

The central error of 'ONENESS' refuted

Alan Cairns in his 'Dictionary of Theological Terms' has this entry on page 121 under the heading of 'Sabellianism' – 'A form of Unitarianism named after Sabellius, a third century African Bishop; the heresy of modalistic monarchianism. It is the view that God is not only one single essence but one single person. Thus the names *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Spirit* are not personal names but modes or relations of the one divine person in His dealings with man. According to Sabellians the term *Father* referred to this one divine person when His incomprehensible greatness and sovereignty were in view. *Son* referred to His revelation to men and His becoming incarnate. *Holy Spirit* referred to His operating immediately upon the creature in the works of creation, providence or grace. In modern times Swedenborgianism and some so-called "ONENESS" sects have adopted Sabellian views'.

In early January I was contacted by a sister in Christ from Canada who was seeking information on what 'Oneness' groups believe as a friend's daughter had apparently recently become involved with one such grouping. Worldwide one of the largest of these groupings would be the **United Pentecostal Church** and locally here in Northern Ireland we have **The Churches of God**.

The 'Oneness' movement arose as a result of a claimed 'revelation' [of 'oneness'] supposedly given to R E McAllister at a Camp Meeting held near Los Angeles in 1913. The fall-out from this 'revelation' eventually led to a split by adherents of this 'Oneness' teaching from the Assemblies of God in 1916.

This teaching was, according to what we read on page 27 of John Montgomery's booklet - 'Evangelical or Heretical? An examination of the Churches of God in Ulster' - "brought to Ulster by Gordon Magee about 1955. The following statement from his book confirms this – '*The author of this booklet [Gordon Magee] was used by God to pioneer the Oneness revelation in the British Isles. His ministry was particularly fruitful in Ireland*' [p 2]. The 'fruitful' ministry in Ireland means Mr Magee's success in converting the Churches of God from Trinitarianism to Oneness".

One of the early pastors/preachers in the **Churches of God**, James Forsythe stated 'We believe that there is one God who has manifested Himself as Father, as Son and as Holy Spirit, He is the Father in the manifestation of His deity, He is the Son in the manifestation of His humanity, and He is the Holy Spirit dwelling in the hearts of His people.... Father, Son and Holy Spirit are merely 3 offices of Jesus Christ in the same way as He is prophet, priest and king' [John Montgomery – page 9].

Some years ago [as you will see at a time when Tony Blair was Prime Minister of the UK] I spoke by invitation on the subject of the local 'Oneness' grouping here, the **Churches of God** and this is how I addressed their views of 'Oneness' and their use of the terms **Father**, **Son** and **Holy Spirit**.

The **Church of God** as we have just seen claim that **'Jesus ALONE' is GOD** and **as God** He holds 3 'offices' **'FATHER' 'SON' and 'HOLY SPIRIT'**

Now let's reduce this to 'human terms' –
it's like saying that
Tony Blair could hold **'3 cabinet posts'**
Prime Minister
Chancellor of the Exchequer
Foreign Secretary

Now let's suppose there is a **'court case'**
and **Tony's** friend **Peter Mandelson** is in the dock
and in his defence **Peter Mandelson** says
'I can call 3 witnesses'
and he then proceeds to call
The Prime Minister
The Chancellor of the Exchequer
The Foreign Secretary

Each time it would be **Tony Blair**
stepping into the witness box.

Can you see the court accepting that
3 witnesses have testified?

Of course not! In their view only 1 witness
[holding multiple offices] would have testified

Multiple offices but only 1 witness

Now, let me quote from **John chapter 8**

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. **14** Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, *yet* my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. **17** **It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.** **18** **I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.**

According to the **Church of God theology**,
Jesus would be 'bearing witness' in 2 'roles' OR 'offices'
as **FATHER** and **SON**

Multiple offices but only 1 witness

**YET JESUS QUOTED DEUTERONOMY 17:6
TO SHOW THAT HE AND HIS FATHER ARE
TWO SEPARATE WITNESSES**

The **Church of God** does not honour
the **God of the Bible**
for Jesus Himself said in **John 5:23**
“**He that honoureth not the Son honoureth
not the Father which hath sent him**”

The **‘Oneness Doctrine’** of the **Church of God** is simply
a ‘dressed-up’ version of the 3rd Century heresy known as
‘Sabellianism’

[named after a 3rd Century African Bishop who introduced it]

Is the teaching of **‘Oneness’** a matter over which to be seriously concerned – emphatically the answer is **‘yes’** for we read from the opening 7 verses in **2nd John** of the apostle John’s absolute delight with those believers to whom he is writing and it is couched in these terms “**unto the elect lady and her children whom I love in the truth and not I only but also they that have known the truth. For the truth’s sake which dwelleth in us and shall be with us forever... I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth... for many deceivers are entered into the world”.**

Adherence to gospel truth brought immense joy to John and then in verse 9 he plainly stated the seriousness of holding to or teaching error pertaining to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ – “**Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, HATH NOT GOD. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath BOTH the Father and the Son**”.

‘Oneness’ which is a clear violation of **‘the doctrine of Christ’** and indeed of the whole Godhead is serious to the point where, **according to John**, those who believe it **‘have not God’**.

Cecil Andrews – ‘Take Heed’ Ministries - 12th January 2009