ISSUE # 7 - CHRISTIANITY VS RELIGION

Posted on February 20, 2025

Category: The Main Issue

WE GET PHONE CALLS!!

No, not all phone calls are angry calls, less than fifteen or twenty percent. Most callers are polite and offer encouragement. It seems, however, The Main Issue steps on a lot of toes. There are many who do not want to hear about things that matter.

And yet people have the right to know. And yes, they also have the right to not know. One patient says, “Tell me, Doctor, I want to know whether it's good news or bad.” Another says, “Don’t tell me any bad news, I just don’t want to know!”

Every person has the right to know the truth if he so chooses. The truth is, according to the Bible and according to the recorded words of Jesus Christ, that each of us has an enemy, someone very interested in the destruction of our eternal lives. The Main Issue brought that truth door to door throughout Kelowna and the reaction by some was a bit scary.

Some objected because they thought it was too explicit (and they may have a point), but there were others who simply objected to being told they have an enemy intent on their destruction. They just don't want to hear it and even object to others hearing it.

This edition, Christianity vs. Religion, will upset many. What right do people have to give their opinion about my religion? And yet there are thousands in Kelowna who would leave their religion in a flash if they came to know the truth about their religion. Many have been taught since childhood their faith in a particular religion will bring them success when in fact it will bring disaster. To them there is no other world but the one imposed upon them by others. Each has the right to have the truth presented to them. What they do with it is their prerogative. Regardless, they have the right to know.

A family who used to live next door is entrenched in the Jehovah's Witness organization. The small children are now grown up and do what they have been admonished to do – knock on doors and stand on corners, spreading the same misconceptions that had been unrelentingly imposed on them. Do they not have the right to the truth? Is placing The Main Issue on their doorstep an unkind act?

This edition of The Main Issue will probably be the most controversial of all ten. It exposes religion for what it is, a counterfeit to true Christianity. When Jesus came to earth through the body and obedience of a virgin it was not for the purpose of presenting another religion. No, He came to give Himself. He came for the purpose of bringing life, eternal life, to those who would embrace Him as lord and request His forgiveness.

It was the religious who were His most ardent enemies. It was the religious who had Him crucified. It was the religious who hindered others from coming to Him. And so it is today.

Religion holds a certain respectability with man, but not so with God. Religion is a counterfeit to His redemption plan – that plan being His only begotten Son.

So phone all you want, you who hold your religion above God's word. Scream and complain and threaten and call names to your heart's desire, you who place your gospel before the gospel of Christ, you who cherish the words of man over the words of your Creator, you who refuse to bow to the lordship of Christ.

The Main Issue goes forth!

CHRISTIANITY VS MASONRY

Information in this article has been gathered from The Secret Teachings of the Masonic Lodge, co-authored by John Ankerberg and John Weldon (Moody Press).

The Masonic Lodge (also known as Freemasonry) is a powerful fraternal order and the world's largest secret society. From the first Grand Lodge founded in London, England in 1717 there has

sprung over 33,700 Lodges worldwide. The first Canadian Lodge was established in 1745. Each Lodge leader, the Worshipful Master, is the absolute ruler of his district.

Masonry has a cultivated system of secret signs, symbols, and oaths. Two examples of each is cited for the reader's perusal:

SECRET SIGNs:

1) A Mason will cross his legs, the left over the right, to let another know that help is requested. The other Mason will acknowledge he has received the message by crossing the right leg over the left.

2) After giving an oath (10th Degree Scottish Rite) a dagger is placed under the chin and brought down to the waist, a sign of willingness to be split open should he be found guilty of dishonouring his pledge.

SECRET SYMBOLS:

1) The square and compass overlapping each other, and the letter "G" in the middle. The square symbolizes morality, the compass spirituality and the G means God (to some the G stands for geometry or gnosticism).

2) The sword pointing at a heart. This symbolizes justice, God rewarding men for their good deeds.

SECRET OATH:

1) From the 18th Degree of the Scottish Rite:
I, _____ , do solemnly and sincerely promise and swear under the penalty of all my former obligations which I have taken in the preceding degrees, never to reveal directly or indirectly, the secrets or mysteries of ,..... under the penalty of being forever deprived of the true word, to be perpetually in darkness, my blood continually running from my body, to suffer without intermission the cruel remorse of soul; that the bitterest gall, mixed with vinegar, be my constant drink; the sharpest thorns for my pillow and that the death of the cross may complete my punishment should I ever infringe or violate in any manner or form the laws and rules which have been, are now, or may be hereafter made known or prescribed to me.

And I do furthermore swear, promise and engage on my sacred word of honor, to observe and obey all the decrees which may be transmitted to me by the Grand Inspectors General in Supreme Council of the thirty-third degree... So help me God and keep me steadfast in this my solemn obligation. Amen.

2) From the 14th Degree of the Scottish Rite:

I do most solemnly and sincerely swear on the Holy Bible and in the presence of the Grand Architect of the Universe...Never to reveal...the mysteries of this our Sacred and High Degree...In favour of this, my obligation, I consent to have my belly cut open, my bowels torn from thence and given to the

hungry vultures.

The beginner enters Masonry at the Blue Lodge level which consists of three degrees (Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason) and then, if he chooses to advance, ascends either the 30 degrees of the Scottish Rite or the 11 degrees of the York Rite. In the Scottish Rite he will be given such titles as Secret Master, Master Architect, Grand Pontiff, Knight of the Brazen Serpent, Prince of Mercy, etc. If he advances through the York Rite he will be rendered such titles as Most Excellent Master, Select Master, Super Excellent Master, etc. However most Masons never advance beyond the Blue Lodge and therefore remain "unworthy" of the "greater mysteries" of the Scottish and York rites, and are ignorant of true Masonic purposes and teachings. Many teachings are rooted in medieval occult and religion.

According to Ankerberg and Weldon, the Masonic Lodge boasts of many notables, such as: Irvine Berlin, William Jennings Byran, Sir Winston Churchill, W.C. Fields, Benjamin Franklin, Edward VIII, J. Edgar Hoover, Rudyard Kipling, Douglas MacArthur, the Ringling Brothers, Red Skeleton and Francois Voltaire. Masonic influence is worldwide, historic and powerful.

The Masonic Lodge has many kindred organizations such as the Order of the Eastern Star and the Order of Job's Daughters for women, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, the Loyal Order of Moose, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Shriners and many more.

The aspiration of the Masonic Lodge is to bring all mankind together in peace and harmony under the Masonic umbrella. It sets itself as an example of tolerance, accepting all faiths and all people (although they believe all non-Masons and unlearned Masons to be in darkness). It involves itself in humanitarian causes, thus gaining the acceptance of the populace. One example is the Shriner's Circus which supports hospitals for children.

The novice Mason would be surprised to know the occultic nature of the higher Masonic Degrees. Often the Lodge Master has become entrenched in occultic practices and is himself a medium with great powers (obtained from the spirit world of darkness).

"a dagger is placed under the chin"

" I _____,
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swear:

"he will be given titles such as Secret Master, Master Architect, Grand Pontiff"

"The Mason is taught he can by his own efforts and self-improvement become worthy at the Celestial Lodge Above."

MASONRY VS THE BIBLE:

Masonry:

The Bible. Although pretending great reverence, the Bible is considered a mere symbol of the will of God for man and as such is designated “lodge furniture.” (The Bible is on par with a chair or table.) As a flag symbolizes a country, so does the Bible symbolize God’s word. The Bible is in the same category as The Book of Mormon, the Vedas, the Koran, etc. and need not be obeyed.

God. God is the spiritual father of all mankind. When a person dies, regardless of his beliefs and past lifestyle, he will go to the “Celestial Lodge Above.” God is unitarian (only one person is God). God is so awesome that it is impossible for man to make contact with Him. God is referred to as the Great Architect of the Universe. In the higher levels God is called Jabulon, a name taken from pagan gods.

Salvation. The Mason is taught he can by his own efforts and self-improvement become worthy of the Celestial Lodge Above. In the Second Degree, the Mason is given an apron and told: “The apron of a Mason is intended to remind him of purity of mind and morals..... Thus you will wear your apron while laboring among us...ever remembering that you are to wear it as an emblem of that purity of heart and conscience that is necesary to obtain for you the approval of the Grand Architect of the Universe.”

Jesus Christ. The name of Jesus is prohibited in many Lodges as that name might be an offense to some. The name of Jesus is removed from Scriptural texts when used in rituals. Of all the prayers used in the rituals of Masonry not once is a prayer offered to God in the name of Jesus Christ. Masons degrade the name of Jesus. In one ritual the candidate is told, “Be thou a Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek.” (This is particularly blasphemous as that holy office has only been filled

by one Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.) Christ is not believed to be God, but merely a man.

Now let's get the Bible perspective.

The Bible:

The Bible. Issue # 3 of The Main Issue gives much evidence that the Bible is in a class by itself. The Bible claims itself to be the inspired word of God and the Christian community has always accepted it as so. The difference between the Bible and the Book of Mormon, the Koran, the Vedas, etc., is simple: the Bible is true and the others are not.

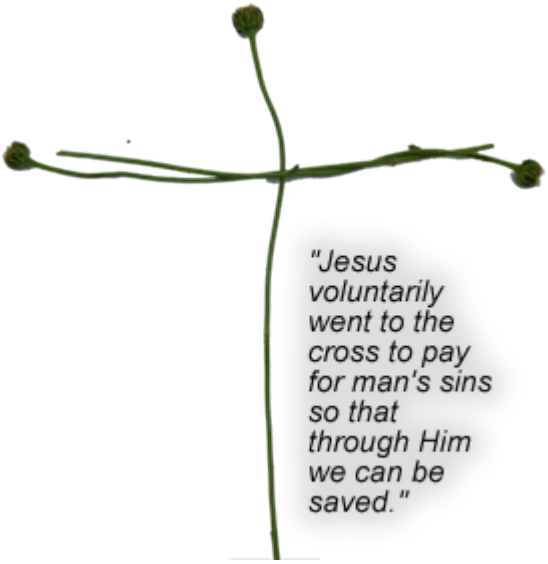
God. God is not the spiritual father of all mankind, but only those who have been born spiritually into His family. That is why Jesus taught, “You must be born again.” God is a triune God, three Persons in one God, each Person equally and fully God. These three are the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. God can be reached through His Son Jesus Christ. The true name for God is “I am.”

Salvation. Scripture states very plainly (Ephesians 2:8,9), “By grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Attempting to make it by one’s own effort is rejecting the salvation that God gave freely, the gift of eternal life. The big difference between Christianity and all religions (including Masonry) is that Christianity receives by faith while religion strives to accomplish by one’s own effort.

Jesus Christ. Jesus said (Mark 8:38), “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” The Bible declares that Jesus is the Son of God, equal to the Father. He left His regal position and entered the human race through the body and obedience of a virgin. As a man he was tempted in all ways but sinned not. Jesus voluntarily went to the cross to pay for man’s sins so that through Him we can be saved.

"The name of Jesus is prohibited in many Lodges"

"These three are the Father, the son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit."



DEAR MASON,

The Masonic Lodge is not only secretive to outsiders but to each other, including yourself. How would you feel if your teenage son or daughter associated himself with a secret organization he knew very little about? Why, you would have a right to know, does this organization have to be secret? What's to hide?

The Masonic Lodge has much to hide. When they told you, "I assure you there is nothing therein that is incompatible with your civil and religious duties or with those higher and nobler duties which you owe to God, your country, your neighbor, your family or yourself," they told you a lie.

They said Masonry is not a religion but in fact it has an extensive belief system, much of which is compatible with New Age mentality. They told you by good works and self-improvement you can make your own way to the Celestial Lodge Above when in fact your best works are as filthy rags in God's sight and will win you nothing more than the Infernal Lodge Below! They never once told you faith in Christ is necessary for salvation. Why? Because they don't believe that to be so. In fact, the Masonic Lodge and Jesus Christ are enemies of each other.

The Masonic Lodge will lead to remorse and pain, lots of both. There are many who fear for their life simply because they chose to leave this "benevolent society." The oaths you and other Masons have made are not only an insult to God but to reason as well. Come on now..... Pontiff?..... Most Excellent Master?..... Knight of the Brazen Serpent? I mean, really! Isn't it a bit childish?

Cancel your foolishness with wisdom. You made bad choices, now make a wise one – humble yourself and turn to Christ – for forgiveness, for salvation, for entrance into God's kingdom. Throw away that white apron. Renounce those foolish oaths. And turn to Christ.

Thanks for listening.

Editor

CHRISTIANITY VS. MORMONISM

(This article on the Mormon faith (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) was written by Sword Of Truth Ministries of Kelowna, B.C. for The Main Issue.)

The Mormon Church was founded by Joseph Smith in 1830. Smith published his Book Of Mormon in the same year, a book considered by that faith as par with the Bible. The Mormon faith has its main temple in Salt Lake City, Utah. It is global and expanding. Sword Of Truth challenges their claimed divine status of the Book of Mormon and certain doctrines of The Church Of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

The most difficult problem when examining and commenting on another person's religion is that invariably whatever is said, regardless of intent, will offend. But to the Mormon we would say please take the questions that this article raises to the Word of God for the final answer. If the Mormon faith is true it will stand up to scrutiny. Brigham Young himself said, "Take up the Bible and compare it with the faith of the Latter Day Saints and see if it will stand the test." Orson Pratt teaches in his book The Seer that a Mormon is to convince other faiths of their errors of doctrine "by reason, by logic, and by the word of God." It is by using these very weapons that we present this discourse on the Mormon faith.

THE BOOK OF MORMON VS. THE BIBLE

Historical Evidence. All one has to do is examine secular history books or encyclopedias to find more than adequate proof of the historical authenticity of the Bible. The way of life of historical Biblical characters has been proved by way of extra Biblical texts and by archaeology. Coins, tools, clothing and housing articles have all been unearthed, authenticated and put on public display. On the other hand...

Of the coins mentioned in the Book of Mormon not one has been found, although the L.D.S. (Latter Day Saints) insist they do exist. If, however, this is the case, why are they not available for public display?

A mighty battle is said to have taken place on the hill Cummorah somewhere in America involving many men and horses. This battle apparently took place around 600 A.D., yet history attests to the fact that horses were not introduced to North America (by the Spanish) until 900 years after that date.

1st. Nephi 17:5 (of the Book of Mormon) speaks of the land called "bountiful," a land of "much fruit and wild honey," to describe an area in Arabia. However, Arabia never had an abundance of either. 1st. Nephi 18:1 speaks of an "ample timber" in Arabia, but in contrast there is a scarcity. 1st. Nephi 2:6-9 speaks of an Arabian river which flowed into the Red Sea; however, in all recorded history there has never been such a river.

There are many other instances where we could show that the Book of Mormon is geologically and historically incorrect; however for lack of space we shall instead move on.

Where Are The Maps? Why is it that although there are many maps relating to the Bible there are none relating to the Book of Mormon? Many have said to us, "Yes there are," yet no one has ever produced one.

Where Are The Manuscripts? There many thousands of manuscripts of the Bible on display for all to see, each agreeing with the other with such a small degree of error so as to defy imagination, yet...there has only been ONE copy of the Book of Mormon...and this one copy has vanished.

You Be The Juror. This one (supposed) copy was found by a young Joseph Smith in New York state and was written upon plates of gold. As the story goes, this Joseph packs these gold plates (which must have weighed hundreds of pounds) under one arm and runs with them. Joseph found the "Urim and Thummim" (these are thought to be two gems used to determine the mind of God) near the gold plates and discovered that they could be worn as spectacles...and this gave Joseph the ability to decipher the plates. Thus we have the Book of Mormon, reverenced by millions of Mormons to this day.

To continue the story, after Joseph Smith translated the gold plates an angel came and took the

golden plates (and also the Urim and Thummim) away... never to be seen again! We are told that Joseph was not the only witness to the existence of these plates...that there were others... however these witnesses never really laid eyes upon the plates, but saw them with "the eyes of faith."

Now...if you were a juror in a trial to determine the authenticity of this story, what would your verdict be?

Please Note:

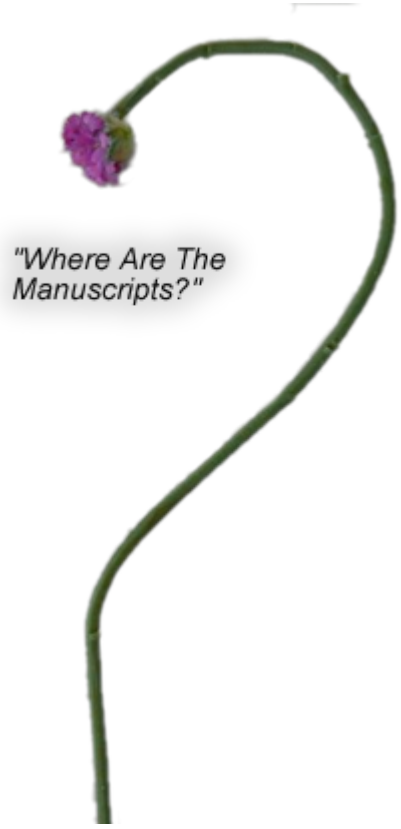
1) there is no map showing any place spoken of in the B.O.M. (Book of Mormon)
2) the B.O.M. is in error regarding geography
3) there are no plates to check the authenticity of Joseph Smith's story
4) although Joseph had no training in any other language, he single handedly translated this incredible volume
5) none of Joseph's witnesses witnessed anything
6) though lauded by Joseph Smith as "the purest book ever written," there has been over 3000 corrections and changes.

Two Sticks. The L.D.S. states that the arrival of the B.O.M. is the fulfillment of a prophecy given by the ancient prophet Ezekiel as quoted in the book of Ezekiel in the Old Testament of the Bible, chapter 37. The Israelite nation was split into two camps and God wanted to make the two nations one nation. God instructed Ezekiel to place two sticks in his hand, each representing a nation. The placing of the two sticks together was to signify the uniting of the two nations. However, the L.D.S. claim that the two sticks represent two books (and not two nations), the Bible and the Book of Mormon, and Ezekiel's prophecy was fulfilled when Joseph Smith translated the gold plates in Mira, New York in the 1830's (this translation being the Book of Mormon). Is this possible? Determine for yourself whether Ezekiel speaks of two nations or two books:

Ezekiel 37:22: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of lsrael; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.

"why are they not available for public display?"

"Where Are The Maps?"


"Where Are The Manuscripts?"

ATTAINING GODHOOD:

An Unusual Doctrine. The Mormon church's doctrine on Godhood is: "As man is, God once was. As God is, man can become." In other words, God was once a man who evolved into Godhood and any man can likewise become God. This is what the Mormon strives to become...God! One must work his/herself to a stage in this life whereby they are deserving of their own God-hood in the next.

Question: If God began as a man, who created this man? If it was another God that created this man, should not the Mormon be worshipping this other God?

What Does Scripture Declare? The question is...where in scripture is there a guarantee of this Godhood? The Mormon church points to the following Scripture verse to confirm the Godhead teaching:

Genesis 3:5: For God doth know that in the day you eat thereof; then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods knowing good and evil.

Perhaps you will recognize this verse as the one whereby the serpent tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. The words "you shall be as gods" would seem to indicate a guarantee of Godhood...just eat the fruit. However...it was not God, but the devil who made that guarantee!

Mormon doctrine would have you believe that the devil told the truth to Eve. However, in verse 13 Eve tells God that the serpent “beguiled” (fooled or lied to) her! Eve was tricked into believing that she could become like God. This lie that caused so much grief to mankind is the same lie that each Mormon is expected to build his/her life upon!

No Truth In Him. If satan had, as the Mormons believe, told the truth in Genesis 3:5, how can it be that Jesus declared that there is “no truth in him” and that satan is a “liar and the father of it”? Paul, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, speaks of his concern that they (the Corinthians) might be “beguiled” in a similar manner as was Eve. Scripture clearly shows that the serpent (devil), is and always was incapable of telling the truth.

Godhood is something that belongs only to God. If we are to accept a doctrine...surely that doctrine should be based upon words spoken by God...not the devil!

SALVATION AFTER DEATH

Baptism Of The Dead. Another doctrine peculiar to the Mormon faith is salvation-after-death. By the performing of certain rites and ceremonies, along with baptism of the dead (someone is baptized in proxy for the dead person), the dead can receive the salvation that they refused in life. The faithful Mormon is encouraged to research his or her family tree, take this information to a Mormon temple where the faithful are baptized vicariously in place of the deceased relative. (The Mormon church possesses the largest genealogical research facility in the world, located in Salt Lake City, Utah.)

The faithful Mormon is taught to believe that this ritualistic baptism is capable of elevating their dead to a higher state of being in the after-life, and also that this "temple work" plays an integral part in their own salvation. Not only does the Bible refute such a notion but also the Mormon's own Book of Mormon.

Alma 34:35 (of the B.O.M.): For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold you have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked.

If we are to assume that the Book of Mormon is translated as correctly as professed to be, we can

then conclude that Alma 34:35 adequately disproves the theory of salvation after death!

A SCARY COMPARISON:

Mormons are washed and anointed with oil before being initiated. Witches are washed and anointed with oil before being initiated.

Mormons are taught they can attain Godhood. Witches are taught they can attain Godhood.

Mormons wear Masonic-type aprons and use Masonic-type handshakes to communicate among themselves and with spirit-beings.

Witches wear Masonic-type aprons and use Masonic-type handshakes to communicate among themselves and with spirit-beings.

Mormons receive their most sacred information on the five points of fellowship. Witches receive their most sacred information on the five points of fellowship.

Mormons believe they hold the priesthood of Melchizedek. Witches believe they hold the priesthood of Melchizedek.

Mormons are given new secret names. Witches are given new secret names.

Mormons are taught that salvation is gained by works. Witches are taught that salvation is gained by works.

Mormons worship in a circle alternating male and female, with hands linked in special grips. Witches worship in a circle alternating male and female, with hands linked in special grips.

Mormons wear magical garments with special markings for spiritual protection. Witches wear magical garments with special markings for spiritual protection.

Mormons believe the devil told the truth in Genesis 3:5. Witches believe the devil told the truth in Genesis 3:5.

Mormons believe in eternal marriage beyond death. Witches believe in eternal marriage beyond death.

Mormons believe in a previous existence. Witches believe in a previous existence.

Mormons believe there are multiple levels of salvation. Witches believe there are multiple levels of salvation.

CHRISTIANITY VS NAM (NEW AGE MOVEMENT)

What is the New Age Movement?

The New Age Movement (herein called NAM) is the tapping into powers of the spirit realm for the purpose of enlightenment, healing, information, wisdom, power over others, power over circumstances, etc. - sometimes for the purpose of good, other times for evil. The power obtained, generally, is real, not imagined. However, the powers being tapped into are not the powers of God, but the powers of evil.

Issue #6 of The Main Issue dealt with the two spiritual worlds: 1) that of God and 2) that of the kingdom of darkness. The dark kingdom is ruled by the fallen archangel, Lucifer (who has been renamed satan) and the billions of demons under his rule. It is this realm the New Ager taps into. To be sure, the New Ager would passionately argue that point, having been taught they are delving into the power existing within themselves (within is a big word to the New Ager). They themselves are God, or a part of God, and they have an abundance of dormant power within themselves that can be explored and used.

The typical New Ager does not have evil intentions. On the contrary, his goals might be quite noble. He may seek peace, joy, fulfillment, love. He wants to change the world in which he lives. However, the New Ager is duped. The one descending deep into New Age often ends up in bondage to some master, hopelessly demon-possessed, irreversibly damaged by drugs, altered values, possessions in the hands of another, life shipwrecked. Not always, but often. He thinks his newly found spirit guides are friendly servants but, in fact, they soon become master.

The New Ager might involve himself in mental telepathy, soul travel, meditation, inner healing, channeling, chanting mantras, yoga, drugs, diets, hypnotherapy – all in an effort to reach God-consciousness. God-consciousness, to the New Ager, is the awareness that one is God, the ultimate plain. To get there he might have to surrender his independence to an authoritative guru, die to his own ego, and be reincarnated a number of times.

The NAM is not new at all but only the acceptance of it is new. While the expression New Age Movement is a 1980's creation, the religion (they hate it being called a religion) is ancient. The methods to attain an altered consciousness, the use of occultic practices, the tapping into the demonic world, channeling, astrology, seeking God-consciousness – this has been going on for milleniums. The difference is in the packaging. What was once mysticism and religion is now science and technology. Same product, different package. The package being different, it became acceptable to much of North American society.

"they are dealing into the power existing within themselves"

"The dark kingdom is ruled by the fallen archangel, Lucifer"

WHO IS AFFECTED BY THE NAM?

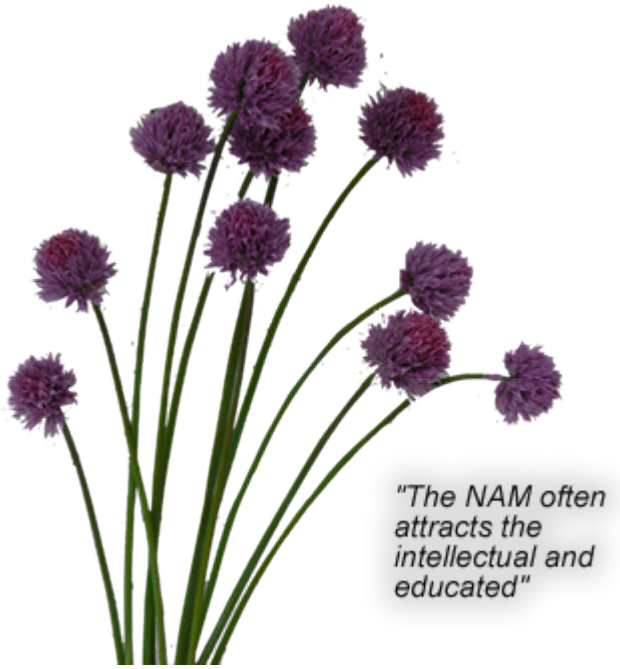
Everyone. Everyone is affected, or at least touched, by the NAM.

The NAM often attracts the intellectual and educated who have influence in the media, entertainment, business, and political, medical and educational spheres. Many of Hollywood elite are New Agers and propagate the New Age gospel over the screen with flair and enthusiasm.

The NAM is like a cloud, a dark spooky cloud, presently sweeping North America. No nook or cranny of North American life is left unblemished. Shirley MacLaine asks the help of a “spirit guide” in editing her Out On A Limb. Every major city produces between one and several New Age magazines. There are radio stations that play nothing but New Age music. Representatives from some of North America’s largest corporations meet to discuss how New Age methods can be used to improve business. New Age philosophy has penetrated children cartoons and toys and books.

The American Health magazine reports “a new breed of shrinks in the land” who use tarot cards and astrology charts. There are psychiatrists who now consider the insane as being on a higher plane than the rest of us. Wayne Gretzky turns to a hypnotist to help him overcome his fear of flying. Millions of North Americans are working out their karma. Lazaris and Mafu are the names of but two of many non-human entities that have become popular in NAM circles. An astronaut carries out a spaceship-to-earth telepathy experiment while journeying to the moon. Certain astronauts,

American and Soviet, promote the human-potential movement. Employees of various companies are taught yoga to help relieve stress. New Agers worldwide gathered at the great pyramids in Egypt and other locations to hum in unison for the purpose of bringing awareness to their New Age aspirations, including a one-world government. University business courses might include tarot card reading or channeling. One university hosts a yoga convention, another teaches about out-of-body experiences and reincarnation. While in India Pope John Paul II encourages the world to look to the East for spiritual bread. Fifty-two publishers form the NewAge publishing Alliance. The bestseller The Acquarian Conspiracy reports a network of New Agers so strong as to be able to change North American culture. People joke about their next life on earth. Shamanism is big in Russia. New Age philosophy shows up in diet magazines, health articles, earthcare products. There are this very day multitudes of New Age courses, campouts, lectures, workshops, and conventions throughout North America.



WHY IS THE NEW AGER A NEW AGER?

New Agers rejects God's simple salvation by faith in Christ and choose instead to make it on their own, to create their own world, heal their own bodies and minds, determine their own destiny. There is a certain thrill, a pride, in independence from God.

Perhaps they are disillusioned. Science and materialism never brought their promised bliss. Now what? Where does one turn? Perhaps the NAM has the answer. One can discover within himself the power and ability to do great exploits, it is said. Simply learn to tap that world within and come to discover your own potential.

New Agers wants to do what science and materialism and (other) religions fail to do. They want to bring soundness to our troubled planet. They seek peace, and even joy, for mankind. They are tired of international strife and bickering, tension and suffering. They seek a new age of discovery and human endeavors. They want to maximize human potential, individually and collectively.

But the NAM, in fact, is a product of the "god of this world." Why is the NAM here? The bottom line is this: the NAM is here because the spiritual underworld brought it here. It is their baby. The NAM is a counterfeit to Christianity. Christians have power to heal and bring deliverance, and also have purpose and joy and happiness. Well, so does the New Ager. Or so he thinks.

The New Ager is a New Ager because he/she is deceived by "the god of this world." He has fallen into deception because he has thus far resisted the gentle tugging of the Holy Spirit, drawing him to Christ. If it wasn't the NAM, it would be something else, one of satan's many other counterfeits, some of which are discussed elsewhere in this paper.

WHERE DID THE NAM GET STARTED? AND WHEN?

First, let it be known most of the material in this article has been taken from Paul McGuire's Supernatural Faith in the New Age (Whitaker House).

Most New Agers would be surprised to learn that the mother of the NAM is Hinduism. To comprehend the NAM one must have an understanding of (Mother) Hinduism.

Hinduism

This religion goes back about 4,000 years and can be traced to a people known as the Aryans. Hindus advance through four stages of spiritual growth: a) student, b) head of the family, c) spiritual pilgrim, and d) rejection of the things of this world. The concept that man could attain an awareness and knowledge on par with God (called brahmanatmari) became prevalent. The life we experience (called maya, or illusion) is merely something to be passed through on the way to brahmanatman. Reaching this lofty spiritual plateau is attaining one's nirvana. One may have to pass through many reincarnations (punarjanman) to attain his nirvana.

Hindus look to the writings of their Bhagavad Gita, a book based on two mythical characters, Krishna and Arjuna, for inspiration and direction. Unlike the Christian faith hinduism has no historical events on which to base its faith.

Buddhism

The NAM also has roots in Buddhism, a religion started by a Hindu, Siddhartha Gautama, a discontented Hindu who wore a robe and shaved his head. In his own quest to find God, he sat under a tree where he contemplated, among other things, his navel. This meditation helped Guatama reach his nirvana in only forty days, and he became known as "Buddha" which means the enlightened one.

Like the Hindu, the Buddha seeks nirvana and must pass through reincarnation cycles to attain it. He is given eight techniques, The Noble Eight-fold Path, to help in his pursuit.

Hindu and Buddhist mysticism began taking root in North America in the fifties and sixties, and eventually became known as the New Age Movement. Changes in family structure, the assassination of an American president, unrest on campuses, the Vietnam War, the realization that science and materialism did not and could not satisfy, corruption in government – all these left a spiritual gap. And North America was experimenting to fill that gap – experimenting in drugs, in the sexual revolution, in rock music, in humanism.

On the other side of the globe was a highly structured evangelistic organization prepared and eager to fill the spiritual gap on this side of the globe. Westerners lack fulfillment and purpose and direction? Well we would be most happy to help out. And so help came from gurus and mystics, the Hindu and Buddhist evangelists who have always had an ambition to conquer the world.

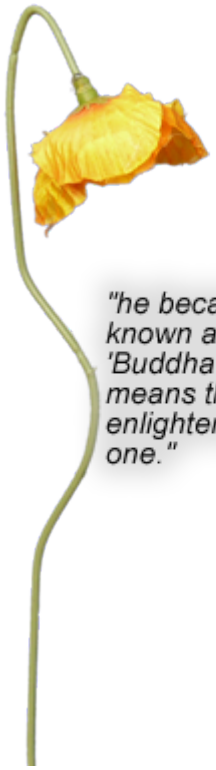
The Beatles went East. Bob Dillon went East. Psychologists and politicians and writers went East. And gurus and mystics and channelers came West, to teach, to demonstrate, to convince.

They came with deception, telling just enough and no more. They said their religion was not a religion. They called science what was in fact shamanism. They convinced many North Americans they did not have to alter their values, knowing the opposite was true.

When Maharishi Mahesh Yogi realized North Americans have the peculiar custom of outlawing religion in the schools, and that the West was religion hardened, he quickly changed his terminology, erasing from his teachings such words as spiritual and religious and replacing them with scientific jargon (i.e. God became the vacuum state). People were told that TM is not a religion (which it is), not a philosophy (which it is), not yoga (which it is), is not mind control (which it is), and does not require one to change his beliefs (which it does). Had Eastern mysticism come to North America packaged as the religion it is, it would never have found root. But changing the package gave unwarranted acceptance. There are schools that reject every religion, except one, the one that changed its label.

The smiling gurus manipulated Westerners' minds while disclaiming to do so. They did not speak of the dangers involved, of horrifying experiences, of meeting gruesome non-human entities that would not go away, of resultant permanent emotional scars, suicides and insanity.

It came so quickly. Suddenly a new mentality, the Eastern perspective so destructive to its own nations, was to be felt in every aspect of North American life. Soon there were psychiatrists telling patients they were just working out their karma on their way to nirvana. Soon there were entertainers seen kneeling before their guru with a wispy expression on their face. Soon millions of North Americans were seeking an altered consciousness and joking about their past lives. Soon sorcery became scientific, and shamanism became technology.



"he became known as 'Buddha' which means the enlightened one."

"we would be most happy to help out."

DEAR NEW AGER:

Paul McGuire, author and ex-New Ager, says it best: "If you could rip the mask off the front of a smiling guru, you would see a hideous demon." That demons can take possession of people is a Biblical fact. To deny demons are a reality, or to deny they can live in a person, is to deny Scripture.

But there is a protection between people and demons. Demons cannot just say, Hey, let's go live in Sally for a while. No, it doesn't work like that. In order for demons to take possession of Sally, Sally has to open a door into her life.

It works the same if one wants the Holy Spirit to dwell in him (as He does in every Christian). One must open the door. The Holy Spirit never enters into a person's life accept by invitation.
I'm not saying demons are the gentleman-type who would never come in uninvited if they had a choice. I am saying there is a protection (a fence, a guard) around people's lives. This protection comes from God.

I know you would never knowingly ask a demon to dwell within you. But flirting with the NAM could well be opening a door you would rather stay shut. I am warning you that dabbling in the NAM is dangerous.

God speaks specifically on the matter. Deuteronomy 18:10-12: There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire, or who use divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer, for all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord.

You think, perhaps, that every spiritual happening must be of God. Such is not true. The following account from the book of Exodus demonstrates this conclusively:

Moses and Aaron are standing before mighty Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Egypt, at this time, was deep into sorcery, perhaps as no nation has ever been before or since. Moses, standing before Pharaoh, is demanding that Pharaoh release the Israelite nation that he held captive. To demonstrate their power and authority, Aaron threw down Moses' rod, as God had previously instructed them to do, and the rod became a serpent! This is a manifestation of the power of God. But....

The Bible teaches, "Pharaoh called for the wise men and the sorcerers (wizards and jugglers). And they also, these magicians of Egypt, did similar things with their enchantments and secret arts. For they cast down every man his rod and they became serpents." This is a manifestation of the power of the dark kingdom.

You see, not everything supernatural is of God. Though Aaron's serpent gobbled up the magicians' serpents, establishing God's power to be so much greater than that of the devil, the devil nonetheless has much power. All he needs is a willing agent to work through. satan has many accommodating agents in the NAM.

Do not be deceived. The Bible speaks of "all sorts of miracles and signs and delusive marvels – all of them lying wonders – and by unlimited seduction to evil and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing (going to perdition) because they did not welcome the Truth but refused to love it that they might be saved."

These spiritual happenings are called "delusive marvels" and "lying wonders" because when one sees them they come to the wrong conclusion. For example:

A New Age "healer" lays hands on a sick person and, amazingly, that person recovers. Ah, he must be of God!" one concludes. "No, he doesn't heal in the name of Jesus. Who needs Jesus?" But if a demon can afflict a person (Jesus healed "all that were oppressed of the devil") that same demon can therefore remove that same affliction. But the "healer" concludes that the power to heal comes from within himself. He has been deceived by a "lying wonder."

The NAM is not what you think it is. They have not given you the whole story. It's like when a Jehovah's Witness knocks on your door – they don't tell you everything. They fail to mention that down the road you will not be able to vote, take a blood transfusion, go to a wedding, sign a petition, associate with certain loved ones. No, it is best to withhold those details until you are hooked. Likewise, there is much that you have not been told about the NAM. For example:

You have not heard of the organization, Spiritual Emergency Network (SEN). SEN consists of about 35 centers around the world; their purpose is to support the many people experiencing bad trips while tapping into (what they are told is) the psychic realm – through yoga, drugs, TM, etc. The horrid non-human entities, gruesome visions (like floating green eyes), and being thrown across the room by evil spirits – it is best not to mention those things.

Nobody has told you that your life is about to be altered and you may never find your way back. If you encounter that "spirit guide" you seek, you would have found what is actually a demon. And it is probable that that demon wants very much to enter into you, whereby he will speak through you and direct your life. In short, you will have become demon-possessed.

The NAM is satan's counterfeit to God's plan. It is masked with ideals and promises and hopes and dreams. But underneath the mask is destruction and pain and remorse. New Age teachings (sometimes masked as relaxation programs or stress control techniques or inner healing or whatever) are meant to desensitize you and make you passive enough to accept satanic domination. Some oppressive guru is going to have another spineless vassal to offer to his master, satan.

I warn you that a day of regret lies just ahead, a time when you will curse the day you became involved with the NAM. Participating in channeling, astral projection, yoga, TM, horoscopes, working out your karma, holistic healing, or even attending a conference, is in direct rebellion to the One who created you. Go too far and you will lose God's protection and the door between you and the realm of darkness will be open.

Paul McGuire was for many years involved in New Age activities and mentalities, and came very close to being possessed. While conversing with a visiting guru on campus something from the guru tried to enter him. “Something is wrong here. You cannot enter my mind,” Paul said to the guru – who replied, “We will meet again.” But they did not meet again. God protected Paul and brought someone into his life to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. He came to a decision to accept Christ into his life, and he never looked back. Unlike the New Ager who is forever seeking-one lifetime of seeking not long enough, he has to keep coming back – Paul McGuire no longer seeks. He has found.

The visiting guru was masked with that sombre, harmless expression that gurus wear, and yet his intention was to impose himself upon an innocent by stealth, using his mystic powers. Stealth. Deceit. Manipulation. Half-truths. Misrepresentation. These are the tools found so often in the NAM.

You must come to realize that you cannot reach God through self-effort. Not through Yoga, TM, chanting, channeling or whatever. You can only reach God through the Lord Jesus Christ, the only One who died for you, the only One who can forgive your sins.

I pray you will come to know the Christ who impacted my life in such a dynamic and permanent way. Thanks for listening.

Editor

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"I am warning you that dabbling in the NAM is dangerous."

"You see, not everything supernatural is of God"

"Your life is about to be altered and you may never find your way back."

CHRISTIANITY VS. CATHOLICISM

Note: Information is taken, in part, from two books, Decline and Fall of the Roman Church, authored by Malachi Martin (Putnam's Sons) and Bless Me Father, co-authored by Quentin Donahue and Linda Shapiro (John Deyell Company).

THE POPE

The pope is the head of the Catholic Church. Seated in the Vatican, a small city-nation within the city of Rome, this “Vicar of Christ on earth” rules almost a billion adherents and impacts the destinies of most nations. He is considered to be infallible in all his teachings on church doctrine and morals. He rules through a network of cardinals and bishops and priests, reaching every Catholic parishioner in the world with his power to forgive sins and his Catholic brand of salvation.
The Catholic Church (herein called the CC) teaches the lineage of popes goes back to the time of Christ. Peter was the first pope, Clement the second and the present pope, Benedict XVI.

HISTORY

Some became pope because of their religious fidelity. Others were simply appointed by king or emperor, or conquered the papal position by armed force, murder, political finesse, treachery, and bribery. The following information regarding some notable characters in the history of the CC comes

from the writings of a Catholic Jesuit priest who was, at the time of his writing; a recognized and respected Catholic theologian (this information is harmonious to other Catholic writers):

POPE STEPHEN IV

Pope Stephen IV reigned from the years 768 through 772. Less than five feet in stature, Stephen was an exceptionally cruel and cunning man, a survivor. Fearing for his life he slipped away from Pope Constantine who had seized the papal throne by armed force even before the dying Pope Paul I ceased his breathing. (Pope Paul I had done much the same thing to his predecessor.) Stephen returned with armed forces of his own to conquer the pontiff's seat and Constantine became his prisoner.

After Pope Stephen IV had Constantine severely beaten, his kneecaps broken and his eyes cut out, he was far from finished. Constantine, in heavy chains, was dumped unceremoniously before Stephen and a synod of 150 cardinals, bishops, etc. who had gathered to do the CC's business at hand. Constantine begged for mercy but of such Pope Stephen IV had none to dispense. After a period of questioning, the answers not being satisfactory, a number of the synod fell upon the helpless ex-pontiff, kicking, shouting, spitting, beating. Unconscious, Constantine was dragged off to prison to serve a lifetime sentence.

During these confusing days a priest, Waldipert, under orders of the reigning Duke, declared a monk, Philip, to be pope. Understandably, Pope Stephen IV didn't like that. Waldipert lost his eyes, and orders were given by the synod of 150 that a piece of his flesh be cut out every day until he died. And Philip was to be flogged and imprisoned until death. Over the years Pope Stephen IV executed other potential threats to his power (after having their eyes removed).

"this 'Vicar of Christ on earth' rules almost a billion adherents"

"Less than 5 feet in stature, Stephen was an exceptionally cruel and cunning man."

THEODORA AND MAROZIA

Theodora and Marozia were mother and daughter of an influential family of tenth century Rome, their lives were intertwined with those of the popes, the many popes, of their day. Marozia had her start at the age of six when she was made to witness the remains of Pope Formosus being dragged through the streets and then thrown into the River Tiber. Pope Formosus had at that time been dead for a number of months but that didn't stop the present pope, Pope Stephen VI, from having him tried for past offenses. They sat the decaying corpse on the papal throne, clothed him in a manner befitting a pope, and found him guilty. (Pope Stephen VI was soon thereafter imprisoned and strangled – replaced by Pope Ramanus who was removed four months later – to be replaced by Pope Theodore II who lasted 20 days – before replaced by Pope John IX who actually died in his bed.)

Theodora, the mother, installed Pope Benedict IV (who died 3 years later) and then Pope Leo V. Pope Leo V was captured by Cardinal Christopher who then sat in the pope's seat until imprisoned by Cardinal Sergius who became Pope Sergius III. Marozia, the daughter, became Pope Sergius III's mistress at age 15, having one child (who was to eventually become Pope John XI).

Theodora then installed Pope Anastasius III and then Pope Lando. After disposing of Pope Lando she installed her lover who became Pope John X. After Theodora's death Marozia participated in having Pope John X killed and replaced by Pope Leo VI.

Marozia disposed of Pope Leo VI, replacing him with Pope Stephen VIII – who soon disappeared. At this time Marozia installed her son Pope John XI, 16 years old. Her other son, Alberic, threw his mother Marozia in prison, placed half-brother Pope John XI under house arrest, and installed Pope Agapitus II. Alberic was also responsible for the installation of his son Pope John XII, 16 years old, who made the popery one smashing party until he left Rome with the papal purse and, years later, returned to dispose of his replacement, Pope Leo VIII. Pope John XII's career of torturing opponents and beheading clerics came to an abrupt end by a hammer blow to the head by an infuriated husband who caught the pontiff with his wife.

It was Pope Gregory V who gave the order for the aged Marozia to be smothered with a pillow (after given absolution for her many sins).

"Theodora, the mother, installed Pope Benedict IV"

"Marozia, the daughter, became Pope Sergius III's mistress at age 15"

"Marozia installed her son Pope John XI, 16 years old."

THREE POPES AT A TIME

The Conclave became the established method of electing popes. The Conclave is the gathering of cardinals, upon the death of a pope, to elect a new pope whereby the popes are assembled in one room and not allowed out until a pope had been elected by two-thirds majority. The Conclave was started, not by the clergy, but the laity. The stability of Europe, in those years, depended upon a pope being seated on the papal throne. But often after a pope died the rivalrous cardinals who represented various families and countries could not come to a decision and the papal seat remained vacant, as long as two and a half years at a time. So the cardinals were not allowed to come out of their meeting place until they came to a conclusion. Often armed guards were posted to keep them from escaping.

Different methods were employed to hurry the cardinals – limit them to bread and wine or just water, remove the roof thus exposing them to the weather, lock the doors, refuse them wages or other money, threaten to burn the place with them in it, etc., etc. Still they often took a long time coming to a decision, so fearful were they of offending a powerful ally.

In 1378 the French pope, Pope Gregory XI died and the Italian populace, tired of French popes, clamor for an Italian replacement. Unfortunately the French cardinals outnumber the Italian cardinals and there is no way an Italian replacement will be voted in. The Romans bring in 6,000 foot soldiers to prevent the cardinals' escape, forcing the Conclave to take place in the Vatican where the Italians can apply pressure. “A Roman or an Italian!” the crowd chants menacingly to the cardinals inside. The cardinals, however, do elect a French pope, Pope Urban VI (a harsh and shady man), and quiver in fear of the mob outside. They trick the people by presenting to them an old man, an Italian, dressed in the pope’s attire, and while the Italians are kissing the old man’s hands and feet the cardinals run for their lives.

After this fiasco, sixteen cardinals hold their own conclave and install Pope Clement VII who returns

to France. Now there are two popes. Both popes die and each has their successors. Eventually another pope (Pope Alexander, to be succeeded by Pope John XXIII) is elected to replace these successors. Now there are three popes. Each excommunicates the other two. All of Europe is hurting. After a series of bribes, arrests, assassinations, poisonings, intrigue, scuffles, threats, debates, excommunications, betrayals, cheatings, perjuring and imprisonments by the popes and their respective cardinals and allies, the mess finally gets staightened out about ten years later upon the election of Pope Martin V (who immediately squashes all efforts of much needed church reform).

PROBLEMS WITH THE POPE

1. Peter, one of Christ's apostles, is supposed to be the first pope. Yet nothing in scripture hints that anyone thought of him as being so, including himself. Paul rebuked Peter on a matter of doctrine and behavior. It was James (not Peter) who seemed to be in charge of an important meeting where Peter was present. James said, "Men and brethren, hearken unto me (not Peter)." Paul wrote of three pillars of the faith, "James, Cephas (or Peter), and John." James was mentioned before Peter. Would he have been mentioned first if Peter was a pope?

2. There was no pope for 300 years after Peter's death. The CC claims there were but in fact there was no pope (or for that matter no Catholic Church!) during these 300 years. It is easy to invent a lineage of popes but another thing to prove it. That some popes were capable of such an invention is a matter of record.

3. Many of the infallible decrees of the popes are anti-Scripture, based on traditional teachings of very fallible men.

4. The method of determining whether or not a man (or a group of men) is really a true disciple of

Christ is not to ask that man (or group of men) whether he be so. That is childish. Jesus taught a simple lesson to determine if a man is true or false. Listen to Him (Matthew 7:15-18, Amplified): “Beware of false prophets who come to you dressed as sheep, but inside they are devouring wolves. You will fully recognize them by their fruits. Do people pick grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every healthy (sound) tree bears good fruit , but the sickly (decaying, worthless) tree bears bad (worthless) fruit. A good (healthy) tree cannot bear bad (worthless) fruit, nor can a bad (diseased) tree bear excellent fruit.” To determine if the popes mentioned above, for example, are good trees or bad (true prophets or false), one merely has to study the fruit of their lives. If they are bad trees bearing bad fruit they cannot be the “Vicars of Christ on earth.”

5. The CC asserts the authority of popes on their understanding of the words of Christ as stated in Matthew 15:22-23. The CC’s understanding is actually a misunderstanding. It concludes that the church of Christ is built on Peter (and not upon Christ) and that men (incredulously) have the power to forgive sins. The Amplified version of these verses makes it clear that both these conclusions are incorrect: "And I tell you, you are Peter (Greek, Petros – a large piece of rock), and on this rock I will build My church...I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind (declare to be improper and unlawful) on earth must be what is already bound in heaven: and whatever you loose (declare unlawful) on earth must be what is already loosed in heaven.” Christ is the Petra – the Gibraltar-like rock – on which the church is built. Peter is but a part of that Rock, as every Christian is. And only God has the power to forgive sins, and his disciples are to declare the good news that the repentant sinner’s sins are truly forgiven by our merciful God.

"there was no pope for 300 years after Peter's death"

"Beware of the false prophets who come to you dressed as sheep, but inside are devouring wolves

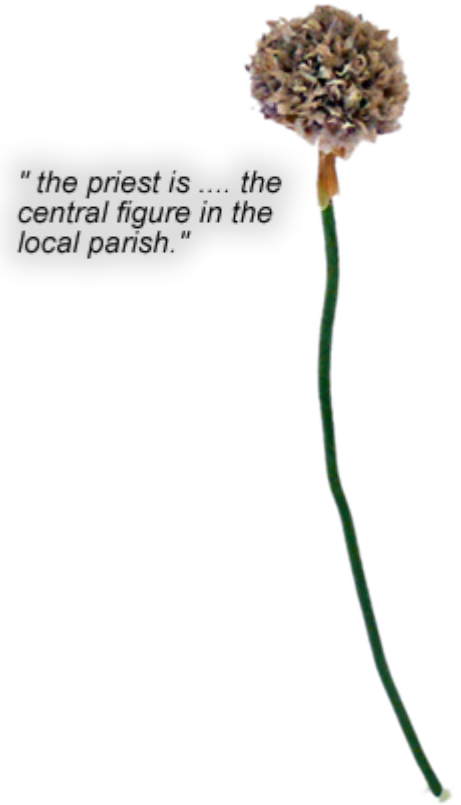
"Christ is the Petra - the Gibralter-like Rock - on which the church is built"

THE PRIEST

The priest is the local spiritual leader who gives oversight to parishioners. He is at the bottom of a long ladder of authority, the top being the pope, and in the middle there are bishops, cardinals, etc. Though at the bottom of the authority ladder the priest is nonetheless the central figure in the local parish. He baptizes the infant, forgives his sins as he matures, gives him Jesus in the form of a wafer bread on Sundays and Holy days, marries him and gives the “Last Rites” (spiritually prepares him to die) on his deathbed.

The priest has much power. With the Latin words “Te absolvo” (“I forgive you”) he wipes the penitent sinner’s sins away. He can change wine into the blood of Jesus and bread into the body of Jesus.

The priest is a celibate; under no circumstance can he marry. He depends on the CC for everything, including spending money. His superiors do not object to him smoking or drinking socially. He usually lives on church property, alone or with other priests. A cleaning person maintains his residence and cooks some of his meals.



PROBLEMS WITH THE PRIESTHOOD

1. Scripture declares (Hebrews 10:14, Amplified): “For by a SINGLE offering He has FOREVER COMPLETELY cleansed and perfected those who are consecrated and made holy" (emphasis mine). The necessity for a priest whose function it is to offer sacrifices was ended at the cross.

2. 1 Timothy 2:5: “There one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” The Catholic is not taught to go to God through the one mediator (the Lord Jesus Christ) for salvation, forgiveness of sins, healing, etc. The Catholic is taught that he/she must go through another (supposed) mediator, the Catholic priest, to obtain these blessings of God. The Catholic is totally reliant upon, a spiritual dependent of, and subordinate to the priest.

3. Jesus forbad people to call religious leaders “father.” Jesus said (Matthew 23:9), “Do not call anyone on earth father, for you have one Father, Who is in heaven.” When the CC teaches the Catholic to call the priests “Father” they cause them to disobey this clear instruction of the Lord Jesus.

4. “You are all brothers,” Jesus declared. Brothers are equal. One is not above the other. From God’s perspective there is no such thing as clergy and laity.

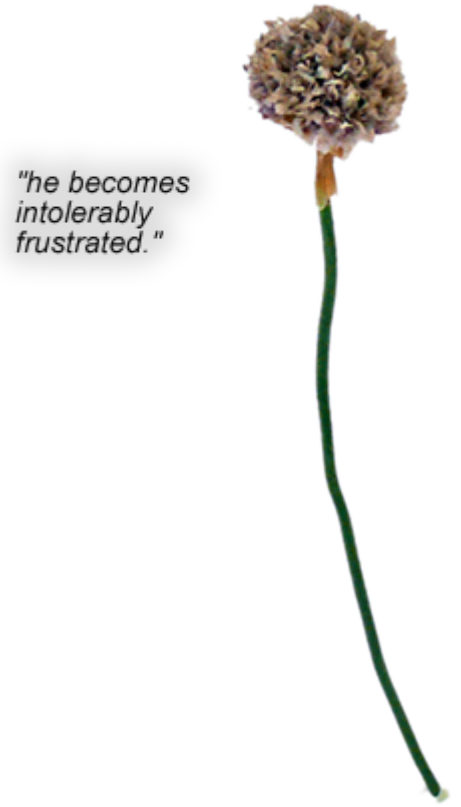
5. Paul calls the forbidding of people to marry a “doctrine that demon(s) teach.” Forbidding priests to marry is not a teaching of God, but a teaching of demons.

6. Priests are put in a very difficult position. They are sexually aroused by those confessing to him in private their sexual sins, but because he is not allowed any release (he is not allowed to marry) he becomes intolerably frustrated. This could go on week after week for the entirety of his priesthood.

7. A high percentage of priests are guilty of sexual sins from adultery to molesting children as verified by many media reports. Certainly the forbidding of priests to marry while forcing them to listen to all types of sexual encounters is a contributing factor. The CC tells us sexual deviants enter the priesthood under false pretenses. In other words, the CC doesn't produce the deviant, he was one already. But any thinking person can see that a single man placed in this intolerable situation is likely to break.

8. If the mentioned persons really were child molesters (or homosexuals or whatever) before entering the priesthood, as certain spokesmen of the CC say, and lived their years in the priesthood as such, one must conclude that many thousands of Catholics have had their sins forgiven by deviants. Deviants changed (and those not yet exposed continue to change) simple bread into the actual person of Jesus Christ. Deviants gave 'Last Rites' to the dying, assuring them they were on their way to heaven.

"The necessity for a priest .... was ended at the cross."


"he becomes intolerably frustrated."

"one must conclude that many thousands of Catholics have had their sins forgiven by deviants."

THE CONFESSIONAL

The typical confessional is like three small adjacent closets, each with a door. Each cubicle is barely big enough for a large person. The priest sits on a bench in the middle cubicle and the Catholic penitents kneel in the cubicles on either side. The priest slides open a panel to listen to the penitent, rotating side to side. It is dark in the confessional. "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned" the penitent begins, and then confesses his sins to the priest. The priest gives the penitent a penance (perhaps ten Hail Marys or five Our Fathers or whatever) and then declares, "Te absolvo" ("I forgive you").

HISTORY

The confessional was a thirteenth century invention. Previous to this the priest and the penitent had to find a dark, private corner in the church and this was a cause of great temptation when the penitent was a woman.

PROBLEMS WITH THE CONFESSIONAL

Imagine the humiliation suffered by the wife who commits a lustful sin, whether in conduct or in thought, and has to enter the confessional to give a report of her sin to an unmarried man. Like

(imaginary) Judy.....

Judy hates the confessional. She can still remember her first confession as a seven year old, entering that dreadful box, speaking her dark sins into darkness, knowing a man in black on the other side was hearing about the times she called Tommy a rotten egg, and all the cookies she stole, and the time she pretended to be sick so she wouldn't have to help with dishes. As a married woman, Judy tried very hard to avoid serious transgressions, the dread of the confessional a major factor in keeping her in check. The CC requires her to go to confession at least once a year regardless, but confessing little sins, like impatience toward the kids or feelings of jealousy, was tolerable. But this time she slipped and committed what the CC might consider a mortal sin. A moment of weakness and now Judy must pay dearly. She must suffer the ultimate humiliation. She is forced to disclose a terribly personal matter in a dark box to an unmarried man.

Judy is trapped. If she does not confess her sin to a priest who alone, she has been taught since childhood, has power to forgive her sins, she risks eternal damnation. And she will never be able to receive Communion on Sunday. It is so embarrassing sitting in the pew while everyone else lines up for Communion. What will her children think? What great sin has Mommy done that she can't receive communion? What are others imagining?

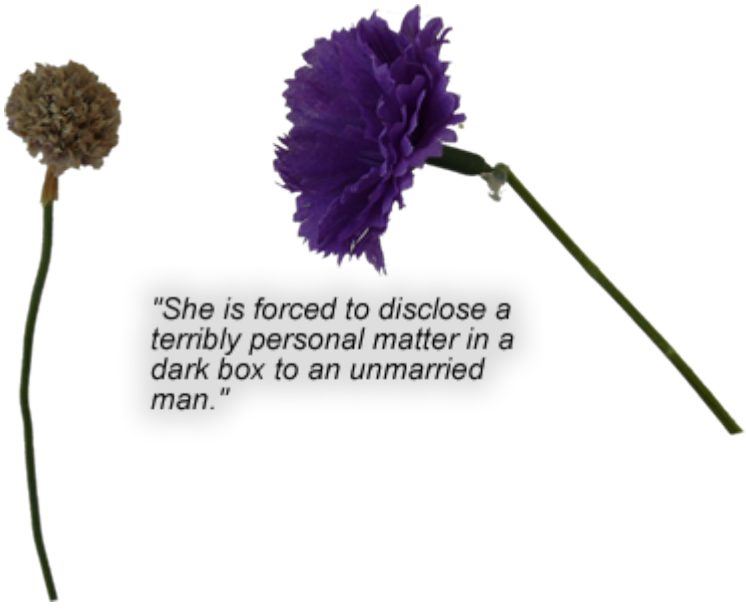
So she has to go to confession. She must enter that dark box, kneel in contrition and await the dreaded panel to slide open. She has already confessed her sin to God, but that won't suffice. The priest must hear. She must share her dark secret with an unmarried man. Waiting, waiting for that panel to slide open.

She hears the muffled voice of Father Whoever talking to the penitent on the other side...something about trying harder to avoid occasions of temptation and being more tolerant with others. Waiting, waiting. She picked her confessor carefully. Father Whoever is past middle-aged, and if she lowers her voice just so, and spoke in an unusually slow and deliberate manner, he might not recognize her. She didn't think he would probe like some priests, demanding to know every detail, more curious than concerned. Or worse yet, becoming aroused. The stories she has heard! Waiting, waiting. Oh God, I hope he doesn't recognize me!

Suddenly the panel slides open. Only a few inches of space and a thin screen separate her from the man in black. Under no other circumstance would she ever be in a dark place whispering intimate secrets in the ear of a man. But this is a Catholic priest, and so it is right, and it is required. Or so the priests and nuns and Mom and Dad had taught her since childhood. "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned," she blurts out. Her mouth is dry, her voice raspy, she is tempted to flee. "It is about six months since my last confession. About six weeks ago Bill and I...oh...I mean, my husband and I...were at this party and...well...everyone was drinking a little too much and..."

Judy leaves the confessional abused and angry, less a person than she was ten minutes previous.

"Judy hates the confessional"


"She is forced to disclose a terribly personal matter in a dark box to an unmarried man."

THE MASS

The Mass is a series of formulated prayers and rituals, most having been passed on through the centuries, and the reading of Scripture verses. The priest wears a particular garment for particular days and occasions. The highlight of the Mass is the "unbloody sacrifice of Christ" whereby the priest changes bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (called "transubstantiation"). The bread and wine taste and look the same, but Catholics must believe they have indeed been supernaturally transformed. The Catholic term, "sacrifice of the mass," means that Christ is again being sacrificed in atonement for man's sins, but this time in "an unbloody manner."

The faithful line up to receive communion from the priest. Except on special events, he/she receives the wafer bread (the host) and not the wine; the wafer, after consecration, is considered to be "the body, blood, soul, and divinity" of Christ. The priest says to the recipient, "Body of Christ?" and the recipient replies, "Amen" (so be it, or so it is). This is how Catholics receive Christ (and therefore receive salvation).

HISTORY

After many centuries, the Mass evolved into what it is today. Many of its symbolisms have been taken from the occult. Until recently it was universally verbalized in Latin but now the common language of the country is used.

PROBLEMS WITH THE MASS

When I was a Catholic, just previous to my conversion to Christ, the priest quoted the words of Christ in Matthew 6:51 during Mass: "I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever, and the bread that I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world." The priest explained to the people that this meant receiving Christ in the Eucharist (the bread turned into Jesus).

It so happened this priest was at our home that Sunday for dinner, and I asked him what I thought to

be an innocent question that, to my surprise, made him angry. “Father, Jesus said those words long before the Last Supper. But when He said those words did He not mean that people could "eat this bread" right then and not months or years later when the Communion meal was first established?” The priest was angered because it proved one could receive Christ (“eat this bread”) without receiving communion. It undermined the Catholic teaching that one received Christ at communion.

Scripture declares “by a SINGLE offering” He paid for our cleansing from sin. Jesus cried out from the cross just before He died, “It is finished.” According to Catholic doctrine it is not finished because Christ is being sacrificed thousands of times every day all over the world.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Catholics are taught their petitions are more likely to be answered if they ask Mary (the mother of Jesus) to present their request to God on their behalf. Mary is given a place of high prominence in the Catholic's heart, higher than any other saint. Mary is considered to be "the mother of God," the "Queen of Heaven," and a perpetual virgin (she never surrendered her virginity). In most churches there is a large statue of Mary, and the faithful light candles before it. Catholics must believe, their salvation depending on it, that Mary is the "Immaculate Conception" (she was conceived without sin, as was Jesus), and that Mary was taken up to heaven before she died.

HISTORY

The CC has fought bitterly among itself over the centuries regarding the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Thomas Aquinas, an early theologian highly respected by the CC, wrote, "the Blessed Virgin contracted original sin." Many other Catholic leaders voiced the same opinion. Nonetheless, in 1854 Pope Pius IX decreed infallibly the Immaculate Conception of Mary. In 1950 Pope Pius XII declared the Assumption of the Virgin (Mary was taken up to heaven before she died).

PROBLEMS WITH THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

1. Mary was a virgin when Jesus was born, but afterwards had sexual relations with her husband Joseph. This is verified in Matthew 1:25 (speaking of Joseph and Mary): "But he had no union with her as her husband until she had borne her firstborn Son." Furthermore, Mary had at least two daughters and three other sons, all recorded in New Testament writings. James, writer of the letter of James, is "the Lord's brother."

2. To say Mary was born without sin and never sinned is blasphemous. Only Christ maintained a sinless life. Mary called God her "savior." Savior from what? Only those in sin need a savior. Also,

Jesus said of all people born John the baptist (not Mary) was the greatest.

3. “Blessed” does not mean sacred or pure, but rather fortunate, to be envied, happy. Mary is quoted as saying (Amplified), “all generations will call me blessed and declare me happy and to be envied.”

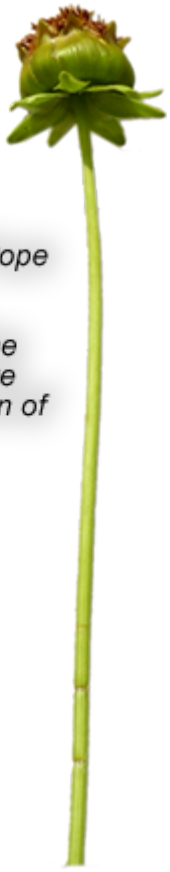
4. Mary is the mother of Jesus the man. While Jesus was divine in His human form, Mary had nothing to do with His divinity. She was not and is not the “mother of God.” God has no mother.

5. Nowhere in Scripture are Christians instructed to pray to the dead. Jesus taught us to pray to the Father in His name. Mary is another mediator between God and man, yet Scripture declares there is but one mediator, the Lord Jesus.

6. Jesus once said, “Who is my mother and who are my brothers? For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother!” Neither Mary the mother nor the brothers and sisters of Jesus had special privileges but only those who did “the will of My Father.”

7. There is no verse in Scripture hinting that Mary did not die a physical death.

8. The CC teaches Catholics must believe the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary if they hope to attain salvation. However, Jesus says that to be saved we simply have to come to Him. “He who comes to me I will in no wise cast out.” Who does one believe?


"in 1854 Pope Pius IX decreed infallibly the Immaculate Conception of Mary"

INDULGENCES

Indulgence is forgiveness from the punishment of sin, either in part or in entirety. It works something like this:

Johnny disobeys his Mom. She forgives him, but still doles out punishment. Johnny has to stand in the corner for one hour. But Suzie, his sister, just did something really good so she has a reward coming. So Mom balances it all out and forgives Johnny's punishment so he doesn't have to stand in the corner.

The CC teaches sins are forgiven at confession but there is still a punishment attached to the sin that must somehow be paid. There is, however, a pool of rewards other Catholics have gained. It is possible to draw from this pool to have one's punishment erased, partially or completely. This is called an indulgence. Most indulgences are partial payment, but a 'plenary' indulgence is a complete compensation.

If a Catholic dies without having his punishment paid for, he will go to purgatory where he will suffer sufficient punishment. Only Catholics believe in purgatory. Purgatory is much like hell, only the stay is temporary, not permanent. A Catholic on earth can earn an indulgence on behalf of a Catholic in purgatory to shorten his stay, or even earn a plenary indulgence on his behalf to get him out immediately.

HISTORY

In the early days of the CC the punishment (penance) for sin was very severe and had to be paid before the absolution (discharge, release) of the sin. A man commits adultery and confesses his sin to a priest. The priest might give him a penance of bread and water fastings for ten years and make him wear a sackcloth and stand in front of the church every Sunday morning. After ten years the punishment was paid and the sin absolved.

Because of the severity of punishment some waited until they were dying before confessing their sins. (This was risky; if death arrived before the priest the Catholic would go to hell.) It was customary to be absolved of their sins immediately, without penance, since they were about to die anyhow. But how could the punishment for sins be paid if not in this life? The answer, the Catholic theologians decided, was purgatory.

But nobody wants purgatory; it is almost as bad as hell itself. Thus the indulgence. With indulgences one can build up an account and, hopefully, at the end of one's life everything will balance and the contrite sinner will go straight to heaven. And with a plenary indulgence one's entire punishment for all sins is paid in full.

One way to earn a plenary indulgence, in the middle centuries, was to fight in a Crusade. A Catholic today can earn one by going to see a visiting pope (thus the large crowds).

Another way of getting indulgences, back in the middle century, was to simply buy them from the CC. This helped pay for the many European Catholic cathedrals and priceless artwork. It also led to the ascent of Martin Luther's Reformation. The pope wasn't as aggravated at Luther's "justification by faith" as he was the affliction of his treasury caused by Luther's criticism of selling indulgences. In the sixteenth century one could purchase either a "confessional letter" or a certificate in which he could sign his name. Both assured the purchaser he would never have to go to purgatory.

PROBLEMS WITH INDULGENCES

1. There is no such place as purgatory. Jesus taught heaven and hell, not purgatory. The repentant sinner on the cross went immediately to paradise, not purgatory.

2. The Bible teaches when one comes to Christ for forgiveness, He forgives and forgets. Those sins are forever washed away by the blood of the Lamb, "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

3. Indulgences, as defined by the CC, do not exist. The selling of indulgences should prove to the most ardent Catholic that Catholicism could not be true.

DEAR CATHOLIC:

You may be angered by what I have written. But what I have written is truth; you can check it for yourself. And it is not written for your harm but for your good.

Writing this paper and having it brought to your home is not a pasttime. It is a matter of life and death, eternal life and eternal death, your eternal life and your eternal death. Would you be angry with the doctor who brought bad news about your health? Or the policeman who informed you that a loved one was injured? Yes, if they were not telling the truth, if they were giving you a false report for some sinister reason you would have cause to be angry. But I am not giving a false report.

Please do not say what I have written is not the truth until you have looked into the matter. And please do not say I do not have a right to express truth. It is not only a right but a duty. What would you think of the doctor who held back the truth because he didn't want to upset you?

I know it hurts. I was once where you now are. I said the rosary, wore the scapular, made the stations of the cross, assisted the priest at mass. But Jesus set me free and gave me a much richer life.

I realize your whole world may be built upon the CC - the mass, the sacraments, the priests and nuns; friends, family, loved ones; your social life; your hopes and dreams; your trust in man.

But there is a better life. A much better life. It is yours for the asking. Jesus will give you the new life that He won for you at Calvary. Simply remove the trust you have in the CC and place that trust on He who alone is able to forgive you, and save you, and bring you to the Father.

Truth. Do you love truth? Christ is committed to truth. Are you? Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free." You have heard it said yourself, "Love tells the truth."

The truth is the CC never has and never will save one person from hell. The truth is purgatory, indulgences, the mass, confession, the rosary, etc., are Catholic inventions and are not of God. The truth is the CC is an ancient and colossal reservoir of corruption. The priest cannot forgive your sins; only God can do that. Catholicism is one of many false gospels, more elaborate than most but false nonetheless. The vestments, statues, candles, music – all those things that impact the physical senses – will not make the CC true. The Vatican doesn't make it true. The artwork, the cathedrals, the ceremonies, the pope and bishops and priests and nuns do not make it true. Being one of the richest organization in the world does not make it true. Its long history and nearly one billion adherents do not make it true. And desperately wanting the CC to be true does not make it true.

The Bible is true. The Bible is the truth about the Truth. Jesus is the Truth, the "way, the truth, and the life." The words of Christ are true. Truth does not diminish in time, not even 2,000 years of time. What

Jesus said 2,000 years ago is just as true today. When He said, “I am the way, the truth and the life," when He said, “Come unto me all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," when He said, “Whosoever believes on me should not abide in darkness," these words are eternal words that never lose their power, just as true for you as the people who heard them.

Jesus said, “The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life.” Do you think His words lost some spirit and life over the centuries? If they worked for people back then, before Catholicism was invented, will they not work for you now?

The question is not What do you think of the CC?, but What do you think of Christ?

Well, what do you think of Christ? Will you turn to Him, and thus turn from everything else (including the CC) to save you, to forgive you, to bring you into His kingdom?

I sincerely pray you make a quality decision, a decision for Jesus Christ.

Most sincerely,

Editor

"I said the rosary, wore the scapular, made the stations of the cross"

"What Jesus said 2000
years ago is just as
true today"

CHRISTIANITY VS. ETC.,ETC.,ETC.

There are so many religions. Hundreds and hundreds. And each, to one degree or another, is an alternative to the words of Christ. Religions are usually built around a man, or a misconception about God. They do no good and much harm, hindering people from finding and accepting God's salvation. God's salvation is Jesus Christ who paid the ransom for man's sin. Only He can bring us into the kingdom of God. Depending on a religion, any religion, for salvation will only lead to remorse and pain and grief, an eternity of each.

Christianity vs. Jehovah's Witnesses

Issue # 2 of The Main Issue dealt with the Jehovah's Witness cult. This organization had its beginnings in 1884, founded by Charles T. Russell of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Issue # 2 of The Main Issue, page 2: Charles Russell considered his opinions to be unparalleled even inspired. He once wrote in the Watchtower that his books, Study in Scriptures, were "practically the Bible." He wrote: "They are not mere comments on the Bible, but they are practically the Bible itself. Furthermore, not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the Scripture Studies aside, even after he has used them, after he has read them for ten years – if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the

Bible alone, though he has understood the Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness."

The Watchtower Society (the Jehovah's Witness organization) would like to disassociate itself with its founder because of such embarrassments as Russell's perjury in his court action (which he lost) against a Baptist minister for slander (" never attended the higher schools of learning; knows comparatively nothing of philosophy, systematic or historic theology, and is totally ignorant of the dead languages"), his Miracle Wheat (which he claimed to grow five times faster than any other), his wife suing for divorce ("because of conceit, egotism, domination, and improper conduct in relation to other women"), his imaginary trips around the world to impress his followers, his many false prophecies, his predictions of future events based on "very accurate measurements" of Egyptian pyramids and the changing of these "very accurate measurements" to accommodate his changing predictions.

Today's Jehovah's Witness believes his salvation (salvation from Armageddon) depends on his service to God through His organization on earth, the Watchtower Society. The J.W. is a slave in a true sense of the word, and his/her purpose of witnessing door-to-door is to remain in good standing with the organization and thus escape the perils soon coming upon mankind. Raymond Franz writes in his Crisis of Conscience:

"Today more than two million Jehovah's Witnesses believe and teach that Christ's invisible presence began in 1914. Very few realize that for nearly fifty years the Watch Tower Society announced and heralded in their role as prophet, that such invisible presence began in 1874. As late as 1929, fifteen years after 1914, they were still teaching this."

CHRISTIANITY VS. THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

While Charles Russell proclaimed humanity lay in spiritual darkness from the time of Christ until his arrival in the 1870's, Herbert W. Armstrong declared the eighteen and a half centuries of spiritual darkness was not lifted until January 1934, the date of his first radio broadcast. He once announced, "It is I know a shocking staggering FACT to realize that this work – The PLAIN TRUTH, The World Tomorrow program on radio, worldwide and on daily TV in the US (and Canada weekly) – the work going on from Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God is the ONLY WORK ON EARTH proclaiming the very gospel of Jesus Christ to the world in great power!"

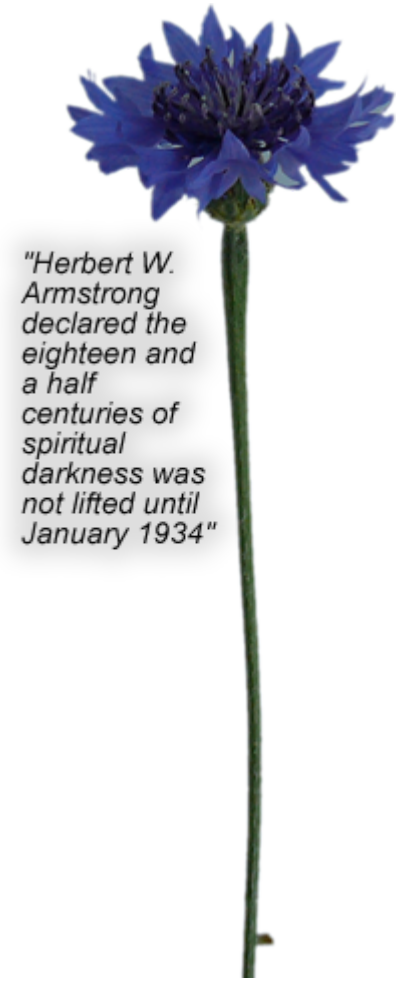
The magazine, The Plain Truth, has a circulation of 8 million and is available in 7 languages (these numbers have undoubtedly changed since the original writing of this article). However, the plain truth about the Plain Truth and The World Tomorrow is they lack truth and promote error. Such as: BRITISH ISRAELISM. According to this astounding theory, the ten lost tribes of Israel ended up in England. The English and North Americans are the actual Jewish nation.

SOUL SLEEP. This was picked up from Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists who teach the physical body and the soul of a man are one and the same. When a person dies he enters into an unconscious state and remains that way until he is resurrected at the second coming of Christ. This is definitely contrary to the Bible which reveals that a man is a spirit that lives in a body and possesses a soul.

HELL. While satan and his demons will indeed suffer eternally, the non-believer, according to Armstrong doctrine, will be consumed by hell-fire, and cease to exist. (This error is dealt with in Issue #5, Heaven and Hell: The Great Controversy.)

SALVATION. One cannot be assured of salvation until he is resurrected sometime in the future, this in spite of the Bible's clear instruction, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." Salvation comes at the time of believing in (clinging to, trusting in, relying upon) Jesus Christ.

The Worldwide Church of God is a hodgepodge of other religions – Jehovah's Witness, Mormonism and Seventh Day Adventism. And since Armstrongism teaches its adherents that the Worldwide Church of God is the one and only true church, one's salvation is indirectly tied to obedience to this church.



CHRISTIANITY VS. SECULAR HUMANISM

Secular (or worldly) humanism is a non-spiritual, non-Biblical, atheistic point of view. Writes Paul Kurts in his Manifesto I and II: Humanism traces its roots from ancient China, classical Greece and Rome, through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, to the scientific revolution of the modern world.

In secular humanism, traditional morality is scorned. Situational ethics replaces Judaic-Christian principles. If it feels good do it is an example of humanistic mentality. There are no standards except do not step on the next guy's toes. Humanism totally rejects the words of Christ, instead embracing the theory of evolution, abortion on demand, outlawing prayer and the Bible from public schools, easy divorce, extreme feminism, open sexual expression, homosexuality, changes in family structure, etc. While Canada and the United States were founded on Christian principles – as evidenced in the courts, law, schools, the family and government – secular humanism has been at work to change that. Generally speaking, humanists have won much control of the media, the

medical field, welfare, entertainment and politics. Canada is no longer a Christian nation (a country occupied with Christian endeavors and principles) but rather a humanistic nation.

Secular humanism is opposed to God on many issues – for example: homosexuality. While loving the homosexual, God abhors homosexuality and calls it sin. Who cares? says the secular humanist. If it feels good do it! The homosexual now demands the right to hold public office, take leadership in the religious community, and every other position including teaching children, parenting, and being a Big Brother or Sister. And why shouldn't he/she have these rights? Without a standard by which to make judgments, such as the Bible, why should he be denied? If homosexuality is not perverse, as the Bible says, why should the homosexual be discriminated against? Because of this humanistic mentality homosexuality is spreading.

Secular humanism is a religion. It accepts by faith that man has the capacity to save himself, there is no God to whom one must answer, "me" is the center of each person's world. Humanism leans heavily on science, human logic and human philosophies. They work hard to destroy Christian influence in the home, government and schools, and have been very successful in their endeavors.

CHRISTIANITY VS. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

"Mother" Mary Baker Patterson Eddy is the founder of the Christian Science religion. Harold J. Berry writes in his What They Believe:

In 1866 she "reached the scientific certainty that all causation rests with the Mind, and that every effect is a mental phenomenon." sickness, death and even our bodies do not exist – they are only imagined. Based on this belief, she began formulating her unique interpretations of Scripture. These...were incorporated into her book Science and Health, published in 1875.

When her husband Mr. Eddy, himself a Christian Science practitioner, died of a heart attack (a heart attack that was not supposed to exist, causing a death that was supposed to be imaginary), Mrs. Eddy claimed the death of her husband was due to foul causes, "arsenic poisoning mentally administered." Of this episode Walter Martin writes in his The Kingdom of the Cults:

Mrs. Eddy's letter to the Boston Post dated June 5,1882, in which she accused some of her former students of mentally poisoning Asa Eddy with malicious mesmerism in the form of arsenic mentally administered is one of the most pathetic examples of Mrs. Eddy's mental state ever recorded and one which the Christian Science Church would like to forget she ever wrote.

Although claiming many healings there is no evidence she healed anyone, and she flatly refused to heal those brought to her by medical doctors. She herself went to the medical profession for help for her own ailments, and in 1910 fell victim to the death she always feared. Prior to her death she hid from the probing press, no longer able to conceal the sickness tormenting her life.

Mrs. Eddy claimed her writings were inspired by God, but in fact many of these "inspired" publications she copied from other writers. The fact she revised her own "inspired" writings makes her claim a mockery. Nonetheless her faithful followers, about 3,000,000 worldwide, hold her writings above the Bible (which often conflict with her writings). Over the years some of these followers have died needlessly; instead of going to a doctor they placed their trust on Mrs. Eddy's strange doctrines, the same teachings that failed Mrs. Eddy herself.

CHRISTIANITY VS. ASTROLOGY

About 5,000 years ago the Chaldeans concluded the planets were life-giving forces that determined the destiny of man. The fact almost every newspaper in North America features daily horoscopes indicates that man hasn't progressed very far. Is it really reasonable to assume that non-life (planets, the sun and moon) controls life (you and I)? Hunt and McMahon write in their America: The Sorcerer's New Apprentice:

Since mind is non-physical, it must exist in a different dimension from the space-matter-time

continuum of cosmic rays and intergalactic forces and atomic rhythms. Consequently, mind and consciousness must be independent of planetary force fields. If this is indeed the case, then it cannot be true, as astrology claims, that the positions of certain planets in relation to the place and date of one's birth determine personality and destiny. Astrology must be a myth – yet it has consistently maintained an almost unbreakable hold over hundreds of millions of the world's population.....

From the very beginning, astrologers have failed to take into account a wobble in the earth's axis that has changed the positions of the stars relative to the earth, moving the zodiacal signs almost a full position since the second century..... The constellation Aries is now in the position assigned by the zodiac to be the sign of Taurus and so on.

Christianity vs. Bahaism

J.K. van Baalen writes in his The Chaos of Cults: Bahaism is of Persian Mohammedian origin, tracing its beginning to the Mohammedan belief "that the last true successor of Mohammed who disappeared in the tenth century never died, but is still living in a mysterious city, surrounded by a band of faithful disciples and 'that at the end of time he will issue forth and fill the earth with justice after it had been filled with iniquity!' " This hidden successor is said to have revealed himself from time to time.

Sometime in the 1850's a fellow by the name of Mirza Husayn Ali announced himself as this mysterious missing successor of Mohammed and became known as Baha'-u'llah, meaning The Glory of God. To his worshippers, who began to call themselves Bahais, this fellow was God Himself. After Baha'-u'llah's death his son took over and was called 'Abdu'l-Baha (The Servant of God) and it was his role to dispense his father's insights.

Like Christ, Baha'-u'llah was considered to be a manifestation of God. Bahaism teaches that when Christ instructed his followers to "watch and pray" for His return, He actually meant "Receive Baha'u'llah."

'Abdu'l-Baha came to the U.S., the Bahai faith took root in Chicago, and from that time and place spread throughout North America.

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

Christianity is being in union with Christ. This can only be accomplished by the power of God. God brings a person into this union when that person comes to Christ – repenting of sins, asking to be permanently in union with Christ, and accepting Christ's payment for our sins and His lordship over our lives.

While the religious seek to impress God by their good deeds, piety and religious practices, the

Christian is one who has come to Christ fully admitting he has no ability to save himself, and humbly requests to be saved. The religious person works, the Christian receives by faith. The religious strive to be good enough, the Christian realizes the futility of trying to impress God. The religious wants to earn her salvation, the Christian simply receives salvation as a gift.

What Is A Christian?

Born-again. John 3:3 (Amplified): Jesus answered him, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that unless a person is born again (anew, from above), he cannot ever see (know, be acquainted with, and experience) the kingdom of God.

It all starts here. A man is not a Christian until he has been “born again,” born of the Spirit of God. As one is born into his natural family, so is one born into God’s family. The new birth is given by God to those who come to Christ to be forgiven and to receive Him as Lord (Boss) and Savior (from the consequences of his sins).

Redeemed. Rev. 5:9 (KJ): You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by thy blood.

A Christian is one who has accepted the redemption of God. Someone came and paid the debt that each person owes to God for the sins committed against Him. That someone is Jesus. The payment was His innocent blood shed on Calvary’s cross.

Forgiven. Romans 4:7 (Amplified): Blessed and happy and to be envied are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered up and completely buried.

A Christian is forgiven. Psalm 103:12: "As far as the east is from the west; so far has He removed our transgressions from us." And Jeremiah 31:34: “For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more.”

Saved. Romans 6:23 (Amplified): the wages which sin pays is death.

A Christian is saved from the just punishment that is due him because of his own sins, sins against the One who created him. That punishment is severe and non-ceasing. You may have heard much of the love of God but little of the severity of God. Know that the destiny of every sinner is an eternity in Gehennah, the lake of fire. (See issue # 5: Heaven and Hell.) This place is ghastly beyond comprehension. But the Christian has been saved from this eternal horror, as his sins have been “covered up and completely buried.”

Registered. Revelation 20:15 (Amplified): if anyone’s was not found recorded in the Book of Life, he was hurled in the lake of fire.

A Christian’s name is recorded in the Book of Life, presumably at the instant one comes to Christ to be forgiven and saved. His reservation is made, a place prepared, and the citizens of heaven await his arrival.

Son or Daughter. Galatians 4:6 (Amplified): because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba (Father)!

At birth you became either a son or a daughter. You didn't work for it or deserve it; it happened simply because you were born into your family. If and when you choose to become born-again by the Spirit of God, you will likewise become a son or daughter of God. There will be a knowing inside you that God is now your Father and such you will freely call Him.

Justified. Romans 5:9 (KJ): being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

A Christian is justified (made just), certainly not by her own good works but because Jesus made her just. 1Peter 3:18: "Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." To be just is equivalent to never having sinned.

Sanctified. 1Corinthians 6:11 (KJ): You are sanctified

To be sanctified means to be set apart. Christians are set apart from the world, special and acceptable in God's sight, this because of what Christ has done for us.

Righteous. Romans 3:22 (Amplified): the righteousness of God which comes by believing with personal trust and confident reliance on Jesus Christ.

To be righteous means to be in right standing with God. God is righteous and could never fellowship with unrighteousness, and we have no ability to make ourselves righteous. However, Christ has freely made the Christian righteous. It's as if Jesus takes a cloak of righteousness and places it over our shoulders. This righteousness is a gift Jesus gives to those who come to Him. The religious try to cloak themselves in righteousness, a futile exercise. Romans 10:3: "Being ignorant of God's righteousness , and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."

How Does One Become A Christian?

One becomes a Christian by coming to Christ. One comes to Christ in prayer asking Jesus to forgive his sins and telling Jesus he wants to be in union with Him and will trust Him and Him alone for salvation. 1Peter 5:5: "God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble." One must humble herself before Christ, admitting she is a sinner in need of forgiveness. Jesus has promised: "He that comes to me I will in no wise cast out."

"Christianity is being in union with Christ"

"A Christian is forgiven"

TEEN PROBE

S-T-R-A-I-G-H-T T-A-L-K T-O T-E-E-N-S

You never heard of Philip. Philip was this guy – well not a guy, really, but a person – well not a

human person – but a somebody who showed up at this experiment by the Canadian Toronto Society of Physical Research. They were out to prove that non-human somebodies – spirit-beings – like Philip don't exist. Got it?

Anyhow, Philip was a different kind of a – something. At first Philip just tapped on the table and stuff like that, maybe just to get attention, I don't know. And then – maybe he was getting bored or something – he began lifting the table off the floor – maybe he wanted to prove he was stronger than all those researchers trying to hold it down. Next thing you know ol' Philip was flying that table around the room with all those guys trying to chase it down. Ever hear of an experiment like this?

And what conclusion did the researchers come to? Well obviously the only thing to conclude was that persons such as Philip do not exist! Yep, that was their conclusion. (You might wonder what would have to happen to prove Philip does exist.) They began this experiment to prove spirits aren't real – and they were not about to be swayed by the likes of Philip. No, the table moved around the room because of – get this – the collective power generated from their own unconscious minds. Hmmmm. The Hindu and the New Ager and maybe the 32nd degree Mason might agree. Hmmm. You might ask how the mind, which is not tangible, is able to move a very tangible table without even trying. It gets tricky but I'll try to explain.

You see we have to go back to two dudes by the name of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Freud started it all and Jung pushed it along – with the help of Philemon.
Philemon?

Well Philemon looks exactly like Philip. Hey don't lose me – we're just getting started – this thing really gets wild. Philemon was – well let's call him a helper, some guy from the place that doesn't exist who helped Jung understand why tables can move around rooms and.....

Okay, okay, I'll start over and take it reeeal slow.... but first.....

I want to tell you why I'm telling you. You see, you and I are being taken someplace. It's true. It's like someone has each of us by the hand and leading us to a particular destination. But you and I are being taken in opposite directions. And the One leading me and the one leading you are two very different-type persons.

It's like we each have a shepherd. My Shepherd loves me. He is gentle and kind and forgiving – and very powerful. I discovered this loving Shepherd in February, 1972. It was an experience. My life changed that day. I was born-again of the Holy Spirit. I have a day-to-day relationship with this Shepherd. I live for Him and would die for Him. It is my love for Jesus compelling me to reach out to you now, to warn you, to reason with you. Because my Jesus loves you more than you could imagine.

But your shepherd – hey, he likes you about as much as you like spinach. He's a mean hombre who means you dirt. My Shepherd and your shepherd are enemies. My Shepherd wants to rescue you, to

lead you out of the enemy's crowd and into His own.

But the problem is you don't see him. And like those researcher guys, it's hard to believe in something you can't see. But hey! you can't see the wind neither but you know it's there because you feel it. And you can't see love and hate and anger and jokes and ideas and stuff like that, but they're real too. And this shepherd of yours, he's real, man, really real! And he has a name – satan. And he's the guy behind this psychology, psychiatry stuff.

You're at this puppet show and you see these cute little puppets hitting each other – bam, bam, bam! But you know hidden below the stage are two guys controlling the puppets. Well life's like that – sort of. The puppets are like people who are controlled by someone you can't see. Jesus is behind the one (the Christian), and satan is controlling the other (the non-Christian).

But people aren't really puppets – God made us with an intellect and will – and nobody controls us. But nonetheless there is someone behind the scenes influencing. Behind the Christian is the good Shepherd – helping, encouraging, directing. And behind the non-Christian is the evil shepherd – coercing, tempting, whispering, threatening. The good a Christian might do is only with the help of God, and the evil the non-Christian does is usually by the prompting of the devil.

The influence applied to the believer might come through the Holy Spirit, or the angels, or other Christians. And influence to the non-Christian could come through the world of darkness, a vast army of demons – ugly, perverse, sinister demons – and other non-Christians. (Hey, I'm just speaking in general terms – I'm not saying Christians never do dirt or non-Christians don't do good. And I'm not saying satan doesn't tempt Christians or God doesn't influence non-Christians. The bottom line however is this: the good Shepherd is at enmity with the evil shepherd – Jesus versus satan – and they both want you.)

Jesus – the good Shepherd – taught if we build our lives on His words we will be safe. But if we don't, we won't. satan – the evil shepherd – invented many religions and philosophies and phoney gospels to confuse you so you won't recognize the words of Christ whereby you can be saved. He figures you are apt to cling to at least one of his counterfeits, or else think it's all bogus and reject everything, including the true gospel of Christ. Since you were a child you have been – whether you realize it or not – coerced to build on the words of another, someone other than Christ - another gospel, a lie, a misconception, a philosophy – something other than the words of Jesus. And if you do, you ain't going to make it.

In the last issue I told you that you were only getting half the picture, and your education was not only limited, but misleading. I talked about the history you were taught and the history you weren't. And now we are going to look at the weird world of psychiatry, psychotherapy, psychology, etc. that has invaded the educational system. Try to see behind the scenes, you know, the guy hidden under the stage.

The dictionary says psychiatry is "the science of treating mental illness" and a psychiatrist is "a

physician who practices psychiatry"- but in fact psychiatry is not science, but a religion (a religion is something that must be accepted by faith, not proof), just like the other religions mentioned in this paper – and the psychiatrist is a physician only in the sense that a witch doctor is a physician. The whole world of psychology and this-and-that-ology is opposed to the words of Jesus. It leads, literally, to hell. Is psychiatry really a religion? Listen up:

Thomas Szasz (see note 1): not merely a religion that pretends to be a science a fake religion that seeks to destroy true religion..... The popular image of Freud as an enlightened, emancipated, irreligious person.... is pure fiction..... One of Freud's most powerful motives in life was the desire to inflict vengeance on Christianity.....

Martin Gross (see note 2): One of the most powerful religious ideas of the second half of the twentieth century is the Great Unconscious..... In this religion of the Unconscious, our conscious mind is a second-class being..... a mere puppet of the unknown true self..... Is there an Unconscious?..... From a scientific point of view, it is a theological device which fills the gap in man's biological ignorance.....

Hunt and McMahon (see note 3): A lengthy study appointed by the American Psychological Association (subsidized by the National Science Foundation and involving 80 eminent scholars) concluded that psychology is not and cannot be a science. This is the case in spite of decades spent in "ritualistic endeavor to emulate the forms of science in order to sustain the delusion that it already is a science." Karl Popper, considered to be one of the greatest philosophers of science, has concluded that psychological theories "have more in common with primitive myths than with science....."

Freud is a big name in the psychology business, a 15-20 billion dollar a year industry in North America. He's the one who discovered the UNCONSCIOUS part of the mind. Now this discovery isn't like Columbus discovering America – this discovery was something you can't see or touch or take home with you. You can't measure it, inspect it or teach it tricks – or even prove it's real. But the Biggies – those disdainers of truth and propagators of perhaps the biggest hoax of all times – thought it convenient to accept it as being for real. So now we have a society accepting the unconscious mind as fact – on faith, faith in the Biggies – even though it has never been seen or touched or proven to be real! It is more in in some circles to be ruled by this great and wonderful unconscious than the boring, mundane consciousness. Sure your little ol' consciousness may get you through high school and university and stuff like that but can it sail tables around the room? Yep, we're back to that table.

You see, something has to explain why the table floated in the air. And why over half of North American adults have had at least some unexplainable weird happenings beyond normal human capacity. In their own studies many psychologist cannot deny that abnormal (spooky) happenings do occur. But how? There are two possibilities: a) either by the power of a non-human entity (a spirit), or

b) by the innate (hidden, inside) power that, supposedly, lies within each of us.

The reason the researchers had to come to the conclusion the table moved by the power of the unconscious mind is simple. If they would admit the obvious – that a spirit-being totally independent from humans made the table move around the room – they would suddenly become quacks amongst their contemporaries. Now in this business what one fears most is becoming a quack. But by concluding that the power came from the unconscious mind they could remain dignified and well-paid psychologists and as you can imagine it's nicer to be a psychologist than a quack any day.

Take Carl Jung – one of the founders of the psychotherapy faith. There are many things in his life he liked to keep secret because he too didn't want to become a quack. Where did he get his (mis)understanding of the human psyche? Most -ologist don't know it but Carl was tied up with the occult and spiritism and "ghosts" from childhood, his family deep into the occult, and the presence of spooks was a fact of life for Carl and nearly drove him bananas. And now enters Philemon the spook into Carl's life. Writes Carl: Philemon represented a force which was not myself..... It was he who taught me the psychic objectivity, the reality of the psyche..... He was a mysterious figure to me. At times he seemed quite real as if he were a living personality. I went walking up and down the garden with him, and to me he was what the Indians call a guru." Wow! In fact, Philemon helped good ol' Carl write a complete book in three days – a book that was the cornerstone of his (mis)understanding on different subjects like God, religion, man, etc. It's called automatic writing – Philemon did the talking, Carl simply wrote down what he heard. Now as I said Jung is one of the two fathers of this unconsciousness stuff and his theories (most, if not all, coming from an evil spirit) were hungrily consumed by the psychology academia. So here, in brief, is one way psychology entered into your educational system:

It started from satan..... who worked through his army of demons, Philemon in particular..... who found an entrance into Carl Jung's life and taught him sinister fabrications..... and Carl, through writings and lectures, taught the psychology academia..... who passed it on as gospel truth to teachers..... who in turn teach the students. There you have it.

Is psychotherapy beneficial? Even a little? Let's look at an experiment prudently hidden from the public. This experiment involves 650 boys who, it was thought, might develop delinquent behavior. The boys were divided into two equal groups, one group was to be left alone, the other group received special tutoring, joined the scouts and the YMCA, – AND five years of psychoanalysis or psychotherapy. Of course everyone thought the group given the special attention would come out on top. But surprise, surprise. The first study of both these groups revealed that the left-alone kids did slightly better than the others. And in the second study – the boys now being about 55 years old – the "criminal behavior, mental and work problems, and alcoholism was far greater among those who had received the psychotherapy than those who had not" (see note 3).

You see, it's all a cruel hoax. If I had space I could tell you more wild stuff – like the ink test – that

was a test administered by the psychotherapy industry to a million victims a year – if the victim should happen to see an inkblot that makes him think of some religious symbol he is – get this – considered to be a schizo or maybe oversexed! Hunt and McMahon write (note 3), "The attempts to deal with human problems on the basis of Freudian/Jungian theories of the unconscious has spawned more than 250 contradictory therapies and 10,000 competing techniques." One such technique is sex with one's psychologist. Another is to place the patient in a large crib, give him a bottle to suck on and a doll to play with and tell him to scream, "Mommy, I hate you!"

You may think these psychologists are scientists whose only motive is the truth. Un-unh. They are not scientists at all, but religionists whose real motivation is to avoid getting a rep as a quack. If they wanted truth they would have found it a long time ago. (The same applies to you.) If truth were to go for a trip to Australia they would search for it in the Rockies or maybe Iceland or something – anywhere but Australia.

Jesus is the Truth. What He has said is the truth. The Bible is the truth about the Truth. People who want truth instinctively turn to Christ. People who don't don't. If you want the truth turn to the Bible and read what Jesus has to say. His words are the only words safe to build upon.

Turn to Jesus. Come to Him, the sinner you are, and ask him to forgive your many sins. Invite Him to sit on the throne of your life and be your boss and captain and friend.

Until next time.....

Note 1: Thomas Szasz, psychiatrist, The Myth of Psychotherapy, Doubleday.
Note 2: Martin Gross, The Psychological Society, Random House.
Note 3: Dave Hunt and T.A. McMahon, America; the Sorcerer's New Apprentice, Harvest House.

"a somebody who showed up at this experiment"

"And what conclusion did the researchers come to?"

"Philemon?"

"My Shepherd and your shepherd are enemies"

"satan - the evil shepherd - invented many religions and philosophies and phoney gospels to confuse you"

"faith in the Biggies"

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"Jesus is the Truth."