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“I wish Somebody’s Soul would Catch on Fire!”

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (Holy Bible, De. 6:4).

“And Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is, ‘Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God is One LORD” (Holy Bible, Mark 12:29).

What belief has become increasingly popular because Trinitarian ministers, pastors, and saints come to a revelation of who Jesus Christ is? Many people may not have heard of this belief but I know that everyone knows at least one person in this faith: The Oneness Pentecostal Faith. This belief has been around since the apostles but after all of the writers of the Cannon Bible were dead, King Charlemagne decided to have men create a creed that is to be the belief of all the nation: The Nicenean Creed. This creed and many others tell people that the Godhead is Trinity. There are so many oneness Pentecostal organizations out in the world, and they each one hold a different belief. The main organization being shown here is the United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI). This organization was founded upon many core beliefs found thru out the bible. They will be shown thru out this paper also. Many famous musical artist had their beginnings in the UPCI church. Elvis Presley started in a little church that was UPCI. He sang in the choir and sang solo many times. He started to sing national and only sang gospel songs like “Swing Low Sweet Chariot”, “How Great thou art”, “Put your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee”, and so much more. He was so famous and very soon the world easily influenced him into singing rock n roll and by doing that he became the King of Rock n Roll. After his change from gospel to Rock, he actually took a huge pay cut and hurt him emotionally. In the end, Presley committed suicide in his bathroom. The United Pentecostal Church has never been segregated or discriminated against the blacks or any other race (Reed 3-4). When the Ku Klux Klan was in full force and still, no one in the United Pentecostal Church ever participated or even helped in any way with the Klan (Reed 5). The worst event in the United Pentecostal Church history if that the Klan didn’t just attack or kill African Americans, but they went after and didn’t just kill the UPCI people but mutilated their whole family’s corpses (Reed 5). Lastly, the United Pentecostal Church International is

continuing to become so popular and big. They appeal to three aspects of human life: having a sense that God is a friend and is close, the sense of whole and not sections/offices, and lastly thru personal devotions followed to understanding why the UPCI believes what they do.

Directness to God

To start off with, the best way to show the directness is to simply write about the trinity and explain the difference of approach to the Godhead. The word “trinity” never appeared anywhere in the original Hebrew/Greek Bible. The term “trinity” was coined after all of the apostles died; with men from differing beliefs of the bible coming together on an isle called Nicene. Many people, besides the Jews, couldn’t grasp how Jesus was God but yet there was still One God, so men came together to say that the Father (God) has his own position/office, the Son (Jesus Christ) has his own, and the Holy Spirit (Ghost) has its own, but they agree in one. They went so far as baptizing in the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Nowhere in the bible does it say to baptize in the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

When the Oneness or Jesus Only believe in the belief of One God manifested as the Father in creation, the Son in redemption, and the Holy Spirit in the church. The term manifest simply means the embodiment of a spirit (manifest). Just to help out the term embodiment means incarnate or come as a human. This belief is held with high regards in the Jesus Only churches. The main verse found to be used by the church is “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, The Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” (Holy Bible, I John 5:7). This scripture is only found in three bibles: The Interlinear Hebrew/Greek Bible, The King James Version, and lastly the Amplified Bible. This scripture is taken out of every other bible for some reason or another. The term “oneness” is very simple if someone takes out the “one” it means exactly that one, and if someone takes the “-ness” it simply shows a distinctive of God as an entity of 1 (French 7). To simply put it the father came in the form of a son, who after dying and rising in three days, then ascended into Heaven, then forty days later, the father/son came in the form of a holy spirit (ghost). The key word form (comparable to the states of matter: solid, liquid, and gas). Another help to show this is the common Trinitarian belief of John 3:16. When the philosophers of King James were writing the Hebrew/Greek bible, they came across Hebrew or Greek words that would be the greatest fit, but they used them. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Holy Bible, St. John 3:16). If someone was to look into the

Greek Bible and read this passage, he or she would have realized that it does not fit the way he or she ever read it before. One word changes this meaning totally: monogènes. This Greek term never meant begotten. To understand this word, scholars must tear the word apart and understand the root and the end part. Mono means in English alone or only, and genes means kind or type. With this understanding the actual reading of this scripture is meaning he gave himself for us (Jones 7).

With that all said, to wrap up the directness to God part, the part of the One God manifests as the Father in creation, the Son in redemption, and the Holy Spirit in the church simply means that the Spirit (God, YHWH, Jehovah, I am, Jesus) plays all these roles. Jesus is not just our Savior, but he is also the Creator of our universe, and He is living inside of each and every one of us. Jesus is omnipresent (can be everywhere at once). This is totally different compared to if someone was to talk to a Trinitarian minister because he/she believes in a creed created after the original writers of the gospels and the whole book of the old and new Testament died.

Sense of Wholeness

First of all, the statistics speak for themselves when someone examines how much the UPCI has grown. Back in 1992, Boyd said that the biggest Jesus only member organization was the United Pentecostal church with over 400,000 members in America alone. In 2007, the world found out that in America, the United Pentecostal Church had over 1.5 million members. Then in 2008, A new number of members to the whole world came out with 14 million Jesus only believers and of that 14 million, 7 million belong to the United Pentecostal Church International (Reed 1). What could be happening to cause such an increase in souls into the United Pentecostal Church?

Second reason and most obvious as of yet: the younger generation simply needs a church that will help them form their identity. Other churches say they have great youth programs but yet many youth backslide once they leave the youth group because of the nonsupport of the elders of the church. The backsliding of souls in the ordinary churches are increasing along with declining of souls, but the UPCI churches are experiencing an increase of over 100 percent of souls. One core belief above any other is that the UPCI churches won't turn away a soul for any reason. Many young people walk into the church and love the atmosphere they feel and sense because each UPCI church has that evidence of connecting with Heaven: speaking with other tongues. Many young people are bored from the ordinary format for church: singing a

few songs and not actually worshipping or getting into the music, then hearing the preaching of the word, and going home the same way he/she walked in, not changed one bit. In every UPCI church, the preacher, most times, will not preach because of the movement that God is doing in the church. Each UPCI minister/pastor believes that God can do more in 2 seconds than he/she can do in 30 to an hour long message. Young people need that kind of experience because they long and feel for it. Another influence that helps is the faster, more upbeat music (not the hard rock but the faster louder worship songs) makes the young generation want to show their expression of worship to it and not feel confined. The UPCI churches allow total worship (means giving your all in praise and worship: running the isles, jumping, shouting, etc.). That is the sense of wholeness from the young people's side.

Lastly, another sense of wholeness is simply fully grasping the truth of the Oneness. People of today's culture need only one person of entity to rely on not three. Churches are declining because of the lack of understanding of oneness of the Godhead. If someone was to ever fully grasp the oneness, he/she would finally have a sense of completeness, happiness, wholeness, joyfulness, etc. Just to simply understand this concept brings even the most callused of hearts to redemption, forgiveness and remission of their heart. Many of the UPCI individual church's prison ministries have and are still experiencing a growth (not in jail space but of souls coming to the ministry). The last estimated number of killers on death row who have been saved is over 150 in just Texas alone! That is awesome. Almost every state has at least one death row inmate saved. The states that don't have at least one death row prisoner saved is because that state has banned the death penalty. These results are astonishing to read and listen to! The UPCI is moving and will continue to move thru out jails and prisons until everyone of them have heard the true saving word of Jesus (Acts 2:38-39).

Personal Devotions

To begin with, every person in the United Pentecostal Church International has many personal devotions of which they never touch or even think about. To begin with, Women must never touch their hair with sharp objects resulting in the cutting of their hair. "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering" (Holy Bible. I Cor. 11:15). This is the scripture of which Oneness believers use to show that a women is to not have their hair cut, but the men is different. "Doth no even mature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him" (Holy Bible, I Cor. 11:14). Paul was simply saying that men should never have long hair because it is simply a shame for him. The bible is

very clear and it is the infallible (not proven wrong) word of God (Jesus). If the UPCI board finds some item in the Bible that is to be followed, the General Superintendent (like the President) will notify church pastors to explain the rule/belief.

Another belief of the Oneness believers is that modesty in dress is highly important. That man and female must be distinguishable in dress. “The women shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God” (Holy Bible, Deu. 22:5). This scripture was meant also for the men and women in Moses’ time. It may sound weird, but its true. Men and women wore robes back in biblical history, but there were many different kinds of robes to distinguish male from female Israelites. In contemporary Oneness churches, the members uphold this law by the women wearing long dresses or skirts, and the men wear pants. No woman wears pants in the belief because in the beginning when pants were made, they were made only for males. Everywhere someone looks in history, he/she will find women always wore dresses or skirts because it was the proper and right dress to distinguish between male and female. If someone who lives in Britain, Ireland, or Scotland, he is allowed to wear the kilt that is used from their traditions. The United Pentecostal Church wasn’t designed to destroy cultures; it was to hold each one up with the culture helping hold up the church.

Lastly a devotion that is still used very widely and is believed is the Acts 2:38-39 plan of salvation. Many religions believe that all you have to do is say a prayer with your whole heart and be sincere then believe on the Lord and you are saved. Well, this is not at all true. Nowhere in the original church history book Acts does it tell you that all you must do is say a prayer and you are saved. Peter never preached that on the Day of Pentecost. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Holy Bible, Acts 2:1-4). This holy ghost spirit is exactly what everyone felt on the day of Pentecost as they came rushing out of the upper room and filling the streets. When a crowd of people asked them, “Men and brethren, what shall we do” (Holy Bible, Acts 2:37). “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Holy Bible, Acts 2:38). This plan of salvation is still active today: Peter added, “For

this promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are a far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Holy Bible Acts 2:39) to show that no matter time or space this gospel message and belief is still good and the only way to get to enter into Heaven’s pearly gates. This shows that this plan of salvation is still good, and it still is in affect. Few people who don’t belief this scripture don’t know that it’s even in there, and that is truly sad. This is another key personal devotion of the United Pentecostal Church International.

In conclusion, I have shown that the Oneness Pentecostals are a belief that is vastly different than any other belief in the world today. They reject the trinity and belief in the verse of Deuteronomy chapter 6 and 4: “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord” (Holy Bible). I am a member of this religion particularly the United Pentecostal Church International. This organization has endured so much pressure, blood, sweat, and tears, that no one understands. The new face of the UPCI is our General Superintendent David Bernard. He was who helped place the UPCI on the map with the help of God. This is just a small testimony of what the United Pentecostal Church International has done for me and so many more. The UPCI will not be stop growing, helping, reaching out, outreaching, and doing God’s work until everyone in the world has heard the true gospel of salvation! With that all said, The best way to end this paper is to end on a quote from the renowned contemporary gospel singer Marvin Sapp who said to the Atlanta West Pentecostal Church (UPCI) for the judging of the national gospel choir competition: *How Sweet the Sound 2009*, “You cannot mess with an Apostolic Pentecostal church!” This UPCI church also won the competition and received two gifts: a check for thirty thousand dollars and the opportunity of a lifetime: to sing on stage with the host of this competition and another renowned gospel singer Donald Lawrence. What a fantastic blessing! Thank you for your time.

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