

EXPOSING THE MOON RIVER CULT

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"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious as wolves." -Matthew 7:15

## Introduction

We have all heard of the terrible dangers of false prophets and the cults they dominate. Visions of David Koresh's fiery inferno, the hundreds of bloated bodies left behind by Rev. Jim Jones, the Tokyo subway deaths engineered by the Aum Shinriko cult, and the bloody remains of the Solar Temple Cult, are all still fresh in our minds. But we have always been able to console ourselves that these false prophets are located so far away from us. That time is now over. For a cult no less dangerous than the ones we have seen in the news is located in Moon River Estates, just a few miles outside of Lethbridge. This "Moon River Cult" as it is sometimes called, is dominated by a very hateful man named Victor Hafichuk.

Victor Hafichuk does not prey on people far outside our church doors, he preys on people **WITHIN** them. Victor **SPECIFICALLY** targets young, church attending Christians for his cult. He has admitted to attending and infiltrating Churches for the sole purpose of getting people **OUT** of the Church and **INTO** his cult group (Counterfeit Christianity, p.8). This false prophet and self-styled messiah is no mere threat to our churches, he has already drawn blood. One of his prominent converts was a Sunday School teacher, Bible study leader, and worship service leader at First Baptist Church, as well as, club president of the University of Lethbridge's chapter of Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship. Victor has not failed to use his convert's former contacts and influence to wreak even further havoc on the Christian community. We as Christians need to arm ourselves and warn others about the danger this man presents.

The intent of this report is to warn the Christian community about the practices and beliefs of Victor Hafichuk and the Moon River Cult. The research for this paper has been done by Pat Schoenberger, Al DeLeew, and John Albiston, with special support from Chris Heynen. Our research has included personal interviews with Victor Hafichuk, Sean Fife (one of Victor's followers), former followers of Victor, and many people Victor has attempted to control. Along with these interviews, this report is based on the following essays written by Victor Hafichuk himself:

- Here is the Way it is
- Prophecy (March 17, 1984)
- The Wrath of God
- So You Want to Talk With Jesus
- The Case for Coming out
- Counterfeit Christianity
- Baptism With The Holy Spirit
- Diabolical Doctrines

These documents are available from Pastor Doug Whelpton, at First Baptist Church, Lethbridge.

"But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you."  
-2 Peter 2:1

## Part I: False Beliefs

**WHAT** you believe and **IN WHAT** you believe are of extreme importance. **WHAT** you believe affects how you behave. If you believe that you are the scum of the earth, you will behave as if you were the scum of the earth. If you believe that you have to earn your salvation, you will live a life of fear and anxiety. **IN WHAT** you believe affects your eternal destiny. Jesus said that no one comes to the father but by **HIM**, if you put your faith in your own works, or in a false prophet, or in a false God, then you will **NOT** come to God the Father. This is why false doctrine will not only destroy your life, it will also destroy your soul.

The main reason why Victor Hafichuk can be identified as a false prophet is that he teaches doctrines that clearly contradict scripture. The Moon River Cult believes in a **DIFFERENT** God, A **DIFFERENT** Jesus, and a **DIFFERENT** Gospel. In the following we will examine just a few of Victor's key teachings in the light of Scripture.

### I. The Nature of God

#### Victor's Teachings:

God willfully created evil, "His creation plan includes a place for evil", and God himself seems to transcend good and evil (*Here is the way it is, p.1*). In a prophesy supposedly uttered by God himself, Victor's "god" reveals himself as the author and creator of Evil (*Prophecy, p.2*).

#### The Biblical Truth

The truth of the matter is that evil exists only because of God's creatures' abuse of the good gift of free will. James 1:13-14 clearly indicates that God has nothing to do with evil, instead it is his creatures who are responsible for evil:

When tempted, no-one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his **OWN** evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

God is absolutely holy. God does not merely do what is good, but goodness itself is **DEFINED** by God's unchanging character. Evil, is defined as anything that does not reflect God's character. Love is good **BECAUSE** God is loving. Honesty is good **BECAUSE** God is honest. Faithlessness is evil **BECAUSE** God is faithful. God cannot possibly be evil, nor be the author of evil because, by definition, evil is anything that is **NOT** Godlike. So who is Victor's "God" who is the father of evil? Fortunately, the Bible identifies this father of lies in John 8:44 as being the devil, which sheds some light on the identity of the "God" Victor serves.

#### Victor's Teachings:

God is not triune in nature. The Trinity is a doctrine of the devil and a "damnable" heresy. There is not three persons in one God, but one person in one God. God is an actor that plays the three different roles of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The reason the Bible supports the doctrine of the Trinity is because the Bible is corrupt. Evil men are guilty of "messing with the records (Scriptures) to support their damnable heresies!" (*Diabolical Doctrines, p.14*). The reason Victor knows the Trinity is false is by the way Victor hears "God's" voice. As Victor writes:

I hear the voice of God...Do I hear introductions like "This is the Father" or "This time it's the Son" or "Yesterday you heard from the Son but today I, the Holy Spirit, am speaking"? or do I sometimes

or always hear a chorus of three voices? No, I hear one voice...

(Diabolical Doctrines, p.15)

### The Biblical Truth

Whether or not Victor hears "voices" is irrelevant. It is of vital importance that we derive our beliefs from the inspired word of God, and not by disembodied voices one hears in the night.

It is also of extreme importance to understand the significance of the nature of God. Say I knew an Afro-Canadian from Edmonton named John Smith. If I were to ask you if you knew John Smith and you replied: "yeah, he's the tall blonde fellow from Calgary". It would be obvious that we were talking about two separate people. Just because two people share the same name doesn't mean they are the same person. For example, when a Mormon says "God" he is not referring to our eternal, omnipresent, creator of the universe, God of spirit. He is referring to a created human being from the planet Kolob. Same name, different god. Now if you put your faith in the Mormon "God" (who, incidentally, exists only in the imaginations of the Mormons), that non-existent "God" can NEVER save you. So too with the "God" of the Moon River Cult.

As we look to the scriptures several things become clear.

First, there is one, and only one God:

- Isa. 44:6b "I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God."
- 1 Cor. 8:4b "...there is no God but one."

Second, God the Father is God:

- Rom. 1:7b "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

Third, God the Son is God:

- Heb. 1:8a "But about the Son he says, 'Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever...'"

Fourth, God the Holy Spirit is God:

- Acts 5:3,4 "...you have lied to the Holy Spirit...you have not lied to men but to God."

Fifth, the three persons of the Godhead relate to each other as persons:

- Matt.3:16,17 "As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'"

Notice that when God the Father speaks he uses a subject-object distinction between himself and the Son. Clearly there is a personal distinction between the Father and the Son.

From these five points there is only one possible conclusion; there is one God who exists in three persons. It is not three persons in one person, but three person in one God. This is the God of the Bible.

Now compare the God that Victor serves. To whom was Victor's Jesus praying to in the garden? According to Victor, he could not be praying to anyone, his God seems to suffer from some sort of mental illness. He talks to himself constantly and even seems to pray, in effect, "not my will, but my will be done" and on the cross effectually states "Me, into my hands I commit my spirit" and at his baptism would seem to state "This is my me, I love myself, and am pleased with myself". Victor's God is obviously not the God of the Bible, and cannot possibly save you.

## II. Salvation

### Victor's Teachings

No one is saved by accepting Jesus as saviour. (Baptism with the Holy Spirit [hereafter referred to as BWHS], p.2). Repenting of your sins will not save you (BWHS, p.8). There are in fact 7 steps you need to follow in order to be saved:

- 1) You must repent and pay for all your sins. You must confess each sin specifically to everyone you have sinned against as well as confess these sins to Victor, the only known man of God. You must make full restitution for all of your sins, "Apology is not enough". And you must forgive all offenses committed against you (BWHS, p.10,11). In case you are not sure that you must confess your sins to Victor, he makes it very clear: "I mentioned confession of sin to a man of God. I must be fair and straightforward with you about this matter. I DO NOT KNOW OF ANOTHER MAN OF GOD OTHER THAN MYSELF" (BWHS, p.14).
- 2) Repentance is not enough, merely accepting Jesus as your personal Saviour is "diabolical heresy". You must purge yourself of all rebellion and completely submit to God (BWHS, p. 11). "It will require that you SUBJECT EVERYTHING IN YOUR SPHERE OF EXISTENCE to the scrutiny and judgment of God. You will have to know and trust that IT IS GIVEN ME, AS A MAN OF GOD TO EXERCISE THAT SCRUTINY AND JUDGEMENT in the Name of God" (Here Is The Way It Is, p.7).
- 3) You must undergo water Baptism. (BWHS, p. 11)
- 4) You must completely forsake your past life. "It is not only sin that must be put away but good things must be left behind like mother, father, brothers, sisters, friends, lands, houses, dreams, aspirations, vocations." You face and suffer persecution, if you do not you are not of God. (BWHS, p.12) above all you must forsake the Christian Church. Victor proclaims: "I tell you most solemnly, that UNLESS YOU HEED MY VOICE AND RECEIVE ME AS THE LORD'S SPOKESPERSON and come out of your church system, YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SINS" (The Case For Coming Out, p.6).
- 5) You must have an intense desire, if you are lukewarm you will be lost. "This is not an invitation to a picnic but to the cross and grave" (BWHS, p.12).
- 6) You must ask, with a heart of the purest intentions to receive the Spirit. (BWHS, p.13)
- 7) You must believe that you have received the Spirit. (BWHS, p. 13) "How does one believe? By hearing what God says. How does one hear? By receiving a messenger of God, His representative and SUBMITTING TO HIM AS UNTO THE LORD" (Here Is The Way It Is, p.2). In case you are not sure who this messenger of God is Victor identifies himself: "I am sent of God and those who are not offended in me but receive and DO WHAT I SAY will be blessed..." (Here Is The Way It Is, p.5).

### The Biblical Truth

While Victor sees himself as a necessary part of salvation, the Bible is very clear that our salvation depends on Jesus alone, and **NOT** in following and submitting to any other man. The Bible makes this clear:

Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. -Acts 4:12

The Bible also makes it clear that we are saved by God's grace and mercy, through putting our faith and trust in him, **NOT** by works and jumping through all the hoops Victor demands:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is a gift of God - not by works, so that no-one can boast.  
-Ephesians 2:8,9

Consider the following verses:

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.  
-Romans 10:9

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.  
-John 3:16

We are saved by putting our faith in Jesus and submitting to **HIM** as Lord of our lives, **NOT** by submitting to a false prophet. The real danger in following Victor's salvation teaching is that instead of putting your faith in Christ alone (which is the only way to be saved), you will rely on Victor and your own human efforts to save yourself and pay for your sins, the end result of this is that you will **NOT** be saved. Victor's teachings here are eternally deadly.

### III. The Church

#### Victor's Teachings

"...all the churches **ARE** the gates of Hell which are constantly wide open to entice the ignorant and the simple and the self-righteous and the self-serving through appearances of piety called worship" (Counterfeit Christianity, p.5).  
"...You [the church-going christian] speak as though you were filled with the Spirit of God but you are the children of the Devil who lies by speaking truths, who destroys by being nice..." (Counterfeit Christianity, p.5). Christians in churches, while claiming to worship God, are actually worshiping Baal (Counterfeit Christianity, p.8). God has revealed to Victor "the utter blasphemies and hypocritical ways of church-going people", and that **ALL** of them are "vipers", "bastards", and "enemies of the Lord" (Counterfeit Christianity, p.15). **All** the suffering in your life is a result of offending God and attending church (Counterfeit Christianity, p.6). Even Victor himself, before he was exalted as a prophet, suffered from his parents attending church (and evidently, rejecting the "truth" that all churches are evil): "Because of their unbelief, we suffered many things; sin reaped its consequences. I was born with straight hair when I would have preferred curly" (Diabolical Doctrines, p.5). The Christian Church is the whore of Babylon and "you, if you are in a church system, **ARE** the whore" (The Case For Coming Out, p.6). The only way to be saved is to leave the Christian Church and follow Victor (The Case For Coming Out, p.6).

#### The Biblical Truth

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus himself declared that the gates of Hell will not overcome his church. In contrast to Jesus' own words Victor declares that the churches **ARE** the gates of Hell. Victor calls the church the whore of Babylon, the Bible calls the church the Bride of Christ (Rev. 19, Eph. 5:25-27, 2 Cor. 11:2). In Ephesians 2:20,21 the church is called the Holy Temple of God. If the church was the enemy God why would half of the New Testament be written to churches? (Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, 1 Peter, 2 John, 3 John and Revelations). If Church pastors are servants of Satan, why are there New Testament books written to pastors to guide and encourage them? (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus). If churches are evil why do the apostles spend so much of their time planting them and strengthening them? (The entire book of Acts). If meeting together and encouraging other Christians is an act against God why does Hebrews 10:25 say "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another

- and all the more as you see the day approaching?" Victor's only response to this verse is that the verse is "the pet verse of the harlot, 'Mystery, Babylon the Great to use as a weapon, as justification for her whoredoms (sic.)" (The Case For Coming Out, p.1). Victor doesn't have a thing to stand on. All he can do is engage in play-ground name calling. The sole reason for Victor's stand against the church is that he wants you out of the Church and under his thumb.

#### IV. The Christian Life

##### Victor's Teachings

The Christian life is a living death. "This is not an invitation to a picnic but to the cross and grave" (BWHS, p.12). "To worship in spirit and truth, you must die" (The Case For Coming Out, p.4). It is the abandonment of all that is good. "It is not only sin that must be put away but good things must be left behind like mother, father, brothers, sisters, friends, lands, houses, dreams, aspirations, vocations" (BWHS, p.12). You must forever give up fun, laughter, and enjoyment for these are of Satan. "How often it speaks of Jesus and the disciples going to the theatre, going horseback riding, swimming in the sea of Galilee, mountain-climbing on Mount Hermon, trekking in the wilderness with camping, eating out in restaurants and having parties! Fools! Blind, willful, adulterous, hypocritical fools!" (The Case For Coming Out, p.9,10). Victor not only says that we are saved by works, he also teaches that we must live the Christian life by being subject to the old Jewish Laws (Diabolical Doctrines, p.18,19). "IF YOU ARE NOT KEEPING THE SABBATH DAY, THEN YOU ARE DAMNED" [emphasis Victor's] (Diabolical Doctrines, p. 24). We must also be careful to keep the Old Testament dietary Laws (Diabolical Doctrines, p.27,28). True Christians DO NOT "reach out" to others, or witness, or "build relationships" with unbelievers. Victor says that were are not even to "touch" these people (The Case For Coming Out, p.3).

##### The Biblical Truth

Rather than Victor's gospel of death the Bible teaches a gospel of life. Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal LIFE and will not be condemned, he has crossed over from death to LIFE!" (John 5:24). While Victor offers only death, Jesus offers life: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have LIFE and have it to the FULL!" (John 10:10). Victor forbids us to enjoy nature (Swimming, hiking, etc.) while the Bible tells us that God's natural creation, rather than being evil, testifies about his glory (Psalms 8, 19, 24). The Song of Songs teaches us to delight in what the Lord has provided for us: "Every good and perfect gift is from above..." (James 1:17). Following Victor only results in bondage, following Jesus brings freedom: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1). While Victor teaches we are still under the yoke of the Jewish Law, the Bible teaches something very different. "The law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law" (Galatians 3:24,25). "You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace" (Galatians 5:4). Finally, as Victor teaches us not to even "touch" the unclean unbelievers, Jesus commands us to "go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19).

#### V. Victor Himself

##### Victor's Teachings

Victor is unique. He is the only living prophet and man of God on the face of the earth (BWHS, p.14). Victor is God's chosen vessel to "deliver" humanity "from the works of men, the paths of the destroyer, the religious systems of this world, the flesh and the devil" (Counterfeit Christianity, p.7 and Here is the Way it is,

p.6). The only way to salvation is by receiving Victor as the messenger of God and God's personal representative here on earth, and submitting to him (Here is the Way it is, p.2). It is only by obedience to Victor that you will find "the peace and prosperity of God" (Here is the Way it is, p.5). Victor alone is the mediator between God and humanity. If you obey Victor he will "hear from God on your behalf and speak to you on his behalf" (Here is the Way it is, p.6). Since Victor is God's personal representative on earth, opposing Victor is the same as opposing God himself. "I come in his name. If you aren't with me, you are against God. That is the way it is. Repent. Come and learn from me. Come and do as I say" (Here is the Way it is, p.6). Your obedience to Victor must be total and complete. You must "SUBMIT EVERYTHING IN YOUR SPHERE OF EXISTENCE" to Victor's "scrutiny and judgement" (Here is the Way it is, p.7). All of Victor's followers "without exception, have prospered but all without exception who have rejected my counsel have suffered, some even unto death" (Here is the Way it is, p.7). If you are to be saved you must treat Victor the exact same way you would treat Jesus himself. You must even say the same words that were said to Jesus. You must say " 'Blessed are you who comes in the Name of the Lord' ...and submit and obey, saying [to Victor], 'Lord, what will you have me do?'" (The Case for Coming Out, p.7). It is to Victor that we must confess all our sins "especially secret ones" (The Case for Coming Out, p.8). Finally, Victor is God's chosen instrument of wrath who will "pierce the hearts of many with sorrow and divide the weak from the strong, the sheep from the goat and the fleece from the lamb. [Victor] will run through the hearts of the wicked and they will not be able to stand up against [him]. [Victor will] consider and look and see them no more" (Prophecy, p.1). "The Wrath of God is in my whole being" declares Victor (The Wrath of God, p.19).

How can we know that Victor is truly a man of God and a true prophet? Not by searching the scriptures and comparing them to what Victor teaches, for Victor has declared that "God hates theology" [theology being the study of the Bible to know more about God] (Interview with Pat Schoenberger). If you are truly of God there will be no objective verification, you will just subjectively "know" (The Wrath of God, p.16; see also The Case for Coming Out, p.7; see also Here is the Way it is, p.2).

### The Biblical Truth

According to the Bible, it is not Victor, but God who is our only deliverer: "And the **LORD** shall deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:18). Our salvation is in Christ **ALONE** for "salvation is found in **NO-ONE ELSE**, for there is **NO OTHER NAME** under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). While Victor claims to be the mediator between God and Humanity, this is clearly proved false by Scripture: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). Victor's claim of the position of Christ and his accepting of the adoration given to Christ is nothing less than blasphemy. Rather than being the instrument of God's wrath, Victor will be the **OBJECT** of God's wrath. This too is attested by scripture:

There will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies...bringing swift destruction on themselves. ...Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping... Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings...these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish. They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done" (2 Peter 2:1-3, 10, 12-13).

How do we know that Victor is a false prophet? The Bible gives several ways. The Bible is not silent about the man who prophesies about a "God" who is very different than the God of the Bible: "a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods

must be put to death" (Deuteronomy 18:20). Eye witness accounts relay Victor falsely healing people (ie. "healing" a boy with a milk allergy which he still suffers from today, 20 years later) and declaring them healed when this was not so. The Bible mentions false prophets who declare things which are ultimately false: "If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:22). How do we know that Victor is a false teacher? By comparing what he teaches with Scripture. Acts 17 talks about the believers in Berea who were considered noble because they tested what the Apostle Paul said in light of the written word. Victor's teachings are clearly opposed to Scripture, and Scripture is not silent concerning this:

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!"  
-Galatians 1:8

### False Beliefs: Conclusion

What Victor Hafichuk teaches is almost always a corruption of the teachings of scripture. We have only touched on some of his main points. If we had more space, we could have dealt with other issues like how Victor teaches that there is no hell, but rather that people go to another world to get a second chance (*Diabolical Doctrines*, p.7,8). Victor also teaches that Christmas and Easter are wicked and evil holidays (*Diabolical Doctrines*, p.23-25). There are many more such teachings ranging from the dangerous to the silly. We have clearly demonstrated that since Victor teaches false doctrines, he is a false teacher, plain and simple. Jesus said that if we follow HIS teachings, then we will know the TRUTH, and the TRUTH will set us free (John 8:31-32). So if truth sets us free, what does believing a lie bring? Slavery. Truth sets you free, lies put you in bondage. If you follow Victor Hafichuk's false teachings you will be enslaved, perhaps even eternally. Not only will following Victor make your life here on earth a living hell, it may also make your eternal destiny a literal hell.

"In their greed these false teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up."

-2 Peter 2:3

## Part II: Lies and Manipulation

While Victor is certainly no master of Scripture, he is a master of psychological manipulation and logical fallacies. Understanding Victor's methods of manipulation will help you protect yourself from them.

### I. The Confrontation

Much like other cultists Victor has a set strategy he uses when he personally meets a prospective convert. From interviewing different people Victor has confronted, we have seen the exact same pattern of manipulation emerge again and again. As we mentioned in the introduction, Victor specifically targets young, inexperienced Christians, and his confrontation strategy is designed specifically with his target prey in mind.

#### STAGE 1: Discovering Your Weaknesses

When you initially meet with Victor he will have a very peaceful and loving demeanor. He will want to get to know you. He will, with concern in his voice, ask you about the spiritual struggles that you face. Most Christians, under the impression that Victor is another Christian brother, will disclose the intimate details of their spiritual lives. While Victor seems to be compassionate, his motives are not. At this initial stage of the confrontation Victor is trying to accomplish two things. First, he is trying to establish your trust and confidence which he will use against you later. Second, he is probing you for your weakness which he will exploit in the third stage of his confrontation.

#### STAGE 2: The Assault Against Your External Christian Environment

After Victor has established your trust and has gathered enough information about you, he will enter the second stage of his confrontation. He will now attack and undermine your external Christian environment. If you were saved in a Baptist church, he will attack the Baptists. If you went to a Mennonite Bible school, he will attack the Mennonites. If you now attend a charismatic church, he will attack the charismatic movement. He will attack your parents, your friends, and your pastor. If anyone has ever let you down, Victor will exploit that fact. If there are some in your church who don't visit prisons or give away all their possessions, he will exploit that. Victor has been known to spend 45 min. to an hour attacking your external Christian environment in order to expose and exploit the imperfections. The primary purpose of this assault is to undermine your confidence in your Christian support network. You will no longer trust what your pastor, church, friends, and parents have ever taught you. By the end of this stage Victor has gained your trust for himself and undermined your trust in everyone else.

#### STAGE 3: The Assault Against Your Personal Witness

Once Victor has succeeded in undermining your faith in your external Christian environment, he will attack you personally. And Victor will be quite effective in this assault simply as a result of the fact that during the initial stage of the confrontation, you have already exposed all your spiritual weaknesses to him. He will now exploit those weaknesses. With the help of his master, Satan (referred to as the Accuser in the Bible), Victor will savagely expose the sins you have committed and use them against you. If you expressed any spiritual disappointments, he will use them against you. If you have experienced any spiritual triumphs he will twist

them so they seem like defeats. Victor will use all your personal weaknesses to try to show you the falsehood of your beliefs. His entire objective in this personal assault is to undermine your confidence in your relationship with God, and to undermine your confidence in your beliefs.

#### STAGE 4: The Kill

By now Victor has you in a position where you no longer trust what anyone in your life has ever taught you, and you no longer trust your own convictions. Many of those who have experienced Victor's assault claim they felt very depressed, condemned, and confused, not knowing what to believe anymore. You are now ready for the kill. Victor's final, and most deadly stage of the confrontation will sound like this: "You can no longer trust your pastor, your church, your friends, you parents. You can't even trust in your own convictions and beliefs. BUT! You can trust in me! I am the chosen one of God, the living prophet. I can deliver you and heal you. Follow me, and do as I say, and you will see the face of God. Follow me and you will know peace and prosperity like you've never experienced it. It will be hard work, but the rewards will be endless. BUT! If you leave me now, you will face the wrath of God. Torment and suffering will fill your days, and you will die in your sins!" Even if you are given the grace to resist Victor in this final stage and escape the control of his cult, you will be left broken and shattered. It will take some time for your Christian friends and family to put you back together again.

## II. Smoke and Mirrors

When personally meeting with Victor (and unless you are a mature and knowledgeable Christian, this is not advised), or if you read his 'essays' (these are available from Pastor Doug Whelpton at First Baptist Church, Lethbridge) you will be faced with a number of logical fallacies and outright lies. Learning to recognize these will help you greatly. The following examples will show you the variety of cards Victor keeps up his sleeve.

### 1. Ad Hominem (Personal Attacks / Name Calling)

This fallacy is essentially calling your opponent names instead of addressing his arguments. For example, "Your doctrine of the Trinity is false because you are a hypocrite" would be considered an example of the Ad Hominem fallacy because no attempt was made to discuss the Trinity, instead the personal character of the opponent (which would have nothing to do with the Trinity) is attacked.

This fallacy is a favourite trick of Victor's. In his tract "Counterfeit Christianity" (pages 2,3), Victor argues that Christianity is false because his neighbor's kids scooped dog poop into his yard. You will never see Victor argue that Church practice X is wrong because it contradicts Scriptures A, B, and C and for reasons 1,2, and 3. Nor will you see him argue that Doctrine Y is wrong because it contradicts Scriptures D, E, and F and for reasons 4, 5, and 6. Instead you will see Victor use name calling as a substitute for logic and reason.

### 2. Overgeneralization (faulty conclusions)

This is another of Victor's pet fallacies. It is the fallacy of drawing a conclusion when the facts do not warrant it. For example:

- a) Uncle Bob is a man.
  - b) Uncle Bob is bald.
- = Therefore ALL men are bald.

Victor depends on the use of this faulty reasoning process. In "Counterfeit Christianity" (Pages 2.3) Victor argues that because his neighbors were bad people, ALL Christians are bad people, and therefore Christianity (as practiced by Christians) must be false.

### 3. Bait and Switch

"Bait and Switch" is the illegal retail sales practice of advertising one product (often at a ridiculously low price, a \$20 T.V.) but when the customer arrives they claim the product is sold out, but offer another product in its place (a \$100 T.V.). You advertise one thing, but deliver another. Bait the customer with something good, and switch it for something bad.

Victor uses bait and switch with deadly consequences. Victor promises service to God, but delivers bondage to himself. For example, Victor uses obedience to God as bait: "...you [must] subject everything in your sphere of existence to the scrutiny and judgment of God" (Here is the Way it is, p.6). This sounds fairly orthodox....But then Victor, in the very next sentence, switches obedience to God with obedience to Victor: "You will have to know and trust that it is given ME, as a man of God TO EXERCISE THAT SCRUTINY AND JUDGMENT in the Name of God" (Here is the Way it is, p.6). He promises obedience to God but delivers slavery to himself. Victor will even use the "Bait and Switch" in the SAME sentence: "Follow the Lord, follow ME..." (Counterfeit Christianity, p.6). Victor is playing an elaborate shell game. He will use truth as a bait on a hook, but when you think you've taken the truth, you find you've ended up with the hook of heresy.

### 4. Ad Bacculum / Ad Corrotum (Threats and Bribes)

This is another argumentative fallacy that is used as a bad substitute for reason. Instead of arguing that doctrine X is true because it corresponds to scriptures A, B, and C, this fallacious argument claims that doctrine X is true, or else you will suffer sickness and death.

This fallacy is an important ingredient in Victor's recipe of deception. Here is a classic example: "Resist [me, Victor] and you'll perish. Believe and obey [me, Victor] and you'll prosper....If you aren't with me, you are against God. That is the way it is. Repent. Come and learn from me. Come and do as I say...I have staked my life on this way, and having proven it, have counselled others to follow. In following, they all without exception, have prospered but all without exception, who have rejected my counsel have suffered, some even unto death" (Here is the Way it is, p.6). Never are there any facts or evidence to back up these claims, only hollow threats and empty bribes.

### 5. The Trojan Horse Fallacy

This fallacy is closely related to "Bait and Switch". It is the technique of using a true statement, or a series of true statements, to lull your opponent into intellectual slumber in order for a lie to be smuggled in. Victor will often bring up a whole series of legitimate complaints and concerns you yourself will probably have with the church, and then, after you have been agreeing with him for some time, he will try to smuggle in the idea that all churches are from Satan.

An example of this technique can be seen in Victor's "Here is the Way it is" tract. Victor makes the following orthodox points:

- God is Eternal (p.1)
- The Bible is God's authoritative revelation to humanity (p.1)
- Man is not able to save himself (p.1)

-Only by the Work of Jesus can we be saved (p.2)

-It is an honour and privilege to worship God (p.2)

So far so good...Victor is sounding very much like a typical Christian. But this is merely the set up for his Trojan horse. Victor uses an allusion to a familiar scripture verse (Roman 10:17 - "Faith comes through hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" to cradle his destructive lie: "How does one believe? By hearing what God says. How does one hear? By receiving a messenger of God, His representative and submitting to him as unto the Lord" (Here is the Way it is, p.2). Victor starts off sounding pretty good, but then tries to reinterpret scripture itself to con the reader into submitting to Victor "as unto the Lord".

## 6. Corrupt Definitions

This technique, used by many cultists, involves taking a word out of scripture, totally re-defining the word with a corrupt definition that favours the cultist, and then re-inserting the corrupted word to show how scripture supports the cultist's false doctrine.

Victor uses this technique frequently. One example in "Here is the Way it is", is that Victor re-defines the word "worship" to mean total submission to Victor, God's personal representative on Earth (Here is the Way it is, p.2). Worship does NOT mean prayer, fasting, and living righteously. Now that Victor has re-defined the word "Worship" to mean submission to Victor, he can re-insert it into scripture and use Jesus' own words "to worship in spirit and truth" to mean that we are to submit to Victor and reject Christian practice. Remember Victor has insisted that worship does NOT mean the Christian practice of prayer, fasting, and righteous living but rather to mean the act of submitting to the dominance of Victor himself (Here is the Way it is, p.4).

Another good example is found throughout Victor's "The Case for Coming Out" tract. Here Victor re-defines the words "Whore" and "Babylon" to mean "the Christian Church". He now uses any, and every, scripture available to him that mentions either prostitutes, or the city of Babylon in order to "show" how the Bible clearly speaks out against the church.

## 7. The Straw Man / Misrepresentation

This is the technique of misrepresenting the cultist's opponent's position into something that it isn't, and then attacking the misrepresented position (knocking down the straw man the cultist has just constructed). The desired effect is to make the cultist's position seem strong by showing the opposition's position as being weak. This is rather easy to do when it is the cultist himself who creates the opponent's position.

One example of this is how Victor represents the Christian as making the following claim: "There are many ways to God, Christianity being only one of them" (Diabolical Doctrines, p.1). This is clearly NOT a Christian teaching. Still, Victor depicts the Christian as holding this view and then attacks the Christian for holding this position. Victor uses scripture to attack this position, and thereby shows how the Christian is ignorant of scripture and, in fact, stands in opposition to it. Victor's line of reasoning would have been fine and dandy, were it not for the fact that he is misrepresenting Christianity.

Victor's misrepresentation of Christians can reach ridiculous levels. At one point he accuses Christians of professing atheism! "Damned fools and wicked! ...Damned because you don't believe and fools because you say there is no God" (Counterfeit Christianity, p. 6). Again, atheism is NOT a Christian belief, but if Victor can persuade you that it is, then he can then easily persuade you that

Christianity is false, and that he, alone, offers the true path.

### 8. Scripture Twisting

Finally, Victor abuses the Bible by twisting scripture in various ways. James Sire, in his book *Scripture Twisting* identifies 20 different ways cultists like Victor twist scripture. The two principle ways Victor twists scripture (other than the ways mentioned above) is by taking scripture out of context, putting scripture within a false context, and by misquoting scripture altogether.

To try and win over one man who was suffering from some health problems, Victor had told the man that the Bible says that "The wages of sin is sickness and death". Since the man was sick, he must be living in sin, only by submitting to Victor may he be healed. The man was quite upset that scripture taught that his illness was a result of his living in sin until he discovered that Victor had misrepresented scripture. The passage reads: "For the Wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal Life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). The passage is talking about salvation and is not saying that the result of rejecting Victor Hafichuk is physical illness.

Even if Victor does happen to quote scripture accurately, he is probably taking it out of its proper context. For example, Victor in his tract "Counterfeit Christianity", spends most of his time trying to show how Christians are hypocrites who talk the talk, but don't walk the walk. He then claims that II John (verses 7-11) talks about these same Christian hypocrites labelling them as deceivers (*Counterfeit Christianity*, p. 12). Victor later claims that II John 10 and 11, ("If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.") is referring to those who do not hold to the teaching that Victor is the true prophet and that all the Christian Churches are false, and must not be welcomed.

If anyone actually reads the book of II John, it becomes clear that, unlike Victor's claim, John isn't saying anything about hypocritical church goers, or how evil the Christian Church is. John is talking about "deceivers" who do not believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus. John further stresses that if anyone doesn't bring the teaching of the physical resurrection of Jesus, we are not to welcome them into our homes (incidentally, Church services were held in private homes for the first 300 years of Christian history).

### **III. Caught in Victor's Web**

What happens if someone IS caught by Victor's web of deception? By gathering information from former followers, and first hand accounts we have noticed a systematic pattern of isolation and increasing domination.

After seducing a new convert, Victor's initial aim seems to be to isolate this convert from any former Christian and/or family contact. Victor engages in an ongoing character assault against the convert's friends in an attempt to convince the convert that his former friends are actually his enemies. Visible symptoms of this process are that the convert will become withdrawn and secretive around his friends and family. To further this process, Victor has been known to invite the convert's friend to meet with himself, presumably with the idea that if this friend is a true friend, they will submit to Victor as well. This is almost a win-win situation for Victor. If the friend submits to Victor, he has hit two birds with one stone. If the friend rejects Victor, it is only proof that the convert's friend is depraved, and is really an enemy.

Victor will constantly use bribes and threats to keep his follower in line. If things prove difficult, Victor explains the difficulty as proof that the convert needs to submit even more of himself to Victor. The convert is convinced to sacrifice his whole life to Victor. Friendships, family ties, hobbies and past-times are all removed from the convert's life. Every intimate sin must be constantly confessed to Victor, who then pronounces his judgement on the sin. The convert's weaknesses are constantly emphasised to keep them in a subordinate position. Often the convert must walk on eggshells to avoid offending his new master. Finally, the convert is asked to financially support Victor, and even move in with him, or one of his close associates.

Victor's control over his victim's life and mind is fairly complete. Because the convert now rejects any concept of fun, enjoyment, or casual conversation as being evil, there is little opportunity to develop a relationship with any cult member. Because the new cult member accepts Victor alone as authoritative, and rejects logic and reason as being "carnal", it can be extremely difficult to reach any member with the Gospel. One of the truly scary symptoms shown by any cult member is their loss of personal identity. Reading correspondence written by one member, one can see that the letter is written in the member's own hand, but the words themselves are definitely Victor's. There is even first person/third person confusion where Victor is referred to as "he" in one sentence, and then, without warning, is referred to as "I" in the next. Falling into Victor's cult inevitably results in a living death.

Even if someone does not fall into Victor's hands, they often will end up severely wounded from the experience. These people will leave from their confrontation with Victor not knowing what they believe or who they can trust. Fortunately, many of these victims of Victor's, that we know about, have been "put back together" by loving and knowledgeable Christians. But there may be many more that are still suffering from the effects of their confrontation.

#### **IV. Avoiding Victor's Web**

There are three basic ways to avoid being ensnared in any webs of deception. The first is basic awareness. If you are faced with a confrontation with Victor or any of his followers, be aware of the psychological mind games and emotional manipulation they will try to use. Don't think with your emotions, use your brain instead. Educate yourself in regards to what is logical and what is a fallacy. The second is to do your homework. If Victor or anyone else quotes scripture, you simply have to get off your butt and look up that scripture and make sure you know its proper context. If you still don't know, talk to your pastor or another knowledgeable Christian, until you have a satisfactory answer. Many sheep have been lost simply because they did not call for their local shepherd's help. If Victor should say some have suffered "even unto death" for rejecting him, ask who, then track them down and ask them yourself. We, ourselves, have found it most useful to track down and talk to former followers of Victor's. The third is to know what you believe and why you believe it. This also requires a lot of work. You need to dig into the word, involve yourself in a Bible study, take notes in Church, pray and praise God very often. To those who do know what they believe and why they believe it, Victor isn't the slightest threat. To those who don't, Victor is a very dangerous man indeed.

(For further information contact Pastor Doug Whelpton at First Baptist Church, Lethbridge. (403)-327-2082)

## APPENDIX: Partial Biographical Notes on Victor Hafichuk

Somewhere around 1950 Victor was born into a Ukrainian Catholic family in Manitoba. He has three brothers and one sister. One brother, Archie, is currently firmly entrenched in Victor's cult and his entire family is under Victor's domination. It is believed that the rest of Victor's family, and that of his wife's, reject Victor as a prophet and as a result, have been disfellowshipped by Victor.

Around 1972 Victor converted from Catholicism to Protestantism. There is no known reason to doubt Victor's sincerity at this point. From 1973 to 1974 Victor attended a Southern Baptist Bible school in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (which no longer exists). Victor met his wife at the school and attended Faith Baptist Church.

1975 was a dramatic year for Victor. He began the year appearing as a struggling, misguided, new Christian and ended the year as a false prophet and psychological manipulator. On January 1, 1975 Victor was supposedly baptized with the Holy Spirit and claimed to have received every conceivable Spiritual gift that one can imagine, none excluded. Victor attended Prince Albert Alliance Church for most of the year, then under Pastor Ernest Regier. It is reported that Victor had become infatuated with water baptism and struggled with issues surrounding baptism. Eventually Victor was baptized and after an initial "high", he had an emotional crash. Victor then became fascinated with the signs and wonders aspect of the charismatic movement. Those close to him at the time, report that Victor was constantly searching for some kind of esoteric emotional experience. Despite his pastor's cautions, Victor attended a revival-type meeting in Winnipeg that promised that all who attend would speak in tongues. Victor became increasingly interested in miraculous experiences and reportedly had a hunger for the spectacular.

During the summer Victor joined the O.M.F. missionary organization and went on a short-term mission trip to France. No further details are known regarding this trip. All we know is that O.M.F. sends its last contact letter to Victor in 1988.

For the first half of 1975, Victor only seemed to be misguided and perhaps disillusioned. By the fall of 1975, Victor's actions had become far more sinister. Victor began to build a power base within the Alliance Church based on a number of small group Bible studies that he led. The members of these small groups, much like Victor's victims today, were generally young and inexperienced Christians. The purpose of these "Bible studies", as reported by those who actually attended, was not to study the Bible, or worship God, but rather to watch God put on a performance. Victor would refuse to conclude any meeting unless they witnessed a miracle. Often the "study" would go very late into the night until, as a result of sleep deprivation and emotional desperation, some sort of "sign" was given.

As it turned out, the miracles that Victor performed were fraudulent. Late one night Victor convinced one family that had hosted the "study" that he could heal their young son from his milk allergy. The entire group stampeded into the young boy's room where Victor promptly performed his miracle cure. Although the people who were present at the time were convinced they had seen a miracle, the boy, now a grown man, still suffers from his milk allergy. This false healing was far from an isolated incident. Victor managed to convince one young woman, who had broken her leg, that she was healed and no longer needed her leg brace. The woman who was deceived by Victor's psychological manipulation, removed her brace, and promptly re-broke her healing leg. Victor also made use of well-known psychological deceptions. One common deception involves "diagnosing" someone's illness (usually back problems, leg problems, or head aches) as resulting from having one leg shorter than the other. The magician or healer will have the person sit down in a chair and raise their legs. Sure enough, one leg will be shorter than the other. The magician or healer then applies only a small amount of pressure to "stretch" the shorter leg until it's even with the longer leg. A miracle? No. As it turns out most people will rarely

sit in a chair facing absolutely straight ahead, especially if they initially approach the chair from one side or if someone or something that occupies their attention off to one side. As a result of the hips not facing directly ahead, one leg will appear shorter than the other. It then requires the slightest tug to pivot the hips and seemingly "stretch" the shorter leg. By using this simple trick, Victor was able to con a number of people into believing that he was some sort of a prophet. He further enforced this claim by delving into the realm of dream interpretation and his continued search for esoteric and occultic knowledge.

Not only had Victor's practices turned cultic, but so had his teachings. Victor began to add to the requirements of salvation. Victor preached that there were three steps to salvation. First, the believer had to repent and accept the Lordship of Christ. Then, the believer had to be baptized. This was not enough. The believer then had to receive a special "Baptism of the Spirit". Of course, no one could not receive the Spirit if there were some unconfessed sin in his or her life, so Victor encouraged his followers to confess their secret sins to him. As a result Victor began to gain more and more control over his followers' lives. As a warning to his followers who had already "received the Spirit", Victor also taught that they could lose their salvation should they stray. To guard his followers against the orthodox teachings of the Church, Victor began to attack the church, and those who did not support him accusing them of hypocrisy. When opposition did arise, Victor very nearly caused a church split, but fortunately he failed. Victor also lost his control over his followers at one of his "studies". This was the result of the intervention of a Godly doctor who engaged Victor in a debate in front of some of Victor's followers and exposed Victor as a false teacher.

By the end of 1975 Victor had gone from what appears to be a misguided believer to a false teacher and psychological manipulator building a foundation for his cult. False teaching that increases his followers' dependence on himself for their salvation. False miracles that increase his followers' confidence in himself as a prophet. And increasing control of his followers' personal lives formed the cultic base the Victor uses to this day.

By 1976 Victor had begun to exploit his followers financially. Victor had quit his job, sold all his possessions (including many of their wedding gifts), and decided to live on "faith". By "living on faith" Victor simply moved into the homes of various followers and mooched off of them. In March of that year Victor claims to have been healed, cleansed and delivered by God and to have been commissioned by God to "deliver" others from the Christian Church.

By 1977 Victor loses contact with people in Prince Albert and his whereabouts until 1988 are largely unknown.

In March 1984 while in Bernalillo, New Mexico, Victor claims to have received written revelation from God which further condemns Christians and exalts Victor. This is the only piece of information we have regarding Victor's life from 1977-1988.

When we pick up Victor's scent again in 1988, he is living in Moon River Estates in a large comfortable house, with no regular job. Victor has a small group of followers who pay tithes to him. It is reported that Victor had already broken up one marriage as a result of a spouse who did not accept Victor's pseudomessianic status. He was actively searching for new followers and managed to attract one man

\* Note: It is quite interesting that Victor demands that all his followers give up any form of entertainment and earthly pleasure, while Victor himself lives in a nice comfortable house, and enjoys his own earthly hobbies. He has even appeared in the Lethbridge Herald showing off his garden and his bird houses. And he calls Christians hypocrites!

and his wife (who now attend First Congregational Church). Although they were relatively inexperienced Christians, this man's wife began to discern that Victor was a fraud. Recognizing her discernment, Victor strongly encouraged the man to leave his pregnant wife because she was a spiritual burden who was preventing his full submission to Victor. Fortunately, the man then saw Victor for what he truly was and rejected him.

Victor comes to our attention again c.1991 when he begins canvassing the University of Lethbridge. Victor phones the Students Union, and requests information on the New Age movement. Why he did this is unknown. As a result of his inquiries, Victor comes in contact with Jeff Cullen, an experienced Christian, who discerns that Victor is not orthodox.

1995 becomes a very busy year for Victor when he is known to make contacts with numerous young Christians from Baptist, Mennonite, and Congregational Churches. Victor succeeds in deceiving a prominent young man from First Baptist Church (who also was the University of Lethbridge's Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship club president). Victor uses this convert to further proselytise and spiritually damage quite a number of young people.

Obviously, we have a very minimal knowledge of Victor's activities. But we are aware that he is still very active in Lethbridge and the surrounding area.