



## STATEMENT DH031

### **Holy Order of MANS Sect Changes Name, Joins Eastern Orthodox Church**

The Holy Order of MANS (HOM), a controversial group founded in San Francisco in 1968, has changed its name to “Christ the Savior Brotherhood,” and joined the Eastern Orthodox Church.

However, the leader of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Queens, New York (Vasiloupolis jurisdiction), with which the HOM was granted affiliation, is not a member of the Standing Committee of Orthodox Bishops of America (SCOBA), which oversees most US groups in the Orthodox tradition.

But that doesn’t mean that HOM has not moved into Christian orthodoxy, said Father Andrew Rossi, director general of the sect and successor to the late Earl Blighton, who claimed he founded the sect after receiving a “divine revelation.”

The Holy Order of MANS (“MANS” standing for Mysterian, Agape, Nous, and Sophia in Greek, or mystery, love, mind, and wisdom in English) amassed numerous critics in the early 1970s due to its occultic theological position and practices. In an early critique of the group by the Spiritual Counterfeits Project (SCP) of Berkeley, California, researchers brought out the fact that HOM believed it was their mission to “unite all faiths.” They believed Jesus was a great teacher (but mere man) who had attained contact with an impersonal kind of “Christ-consciousness.” They also embraced the classical occult “sciences” or alchemy, tarot, Cabala, and astrology, according to the SCP.

Rossi said his order has repudiated all those beliefs and now affirms biblical orthodoxy, including the belief in the Trinity, salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and the Nicene Creed.

“We had a lot of New Age elements in the brotherhood,” Rossi continued. “What they (SCP) were critical of, they had a right to be. We began to purge ourselves of New Age elements and by 1979 we started going the other direction....The mysticism got out of hand. We were searching for experiences and found that it would lead us astray without sound doctrine.”

The changes accelerated after HOM leaders began reading Christian authors such as C.S. Lewis and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, said Rossi.

However, many of the group’s controversial practices have not ended, and under the terms of the merger, the group will continue to have a great deal of autonomy. Rossi affirmed that members who have taken second vows to the group still take them for life — a sore point among critics. Additionally, the group is still highly liturgical, with members adorning themselves in robes and clerical collars. Rossi said the group has about 1,000 members spread throughout the US. Although it maintains its headquarters in Forestville, California, many of its main functions take place in Portland, Oregon.