“Your Article on A Course in Miracles Is Very Disturbing”

I found your article on A Course in Miracles very disturbing. This person is telling me that his opinion is the one I should follow because he is a Christian. I have been a practicing Catholic most of my life and I was under the impression that Christians are supposed to be charitable in that they gently pose their opinions, not slap you over the head with the idea of If You Don’t Follow Me You Are Not Following Jesus!! I do have a STRONG belief in Jesus but I do not profess any organized church as my own. Does this mean that because I don’t go to a church every Sunday that I also will burn in the fires of Eternal Damnation? Please excuse me. I have been reading information on “A Course In Miracles” and as the information I have read has stated this course can be interpreted many different ways. However, so can the Bible, and this person takes the idea that Satan has written “A Course In Miracles” and that anyone taking it will meet the devil and his minions face to face a bit too far. Please excuse me once again but God forbid that any of us should follow Jesus’ path and meet the devil face to face and say through the strength Jesus brings “Get Thee Behind Me Satan”!

Mother of 2

Thank you for writing with your concerns about our article on “A Course in Miracles.” Although I didn’t write the article, it is my privilege to respond to your letter as one “Mother of 2” to another.

This article was written to educate and warn people about the true source of the Course, because most people don’t know what the Bible says and therefore they don’t recognize spiritual danger. As a mom, you can recognize dangers that your kids can’t because they aren’t as well-educated in the ways of the

world as you are, and because you know more about how life works than they do. The author of this article, Russ Wise, has been studying the occult for many years and is extremely well-versed in the many doors into it. He wrote this article in the same spirit in which we as moms lovingly warn our kids, because it really IS a doorway to demons even if it looks innocent and spiritual on the outside.

As I read your letter, it seems to me that you're angry about religious things that have nothing to do with either this article or The Course. I can understand that. . . I was REALLY angry with God and with the church when I stopped going in high school. I found out later that my anger wasn't about God at all, it was about the frustrations of the emptiness of organized religion when what my soul longed for was a personal relationship with God. It took me several years to discover that I could have that relationship, through Jesus.

I'm glad to hear you have a strong belief in Jesus. That's great, since He has a strong belief in YOU! [smile] And that's why we have articles like this one on The Course, because it very subtly attacks His rightful place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords by making him just another spiritual guru, and one of many ways to God. But Jesus said He was the ONLY way to the Father, and proved it by dying on the cross in our place and coming back to life three days later.

To get back to your original letter, I would suggest that perhaps it would be good to do some research on your own—find out if it really is true that saying that The Course will lead one to demons is going "a bit too far." Either it's true or it's not. If it's not, there's nothing to fear. If it is, that's a very scary proposition. . . and that's why we posted this article.

I pray God's good and rich blessings on your life and heart.

Sue Bohlin

“Did Christianity Really Come From Zoroastrianism?”

I am a Christian and have been one all of my life. I am moderately well versed in apologetics. As far as I can tell, as of now, there is only one real argument against Christianity and that comes from Zoroastrianism. I do not know how much you know about this religion, but it was founded by someone called Zoroaster or Zarathushtra who was born around 1200 BC and has a holy text called the “avesta.” It used to be one of the most popular religions in the world, but has since dwindled down to about 140,000 members, most in India.

The argument that people make is that the Jewish ideal of a savior comes from Zoroastrianism, apparently there is a strong savior figure in Zoroastrianism that will die, become resurrected, and then judge the dead. People claim that when the Jews were taken in Babylon they were exposed to this faith and adopted parts of it as their own; they say this explains why the idea of a savior figure emerges in the parts of the Bible that were written during or after the Jews’ stay in Babylon. People will then go on to say that Zoroastianism developed many cults, particularly among Romans, about the time of Jesus that claimed a divine figure will come to earth and defeat “the bull” or something like Satan or the devil, and then judge everyone. These people claim that this made the acceptance of Jesus much more likely and also point out that the three wisemen that went to see Jesus were called “magi” which is a priest in Zoroastrianism. One of the tenants of Zoroastrianism says that the savior figure will be found by

following a certain star, which is what the three wisemen did. Also Zoroastrianism seems to hint that the savior will be born by a virgin (but I am not sure of that).

People would claim that the prophecies that are fulfilled in the New Testament are added in by the authors and would counter the martyrdom of the authors as evidence for belief by saying that they eventually grew to believe it, which is possible according to modern day psychology. They would then say that Jesus was either made up, or a historical figure that happened to be very intelligent but also insane in a way that was not apparent to people around him. A very unlikely event, but one that must be used to explain something amazing as the spread of Christianity according to them.

Now I have of course not cited any evidence for my references on the argument for Zoroastrianism leading to Christianity which is because much of what I have learned is from people who I think reference A History of Zoroastrianism by Mary Boyce. I have not read that book (it is in two volumes I believe), so I cannot judge its arguments, but from a purely historical point of view, if Zoroastrianism really said all the aforementioned material before Jesus was around and then it traveled to Babylon, it does seem like a good argument against Christianity.

I must admit that there some things wrong with this theory, one is that Zoroastrianism is very big about purification by fire, which Christianity never mentions, although it would be possible to think that Zoroastrianism was diluted by the time it got to Babylon and Christianity also does talk about hell being very fiery. I do not know how much of the language the avesta is written in we can actually translate, maybe all, maybe not that much. And I also am well aware of people distorting facts to suit their own purpose and I have no idea how respected Mary Boyce is among historians. I would also like you to check out the web page www.geocities.com/Pentagon/6315/religion/zoro.html as it

argues that Christianity is the result of a cult and cites sources.

Please tell me your thoughts on this matter and on any other argument that Christianity resulted from cults or other religions; it has been pulling at my heart for a while.

Thanks so much for writing! The argument that Judaism/Christianity borrowed from Zoroastrianism is, as yet, unproven. In fact, if any borrowing was done, it was quite possibly the other way around (i.e. Zoroastrianism borrowed from Judaism/Christianity).

In the first place, the evidence actually indicates that Zoroaster wasn't even born until about the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Kenneth Boa states that his dates are sometimes given as 628-551 B.C. (*Cults, World Religions and the Occult* [Illinois: Victor Books, 1990], 45). Other scholars give similar, though not identical, dates (e.g. Herzfeld, 570-500 B.C.; Jackson, 660-583 B.C – see W.S. Lasor, "Zoroastrianism," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter Elwell [Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984], 1202). If these dates are even relatively accurate then it is quite possible that Judaism did not borrow from Zoroastrianism. Rather, it may actually have been Zoroaster who borrowed from the religion of the Jewish captives in Babylon.

It is certainly true that Zoroaster spoke of such things as "… the coming of a savior and the resurrection of the body," etc. (Ibid., 44). But he may have borrowed these ideas from the Jewish captives in Babylon. Indeed, it appears that all of these ideas can be found in the Jewish Scriptures PRIOR to the Babylonian Captivity.

For instance, even if we grant the contention of the person who wrote the web article you referred me to, that Isaiah offers the first, full monotheistic conception of God (e.g. Isaiah 43:10-13), it by no means follows that Isaiah borrowed

this conception from Zoroastrianism! Indeed, Isaiah wrote his book BEFORE Zoroaster was even born! The period in which Isaiah was writing was roughly that of 740-680 B.C. Thus, if there was any borrowing, it was Zoroaster borrowing from Isaiah—not vice-versa. Besides this, LaSor argues that Zoroaster was not a true monotheist anyway, but a polytheist. At most he was a dualist: "He exalted Ahura Mazda…as supreme among the gods…and viewed the world as an agelong struggle between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu" (Ibid., 1202).

In addition, the coming of a savior is promised as early as Gen. 3:15 in the Bible. This was long before the birth of Zoroaster. Genesis was probably written between 1450-1410 B.C. And there are numerous other Messianic prophecies before the Babylonian Captivity (e.g. in Numbers 24:17 (Law); Psalm 22—especially v. 1, 7-8, 14-18 (writings); Isaiah 52:12-53:12 (Prophets)). All of these prophecies were given BEFORE the birth of Zoroaster and the development of Zoroastrianism. Thus, we need not think that Judaism/Christianity borrowed the idea of a Savior from Zoroastrianism; likely it was just the reverse.

The resurrection of the body seems clearly alluded to in Job 19:25-27. Although this book may have been written during the time of Solomon (approx. 965 B.C.), the events themselves are almost certainly from the patriarchal period (approx. 2000 B.C.). Additionally, Psalm 16:10, written by David long before the Babylonian Captivity also alludes to the physical resurrection of the Messiah (see Acts 2:25-32). Thus, the idea of bodily resurrection (including the resurrection of the Messiah) would seem to predate the advent of Zoroastrianism.

Finally, angels are mentioned in the Bible frequently in Genesis (e.g. 3:24; 19:1; 28:12; etc). Thus, the biblical doctrine of angels is also prior to the beginning of Zoroastrianism.

As for the NT authors adding in Messianic prophecies after the

fact, it is simply false. For example, a copy of the text of Isaiah, dating to around the 2nd cent. B.C., was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. This copy of Isaiah is thus PRIOR to the birth of Christ. The prophecies are genuine. Not only this, they also predate the origin of Zoroastrianism as I mentioned previously.

As for Jesus being either unhistorical or insane, both conjectures are entirely without merit. The first flies in the face of an immense amount of information from both ancient Christian and non-Christian sources that were roughly contemporary to Jesus. For instance, aside from the NT and early Christian writers, there are references to Jesus in the Talmud, Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, etc. The second notion, that Jesus was insane, is pure speculation with virtually no evidence whatsoever to support it. People say all sorts of strange things, but the evidence in support of these theories is flimsy in the extreme. And the evidence against such ideas is truly overwhelming.

I hope this sets your mind at rest a little. The ties between Judaism/Christianity and Zoroastrianism are certainly interesting, but the evidence is insufficient to say that the former borrowed from the latter. Indeed, if any borrowing was done, it was likely Zoroastrianism borrowing from Judaism/Christianity.

God bless you,

Michael Gleghorn, Ph.D.
Probe Ministries

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I thank you for answering my question. I would just like to add to that response, which detailed how the Jews did not "steal" from Zoroastrianism, that in Deuteronomy 18:10 the Jews are forbidden to have anyone "pass through fire," a practice that Zoroastrianism used and adopted. The passage

goes on to say that they are forbidden to do many things that the other pagan cults did, such as the Zoroastrians. That would suggest that the adoption of Zoroastrian traditions would be unlikely considering that they were forbidden to have anything to do with them.

Thanks, _____, for this addendum!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries Webmistress

"I want to know more about Buddhism, but your Christianity is garbage!"

While I was interested in your article on Buddhism, one small statement disturbed me: "The resurrection of Christ is a proven historical fact." What (excuse my French) a load of bollocks. It is not a true historical fact. It is a story perpetuated by weak minds and altered over the ages to suit the ruling organizations' needs, wants and sick individual agendas. Christianity is not about the care of people, it is living your life caring about little other than a false god, doing wrongs against others and expecting some sort of forgiveness at the end … what ever that may be. That in essence is why the teachings of Buddha like you say it is a way of life and can never be compared to any religion.

Thank you for your time.

Yes, I will excuse your French. I do not think that represents the spirit of Buddha's teachings very well. On the

resurrection, please go to the Probe Ministries web site, www.probe.org. Look for two articles, Resurrection: Fact or Fiction and Cruci-Fiction and Resuscitation. I hope these articles help. The resurrection is indeed an historical event.

I would caution you on calling the people of Greek, Roman and Jewish times, people of weak minds. The foundation of our philosophy, our language, foundation for medicine and science were given to us by the Greeks. The Romans gave us the foundation for our great governement here in the U.S., and the Jewish people gave the world a foundation for moral laws. They have given human civilization a tremendous contribution; I would be very careful in calling them people of weak minds. I do not think Buddha would approve of such statements, which reflect an arrogant spirit. Humility was a virtue of Buddha's teachings.

The story was not altered to fit the ruling organizations' needs. When the gospel was first preached, the Christians were not in power. The Romans and the Jewish authorities sought to destroy this new faith, not twist it to meet their needs. The New Testament has not changed in 2000 years. We have over 24,000 ancient manuscripts dating back to the first century. They remain consistent in their message. Please reveal the evidence that shows where the textual evidence reveals a change in the message of the New Testament. Scholars have not found any evidence. It seems you have—please reveal the specific changes made and where.

Chrisitanity has done tremendous good over the centuries. More hospitals, orphanages, schools, homeless shelters, colleges, and rescue centers have been built in the name of Jesus than any other person who ever lived. In fact, soon I am going to the Philippines for a medical mission and aid mission to the orphanages there.

I perceive you may have a personal reason for hating Christianity. Obviously it is not for these that you listed.

Let us maintain a cordial spirit governed by integrity and friendly discussion. If this is not possible, this will be my final response. Thank you.

Patrick Zukeran

Dear Mr. Zukeran,

Thank you for your E Mail. Between the time that I wrote that letter and the time that I received your letter I met a man that let me see that what a person says and what a person does and thinks are two different things. He sounded to me like I probably looked to you in my initial letter.

Thank you for responding and if you have any attachments on Buddhism I would be most appreciative as many of my personal beliefs are similar to Buddhism and I have a growing interest and would like to know more about a variety of subjects related to and including Buddhism.

See Also Probe Answers Our E-mail:

- I Would Become A Christian Except that It's Based on Lies and Deception
- You Don't Really Understand Buddhism

"Is Tai Chi Always Related to

Eastern Meditation Practices?”

I was interested to read your response to the email regarding Christians training in martial arts and I agree with it. I have a related question. Is Tai Chi always related to Eastern meditation practices? I like the peacefulness and gracefulness of the movements but I am hesitant to learn it myself as I fear it is another form Eastern meditation.

You ask a very good question. In *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs,* the chapter on “The Martial Arts” has a number of interesting quotes, comments and practical advice useful for Christians considering involvement in the martial arts (Ankerberg and Weldon, Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1996; pp. 351-378).

Probably the first question we need to answer is whether or not Eastern meditation is inherently bound up with Tai Chi. Can the physical exercises be separated from the meditative elements of Tai Chi? Historically, “the development of Tai Chi is often credited to Chang San-Feng (ca. 1260-1368)…His strong interest in the I Ching and other occult pursuits were well known and, in part, eventually led him to develop Tai Chi” (Ankerberg & Weldon, 363). The origin of Tai Chi appears to have strongly influenced the philosophical rationale for its various movements. For instance, one text states: “[T]he movements of Tai Chi Chuan and the [I Ching] hexagrams upon which they are based are both methods of describing the circulation of psychic energy in the body of the meditator” (Da Liu, *Tai Chi Chuan and I Ching,* New York: Perennial/Harper & Row, 1978; cited in Ankerberg & Weldon, 366).

But does this mean that the physical movements cannot be separated from the Eastern meditation practices? It seems to depend on who you ask. One book on Tai Chi states, “The great

majority [in China]…have always engaged in it, and do so still, quite without mystic or religious purpose" (Edward Maisel, *Tai Chi for Health*, New York: Dell/Delta, 1972; cited in Ankerberg & Weldon, 369). However, another source declares, "The ancient and elegant system of Chinese exercise known as T'ai Chi Ch'uan is designed primarily to maintain and enhance health by giving full expression to the life-force, or ch'i, of the universe, embodied in each of us…Tai Chi is more than a mere physical exercise…it is a silent meditation, an energizing exercise…a daily ritual and prayer…It embodies the vibrant philosophy of Taoism…" (Jerry Mogul, "Tai Chi Chuan: A Taoist Art of Healing," Part One, *Somatics: The Magazine-Journal of the Bodily Arts and Sciences,* Autumn 1980; cited in Ankerberg & Weldon, 369).

Personally, I would be hesitant to say that Tai Chi exercise programs ALWAYS incorporate Eastern meditation practices. However, it would probably be true to say that they OFTEN incorporate such practices. Thus, I would be extremely careful about becoming involved with Tai Chi. Here are three important principles to help one in making a wise, informed decision about a Tai Chi exercise program:

1. What is the world-view of the instructor teaching the class? If the instructor embraces Eastern philosophical and religious ideas this will almost certainly come out in how the class is conducted. Ankerberg and Weldon write, "In large measure, the religious or nonreligious nature of martial arts instruction depends more on the instructor than on any other factor" (354). If the instructor embraces Eastern ideas, I would definitely avoid the class.

2. "It may also be prudent to observe an advanced class. This will help the prospective student determine whether Eastern philosophy is taught only as the practitioner progresses" (Erwin de Castro, et al., "Enter the Dragon?" Part 2, prepublication copy, *Christian Research Journal*, 1994; cited in Ankerberg & Weldon, 373). Again, if you notice Eastern

ideas surfacing in advanced classes, I would avoid even beginning your training there.

3. Carefully seek God's guidance in prayer.

Like many of the issues we face in life, I doubt whether this one is completely black or white. However, I would carefully avoid involvement in any form of Tai Chi which incorporates Eastern thought and practices. Since many programs likely do incorporate such things, I would be very cautious about becoming involved in this discipline. However, if you are able to find a completely non-religious program, taught by an instructor who does not hold any Eastern philosophical and religious ideas, and if you have carefully sought God's guidance in prayer and have a clean conscience about participating, then I doubt that the physical exercises are somehow wrong or sinful in themselves. That's my opinion, at any rate.

God bless you,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

"Magic: The Gathering is Better than Other Bad Stuff Kids Can Get Into"

This article has been removed while we do further research.

“Is Magic: The Gathering’ OK For Kids?”

This article has been removed while we research this topic again.

“On What Authority Do You Call New Age Thought Demonic?”

On what authority do you call New Age thought demonic? You have a closed mind and are only allowing yourself to grow within the confines of your narrowness.

I call New Age thought demonic on the authority of God’s word. Whenever philosophies and religions differ from what God has revealed to us as truth, particularly when they directly contradict what He says, then either the Bible is lying or the philosophies are lying. They can’t both be right. And since there is an evil spirit who desperately hates God and whose native tongue is lying, I’m going to agree with God instead of the lying spirit.

You are so right—there truly is a narrowness to my perspective. Truth is narrow, but untruth is wide and popular. I’ve experienced both, and I choose the narrow truth. One

leads to life and peace; the other leads to death. It's been my experience that those who disrespect the Bible have never seriously examined its reliability and truthfulness, but have instead relied on the hearsay evidence of those who want it not to be true and so they easily dismiss it.

By the way, if I'm wrong then I've lost nothing. If I'm right, then you've lost everything. There really is an ultimate truth that cost God greatly to communicate it fully to us.

I pray you'll see the truth one day.

Warmly,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"What About Crossing Over's John Edward?"

I was watching TV and happened upon "Unsolved Mysteries." It aired a segment on "Edgar Cayce." I'm a Christian so this segment troubled me, prompting me to search on the internet for something on this man. I found several sites, but I zeroed in on yours. I was impressed and satisfied with what I read. [Webservant's note: See our article, "The Worldview of Edgar Cayce".]

I also found where several people had written in (most were furious with you), and one of them said that Cayce's ability was indeed a gift from God. I agree with you that the Bible is very specific about avoiding dabbling in these kinds of "gifts" (that word used in connection with the devil is almost comical), and I think that God wouldn't warn us like that if

those kinds of "gifts" weren't really out there. I said all that to say this…Cayce is just one person but not "one of a kind." John Edward of TV's "Crossing Over" is another, and it seems that the times are beginning to be absolutely FILLED with these people.

My problem is this, I have a sister that is very dear to me. She has gotten interested in John Edward and began wondering whether his ability was really from God. She went to her PASTOR (remember that word), and I was shocked at his reply to her. He said that he'd "put it this way….all gifts from God aren't listed in the Bible." I nearly fell over when she told me that. So now she believes that John Edward might be operating within God's will. How do I answer her and compete with the pastor she thinks so highly of?

Thank you for writing Probe Ministries. Although I do not know a great deal about John Edward, my own position would be much different than that of your sister's pastor. From what I understand, John Edward claims to have the ability to communicate with the dead. This, of course, is something expressly forbidden in Scripture. For instance, in an extended passage from Deuteronomy 18:9-15 we read:

> When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the LORD your God. The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so. The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must

listen to him.

Notice that v. 11 specifically forbids consulting the dead. God also prohibits the Israelites from becoming mediums or spiritists, which is essentially what John Edward is. In v. 9, such things are referred to as "detestable ways." And it was because of such detestable practices that the Lord would drive the Canaanites out of the land (v. 12). Although these nations consulted the dead, and practiced sorcery and divination (v. 14), the Lord did not want His people to do so. Instead, He promised to raise up a prophet in Israel to whom He expected the people to give heed. Although this refers generally to all the genuine Old Testament prophets, it ultimately has special reference to Jesus Christ (see, for example, Acts 3:19-26).

But why does God forbid communicating with the dead? Although we may not know for certain, I think there are some important clues in the Bible. In the first place, genuine communication with the dead may (as a general rule) simply be impossible. The story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16 may indicate this. Although some may point to Saul and the witch of Endor in 1 Samuel 28, it's important to keep in mind that (1) this practice was prohibited and condemned by God (as already cited); (2) Saul had been rejected by God for his disobedience (e.g. 1 Sam. 28:6, etc). Indeed, this was just another act of Saul's unfaithfulness to God. Thus, it is not an example for us to follow. And (3) some believe the spirit of Samuel may have been a demon masquerading as Samuel. Although that is not my view, I suppose it is at least possible. [Note: also see the Probe article "What About the Witch of Endor Calling Up Samuel's Spirit?"] There is definitely clear New Testament evidence linking demonic activity to divination (Acts 16:16-18), for example. But even if it really was Samuel (which I believe) the text does not encourage us to communicate with the dead (and other texts expressly forbid it – see, for instance, Isaiah 8:19-20, etc.).

Thus, my overall opinion of John Edward (and those like him)

is this: to the extent that he is truly receiving information from the spirit world, I tend to think it is probably coming not from deceased human beings, but from demonic spirits. As always, their desire is to deceive the unsuspecting and lead them away from considering the biblical command to repent and trust Christ for salvation (see 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, etc.).

In light of all this, if your sister respects the Bible as the word of God, I would simply bypass the pastor whom she respects. Rather than directly disagreeing with him, gently point her to what God's word says. Remind her that even pastors can be wrong, but God never is. And His prohibitions are given with our welfare in mind.

Hope this helps,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

"What is a Biblical View of Kabbalah?"

My daughter-in-law has told me that she is checking out the religion Kabbalah. What can you tell me about this religion and do you have a Biblical critique? She was also dabbling into Wicca. My wife found your critique and we have forwarded it to her.

I am so sorry. It sounds like you have received your "marching orders" from God: to intercede for your d-i-l!! This is spiritual warfare.

The Watchman Fellowship (watchman.org) provides this short

description of Kabbalah:

> *Kabbalah: (Various spellings) Mystical Jewish teachings intermingled with teachings of gnosticism, Neoplatonism, magic and the occult. The word Kabbalah means secret oral tradition and was coined by an eleventh century Spanish philosopher, Ibn Gabirol. The philosophy developed in Babylon during the middle ages from earlier Hebrew speculation and numerology. An early Kabbalist, Moses de Leon, developed and systematized the philosophy in his thirteenth century work, The Book of Zolar (sometimes spelled Zohar meaning Splendor).*

The Christian Research Institute has this article on the subject (note that there are different spellings for the same thing):
www.equip.org/articles/kabbalah-getting-back-to-the-garden

Bottom line: Kabbalah is a mystical spiritual teaching that emphasizes secret knowledge (old-fashioned gnosticism, addressed by Paul in Colossians, that's still around today). This secret knowledge stands in direct opposition to the way God communicates plainly with us through the Bible. Kabbalah uses animistic principles (see our article on animism) of superstitious practices to attempt to exert control over the world: "numerology, talismans, amulets, and incarnation of divine names and words," to quote from the CRI article.

Your daughter-in-law is searching for spiritual truth and experience. Praise the Lord! That IS better than spiritual disinterest and apathy. I pray with you that the Lord will pierce the darkness and deception of her heart with His truth and the evidence of His love, drawing her to Himself.

Blessings,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“What’s a Biblical Description of Witchcraft?”

I was just curious if the Bible has any description of what witchcraft is or what characteristics of a person make them a witch?

First of all, here are the biblical references to witchcraft and other occult practices:

DEUTERONOMY 18:9-14
When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.
There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.
For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you.
You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.
For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so.

LEVITICUS 19:26-28,31
You shall not eat anything with the blood, nor practice divination or soothsaying.
You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard.
You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make

any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the LORD.
Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.

In her excellent book *Lord, Is It Warfare?*, Kay Arthur provides this glossary of terms used in these passages:

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN DEUTERONOMY 18:9-14 AND LEVITICUS 19:26-28,31

1. **Casts spell:** the act of charming; "tying up" a person through magic; used in the sense of binding with a charm consisting of words of occult power.

2. **Divination:** the act of divining sorcery; soothsaying; pagan contrast to true prophecy or prophesying; man's attempt to know and control the world and future apart from the true God using means other than human; foretelling or foreseeing the future or discovering hidden knowledge through reading omens, dreams, using lots, astrology, or necromancy.

3. **Interpret omens:** a type of divination; seeking insight or knowledge through signs or events.

4. **Medium:** necromancer; one who foretells events or gains information by conversing with spirits of the dead; conjurer.

5. **Necromancer:** one who calls up the dead; medium.

6. **Spiritist:** familiar spirit; one who has esoteric knowledge through non-human means; diviner.

7. **Soothsaying:** witchcraft; observing clouds for augury; foretelling future events with supernatural power but not divine power; interpreting dreams; revealing secrets.

8. **Sorcerer:** magician; conjurer; enchanter; one who practices magic arts, sorcery, charms, with an intent to do harm or to delude or pervert the mind; one who claims to have supernatural power or knowledge through (evil) spirits.

9. **Witchcraft:** soothsaying; practice of witches; the use of formulas and incantations to practice sorcery; act of producing extraordinary effects by the invocation or aid of demons; the use of magic arts, spells, or charms.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries