isaiah say that Jesus would be the Father? Yes. Isaiah 9:6; 63:16.
16. When God said, "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26), was He speaking to another person in the Godhead? No. Isaiah 44:24; Malachi 2:10.
17. How many of God's qualities were in Christ? All. Colossians 2:9.
18. How may we see the God who sent Jesus into the world? By seeing Jesus. John 12:44-45; 14:9.
19. Does the Bible say that Jesus is the Almighty? Yes. Revelation 1:8
20. Whom do some designate as the first person in the trinity? God the Father.
21. Whom do some designate as the last person in the trinity? The Holy Ghost. But Jesus said that He was the first and last. Revelation 1:17-18
22. How many persons did John see sitting on the throne in heaven? One. Revelation 4:2.
23. If Jesus is the first and the last, why did God say in Isaiah 44:6 that He was the first and the last? Because Jesus is the God of the Old Testament incarnate.
24. Did Jesus tell Satan that God alone should be worshipped? Yes. Matthew 4:10

25. Does the devil believe in more than one God? No. James 2:19.
26. Does the Bible say that God, who is the Word, was made flesh? Yes John 1:1, 14.
27. For what purpose was God manifested in the flesh? To save sinners. Hebrews 2:9, 14.
28. Was Jesus God manifested in the flesh? Yes. I Timothy 3:16.
29. Could Jesus have been on earth and in heaven at the same time? Yes. John 3:13.
30. Does the Bible say that there is but one Lord? Yes. Isaiah 45:18; Ephesians 4:5.
31. Does the Bible say that Christ is the Lord? Yes. Luke 2:11.
32. Does the Bible say that the Lord is God? Yes. I Kings 18:39; Zechariah 14:5; Acts 2:39; Revelation 19:1.
33. How could the church belong to Jesus (Matthew 16:18) and yet be the church of God (I Corinthians 10:32)? Because Jesus is God in the flesh.
34. Will God give His glory to another? No. Isaiah 42:8.
35. Was there a God formed before Jehovah, or will there be one formed after? No. Isaiah 43:10.
36. What is one thing that God does not know? Another God. Isaiah 44:8.

37. What is one thing that God Cannot do? Lie. Titus 1:2.
38. How many Gods should we know? Only one. Hosea 13:4.
39. How many names has the Lord? One. Zechariah 14:9.
40. Is it good to think upon the name of the Lord? Yes. Malachi 3:16.
41. Does the Bible say that God alone treads upon the waves of the sea? Yes. Job 9:8
42. Why, then, was Jesus able to walk upon the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:25)? Because He is God the Creator. Colossians 1:16.
43. Is God the only one who can forgive sin? Yes. Isiah 43:25; Mark 2:7.
44. Why, then, could Jesus forgive sin in Mark 2:5-11? Because He is God the Savior.
45. Is Jesus the true God? Yes. I John 5:20.
46. If God and the Holy Ghost are two separate persons, which was the Father of Christ? Matthew 1:20 says that the Holy Ghost was the Father, while Romans 15:6, II Corinthians 11:31, and Ephesians 1:3 say that God was the Father. There is no contradiction when we realize that God the Father and the Holy Ghost are one and the same Spirit. Matthew 10:20; Ephesians 4:4; I Corinthians 3:16.
47. When Paul asked the Lord who He was, what was the answer? "I am Jesus." Acts 9:5.

48. When Stephen was dying, did he call God Jesus? Yes. Acts 7:59.
49. Did Thomas ever call Jesus God? Yes. John 20:28.
50. How could Jesus be the Savior, when God the Father said in Isaiah 43:11, "Beside me there is no Savior?" Because "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." II Corinthians 5:19.
51. Does the Bible say that Jesus was God with us? Yes. Matthew 1:23.
52. Did Jesus ever say, "I and my Father are one?" Yes. John 10:30.
53. Can it be proved scripturally that Jesus and the Father are one in the same sense that husband and wife are one? No. The Godhead was never compared to the relationship of a husband and wife. Jesus identified Himself with the Father in a way that husband and wife cannot be identified with each other. John 14:9-11.
54. Does the Bible say that there is only one wise God? Yes. Jude 25.
55. Does the Bible call the Holy Ghost a second or third person in the Godhead? No. The Holy Ghost is the one Spirit of God, the one God Himself at work in our lives. John 4:24; I Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19; 12:13.
56. Can Trinitarians show that three divine persons were present when Jesus was baptized by John? Absolutely not. The one, omnipresent God used three simultaneous manifestations. Only one divine person was present-- Jesus Christ the Lord.
57. Then what were the other two of whom Trinitarians speak? One was a voice from heaven; the other was the Spirit of God in the form of a dove. Matthew 3:16-17.
58. What did the voice say at Jesus' baptism? "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mark 1:11. As the Son of God, Jesus was the one God incarnate.

59. Does the Bible say that God shed His blood and that God laid down His life for us? Yes. Acts 20:28; I John 3:16. God was able to do this because He had taken upon Himself a human body.

60. The Bible says that God is coming back with all his saints (Zechariah 14:5) and also that Jesus is coming back with all his saints (I Thessalonians 3:13). Are two coming back? No. Only one is coming back--our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13.”

Other comments notes from me (Andrew):

After researching this group it was obvious that their beliefs deviate from mainstream evangelical Christianity (or what theologians call “orthodoxy”). But now what? Here are some thoughts, collected from conversations with pastors who’ve encountered the Oneness Pentecostals, or “UPCs” as they are mostly organized under the United Pentecostal Church International umbrella.

One caution I received from another pastor who’s encountered this group is that they may approach Christians and challenge the legitimacy of their baptism. The best thing to do is walk away. The arguments about this are outlined above, but be aware of this issue.

Another pastor friend told me that those who disagree with UPC doctrine are seen as outside The Church. A helpful question to ask might be whether other churches are part of Christ’s Body, or in other words, are non-UPC Christians saved? Those UPCs who’d answer “no” (which is apparently the majority, though I’ve not spoken with enough to know first hand) typically don’t mix with other Christian churches as they believe we’re deceived.

Some UPCs appear ungracious and legalistic, sometimes evidenced in how they dress. Apparently a fairly simple dress code can sometimes become legalistic: dresses for women, no jewelry and plain and simple appearance. This may not be so for every UPC church, but is certainly present in the movement.

A final practice which deviates from mainstream evangelicalism is that those who leave these “churches” are excommunicated, thrown out and told that they’re going to Hell. While the Bible does outline that Hell is real, you don’t have to attend our church (thankfully) to secure a place in Heaven, faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour is the only Biblical prerequisite.

We should recognize that details of these final points may vary with different UPC groups, but central “doctrines” on the Trinity and baptism are fairly sure to be the same as these are posted on their website.