

Introduction

This paper will examine the beliefs of the United Pentecostal Church International (hereafter UPCI) regarding their doctrine on the nature of God. It will examine their beliefs concerning the Trinity and why the UPCI rejects this doctrine. The chief doctrine the UPCI is noted for, namely modalism, will be examined in light of Scripture.¹ I will argue that modalism as taught by the UPCI is heretical because the Scripture clearly, and staunchly rejects this doctrine in light of teaching the Trinity (one God eternally *simultaneously* existing as three distinct persons). Denying the doctrine of the Trinity puts one at odds not only with the Scripture, but with historic, orthodox Christianity. In other words, denying the Trinity via modalism is not a secondary doctrine where Christians can agree to disagree. First, I will define modalism and where it appeared in church history. Next, I will give a brief synopsis of the history of the UPCI. Third, I will explain the beliefs of the UPCI about the nature of God. Fourth, I will argue that they are mistaken in their views, and then I will respond to their objections.

The Definition of Modalism

Modalism is defined in *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words* as, “A heresy stressing the radical unity of God. Modalism teaches that the three parts of the Trinity-Father, Son and Holy Spirit-are merely different modes or manifestations of God, rather than three distinct persons who are at the same time in one substance.”² This definition gets right to the crux of the matter, namely the difference between three simultaneous Persons existing as the one eternal God as trinitarians believe, or as the UPCI believes, just one divine person switching “modes or

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced employ the English Standard Version.

² Terry L. Miethe *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1988), 139.

manifestations” as the one true God. By analogy, modalism is like having one actor (i.e. Eddie Murphy) playing three different characters in the same movie (i.e. the Nutty Professor). By contrast, trinitarians believe there are three distinct Persons who always are Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The difference in modalism versus trinitarianism is not a peripheral issue where one can deny the Trinity and be within the pale of orthodoxy. Church history has dealt with modalism and now I will briefly show how the Fathers have condemned it. Their rejection of it, further establishes the major premise of this paper namely the UPCI is heretical.

History of Modalism

The UPCI’s chief doctrine of modalism has been around in church history long before the denomination started. Robert Letham notes, “Modalism continued after Tertullian, with Paul of Samosata being condemned by the Council of Antioch in 268. Earlier, Sabellius held that the only God, the Father in the OT, had become the Son in the NT, and sanctified the church as the Holy Spirit after Pentecost.”³ Modalism had a revival with the Azuza street movement in the early twentieth century. It should be noted that not everyone associated with Azuza street was a modalist concerning the nature of God. However, the division over the trinitarian view versus the modalist view at Azuza street is what led to the birth of the UPCI. It is important to know that the major belief of the UPCI namely modalism did not appear out of thin air at the Azuza street revival early in the 20th century. Most heresies regarding the nature of God, the church has successfully dealt with in creeds and councils over the first 5 centuries of her existence. These errors tend to repeat themselves in our modern day. The premise of modalism being in error is supported by the historic church.

³ Robert Letham *The Holy Trinity in Scripture History, Theology and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ, PR Publishing, 2004), 108.

Brief History of UPCI

The UPCI had its birth from a split in the Assemblies of God, a trinitarian Pentecostal denomination that rejected the modalist view of the Godhead. The first doctrinal issue for the early twentieth century Pentecostals that arose was baptism in the name of Jesus only. Hence, modern day modalists are sometimes known as “Jesus only people” not so much because of their espousal of modalism, but because of their insistence in the baptismal formula of Jesus alone in the administration of the sacrament of water baptism (Acts 2:38). The initial “discovery” of baptism in Jesus name only allegedly throughout Acts and the Epistles eventually led these men to the rejection of the Trinity. The *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* notes,

“By the time the general council (Assemblies of God) convened in St. Louis in October 1916, the majority had effectively organized to force the Oneness ministers to accept the Trinitarian formula or to leave the organization. The leaders appointed a committee of staunch Trinitarians to draw up a ‘Statement of Fundamental Truths.’ This statement embraced the traditional formula and made the doctrine of the Trinity a basis for membership.”⁴

There were several more mergers of Oneness (sometimes called Apostolic) churches which eventually led to the birth of the UPCI in St. Louis in 1945. Today, the UPCI is the largest non-trinitarian Pentecostal denomination.⁵

Teachings of the UPCI

In 1985, the UPCI sent two scholars Dr. Robert Sabin, (then Pastor of the Apostolic Bible Institute of Minneapolis, Minnesota) and Reverend, Dr. Nathaniel Urshan (then General Superintendent and speaker on their Harvest Time radio broadcast) to engage in a public debate with

⁴ Stanley Burgess, M. *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 1998.862.

⁵ Melton J. Gordon, "United Pentecostal Church, International (UPCI)." In *Encyclopedia of World Religions: Encyclopedia of Protestantism*, by J. Gordon Melton. 2nd ed. Facts On File, 2016. http://ezproxy.biola.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/fofecvt/united_pentecostal_church_international_upci/0?institutionId=469

trinitarians Dr. Walter Martin and Dr. Calvin Beisner.⁶ UPCI minister Reverend Urshan, when asked in the introduction for a definition of God said,

“We do not believe in a three-person Trinity, we believe that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh. We do not believe the terms ‘Trinity—God the Son,’ ‘God the Father,’ ‘God the Holy Ghost,’ ‘eternal Son,’ the ‘first, second and third Persons in the Trinity’ are either Scriptural or correct. We believe the doctrine of the Trinity was a product of pagan mythology and Grecian philosophy.”⁷

Reverend Urshan wasted no time getting to the heart of the matter as to what the UPCI believes regarding the nature of God. Dr. Robert Sabin echoed Reverend Urshan’s words with a simpler definition when he said, “We believe that there is but one divine Person, who has manifested Himself as Creator and Father and as the Lord Jesus Christ and as the Spirit of God in the earth today for believers.”⁸

The introductory quotes clearly match the numerous UPCI tracts and pamphlets the author has investigated. Also, the UPCI website currently maintains the belief, “There is one God, who has revealed Himself as our Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and as the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is God manifested in flesh. He is both God and man. (See Deuteronomy 6:4; Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 2:9; I Timothy 3:16.)”⁹ Again, this quote shows the contrast to trinitarian theology as it fails to mention three distinct Persons simultaneously existing as the one true God.

Since modalists and trinitarians can differ in their interpretation of the plethora of Bible verses where God says that He alone created the heavens and the earth (regarding these verses

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1t1OIPb9JXQ> accessed June 18, 2020

⁷ *The Trinity or “Jesus Only”: What Do the Scriptures Teach?* Complete program transcripts prepared by the John Ankerberg Show, P.O. Box 8977, Chattanooga, TN 37411, 2.

⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁹ UPCI, “Our Beliefs: United Pentecostal Church International,” UPCI, accessed June 18, 2020, <https://www.upci.org/about/our-beliefs>

trinitarians say God can speak of his Being in the singular and in other verses His Persons in the plural), the UPCI must deal with passages that mention more than one Person in the Godhead.

Due to space constraints John 1:1 will be analyzed in detail. For if a plurality of Persons in the Godhead can be shown in this verse, then modalism falls by the wayside. John 1:1 states, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” When the host of the debate Dr. John Ankerberg asked Reverend Urshan for his exegesis of John 1:1, the minister noted, “I would interpret that as the fact that in the beginning the Word, the Logos, was in the mind and the concept of God and was not a person but in the plan and the mind of the Almighty God for a future manifestation.”¹⁰ According to Reverend Urshan concerning John 1:1, the word “Word” or “Logos” in the Greek, is not a collateral person “with” God. This view postulates that God the Father had the “Word” in mind *solely* as a future manifestation of Himself. Reverend Urshan’s view of John 1:1 echoes the oneness scholar David Bernard’s understanding of this passage. Dr. Bernard notes, “The Word had pre-existence and the Word was God (the Father), so we can use (the title Word) without reference to humanity. However, the Son always refers to the Incarnation and we cannot use it in the absence of the human element.”¹¹ Both David Bernard and Nathaniel Urshan fail to acknowledge the concept of the Word being a collateral Person with God before the Incarnation in John 1:1. The UPCI’s understanding is the word “Word” prior to the Incarnation was a thought in the mind of God the Father before He Himself came to earth in the Incarnation. So, let us now consider some possible weaknesses in this exegesis of John 1:1.

¹⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹¹ David K. Bernard. *Oneness of God* (Hazelwood, MO.: Word Aflame Press, 1983), 117.

Trinitarian Counter Argument on John 1:1

By contrast, historic, orthodox Christianity has always understood John 1:1 to be teaching the eternal Son, or “Word” if you will, was literally, in the beginning “face to face” with God (Father and Holy Spirit). In other words, trinitarians believe John 1:1 is teaching the Word is a distinct Person *simultaneously* existing with God and is God. Dr. Walter Martin responded to Nathaniel Urshan by saying, “The preposition ‘pros,’ ‘In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God,’ literally is ‘face to face’ with.’ You cannot be face to face with a mere concept or abstraction. You have to be face to face with a person.”¹² Dr. Martin’s exegesis of the passage makes the most sense since in the following verses of John chapter 1, (2-3) the Bible uses the personal pronouns “He” and “Him” to describe the “Word” and not “It.” Furthermore, Edwin A. Blum in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* notes, “The Word was with God in a special relationship of eternal fellowship in the Trinity. The word “with” translates the Greek ‘pros’ which here suggests ‘in company with’ (cf in 1:2; 1 Thes 3:4; 1 John 1:2).”¹³ The reasoning of Dr. Martin and Edwin A. Blum contextually makes sense because the Bible says the “Word became flesh (vs 14)” which is impossible for some “thought in the mind of the Father” to accomplish. Furthermore, Dr. Martin and Edwin A. Blum are not alone in their understanding of the Greek preposition “pros” (with) in John 1:1. Greek scholar A.T. Robertson said, “To be with (pros) someone always denotes a relationship between persons.”¹⁴ A thought is not a collateral person that

¹² *The Trinity or “Jesus Only”*: *What Do the Scriptures Teach?* 2.

¹³ Edwin, A. Blum, “John” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty*, eds. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck. (Colorado Springs, CO: ChariotVictor Publishing, 1983), 271.

¹⁴ A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 625 as cited in Calvin, E. Beisner. *“Jesus Only” Churches*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 1998, 14.

can be “with” someone, i.e God, nor can a thought become flesh (John 1:14) at the Incarnation. New Testament scholar Murray J. Harris said, “‘The Word was (in active communion with) the Father.’ This seems to be the import of John’s statement, whether or not *pros* bears a dynamic sense for when *pros* describes a relationship between Persons, it must connote personal intercourse rather than simple spatial juxtaposition or personal accompaniment. Used of divine Persons, the preposition points to eternal intercommunication.”¹⁵ The “Word” according to Murray J. Harris had “eternal intercommunication” with God and that is something a thought or attribute cannot accomplish. Many more Greek scholars can be cited on the preposition “*pros*” showing personal relationship. The point in citing three additional scholars (A.T.Robertson, Edwin J. Blum and Murray J. Harris) is to show that Dr. Walter Martin was not making up material on the spot about the preposition “*pros*” in the Greek. Martin’s exegesis fits well with the additional scholars cited. However, the UPCI did not agree to this exegesis and they had a counterargument to this to which we shall now turn.

UPCI Key Counterargument John 1:1

Dr. Robert Sabin responded to Dr. Martin’s exegesis of John 1:1 by saying, “Well, it is interesting that he should say that ‘the Word was with God’ would indicate that it had to be face to face with God. Job said, ‘With him were wisdom and power,’ and yet wisdom and power are not persons in the Godhead.”¹⁶ After a back and forth exchange on the personal pronouns “He” and “Him” in John 1:2-3, Dr. Sabin doubled down on his rejection of the word “Word” being a collateral person. He continued with, “I believe Jesus was the Wisdom of God. Dr. Martin

¹⁵ Colin Brown. *The New international Dictionary of New Testament theology Vol. 3 Pri-Z. Vol. 3* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1986), 1205, as cited in Calvin, E. Beisner. “*Jesus Only*” Churches. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 1998, 21.

¹⁶ *The Trinity or “Jesus Only”*: *What Do the Scriptures Teach?* 3.

mentioned that they handled the Word of life. What they handled (reference to 1 John 1) was not the flesh of Jesus Christ and that flesh of Jesus Christ was not with God in the beginning.”¹⁷

So it is crystal clear that the UPCI teaches the word “Word” in John 1:1 is not a collateral person in the Godhead but rather a thought or attribute of God (wisdom) in the mind of God the Father before He Himself took on flesh in the Incarnation as Jesus Christ. The UPCI does not see the significance of the preposition “with” (pros in Greek) of John 1:1 as constituting a Person since with God in the Old Testament were “wisdom and power” and they are not collateral Persons in the Godhead. Furthermore, Dr. Sabin accused trinitarians of believing that the flesh of Jesus Christ was with God the Father in the beginning so let us examine this allegation to see if trinitarians have an answer, and if they really believe the flesh of Jesus Christ was with God in the beginning that John 1:1 mentions.

Trinitarian counter-counter argument

In response to the UPCI, it is imperative to clear up the misunderstanding that trinitarians do not believe the “flesh of Jesus Christ was with God in the beginning” as Dr. Sabin alleged. Trinitarianism holds to the notion that Jesus, the Second Person in the Godhead, or Word if you will, received His body (flesh) *at* the Incarnation and *not* “in the beginning” as the UPCI alleges trinitarians believe. This is clearly taught in John 1:14 “the Word *became* flesh and dwelt among us.” The notion that at some point in time the pre-existent Word was given a body is also taught in Hebrews 10:5 where there is a dialog going on in the Godhead *prior* to the Incarnation. Concerning Hebrews 10:5 Dr. Martin responded to the assertion Christ’s flesh was with God in the beginning by quoting Hebrews 10:5, “Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, ‘Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, But a body You have prepared for Me.’ ... That’s not after

¹⁷ Ibid., 3.

the Incarnation, but before the Incarnation.”¹⁸ So the UPCI allegation that trinitarians are somehow saying “the flesh of Jesus Christ was with God in the beginning” is patently false and absurd.

The Hebrews 10:5 counterpoint is very significant for an additional reason. In order to have a dialog as described in the passage, a minimum of *two Persons* is required. Furthermore, the timing of this dialog is crucial for it occurs as Christ was literally entering the cosmos. Let me elaborate. The reason Dr. Martin went to Hebrews 10 was to show there is a dialog that occurs *before* Jesus Christ had a body. Regarding Hebrews 10:5, the UPCI cannot adequately explain dialog between members of the Godhead before the Incarnation like they *attempt* to do with the artificial distinctions of Father, (Christ’s Deity) and Son (His humanity) while Jesus was on earth.

Dr. Martin’s exegesis of Hebrews 10:5 is correct as *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* literally translates the passage as, “Therefore entering into the world, He said sacrifice and offering not you desired a body but you prepared for me.”¹⁹ This is important because as Jesus was entering the world (Greek is Kosmon), He literally said to the Father (Heb 10:5) “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me.” The concept of dialog occurring *before* the Incarnation (Christ entering the cosmos) shows evidence of a plurality in the Godhead. J.H. Davies in *The Cambridge Bible Commentary: On the New English Bible, A Letter to Hebrews*, contextually speaks of Hebrews 10:7 “The words ‘I have come’ (verse

¹⁸ Ibid., 11.

¹⁹, Jay P. Green. *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament: With Strong’s Concordance Numbers Above Each Word.* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1985), 601.

7) enable the writer to refer it to *his coming into the world.*”²⁰ (italics in original). J.H Davies agrees with Dr. Martin that the dialog in Hebrews 10:5-7 is referring to Christ entering the cosmos. Therefore, it is imperative to go to the portions of Scripture (Gen 1:26, & 11:7 Isaiah 6:8 & Hebrews 10:5) that show a dialog in the Godhead prior to the Incarnation. The UPCI cannot adequately explain dialogs in the Godhead that occur prior to the Incarnation.

Furthermore, the UPCI’s understanding of the Godhead in terms of the grammar and dialog in Hebrews 10:5, as Christ is entering the cosmos would not make any sense because you cannot allegedly have God the Father (who in UPCI theology *only* existed in this mode at this point in time) talking to Jesus His Son (i.e. a human body) in Bethlehem’s manger because in their theology there is only one person. The point in time when the Hebrews 10:5 statement occurs is prior to Jesus having a Body, yet there is conversation taking place. In other words, there would be no one there (either in the process of entering the cosmos or at Bethlehem) for God to engage in conversation with because there is only Divine Person in UPCI thought.

Also, the UPCI will attempt the incongruent argument and try to say that in Hebrews 10:5, God the Father is speaking *prophetically* in the form of a dialog with the Son (whom He was to change into) as He Himself is entering the cosmos. In other words, the UPCI will attempt to say the Hebrews 10:5 verse is God the Father speaking ahead of time when He Himself will take on a body. The concept of prophecy cannot adequately explain the conversation going on prior to the Incarnation if there is only one Divine Person in the Godhead switching roles as Father, Son and Spirit.

²⁰ P. R Ackroyd, A. R. C. Leaney, and J. W. Packer. *The Cambridge Bible Commentary. New English Bible A Letter to Hebrews. - Commentary by J.H. Davies. - 1967. - (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963)* 94.

Furthermore, there are additional problems for the UPCI concerning John 1:1, if one took their view of the word “Word” as some sort of impersonal attribute like “wisdom (Dr. Robert Sabin’s comment) being with God in the Old Testament,” which would logically lead to the absurdity that the “Word” who is also called God at the end of John 1:1, would make God just an attribute. By way of illustration, here is how it would look if one postulated the forced UPCI interpretation of John 1:1; “In the beginning was the Word (attribute like Wisdom), and the Word was with God (ok no problems), and the Word *was* God. (i.e. an attribute all by itself is God!).” Certainly, God is more than *just* an attribute.

Also, there is an additional problem the UPCI did not consider in its exegesis of John 1:1. As noted above, the word “Word” in the UPCI mindset is just some idea eternally in the mind of God the Father for a future manifestation of Himself. Dr. Martin noted, “You could even argue for the divinity of mankind eternally, based on John chapter 1, if you took Brother Urshan’s position, because we existed in the mind of God also, therefore we are as eternal as Jesus Christ. That type of logic will just simply defeat you when you try and exegete a passage.”²¹ Certainly, God knew of the future of human beings before they were born (Rom 9:9-13), but that does not mean these individuals existed for all eternity *with* God as the Word did. Furthermore, God never had a conversation with these individuals (i.e. Isaac, Jacob or Esau) before they were born like He did within the Godhead *prior* to the Incarnation (Gen 1:26, & 11:7, Is 6:8, Heb 1:6 & 10:5). Would the UPCI think the Prophet Jeremiah (1:5) existed eternally just because God said, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations?” God can speak prophetically, but when He does, He does not do it

²¹ *The Trinity or “Jesus Only”: What Do the Scriptures Teach?* 3.

in the form of a dialog, with minimally two parties conversing! The exegesis of the UPCI regarding John 1:1 and Hebrews 10:5 is overall weak and found wanting.

Another problem is Oneness scholar David Bernard's mindset that biblically the word "Son" as used in the New Testament in reference to Jesus refers to His humanity and the word "Father" always refers to Christ's Divinity. Dr. Calvin Beisner notes, "Bernard's assertion that the term 'Son always refers to the Incarnation and we cannot use it in the absence of the human element' begs the question; merely asserting it does not prove it."²² During the lengthy debate the UPCI kept asserting that the word "Son" as used by Jesus refers to His humanity and His usage of "Father" refers to His own Deity. However, they did not offer proof for this allegation. This assertion makes Jesus look schizophrenic. This is due to the fact, "The Father is referred to as distinct from Jesus the Son throughout the New Testament over 200 times. And over 50 times, Jesus the Son and the Father are juxtaposed in the same verse."²³ This is overwhelming evidence the Father and Son are distinct Persons. Although the UPCI will deny it, in theory they are treating the human nature of Jesus as a distinct person separate from the Divine Person of Jesus.

Earlier it was noted Dr. Urshan said the Trinity was "a product of pagan mythology and Grecian philosophy." That charge was never substantiated during the lengthy debate. In fact, it could be argued that the UPCI has interpreted the "Logos" (Word) of John 1:1 through the lens of "Greek philosophy and pagan mythology" rather than trinitarians being guilty of this charge. For example, Dr. James White in his book *The Forgotten Trinity* notes, "The Greeks had used the term logos in their philosophical explanations regarding the functioning of the world. The logos was for them an impersonal ordering force, that which gave harmony to the universe. The

²² Calvin, E. Beisner. "Jesus Only" Churches. (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 1998.), 14.

²³ Gregory A. Boyd "Sharing Your Faith With a Oneness Pentecostal (Part two)," *Christian Research Journal* (Spring 1991), <https://www.equip.org/article/sharing-your-faith-with-a-oneness-pentecostal-part-2/>

logos was not personal in their philosophy, but it was very important.”²⁴ This Grecian understanding of “logos” fits better with the UPCI exegesis of John 1:1 that the word “Word” (Logos) was an impersonal thought in the mind of God the Father. The charge leveled by the UPCI of the Trinity coming from “pagan mythology and Grecian philosophy” is baseless.

Conclusion

This paper started with the claim the UPCI is heretical in teaching the doctrine of modalism which is the belief there is only one divine Person in the Godhead who switches roles as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Insufficient exegetical evidence has been provided by the UPCI to establish a modalistic view of God existing solely as one Divine Person rather than three Persons. The UPCI’s chief strategy is to steer clear of passages that show dialog between the members of the Godhead and instead focus on verses like Isaiah 44:6, “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god” as if trinitarians believe in tritheism, three separate gods. As mentioned earlier, the answer to all the Old Testament verses with singular pronouns is that God can speak of His Being in the singular, or His Persons in the plural. John 1:1 was carefully examined and the notion that the word “Word” is referring to a collateral Person makes the most exegetical and logical sense. The UPCI’s understanding of the “Word” in John 1:1 is inconsistent as an “attribute” or “thought” fails to take into account the rest of the verse “the Word was God,” which is tantamount to saying “a thought or an attribute all by itself is God!” Evidence was provided that showed a dialog occurring in the Godhead prior to the Incarnation which shows the plurality of Persons. While it is positive that the UPCI believes Jesus Christ is God, and that there is only one true God, however they fail to recognize the pre-Incarnational, Personal existence of Jesus as distinct from the Father. This belief is tantamount to rejecting the central message of the New

²⁴ James R White, *The Forgotten Trinity*. (Minneapolis, Minn: Bethany House, 1998.), Kindle, 49.

Testament that God *sent* His Son. The notion of the Father sending the Son is clear for 1 John 4:14 says, “that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.” This verse mitigates against UPCI theology for in order for the Son to be “sent,” He had to first exist! You cannot send a non-existent Person “into the world.”

Furthermore, the Greek of 1 John 2:22 clearly says, “Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies *the Father and the Son*.²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.” The Greek syntax of this passage and Matthew 28:19 is the death knell to the UPCI’s beliefs. Noted Greek scholar Granville Sharpe had a very important rule for grammar that applies to not only 1 John 2:22, but Matt 28:19 where the conjunction “and” (kai in the Greek) is followed by the definite article (the), the names listed in the verse(s) are distinct persons. Dr. Beisner quotes the Greek scholar Granville Sharp’s sixth rule as, “At the insertion of the copulative 'kai' (and) between nouns of the same case without articles according to the fifth rule denotes that the second noun expresses a different person, thing, or quality from the preceding noun, so likewise the same effect attends the copulative when each of the nouns are preceded by the articles.”²⁵ What this basically means in laymen’s terms is in the Greek, when you have personal nouns (i.e. Father, Son and Holy Spirit), and they are conjoined by the word “and,” if the definite article “the” is preceding the nouns, the nouns are referring to *distinct* persons. This is the case with both Matthew 28:19 and 1 John 2:22. And what is dangerous about the UPCI is according to 1 John 2:22, by their denial of the Father *and the Son* (as understood by Greek grammar), they are inexorably teaching the doctrine of the antichrist.

²⁵ C. Kuehne “The Greek Article and the Doctrine of Christ’s Deity,” *Journal of Theology: Church of the Lutheran Confession* 13:3 (September, 1973), 25. As cited in *The Trinity or “Jesus Only”: What Do the Scriptures Teach?* 48.

In closing, the UPCI presents what the apostle Paul referred to in 2 Cor 11:4 as “another Jesus than the one we proclaimed.” When a group such as the UPCI ends up denying the preexistence of the Son (i.e. the Son existed as a Person before the Incarnation) as the Son, they end up believing in another Jesus, one that is not taught in the Bible. Regarding the Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the Trinity, the UPCI believes that Jesus Christ turned into the Holy Spirit after the Ascension.²⁶ This bizarre view is outside the pale of orthodoxy. Modalism fails because I have clearly documented the plurality of Persons in the Godhead. It is the duty of all Christians to speak the truth regarding modalism in love to members of the UPCI while “earnestly contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.” (Jude:3).

²⁶ Gordon Magee. *Is Jesus in the Godhead or Is the Godhead in Jesus?* (Hazelwood, MO.: Word Aflame Press, 1988.), 25. Magee, a Oneness scholar argues “There is but one Spirit (Eph 4:4). There is but one Lord (1 Cor 8:6, NIV). Now the Lord [Jesus is the one Lord] is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:17, NIV).” (brackets original). This sophistry is false because the context in Ephesians 4:4 is pulled apart from verses 5-6. Verses 5&6 talk about “one Spirit”, “one Lord” and “one God and Father of us all” Beisner notes, “To assume *spirit* in both Eph 4:4 and 2 Cor 3:17 denotes the Holy Spirit and *Lord* in both 1 Cor 8:6 and 2 Cor 3:17 denotes Jesus is to argue in a circle by assuming what Oneness must prove.” Calvin, E. Beisner. “*Jesus Only*” *Churches*. 35.