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Psychic Carl Hewitt and the spirit world

By Karen Clarke
Day Staff Writer

While some customers at Hewitt's Hair Salon are getting the latest coiffure, others in a small office at the back of the building are getting a glimpse of the future.

By day 1595 Hartford Turnpike in the Chesterfield section of Montville is the address of a hair salon and office for psychic Carl Hewitt. At night and on weekends it becomes the Gifts of the Spirit Church and Psychic Research Center.

Hewitt, a hairdresser by trade, has also capitalized on his "gifts" of clairvoyance and clairaudience which allow him, he claims, to tune into the spirit world.

An ordained spiritualist minister who left the established church, Hewitt calls himself a medium and has set about teaching others about the "gifts of the spirit" — messages from the spiritual plane.

As reverend of the Gifts of the Spirit Church, Hewitt says he is attempting to fulfill a goal dictated to him from the spirit world. The goal, one of several chosen for him, he said, is to preach the existence of the spirit world — a mission he began more than two decades ago.

'I'm just a human being. I'm a channel for the spirit — and that's all there is to it.'

"I don't believe in preachers — I believe in teachers." the 53-year-old South Carolina native quipped during an interview in his office, which doubles as a "reading room" for psychic sessions.

In the spiritualist's view of the universe, life does not end with death. The physical death that removes a person from the earth plane is, they say, the beginning of life in Etheria — the spiritual plane.

Diana Burgess, Hewitt's assistant, further explained the concept. People who have "passed beyond" have form and purpose, as we do in life. They also are cognizant of the living and are often willing and able to communicate with those left behind, she added.

Hewitt believes evidence and proof of spiritual existence will enlighten the average person, adding, "The information has to be spoon-fed."

There is too much information for one person to absorb all of it, he said,

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explaining that orthodox religious teachings do not leave room for the gifts of the spirit.

"Minds have been so polluted through the years. They can't believe there is anyone in the spirit world but Jesus and the saints."

Hewitt's brand of religion doesn't refute Jesus' existence, but claims that he was a prophet, a seer, and a medium — not unlike other so-called saints, Hewitt said.

Hewitt claims he can put people in contact with the spirits — but only if the spirits are willing to communicate. He cautions against trying to conjure up the dead — it is better, he said, to let the spirits come forward on their own.

The medium's readings are designed to allow just that. During each 45-minute session Hewitt becomes the "instrument" to allow this communication to occur, he says.

Hewitt said his "link" to the spirit world is an Indian spirit, Lone Eagle, who, since Hewitt's childhood, has been his "familiar" — his link with Etheria who provides him with information of future events.

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Whatever most people think of Hewitt's activities, one thing is certain — his clients must believe, since they continue to come back — keeping his readings booked for months in advance. Weekday mornings Hewitt schedules as many as four sessions — the limit imposed by his doctor because of the emotional strain associated with the job, he said.

For \$35 a reading, Hewitt enters what he calls an altered state of consciousness, during which time the spirits communicate through him. Though he speaks normally, and remains upright and alert during the sessions, he claims he doesn't remember what is said. He recommends his customers bring a cassette tape and the session is recorded for future reference — something all legitimate mediums insist on, he said.

"The door is open to charlatans," he said, adding "I know I could get people to do anything. A lot would do it."

This is one reason, he said, he recommends that clients return no more frequently than every six months. He also stresses that the reading is by no means a strict pattern to follow, but rather a guide.

"I can open the door and show you

the path to the garden but I can't go down to the garden with you and see the beauty," he said.

Mrs. Burgess, his assistant, also explained there is some information the spirits don't pass on because they believe the client need not know it.

"Sometimes you won't get an answer because it won't help you. You have to experience certain things for personal growth," she said.

Generally, those who aren't pleased with the experience do not hear what they want to hear, she said. The others return again, not only for readings, but also as church parishioners or students in classes taught at the Gifts of the Spirit Church.

Classes in self-healing through self-awareness, the gift of healing, and holistic self-development are offered weekly at a cost of \$35 to \$40, and are well-attended.

A local teacher, who asked not to be identified by name, has taken Hewitt's classes for several years. She said the meditation classes have awakened a heightened self-awareness, and also unearthed an ability to "tune in" to psychic messages.

"The meditation classes are so beneficial to me. I have learned a lot about myself through meditation," she said. "Everybody has a certain psychic connection. We aren't as tuned-in to ourselves as we should be."

She explained that through meditation she has been able to sense, and sometimes actually see, events that are occurring elsewhere.

One incident involved hearing a friend, hundreds of miles away, call out her name. She said she also sensed the moment that same friend died of leukemia.

She still chooses to hide her affiliation with spiritualism because it may be detrimental in her position, she said. She explained she is afraid parents and colleagues will misunderstand, and view her experiences in a negative light.

Barbara K. Storey and her daughter Brenda are just the opposite. They are willing to brag about Carl Hewitt and the Gifts of the Spirit Church, claiming that Brenda has received a cure at the hands of Hewitt and his faith healers.

Brenda, a Newington resident, was born with multiple scar tissue on both retinas, damage to the optic nerves, and an extreme stigmatism in both eyes.

As a last resort, her mother said,

she has been attending healing services since she was 4½. Even though doctors had labelled her legally blind — her eyesight was 20/90 in one eye and 20/100 in the other — her condition has been steadily improving.

Brenda, now in third grade, explained that since she has been attending the services, the headaches and dizziness associated with her malady haven't recurred.

At her last checkup, Brenda's eyes were 20/60 and 20/40.

Her ophthalmologist, Dr. Robert T. Consentino of New Britain, was cautious about the "cure." He admitted her emotional state has improved, helping her deal with her handicap, but, he added, her improvement is short of miraculous.

"As far as the healing goes, it could be physiologically and anatomically explained," he said. "If we're looking for the miracle type of thing, it can't be recorded as such," he added.

Nearly 20 people attended a recent evening healing service and participated in the "laying on of hands" by Hewitt-trained healers. More than twice that number participated in Sunday mass, though not all took advantage of the healing portion.

The basement chapel has an organ, recorded hymns are played and the lights dim for atmosphere. But the sermon is not much different from what you would hear in any church, only it leaves room for discussion of the gifts of the spirit.

At this Sunday mass, Hewitt claimed the spirits told him to read billets — pieces of paper on which parishioners write questions.

Reading each question, and crumpling each in turn, Hewitt gave answers ranging from personal ones about marriage to general questions about the relationship of the spiritual to the earth's plane.

One parishioner — at his first Gifts of the Spirit Church mass — was addressed by the persistent spirit of a young man who had died. Hewitt said the spirit persisted until the medium recognized him. He identified himself to Hewitt as Jimmy and warned his cousin in the audience about entering into

contracts and he predicted a move.

After mass, the man said a cousin named Jimmy was killed in a hunting accident. The rest of the message, he said, seemed to relate to his new job as an automobile salesman — which required him to sign contracts frequently. Also, he said, the company has approached him about moving out of state to participate in a training program.

Some people come to Carl Hewitt searching for answers, some come looking for spiritual fulfillment, and others appear out of curiosity. He invites them in, he says, because he has been told to do so.