

DOWSING – by Ben G. Hester

Chapter II — Part 1

Modern Dowsing

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The Many Explanations

Any discussion of modern dowsing should be prefaced with the observation that if a person, ignorant of dowsing, were to pick up the books written on the subject in the last five years or so, he would be intrigued by the variety of explanations as to just what it is that makes dowsing work. However, if he had perused the history of dowsing beforehand, he would recognize that compared with the earlier attempts to explain, today's efforts are just the same old tune set to different words.

The modern explanations may be couched in the language of physics, psychology, the psychic, parapsychology, parascience, or even our easy way of presenting paganism and the different popular

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religions, but they only add up to a collection of personal opinions! The supernatural or occult color of dowsing has not changed down through the centuries. It is something we have to live with if we are interested in the phenomenon, and we find different ways to accept it.

One easy way is to ignore it as we mentioned before. If it works, use it! No one stops to consider whether this philosophy might be just as dangerous as that other up-to-date one, 'If it feels good, it is right!' Another is that it is of the mind—that unused part of the mind that reputedly knows all, including the collective memory of the past and it can predict the future. Some religious people refer to it as the Universal Mind, others believe it to be an inherent ability known to our ancestors, but forgotten by modern man. Some Christians are labelling it a gift from God. There are some who label it of the Evil One, but the good being done, at least as told in those anecdotes that 'hit the news,' so overwhelms any small hint of questionable magic, or the super natural that any voice of protest is not heard. However, to the Christian there are enough interesting facts about dowsing to warrant a further look, which we will do in a chapter 'for Christians only.' Here it is interesting enough to note what is presently going on, and to examine both the physical and the psychic elements of the act.

Soviet Investigations and Some Contradictions

Earlier than 1970 the Soviet scientists were treating dowsing as a verifiable, non-religious,

physical phenomenon. In 1966 a team of Soviet geologists were carefully monitoring the blasting of several million tons of rock into a ravine for a dam. One of the principal recording instruments used by these hardheaded government scientists was the dowsing rod.¹ They had good reason to use it without fear of the ridicule their peers in the United States would suffer.

At the close of the Stalin era the publishing of a report on dowsing research sparked an ambitious program launched with a large-scale dowsing test involving more than a hundred able dowzers. (Which indicates that Stalin had not been able, in the least, to stop the 'underground' use of the dowsing rod which he labelled 'superstition.') Upon completion, the official scientific commissions concluded, "The 'wizard rod' is the simplest of all conceivable electro-physiological instruments." They also found that there was no shielding against or from this "new" force—even lead. Then, they added an odd footnote. They said, however, that even though rubber would not act as a shield, water running through a rubber hose was undetectable with a rod. Astonishingly, research reports in the United States were completely contradictory. Here we found, conversely, that shielding was possible (lead and rubber), and water in a rubber hose was easily dowsed. The Soviets also added that after a few days of intensive dowsing, the dowser's ability lessened unless a new forked stick was cut from a different

kind of tree. A broken or patched-up rod would not work. Again, in contradiction, here in the United States the findings of the investigators showed no necessity of cutting a new stick or using a different kind of wood. We found that *rest time* was all that was required for renewed dowsing ability. Because of the history of the rod being used in warfare, the Soviets were said to be experimenting with it for that purpose. It should not be inferred from these Soviet reports that they found their experiments conclusive. It is quite noticeable that their reports cautiously indicated only "significant" results. This caution and indefinite conclusions is present in all Soviet reports. They did coin several new words and terms. They renamed dowsing the "Biophysical Method."

Ostrander and Schroeder, in their 1970 publication *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* said that this new name for dowsing was to "conceal its magical origins."² These authors, in their chapter on " 'Wizard Rod' to 'BPE' " were so enthusiastic about this department of Soviet science that it seemed logical to conclude we had surely reached the 'new frontier of science.' Yet seven years later, Francis Hitching in *Pendulum* devoted one scathing paragraph on pages 95 and 96

to what appears to be the unwarranted happy conclusion of Ostrander and Schroeder. They had compiled what he termed "largely unrelated findings" in an attempt to bring these things "within the area of respectable science." Hitching adds that from the point of view of seven years later it is not at all clear that the Soviet scientists are offering any new solutions to the basic difficulties of determining what happens when a person dowses.³ In fact we feel that the entire chapter (Dowsing Versus Science) would be an excellent cathartic for the dowser with

a closed mind.

It is recorded in the story of mining in Cornwall, England, that the only wood that would work for a dowsing rod was that of the witch hazel tree. The early experience of the Soviets taught them that the rod had to come only from a shade tree, but that when the dowser lost his sensitivity, the rod had to be replaced by one from a witch hazel tree, a willow, or a peach. Present dowsing practice contradicts this sensitivity completely. It is well known now that anything will work. Verne L. Cameron in *Aquavideo* lists an unbelievable number of materials from grass stems to plastics and metals. He also states that no device is necessary.⁴

In the early Soviet experiments they reported that

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although leather had not proven to be shielding, the wearing of leather gloves, even kid, shielded the contact.⁵ We remembered this when watching and interviewing an internationally known dowsing expert. When requested to try gloves to dowse he assured us it would not work. He finally acquiesced, and to his astonishment the heavy leather workman's gloves made no difference. He then tried plastic gloves with the same result.

The Modus Operandi of Modern Dowser Writers

We feel that the Francis Hitching book *Pendulum: The Psi Connection* is an excellent illustration of the best in modern dowsing literature.⁶ It contains a staggering amount of material, history, instructions, problems, justification, fallacies, and, as we inferred, a very open discussion of dowsing versus science. By the time this point is reached in the book, and the enormous amount of technical information is digested, the hope suddenly arises that here, for once, we may find a straightforward facing of the apparent gap between the physical and the psychic aspects. With a preparatory chapter on Rhythms of the Universe, the reader is dumped into a very detailed account of *Map Dowsing*, done in England for the location of items in the United States. With this introduction to map dowsing, the reader anticipates

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some attempt to connect the phenomenon with all the past pages of explanation of magnetism. The first hint of the same old ploy of slipping in the mediumistic aspects without comment, explanation or apology appeared when the author and his dowser friend got down to work with the map and pendulum, searching for the kinds of stone emplacements as are found in England, but thought to be existing in the U.S. also. The author asked for the location of a burial chamber, and the map dowser answered, "What about this, then?" The dowser went on to say that the burial chamber was located in the neck of a river bend, that the area was all silted up, but the mound was clearly visible, the capstone was all broken and silted up, and the stones could be seen sticking up!

This was not map dowsing. Either the dowser got this vivid visual image from a long session of information dowsing or it was the visual image received by a medium! This complete letdown made all of the preceding material on "The Scientific Search" a farce. This took us right back to another age when it would be labelled sorcery. Not one paragraph of the 150 plus pages of preceding material in any way prepared the reader for this jump into the supernatural (or at least the supernormal). The following 50 pages tell of present day cases of

ESP, and link it all with the ability of the Eastern Mystic, the Witch Doctor, and the Medicine man. In the last few paragraphs of the book it states that, "Dowsing may also be important in helping to overcome the widespread nervous skepticism about the occult." Finally the conclusion: "Dowsing, perhaps

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because of its common association with the countryside and water, the most basic of man's needs, has remained largely free from suspicion. Yet in its own way it is no less dramatic a method of gaining access to another world, and a new understanding of the mysteries of consciousness. The world of psi, you might say, is at your finger tips.

"The glib method of putting everything unknown about dowsing in "the world of psi" is an extremely poor excuse for an answer. Hitching admits this is "gaining access to another world," his Eastern mystic's world is full of entities, his Witch doctor's world is full of entities, and his Medicine man's world is full of entities, yet the possibility of the spirit entity and its power, total recall of past events, predictions of future events, giving information and visual images is not considered as a possible answer. Why is not every possibility presented? Yet this is what we get, to one extent or another in modern dowsing writings. It would appear that these writers are so desperate to link dowsing to what most people see as reality, they cannot bear to be thought of as believing in a world of unseen beings. And curiously enough, out of this fear, they have developed a new kind of 'doubletalk.' In it the possibility of spirit entities is alluded to in words that will not really nail them down under scrutiny because they also allude to something else rather indefinite, but implied. It is a method that is evidently considered valuable since author after author is picking it up. The only sense that comes out of it is that either the physical has an element of the psychic, or the psychic has an element of the physical that science, so far, cannot justify.

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The Automatic Use of the Supernatural in Dowsing

Many persons insist on separating simple witching from the more overtly psychic elements of dowsing because this method of finding water is so valuable, and they cannot, for one reason or another, stomach the idea of the psychic. Yet these same dowsers, to one degree or another, use the psychic without hesitation or question—even to the use of "The Bishop's Rule" which we will discuss later. Aside from ascertaining the depth of the water source, the quality and the quantity, what physical, scientific law causes the selectivity factor? What causes the device to select only water when one dowses for water instead of some kind of ore? What causes the device to discover only the desired ore out of the many that will occur in the same general area?

Every move, question or word in the dowsing act bespeaks of supernormal intelligence—greater intelligence than can be credited to any phenomenon of human intellect. The hallmark of *every* occult experience is undependability. This is the exact trait of dowsing from simple witching to the claimed sophisticated radionics instrument, and it has been so since ancient times. Every book or pamphlet on dowsing instruction stresses the necessity to ask the device questions from the very first try. They urge the learner to keep trying until the thing suddenly does answer! Is there any difference in asking, "How deep is the water?" and, "Was this a

murder?"

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Some dowsers vehemently deny asking questions of the device, but the unspoken question from habitual use is no less a question. Is there any basic difference in this and the use of the Ouija Board?

We watched a dowser and his unasked question. He had carefully covered an acre of ground and had gone back to the spot where his forked stick had pulled down the strongest. As he stood holding his stick out over the spot it started to nod very slowly. We exclaimed over this and started to ask the obvious question, but we were summarily silenced by the dowser while he concentrated on the action of the stick. He was silently counting the nods. When the motion ceased he turned to us and announced the depth of the water in feet. (In another country or another time it would have been meters or fathoms.) He had not uttered a word from the time he stood over the spot and the stick began to move, except to silence our question. His question was one of long standing habit, the unspoken question to be answered once the water was located. Another dowser used a dry stick in the form of an arc. It was probably an inch in diameter. He grasped the stick at each end, and when over water it twisted in his hands. He, too, asked no question, but just stood transfixed, stick in hand, and arms stretched out over the spot while he waited quietly. After almost a minute he turned to us and told us the depth, and he was right!

A Few 'Simple Witching' Methods

There are so many ways to dowse it becomes confusing. The following list is incomplete, but it contains the most usually used ways, and it will give

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a fair idea of the worldwide diversity:

Sticks bend down.

Sticks bend up.

Sticks turn round and round.

Sticks twist in the hands.

The stick flies back and hits the witcher in the face.

The stick is torn from the grasp of the witcher and flies through the air to drop on the spot above water.

Wires cross.

Wires spread.

The wire bobs up and down.

The pendulum rotates.

The pendulum swings.

The metal band or wood stick forced into an arc (as used in Britain) slaps back against the belly of the witcher.

Hands bleed.

Feet burn.

Muscles jerk.

Objects are rubbed.

A mental image is received.
The witcher smells water over the correct spot.

Sometimes the dowsing act includes a combination of some of the above. However, *once the dowser has chosen a method, or the method is thrust upon him there is never a mixup or misunderstanding on which method is his.*

It will be noticed that some of the above listed methods involve no overt action on the part of the dowser (muscles jerk, hands tingle, etc.), other than the decision to go out and dowse. For some reason,

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dowsing is expected to be the deliberate act of picking up a device and going out to dowse. The fact that this is not universally true gives rise to an interesting question. If these dowsers received their reactions automatically every time they walked over water, ore, something of value buried, or whatever else dowsers look for underground, would they not find it impossible to lead an orderly life, to say nothing of being given a chance to differentiate between things reacted to? In all probability they would have to be institutionalized for complete mental breakdown early in their experience! The fact is, these dowsers too, get their reaction only after making the decision to go out and dowse.

Dowsing by an Entity

Verne L. Cameron, the grand old man of dowsing, known all over the world for his ability, and completely generous in sharing his 'knowhow' tells *Aquavideo* that his decision to dowse (he was primarily a water dowser) is nothing more than getting in touch with a spirit entity. He makes it sound like a most beneficial experience, saying that the entity will tell you things you never dreamed of. He also instructs in the use of dowsing devices for "automatic reading." This is holding the device over a printed page on which it will pick out words that when strung together give a specific message. He says this is the same thing as map dowsing. The map dowser is a distinct embarrassment to the dowsers who wish to have dowsing accepted by science. In map dowsing, a pendulum is used over a map, sometimes just the hands are used. They will tingle when held over the correct spot.

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The Problem of Right and Wrong in the Use of Dowsing

If dowsing were no more than a physical reaction of the device or the human body, as some modern investigators claim, there would be no particular need to discuss the problem of right and wrong. However, since the device will answer questions, and almost all of the instruction for beginners stress learning to ask questions and get answers, and since a large percentage of dowsers do ask questions and get answers, the question of right and wrong becomes a critical issue. In using the information, or acting on the advice of this supernormal source, the dowser automatically puts himself in the position of a subordinate whose actions are determined by someone, or something else. The well known fact that the answers given to him sometimes (generally at a critical moment) turn out to be entirely untrue could be laid to lack of communication, or simple misunderstanding except that these answers that turn out to be untrue are always positive and complete. For instance, a water dowser who is an expert with

an excellent reputation will unexpectedly receive an answer of water location, water quality, quantity, direction of flow, etc., and not only is it a lie, there will not have been any water close by! Note our anecdote (of personal knowledge) about three expert dowsers having been called in, without knowledge of each other. All three not only found the exact and same location, but all were given the message by their devices that the water would be

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found at the same depth. *No* water was found. There is no answer for this happening in the physical phenomenon theory, or the Universal mind theory, or the gift-from-God theory, or the super-conscious theory—unless the super-conscious is what Verne Cameron stated specifically, "a separate entity." Fact: there is an intelligence demonstrated in dowsing. Fact: This intelligence does not always tell the truth—it is amoral.

Further evidence of the amoral character of the dowsing intelligence is the fact that the dowsing power can be, and is used for immoral (harmful) purposes. Historically, the act of Aymar the dowser is incontrovertible proof. Presently, this element in dowsing is well known.

Recently in a dowsing seminar here in southern California (which we were allowed to tape record) the dowser-teacher was not concerned with dowsing for water. Healing was his subject. One of the statements he made was, "I can heal a man in Chicago from his photograph." Then he chuckled and added, "I can also make him sick as a dog!"⁷ Later he told of an instance when he was in a restaurant and a woman nearby was smoking. He found this extremely annoying and he asked her politely to desist. She refused, and he said he took out his small collapsible dowsing device, which he always carried with him, and pointing it at her she became so suddenly and violently ill she rushed from the restaurant. He warned his students not to

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make wrong use of the rod. He told them it was up to their conscience. The most frightening conclusion one can draw from this is its danger in the hands of an evil man, and much worse, that this intelligent power source will lend itself to do evil.

When the Dowser Fails to Give a Correct Answer, Who is to Blame?

To return to simple witching. We would add the details of the three expert dowsers mentioned above. This happened in northern California. The property owner was overjoyed that he could use the three dowsers. It was better than insurance to be thus triple sure. He called each dowser without telling the others of his plan. They came independently of each other and located exactly the same spot. It was staked, and the well drilling rig set up carefully over the stake. All three dowsers had said that water would be found at the same depth—450 feet. How could the owner miss? At 450 feet there was only a trickle of water—an overnight trickle. The three dowsers, who by this time knew of each other, came back and redowsed. The picture of an excellent supply of water at 450 feet was still there. The hole was checked for plumb. No blasting had been done, which might have closed off the stream. The well was drilled deeper—no water. The owner finally gave up a little short of 800 feet with about one gallon per minute flow.

We checked with well drillers and pump men about the charge dowzers make of wells drilled off center so that they miss the stream. They scoffed at the idea. They said that this was the standard alibi

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when a dowsed well turned out badly. They explained that one of the main concerns of the well driller is that this does not happen—for his own protection. Most well drillers here use an eight inch bit or smaller, except for the very deep wells, and an off-plumb hole can easily lose the driller his very expensive bit by binding. Also, the installation of certain kinds of pumps would be impossible in an off-plumb hole. The driller sets up his rig as carefully as a surveyor sets up his instrument. We have watched it. It must be firmly level in all directions. Then when the drilling starts, they watch every second of operation.

They added that if a bit is started off-center and it is not corrected it may be off several feet in a hundred feet of depth depending on the rock formation penetrated. They watch and handle the feed carefully. We asked them about the dowser's charge that a stream is often missed because the driller is careless in setting up over the dowsed spot. One well driller who hated the sight of a dowser because of the financial ruin their dry holes caused his clients, exploded at the question. Omitting the expletives, his explanation was that when a driller goes on the property and sees a stake marking the spot to drill, he immediately asks if it is a dowser's stake. If it is, he demands that the owner witness his careful setup directly over the stake.

When asked about the stream being in a vertical fracture, rendering a miss easy if not probable, he said that few streams were that narrow, and if it were a vertical fracture the bit would discover it often long before it widened enough to contain water.

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The modern dowsing instruction books tell the beginner to watch for the first signs of action in the device which tells of the approach to the main body of water. A dowser we watched explained this as the edge of the stream, and he continued from that point to the deepest water flow. In this case the stream was about twelve feet wide, tapering to nothing at the edges and quite deep in the center and 85 feet deep into bluish granite.

Finally, although it would be extremely difficult to prove either the claim of the dowser that the well driller's carelessness caused the failure in finding water, or the well driller's claim that the dowser's device lied, there is one instance that is conclusive. This same dowsing failure is seen in the hand dug well. Although there is danger of closing off a stream by blasting in a particular type of underground formation, there are many wells that are hand dug with no blasting. When dowsing predicts a generous stream at a certain depth, and that depth, and greater, is reached without any hint of a stream of water, there is no doubt that the dowsing device did not show accuracy.

By What Standard Shall Dowsing be Judged?

Dowsing cannot be judged by any scientific standard of conventional science. The only rule of judgement then, must be excellence of performance. However, the general public has been seriously misled in, not only the stories about dowsing, but in the success rate and performance of the 'good' dowzers. This has come from the ridicule by government circulars

and reports, and from other writers

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who either parroted this source or have done no actual investigation before going into print. It is evident from even a casual perusal, that writers of government circulars approached the subject from the preconceived opinion that dowsing was either superstition or deception.

Only recently has the communications media classed dowsing with the other "ancient mysteries" that are enchanting the viewing and reading audience. The dowsing community is aware of the 'bad press' of their members who cannot perform, do not have the good sense to stay out of the public eye, and generally give dowsing a bad name. There seems to be some disagreement as to what makes a good dowser. Some writers state positively that practice makes for perfection, while others give the impression that it is an innate, and maybe an inherited ability. We do not believe that it can be judged by any other means than an examination of the experts. We do not accept learners and the inept as a valid part of the picture. Therefore, our view of dowsing is through inquiry about those of known ability.

The Bishop's Rule

The picture of modern dowsing would certainly be incomplete without a look at the Bishop's Rule. We told of its beginnings in the History of Dowsing chapter, and it is important today because it is the hook upon which many modern dowsers wish to hang their "scientific dowsing" classification. It is often known as the "the triangulation method" of ascertaining water depth. It is felt that it is a physical fact and therefore acceptable. What they do not take

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into consideration are other facts:

1. Not all dowsers find this reaction.
2. This reaction only occurs when the dowser *asks for it*.

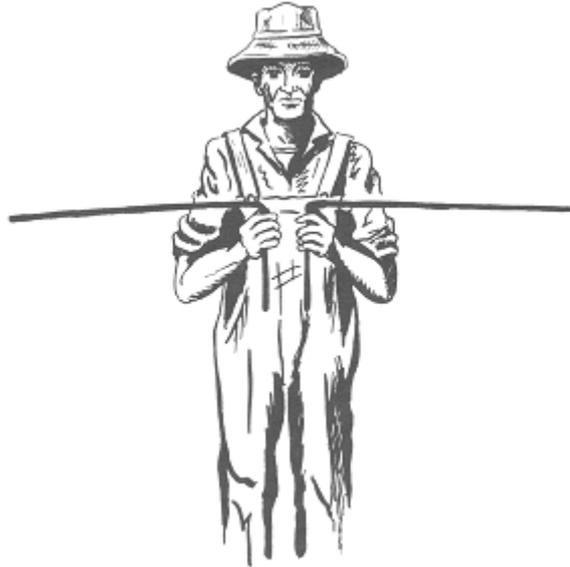
However, it is not quite as simple as it sounds. From what we are told about it, we would assume that any dowser can learn to use it. However, those who do not use it do not automatically receive that reaction when walking over the ground. Those who do use it have made a conscious decision to do so at the outset, after which it will come automatically if the dowser never varies the sequence of his dowsing actions. The dowser often, literally, asks for it, or states his intention of ascertaining the depth.

A vivid illustration of this method was seen in the television program "In Search Of" shown at least twice in 1979. The subject, of course, was dowsing and one of the scenes was the dowsing of a well-gone-dry "high on the Yorkshire moors" of England. The dowser was a senior lecturer in electronics at a university, and the then President of the British Society of Dowsers, Doctor Arthur Bailey. He found that the stream was still there, but at a lower depth. The description of his entire dowsing operation must be given to understand the quite obvious nonscientific aspects of his 'triangulation method' of ascertaining stream depth.

Dr. Bailey used ell-shaped wires held as one would a pistol in each hand. The wires appeared to have handles, probably to reduce dowser interference with their action. As he walked over

the area near the old well, his wires suddenly crossed decisively and he remarked that the stream was still there. As

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Dousing with angle rods. Wires are just as effective and are more often used now-a-days.

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he stepped back, the wires straightened out again and he announced he would ascertain the direction of flow of the stream. This time as he came to the same spot where the wires had snapped across each other, they both snapped to the right, indicating, he said, the direction of flow. Then as he announced his intention to determine the depth of the stream, the wires straightened again and he walked forward until they crossed. The measurement from this point back to the location of the stream, he said, would be the depth dimension.

This, to the skeptic, could have been rather obvious trickery except for one clearly seen fact. The wires moved in a manner impossible to mimic by manipulation. By tipping the handles, the doctor could have made the wires move exactly as they did except the way they moved. They moved suddenly and stopped suddenly, exactly as if someone had taken them in the fingers and moved them precisely to a spot and then held them stationary. Although it was not remarked upon, it was there for all to see. It was also not remarked upon that the wires changed movement at the decision of the dowser, and the stream depth reaction did not occur when he made his first pass—only after he made the decision to 'triangulate.' If it was a physical act, why did the wires cross the first pass, and snap to the right the second time—over the same spot? It could not have been mind control because the doctor did not know the direction of the stream until the wires showed him.

Shielding with Blue Tape

The dowser has long maintained that "water

veins" give off "emanations" that are harmful to man and beast in one way or another (see 'Ley Lines' in this chapter). They also claim that "lines of force" from such modern installations as electrical substations, radio station grounding systems, high tension lines, etc., travel long distances above ground in streams, conduits, fences, railroad tracks, etc., as well as in water and mineral veins. A dowser in Maine became interested in the high incidence of auto accidents at certain spots in the Maine highway system. He dowsed one intersection having a particularly high accident rate and found an underground stream which he followed to an electrical substation where he ascertained very high leakage currents. Another dowser found the same situation in the Ohio highways. Choosing an intersection where there was a high incidence of auto accidents, he tried to apply the idea of the dowser's treatment of bedrooms located over a water vein and where the room occupant were adversely affected. They use *blue tape* to encircle the room or the bed to "shield it from the noxious rays." Being unable to shield an intersection with blue tape, he tried doing so on an auto, and dowsed it while it traversed the intersection. He claimed that the auto was shielded from the "rays." Believing in map dowsing, he tried encircling the highway spot on the road map with the blue tape. In the following six months there was not a single accident at this intersection.⁸ This was

late in 1978. We wonder whatever came of this piece of map dowsing.

Another Book, Another Viewpoint

We have an interesting book, now out of print, written by Emmett Culligan on water. The name Culligan is a household word here in southern California because of the widely used Culligan water softening service. This book covers such subjects as water resources, water and health, water and livestock, and dowsing.⁹ There is no doubt from the dedication of the book to Father M. Raphael Stafford, and a preface by Monsignor Luigi Gino Ligutti, and Culligan's own positive declaration, that he was a very religious man. He was also a brave man, for he titled his chapter on dowsing, "Water Dowsing Explained." He admits that prior to this, dowsing was unexplained, he regrets that dowsers are held in ill repute, and he predicts that when the dowsing rod is correctly explained it will be in as great demand as the Geiger counter or the compass. He states positively that he does not believe the explanation will show it to be in the realm of geological science, but rather a matter of engineering.

No doubt it is unfair to attempt to coalesce Mr. Culligan's explanation into two sentences, but for the sake of brevity; he feels that the charge of positive electricity moving rapidly through the end of the dowsing rod is drawn powerfully into the

negative electricity flowing from the sun to the earth in the moist air. These two energies meet over an underground water body, the circuit is closed, and remains closed until the dowsing device is removed. He does not mention how the dowser ascertains the depth, quality, quantity, and direction of flow, et cetera.

He adds that proof of his theory is that by shielding the dowser with a rubber mat, the flow of

energy will be cut off. He also tells of the Russian experimentation, but he does not mention that the Soviets found rubber to be ineffective as shielding. He states positively that there are no devils or witchcraft involved in dowsing. The dowser is using the same "atmospheric energy" used by radio and television.

He also states that there is nothing divine involved other than an unexplained law of the father of all natural laws. He ends the chapter by accusing those trying to solve the "population explosion" as committing heresy against the providence of God, and that the idea that God cannot supply adequate food and water for the people "He places" on earth is nothing less than atheistic propaganda.

Talk to Your Stick!

We have mentioned before that modern dowsers are taught to talk to the device. *Time Magazine* of October 9, 1978 reported on the eighteenth annual convention of the American Society of Dowsers at Danville, Vermont. The report starts with a description of a dowser at work. Describing the dowser talking to his stick as almost an incantation, it

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quotes, "Please indicate a vein of good drinking water. It should flow at a rate of at least five gallons per minute, and should not be more than twenty feet deep." We wonder, with this Ouija-Board-like approach, how dowsers can ever hope to enter the halls of science.

The Parameters of Dowsing

The report goes on to quote an electrical engineer, "Dowsing for water is only the bottom rung of the ladder. Now these powers are used for everything from determining what foods to eat to finding lost objects and people." Another man stated flatly that he was not interested in "all this psychic stuff." A dowsing convention bookstall is probably an adequate measure of the dowser's interests and beliefs. This report states that "piles of books on the occult are offered for sale, from the works of Edgar Cayce to studies of UFOs and the Bermuda Triangle." Among the "tools" for dowsers, the report noticed, there were the "miraculous electronic black boxes (price \$65) that purportedly 'discharge toxic vibrations from your mind, emotions and etheric body.'" Once the term "black boxes" appears, a whole new element of dowsing is introduced into the picture. This we will describe in detail in the section on "Dowsing the Animate"—all living things.

Loss of Dowsing Ability

Anything that causes the dowser to question the act, or to lose "faith" in it, immediately renders him incapable of performing. He can get no answers from his device, or method. We witnessed such a

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circumstance. An expert dowser was in great demand, and was doing an important job of water witching when we appeared on the scene to interview him. He was curious about our interest in dowsing and about the psychic aspects, of which he seemed to be entirely ignorant. He called us the next day to tell us he had become perturbed about the sorcery aspect of the

act, and when he had returned to his day's dowsing, he found that his ability had left him. We have found repeatedly that a mental 'set' or faith is an absolute necessity to successful dowsing.

Another case of loss of ability seemed to be traced to an acceptance of Christian belief. We wrote to a doctor whom we had known here as an accomplished dowser. He had moved out of state and we had not heard from him for about three years. He seemed surprised at our inquiry, and he stated that he had lost his ability to dowse when he had been converted to Christianity and had become a "born-again-Christian." This puzzled him until one day as he was reading his Bible, he ran across the biblical proscription against divination. He concluded that he had been saved from serious trouble.

References

- 1 Ostrander and Schroeder, *PSYCHIC DISCOVERIES BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN*, pp. 186, 187. Bantam Books, New York.
- 2 This reference is an illustration of a certain weakness in dowsing literature. Authors are obviously careless, using incorrect dates, incorrect names, and as in this case incorrect terms. Tom Williamson, geologist, reported on this same Soviet research in *NEW SCIENTIST* magazine of February 8, 1979, No. 81. He quoted from Soviet sources and journals including *Geologiya Mestorozhdenii*, and definitely interprets the Russian-coined term for dowsing as Biophysical Method or BPM. BPE is Biophysical Effects—the term they coined for the dowsing force field. Ostrander and Schroeder used the wrong term.
- 3 We continue to use *PSYCHIC DISCOVERIES BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN* as reference material since the integrity of its material is not in question. Only the author's use and conclusions drawn are questionable.
- 4 Verne L. Cameron, *AQUAVIDEO*, edited and prepared by Bill Cox, Life Understanding Foundation, P.O. Box 30305, Santa Barbara, CA 93105.
- 5 Ostrander and Schroeder, *PSYCHIC DISCOVERIES BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN*, page 193.
- 6 Francis Hitching, *PENDULUM: The PSI Connection*. William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. Glasgow.
- 7 Wayne Cook, dowser-teacher.
- 8 L. F. Willard, *WHEN WATER WITCHES GET TOGETHER*, article in *Yankee Magazine*, September, 1979.
- 9 Emmett Culligan, *EMMETT CULLIGAN ON WATER*, Crestline Book Co., San Bernardino, California.