

# Christian Science: Mary Baker Eddy and the Bible

## Introduction

The First Church of Christ, Scientist is a towering presence in the city of Boston. It owes its centrally located architecture and nationwide Christian Science “reading rooms” to the ingenuity of Mary Baker Eddy. She’s credited with being an entrepreneur in religion, journalism, education, and women’s rights. Her innovation as a religious leader remains impressive to this day, being that she began such a large movement before women were even allowed to vote. But what of this faith she’s so known for?

Mary Baker Eddy grew up in 19th century New England, a time and place that saw tremendous religious dissatisfaction. Out of this same time and locale Joseph Smith started Mormonism and Charles Russell founded the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Eddy was a sickly woman from early on. She was well versed in general Bible knowledge. At the age of seventeen she joined the Congregational Church. She had somewhat of a rocky social life. She had three husbands by the time she was in her fifties. In her early forties, after her second marriage, Eddy met a man named Phineas P. Quimby.[{1}](#) She seems to have learned at least some of her healing concepts from Mr. Quimby.

Her adult life appears to have been characterized by great paranoia and outrageous allegations. She even blamed her third husband’s death from heart disease on poisoning from enemies of the Eddy’s.[{2}](#) She also related to one of her associates just before her death that she wished to be remembered as being “mentally murdered.”[{3}](#)

The followers of Mary Baker Eddy say she loved God and His

word so vastly that she was given revelation about the truths of scientific healing hidden beneath the surface of the Bible. She recorded these truths in her *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. With this newfound ability to heal came the birth of Christian Science. Christian Scientists claim to possess basic spiritual methods for healing and comfort for participants of any and all religions.

Eddy founded the Church of Christ, Scientist in 1879. She established such periodicals as *The Christian Science Journal*, *The Christian Science Sentinel*, and the Pulitzer Prize winning *Christian Science Monitor*. By the time of her death in 1910, she had even founded the Massachusetts Metaphysical College. Her amazing initiative in the face of poor health for most of her life is not to be questioned. However, what ought to be challenged are the conclusions she arrived at due to such extreme initiative Eddy claimed that “the Bible was her sole teacher” for developing the methodical treatments for sickness as well as sin.[\[4\]](#) If this is so, then it’s appropriate to use that same source as a measure of her claims. Here we will examine the claims of Christian Science and weigh them with the established standard of God’s word. We will see that Christian Science is neither Christian nor science. Let’s see how Christian Science measures up to biblical Christianity.

## Prayer

Mary Baker Eddy founded the First Church of Christ, Scientist upon the notion that everything she taught came from her examination of the Scriptures. Today we’ll begin evaluating her assertions according to the standard of those same Scriptures. Let’s first look at the subject of her first chapter in *Science and Health*: prayer.

She deduces from Scripture that audible prayer is a meaningless attempt to draw attention to one’s pretentiousness. Prayer changes nothing. True change comes from putting Truth into practice. Eddy robs prayer of its true

effectiveness in communicating with God. For instance, Eddy says that prayer for the sick is not what will lead to one's healing, only enlightened understanding heals.[{5}](#) Otherwise, why would some people remain sick after prayer and others get well? Surely if God is consistent and willing to heal He wouldn't withhold healing from one and grant it to another.

But God's wisdom is infinitely beyond our attempts to understand why He heals some and doesn't heal others. Paul pleaded for God to take the thorn in his flesh from him and Christ responded, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). God allows us to experience difficulty in order to fulfill His grander purposes, of which we often know very little (1 Peter 4:19).

Mary Eddy accentuated Jesus' call to "go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret."[{6}](#) To her, this was not a simple command to be humble in prayer. She believed this statement communicated that true prayer is not to be spoken or have anything to do with the physical senses. She said,

*In order to pray aright, we must enter into the closet and shut the door. We must close the lips and silence the material senses. . . . Practice not profession, understanding not belief, gain the ear and right hand of omnipotence and they assuredly call down infinite blessings.[{7}](#)*

Not only does prayer become suspect in Christian Science, but so do the orthodox concepts of belief and confession, which are necessary components of prayer and the Christian faith. Eddy misses the point of prayer altogether. Christians don't pray to manipulate fate. We pray in order to verbally express our hearts to God and communicate our concerns. Jesus said that our Father already knows our needs before we ask of Him, but we are to pray nonetheless (Matthew 7:8-9). Eddy's

Christian Science has its roots in Gnosticism, saying that salvation is obtained through some sort of secret knowledge. That flies in the face of the historic Christian truth that simple belief in Christ as Lord and confession of faith in Him leads to justification (Romans 10:9). This issue, of faith versus understanding, is what we will address in the next section of this article.

## **Belief and Disbelief**

Basic to Christian Science is belief and disbelief in error. Once again, like the Gnostics the Christian Scientists see all things in the physical world as an evil opposition to the virtue of the spiritual world. So error comes from an infiltration in the mind by the material. Eddy wrote, "We treat error through the understanding of Truth, because Truth is error's antidote."[\[8\]](#) If one denies the reality of pain, due to its material nature, one may be delivered from such pain. We read in Science and Health, "The dream that matter and error are something must yield to reason and revelation. Then mortals will behold the nothingness of sickness and sin, and sin and sickness will disappear from consciousness."[\[9\]](#) Basically, Christian Scientists believe that pain is an illusion. If you deny the existence of this deception, it will go away.

As a matter of fact, material things are evil, because they don't really exist. Remember, to a Christian Scientist error is the embodiment of evil. To think something exists that doesn't is error. So anything resulting from the physical is also evil. This is the context for understanding sickness and death from a Christian Science perspective. It's inaccurate to Christian Scientists to say only that sin, death, and sickness are results of a fallen world. They believe sickness and death are intrinsically evil themselves. This explains why Christian Scientists reject drugs and human medicine. Drugs are a material attempt at curing what only the spiritual can

heal.[{10}](#)

Christian Scientists oversimplify sickness and death. Regardless of whether we like to admit it, death, brought on by sickness or suffering of some sort, is inevitable (Hebrews 9:27). Wouldn't belief in spirituality or "disbelief in error" have rescued at least some from such human suffering? From what I can gather, even Christian Scientists still suffer and die. What about Eddy herself? If she was right, then why did she die?

Sickness and death result from the sin that we all answer for in Adam (Romans 5:12). Therefore, God has opted to rescue us from this fallen world through the means of faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Knowledge does not relieve one's sinful predicament. Faith in Christ is the sole deliverer from this condemnation (Ephesians 2:8-9). Even deliverance does not always come in this life, but we have a hope that in the life to come there will be no sickness, no pain, and no death (Revelation 21:4). We have this hope because of that one event in history to which all Christians ought to find unity, the death of Christ. Next, let's look at the Christian Scientist's perspective of the atonement.

## **The Atonement**

As we look at Christian Science we are measuring it according to the standard of God's Word, which it claims to use as the source for its beliefs. In this section, we will discuss Christian Science's perspective on the atonement of Jesus Christ.

Mary Baker Eddy's unique view of the atonement of Christ has supreme bearing on the supposedly biblical nature of Christian Science. To Eddy, the cross of Christ was not meant to save sinful people from death by Christ's death in their place. She stated "The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon 'the accursed tree,'

than when it was flowing in his veins as he went daily about his Father's business." {11} Instead, Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection was a sign to His followers that the type of life He lived was effective in overcoming death.

To Eddy death is an enemy to Truth, another deception. Jesus was not subject to death, nor are we. She writes, "To him, therefore, death was not the threshold over which he must pass into living glory." {12} Jesus is alleged to have survived the cross through the mastery of mind over matter. {13} This was the ultimate example of Christian Science in practice. Jesus healed Himself with no medicine, bandages, or surgery. Only the disciples thought that Jesus was dead. {14} But Jesus overcame all laws of matter in healing Himself from a near-death experience and He shed His material existence to reveal only the "Soul."

Eddy contends that the disciples originally misunderstood Jesus' appearance after the crucifixion by calling Him a ghost. But soon after they realized that He never died at all. If this is so then why is the tradition passed on to Paul by those same apostles in a sequence of events detailed here in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4?

*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day. . . .*

In that same chapter Paul defends the idea that Christ was raised *from the dead*, and that if this were not so then we're all still in our sins and of all people most to be pitied (15:17,19). Hebrews 8:12 says of Jesus "he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption." To imagine that Jesus did not die, but simply healed Himself, is biblically and historically

preposterous.

To Mary Baker Eddy, Jesus' death is no longer the redemptive sacrifice that gives life to all who believe. Instead, she establishes Jesus as the first Christian Scientist, a sort of "way-shower," leaving a prime example of how we *all* can conquer sin, suffering, and death.[{15}](#)

## Human Suffering

As we've been discussing the biblical nature of Christian Science, we conclude with some final thoughts. The central issue in Christian Science seems to be human suffering. Sin, sickness, and death are real threats to the human condition. Mary Baker Eddy was truly bothered by this. Instead of leaning on the God of the Bible for His comfort in times of crisis (2 Corinthians 1:3-4), Eddy devised her own plan to serve as an immediate solution to the burdens she carried.

Contrary to Eddy's charges, Christianity does *not* deny the reality of Jesus' healing ministry. In fact, healing is *still* a valid way for God to show Himself to a generation of hurting people. Nevertheless, healing, even in Jesus' ministry was never intended to be the end all. It was a means for all who witnessed the event to credit Jesus with the Father's seal of approval. The kingdom of God had come. Jesus affirmed this in Matthew 11:4 when He sent John's messengers back to him to respond to the question of whether He was the Messiah with the message, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them."

Healing of suffering, as well as sin must be recognized for what it truly is: God bringing glory to God. When we put humans and their suffering at the center of Jesus' ministry or even our own ministries we are doomed to misunderstand God's mercy and compassion in relation to human suffering. "For my

thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord" (Isaiah 55:8). The Master Architect who is also orchestrating all of history to end the way He planned it has to have latitude in bringing this about. That means many of the problems that may not make sense to us will go unanswered until He has the final word.

Compassion is an essential requirement of the Christian message. But too many, like Mary Baker Eddy, have confused godly compassion for humanistic ideology. We ought to pray that none of us are found guilty of imposing our own circumstances upon the Word of God, in order for it to better address our perceived problems. God is faithful. He won't do anything without purpose. But His purpose in our suffering cannot always be obvious. Remember, He loves His creation and will do all that's necessary to bring about "good, for those who are called to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). Often pain, suffering, and death are a means of God's character development in His children. "[H]e disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness" (Hebrews 12:10). It takes eyes of faith to see His good in our difficulties. He who has eyes to see, let him see.

## Notes

1. She credited Quimby with healing her. She became a huge proponent of Quimby's abilities. Quimby claimed to have rediscovered Jesus' very own methods for healing. Later this relationship went sour. There is a great deal of controversy over whether Eddy taught the same things as Quimby or not. Both Quimby and Eddy claimed originality and that the other was borrowing his or her ideas. Hoekema, Anthony A., *Christian Science*. (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1963), 10-11.
2. Hoekema, 16.
3. Hoekema, 17.
4. *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, viii.
5. *Ibid.*, 12.
6. Matthew 6:6.



7. *Science and Health*, 15.
8. *Ibid.*, 346.
9. *Ibid.*, 347.
10. *Ibid.*, 345.
11. *Ibid.*, 25.
12. *Ibid.*, 39.
13. *Ibid.*, 44.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, 26.

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**See Also *Probe Answers Our Email*:**

["You Got Christian Science Wrong"](#)

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# **The Boston Church – An Abusive Church**

*Former Probe staffer Russ Wise shows that the Boston Church Movement has all the marks of a dangerous, controlling cult. It departed from its roots to become legalistic and abusive.*

## **Church Background and History**

The International Church of Christ, also known as "The Boston Church," began in Gainesville, Florida, under the leadership of Chuck Lucas in 1971. It was known then as the Crossroads Church of Christ, and Lucas was the pastor. Chuck Lucas was also involved in "Campus Advance," an outreach program at the

University of Florida in Gainesville. It was there that he met Kip McKean who later became the founding evangelist and prime influence of the movement. Lucas trained McKean in discipleship based on Robert E. Coleman's book, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*.

In 1976 McKean and other young men under Pastor Lucas's influence were sent to other Churches of Christ with close proximity to university campuses to establish similar ministries. Kip was sent to Heritage Chapel Church of Christ and Eastern Illinois University in Charleston. His success brought scrutiny to his method of discipleship and many in the church questioned his use of manipulation and control to reach new disciples. McKean's aggressive form of discipleship is both the source of the movement's growth and its source of controversy.

In 1979 McKean was moved to the Boston area and the Lexington Church of Christ. It was in Boston that his methodology of subtle manipulation and mind control took its effect on great numbers of people. The church literally exploded in membership from 30 to over 1,000 members.

In 1983 the church changed its name to the "Boston Church of Christ." In the early 1980s the church sent disciples across the United States and around the world to establish its ministry of discipleship, and thereby, to disciple the world.

Because the leadership believed that the biblical model for naming churches was to name them after the city where they were established, they named them the Stockholm Church of Christ or the Dallas-Ft. Worth Church of Christ, etc. They authorize one church per city. According to figures in 1997, the International Churches of Christ has planted churches on every continent, is currently active in 115 countries, has 292 congregations around the world, and has a membership of 143,000. The church has been embarrassed in recent years by the departure of thousands of members who no longer could live

under the smothering control of the church. Ex-members confide that as many people are fleeing the church's bondage as are joining.

According to a *Time* magazine article, 16 May 1992, the Boston Church utilizes a "control system" that is designed to focus all the energies of the member on bringing new people into the church. Mark Trahan, a former member in New York, said, "All you think about is recruiting." It becomes a way of life inside the group.

Trahan goes on to say that once members leave the church, they become "marked" people and are shunned by members who are directed to no longer have any contact with them.

As we continue our examination of the Boston Church Movement, we will see how it embraces legalism. Legalism often opens the door to another gospel—a gospel, in this case, that ultimately says the cross is not enough to gain our salvation.

## **Church Teaching and Belief**

On the surface the Boston Church is much like other Churches of Christ in relationship to their teaching and doctrine. Both teach the necessity of water baptism by immersion, the innocence of infants, the invalidity of original sin, and that musical instruments are not to be a part of worship.

However, the Boston Church and the mainline Church of Christ differ on several counts. The Boston Church utilizes a hierarchical structure of church organization rather than one that reflects the independent nature of the local church. The Boston Church further differs from the mainline body in its controlling method of discipleship which represents the most serious concern about the church.

Discipleship, Boston Church style, is a requirement for the believer. There are no options. Each member has a discipler and is held accountable to the church by that individual.

Disciples are not allowed to make basic decisions on their own, but must conform to the wishes of the discipler and ultimately the church.

Disciples are given direction on every aspect of their lives, from church attendance and giving, to dating habits or personal relationships, from where to live to their sex lives, and a multitude of decisions in between. The lives of disciples are closely regulated and controlled. The leadership maintains that this is all done for the glory of God.

In an article by Stephen F. Cannon, *The Boston Church of Christ- -Has Mind Control Come to Beantown?*, the author gives us an insight into how the discipling program is structured. "New converts are disciplined by older converts. The older converts are disciplined by Bible talk leaders. The Bible talk leaders are disciplined by zone evangelists. The zone evangelists are disciplined by Kip McKean and the elders."

McKean is the absolute leader. He determines "how far a congregation will go in obeying the Scriptures by how consistently he corrects mistakes, rebukes sin, encourages obedience and by impartially carrying out the instructions of God . . . the Evangelist must know where the church is in the eyes of God, where it is headed and what it will take to get where God wants it to be."

This type of authoritarian leadership is not supported by Scripture. Rather, mutual servanthood was the model given to us by Jesus and Paul (Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:24-27; 1 Thess. 2:5-12; 2 Tim. 2:24-26). Scripture is clear in its teaching regarding to whom we are to be accountable: 1 Timothy 2:5 states that Jesus is our mediator, not man.

**Baptism equals salvation.** As mentioned earlier, the Boston Church agrees with the mainline Church of Christ on basic doctrine. Generally, the Boston Church is in agreement that the member must be baptized by the Church of Christ by

immersion to receive his or her salvation. However, the Boston Church goes one step further and says that the member must be a disciple in order for his or her baptism to count for salvation.

In other words, for the Boston Church, faith in Christ and His death for our sins is not enough for the believer to be acceptable before God; he must also be baptized by the "true" church as a disciple. The Bible, however, offers the unbeliever a simple option: believe on (trust in, have faith in, rely on) Christ and you will be saved; that is, the penalty of sin is wiped away and the person is spiritually adopted (born again) into God's family (Rom. 10:9). God does not place restrictions on us as sinners; He only asks us to believe and exercise our faith.

## **Abusive Behavior in The Church**

There are many ways for abuse to become a controlling element in a church body. Later we will look at specific ways one can avoid deception. But for now, let's look at a few ways that we can discern abusive behavior in the church.

**Excessive Control.** A key element almost always found in abusive churches is a leadership that is excessive in controlling its members. Pat Zukeran, an apologist and an authority on The Boston Church Movement, says this about control-oriented leadership: "The leader in an abusive church is dogmatic, self-confident, arrogant, and the spiritual focal point in the lives of his followers. The leader assumes he is more spiritually in tune with God than anyone else. He claims insight into Scripture that no one else has. Or, he may state that he receives personal revelations from God."

**Personal Interpretation of Scripture.** Another element of abuse that usually accompanies this style of leadership is the insistence on a personal interpretation of the Scriptures, and in some cases, even re-writing the Scriptures to underscore

personal ideas and hobbyhorses. This level of manipulation opens the door to a subtle control that affects how one thinks and pulls the member more deeply into the web of deception.

The Bible challenges us to seek its counsel rather than that of men. We are to measure all teachings against the Word of God. We find an example of this counsel in Acts 17:11 where the Apostle Paul places himself under the authority of the Scripture.

**Manipulation of Church Membership.** Psychological manipulation is another element of abuse that may be found in abusive churches. It is most always very subtle and is usually a highly skilled method of control. The use of unwarranted guilt, intimidation, peer pressure, threats of divine judgment from God for disobedience, and confessional are among the methods employed to manipulate the member.

Stephen F. Cannon, mentioned earlier, says that “the chief tool to keep the flock in line seems to be the doctrine of personal confession to one’s discipler.” Cannon continues by quoting Rev. Buddy Martin, of Cape Cod Church of Christ, who claims that “almost everyone in the Boston Church of Christ tells their secrets.” Martin further confirmed that “those secrets are often used against the person if they don’t follow the party line’ and do what the elders want them to do.”

This kind of manipulation is foreign to our Lord, who sacrificially gave of Himself for others. Jesus’ example is one of humility and service, not the dogmatism and arrogance found in those who would abuse their followers.

**One True Church.** Another characteristic of an abusive church is that it often establishes itself as being the only “true” church. In their methodology all other churches are wrong or practice false doctrine. The Boston Church, like other churches with abusive traits, do not allow for any outside teaching that may be contrary to their interpretation of

“truth.”

**Unquestioning Submission.** The abusive church demands undying allegiance to its leadership and its doctrinal positions. It becomes authoritative on every element and aspect in the life of the believer. There is no room for another position to be considered.

## **Understanding Thought Reform**

Abusive churches such as the Boston Church Movement and others use thought reform as a standard element in their program of recruitment. The key to their success is the ability to keep the subject unaware of being manipulated and controlled.

Mindbending or thought reform is carried out in a sophisticated program that incorporates three elements to bring the desired result. First, those who use thought control endeavor to convince their subjects that their past is wrong and that it has negatively influenced their present life. Second, abusive leaders make every effort to gain control over the personal wills of their subjects by introducing mind-altering activities into their normal routine. Third, the goal of such groups is to alter their trainees' normal thought processes and bring them to a neutral, non-resistant state of mind so that the minds of the trainees can be effectively reprogrammed.

All thought reform cults use this type of mind control. The methods used include meditation techniques, pray-reading, chanting mantras, sleep deprivation, and other techniques that alter one's conscious awareness of reality.

Once the group has gained control of the new convert's mind, an intensive time of reprogramming or indoctrination is begun to establish the group's goals and to begin the reinterpretation of “truth” or other beliefs. The key to this process of thought reform is to keep the subject unaware of

the manipulation that is taking place in his or her mind.

How does thought reform work? Listed below are some of the tactics used by thought-reform programs according to Margaret Thaler Singer, clinical psychologist and emeritus professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and author of *Cults In Our Midst—The Hidden Menace In Our Everyday Lives*.

The first tactic is to “destabilize a person’s sense of self.” In essence, cultivate an environment of community in the individual that eliminates his or her personhood, thereby creating an identity crisis within the individual.

The second tactic is to move people to radically reinterpret their life history, dramatically alter their worldview, and wholeheartedly embrace a new conception of reality.

And the third tactic used by the group is to “develop in the person a dependency on the organization, and thereby turn the person into a deployable agent of the organization.”

Dr. Singer offers six conditions that are employed to gain the desirable results of thought reform. The first condition that must be accomplished is to keep the new seekers “unaware that there is an agenda to control or change” them.

The second is to control their “time and physical environment.” Converts are denied an opportunity to interact with family or friends, and they are subjected to a schedule that utilizes every minute of their day without giving them a chance to find time alone.

The third condition is to “create a sense of powerlessness, fear, and dependency.” The group systematically eliminates the individual’s support system. The organization may implement a system of rigid control that dictates where people work or live, how they spend their spare time, and other aspects of personal freedom, consequently increasing their sense of powerlessness.



The fourth condition is to “suppress old behavior and attitudes.” By creating the right environment, new recruits’ prior ideas about right and wrong become irrelevant as the group continues to define the approved agenda of thought.

The fifth condition that must be met is to “instill new behavior and attitudes” so the new converts will readily assimilate into the organization. A system of rewards and punishment is instituted to further control. The goal is for the seekers to accept the new philosophy without question.

The sixth, and last condition that Dr. Singer offers, is to “put forth a closed system of logic” that deters any ability to question the authority of the leadership. Such a program allows no opportunity to express doubt or offer any kind of contradiction that would bring into question the veracity of the organization. The individual is always wrong in such a case and the organization is always right.

These six conditions are utilized to varying degrees by all groups that attempt to reform a new convert’s thought. It is no less than subtle brainwashing, and it is destructive in the long term.

If we are to guard our minds from the enemy and renew them as the Scriptures challenge us to do, then we must remain vigilant. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived.

## **Avoiding Deception**

Previously we have dealt with the Boston Church and its abusive nature. We have also looked at thought reform and how the cults can use it to control their membership. In our last segment we are going to look at practical ways that we, as Christians, can avoid being deceived by those who would entrap us by false teaching.

Deception is a mainstay of thought reform cults and groups. It is a subtle form of manipulation that erodes the personal

freedom of individuals. In an age that has produced the Jonestown and Heaven's Gate cults, it has become imperative for us to protect ourselves and our loved ones from those who would deceive and abuse us. Here are several practical ways we can prevent deception in our lives.

**ONE:** Be careful who you share your problems and spiritual struggles with. On the one hand, you should be open and accepting of others. On the other hand, you need to be cautious around people you do not know personally because devious individuals could use the information you share to take advantage of you. However, if people want to discuss their problems or their spiritual life with you, keep the focus of such discussions on them and off of you. (This approach will not allow someone, who may be out to solicit you into an aberrant group, to seduce you in a time of vulnerability.)

**TWO:** Be aware of Bible studies or meetings that are offered outside of known Christian groups or organizations. If you are unsure about a particular group, check it out by asking your pastor or other legitimate spiritual authorities.

**THREE:** Sincerity does not equal truth. If someone uses Christian terminology and is accommodating they may be camouflaging their true intent—deception—by meeting your social and personal need to belong. Remember legitimate groups are up front and more than willing to identify who they are and what they are about.

**FOUR:** Avoid groups that do not allow you to question their teaching or authority. Non-Christian groups attempt to mislead the individual regarding their true beliefs and goals by not allowing the prospective member to ask needed questions.

**FIVE:** Avoid groups that (1) do not allow you time to reflect on what you have been taught or (2) encourage you to become overly involved in "church" activity or (3) refuse to grant

you the time and freedom you need to make unhurried and unpressured decisions about your spiritual life.

**SIX:** Be aware of groups that attempt to limit or sever your relationship with your family, your church, and long-standing friends in the faith—people who are, in effect, your support net.

**SEVEN:** Be aware of groups that supplant individuality and personal freedom with a communal identity.

**EIGHT:** Make an effort to discover what kind of authority the group operates under. Do members have leeway in making decisions about their present and future, or are they manipulated to do what the group desires?

Scripture warns about those who would bring dissension into the church. Romans 16:17 states, “I appeal to you, brethren, to take note of those who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught; avoid them.”

2 Peter 2:1 tells us that, “false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies . . . and in their greed they will exploit you with false words.”

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# Freemasonry and the Christian

# Church – Are Masons Christian?

*Russ Wise intently examines the teaching and practices of freemasonry from a Christian, biblical worldview perspective. What he finds clearly shows distinct differences between Freemasonry and Christian doctrine and practice.*

## **Freemasonry : Its Background and History**

There are probably few subjects as shrouded in mystery and misunderstanding as that of Freemasonry. Known under a variety of names (the Craft, the Brotherhood, the Order, the Fraternal Order, the Lodge, etc.), Masonry has been aligned with both the Christian church and the occult. A major problem for many whether within the Order or without is the question of the Mason's ultimate allegiance. If, in fact, there is no appreciable theological difference between the church and Freemasonry, their antagonists have no basis on which to denounce them. However, if there are beliefs and practices in Masonry that are incompatible with biblical Christianity, then it becomes imperative for the non-Mason and Mason alike to understand the true teachings of the Lodge.

The history of the Lodge is not easily discernible. Along with those who believe that Freemasonry had Christian beginnings are a growing number of Masonic authors who espouse an occultic origin for the Craft. There are those who indicate that the Craft was an outgrowth of the Ancient Mystery Schools or that it was first associated with the Druids or the Illuminati. In order for the individual to make a correct decision regarding Freemasonry, he must first understand the motivation of the author.

Masonic authors Delmar Darrah, A. S. MacBride, and Melvin Johnson point out the unreliability of many of their fellow

Masonic writers. Darrah, in his book titled *History And Evolution Of Freemasonry*, states that "Masons have believed the things concerning the origin of the institution that they wanted to believe and have gone forth and told them as facts. When links were missing, they have been supplied by drawing upon fertile imaginations."(1)

## **Christianity and the Craft**

Leading Masonic authorities in the 18th and 19th centuries held a distinctively Christian interpretation of Freemasonry. Such leaders as Rev. James Anderson, William J. Hughan, William Hutchinson, Rev. George Oliver, and others had a Christian view of their Craft.(2) Hutchinson, in particular, noted that Jesus Christ was the example for the Master Mason. He stated, "The Master Mason represents a man under the Christian doctrine saved from the grave of iniquity and raised to the faith of salvation. As the great testimonial that we are risen from the state of corruption, we bear the emblem of the Holy Trinity as the insignia of our vows and of the origin of the Master's order."(3)

## **The Anti-Masonic Movement**

The decade between 1826 and 1836 represented troublesome years for the Masonic Order. After several incidents that cast a negative light on Freemasonry,(4) a growing anti-Masonic sentiment began to emerge. As a result, there was a mass exodus of Christians from the Lodge, thereby creating a vacuum to be filled by those who held a non-Christian view of Masonry. During this time Albert Pike seized the opportunity to spread and entrench his pagan interpretation of the Craft. Pike and others began to reinterpret the symbols of the Craft.

The paganization of the Lodge took place over several decades, but it did not reach public awareness until the latter part of the 19th century. Even so, it was not until the 1920s, when a large number of books began appearing in print that claimed

pagan origins for the Craft, that these efforts became widely known.

## **Masonic Universalism**

The anti-Masonic movement dealt Freemasonry a severe blow. However, the exodus of large numbers of Christians proved to be a stabilizing factor(5) for the non-Christian forces of the Craft. Once the Christian majority had left the Craft, Pike was then able to redesign it in a way that would support his pagan views.

It is interesting to note that during the very time that Pike was heavily involved in his paganizing process, the Craft was experiencing a renewed growth in membership from Christians. The majority of these new Christian members represented church leadership and accepted the Christian interpretation of Hutchinson, Oliver, Hughan, and others. Their influence, however, wasn't enough to offset the growing paganization of the Lodge.

Manly P. Hall, a 33rd degree Mason, was one of the early authors who claimed a pagan origin for Freemasonry. In his book entitled *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*, he says that Freemasonry is not a material thing: it is a universal expression of the Divine Wisdom. "The Masonic order is not a mere social organization, but is composed of all those who have banded themselves together to learn and apply the principles of mysticism and the occult rites."(6)

Hall (and a host of other writers including Pike) created a pagan history for Freemasonry that would later take root and grow to become the accepted understanding of Masonic origins. As this new interpretation took hold in the minds of the membership, Christianity was being all but eradicated from the Craft. It became unthinkable to mention the name of Christ or to pray in the name of Jesus. The Craft was set firmly on the ground of "universalism."

The primary standard for membership was, and continues to be, that the candidate believe in "God." This god could be Krishna, Buddha, Allah, or any other god, but Jesus Christ is not to be considered anything more than their equal.

This universalist, or inclusive, idea about God has opened the door for every false deity to have a place within the Lodge. Hall makes his universalist orientation unmistakable by stating, "The true disciple of Masonry has given up forever the worship of personalities. With his greater insight, he realizes that all forms . . . are of no importance to him compared to the life which is evolving within."(7)

Hall adds to his belief in universalism by stating that "the true Mason is not creed-bound. He realizes with the divine illumination of his lodge that as a Mason his religion must be universal: Christ, Buddha, or Mohammed, the name means little, for he recognizes only the light and not the bearer."(8) So, for the Mason, God is not a personal being, but an impersonal force, an energy that has no substance.

The Mason who is a Christian is put in a very difficult position. Although his Fraternal Order supported his Christianity in its early years, it now no longer allows for it as there is no question about the pagan orientation of Freemasonry in our day. Therefore, the Mason must ask himself whether he can, in good faith, remain a part of an organization that devalues the God of Christianity.

## **Freemasonry as a Religion**

As the evolution of modern Freemasonry took place over a period of several hundred years, it continued to be influenced by those who held an occultic worldview. For them, the Craft was a revival of the ancient mysteries.

Albert Pike, the noted Masonic scholar, said that "it is the universal, eternal, immutable religion, such as God planted it

in the heart of universal humanity.”(9) Pike’s statement is a good example of Masonic double speak. The Christian can interpret what is said as being in reference to the personal God of Christianity who created the universe. However, when one takes Pike’s statement together with the balance of his worldview it becomes apparent that he is referring to the impersonal god of Freemasonry as mentioned earlier.

Pike, in his book *Morals and Dogma*, says this about religion and Freemasonry: “Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion; and its teachings are instruction in religion.”(10) According to the modern day interpreters of Masonry, it has now taken its logical place as the unifier of all religions. One such interpreter, Foster Bailey, an occultist and a 32nd degree Mason, said that “Masonry is the descendant of a divinely imparted religion” that antedates the prime date of creation. Bailey goes on to say that “Masonry is all that remains to us of the first world religion” which flourished in ancient times. “It was the first unified world religion. Today we are working again towards a world universal religion.”(11)

In other words, Freemasonry has its roots in the same sources as the mystery religions of the world that brought on the wrath of the Hebrew God of the Old Testament. And the Craft is now preparing the way for the revival of the same religion of the ancients.

The Mason, however, may be unaware of much of what is taught by the Lodge. The Mason who is uninitiated in the higher degrees is deliberately deceived by his brethren. Pike says that “truth is not for those who are unworthy.” He goes on to say that “Masonry jealously conceals its secrets, and intentionally leads conceited interpreters astray.”(12)

Hall put it this way: “Spiritual qualities are necessary before the real Masonic secrets can be understood by the brethren themselves.”(13) What Hall seems to be saying is that one must reach a certain spiritual level before he can rightly



understand the deep symbolic teachings of Freemasonry. As an example, one of the most known symbols for Masonry is the letter "G." Depending on whose interpretation one chooses, this symbol may represent geometry, God, or gnosis. A Christian would obviously interpret the symbol as God, whereas the pagan would see it as knowledge or gnosis.

Albert Pike was even more direct when he stated, "The Blue Degrees are but the outer court of the Temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he shall understand them; but it is intended that he shall imagine he understands them. Their true explication is reserved for the Adepts, the Princes of Masonry."(14)

The Mason may unwittingly be a part of the Lodge thinking that it is an extension of his Christian faith, when in fact it may be a "Trojan horse," allowing another god into his soul.

## **The Masonic God**

The god of Freemasonry and the God of the Bible are not one and the same. There is a great difference between the two concepts of God. The Masonic god, "The Great Architect of the Universe" (G.A.O.T.U), is believed to be above all other gods.

According to Albert Pike, all people, regardless of their spiritual orientation, can unite under the "Grand Artificer of the Universe." The Masonic god is all-inclusive and all-embracing. All potential Masons must acknowledge a "God" in order to gain membership in the Lodge, but there is no definite criteria regarding which "God" is implied or what "God" is acceptable.

Pike states that Masonry is the unifier of all religions and that "the Christian, the Hebrew, the Moslem, the Brahmin, the followers of Confucius and Zoroaster, can assemble as brethren

and unite in prayer to the one God who is above all the Baalim.”(15) In other words, the biblical God is reduced to the level of all the other gods and at the same time rendered as equal with the false gods of those religions. Therefore, Christianity is stripped of its uniqueness as the one true religion that offers humanity its only hope for salvation.

This universal god of Freemasonry is believed by many within the Lodge to be the God of the Bible, but this god is not the triune God of the Christian faith. Freemasonry purposefully diminishes the co-equal and co-eternal status of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. That is, the second and third Persons of the Trinity are placed below God the Father, disallowing the triune nature of the biblical God.

The Masonic god is clearly given a greater position among all other “gods.” Albert Pike spoke of “God as being One; Unapproachable, Single, Eternal and Unchanging. . . . There is but one God, infinite and incomprehensible, to whom no human attribute can be properly assigned, even when imagined to be infinite.”(16) Therefore, according to Pike, the god of Freemasonry is “Single” in nature and not the triune God of the Bible. Likewise, the Masonic god is unapproachable. He is not a personality that cares for his creation, he is a force a principle.

Manly P. Hall, a 33rd degree Mason, refers to God as being the “Life Principle” that lies within all living things. In a passage quoted earlier, Hall stated, “The true disciple of ancient Masonry has given up forever the worship of personalities. With his greater insight, he realizes that all forms . . . are of no importance to him compared to the life which is evolving within.”(17) Hall reveals in this passage that

- *The god of Freemasonry is a force resident within all living things, and*

- *The religion of the Craft is pantheism.*

On the other hand, the God of Christianity is transcendent and only becomes resident within the human family, and then only when He is invited to do so. In Masonry, Jesus Christ is not accepted as being "One" with the Father and is not looked to for salvation.

Jesus made his Father's requirements very clear: "It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only'" (Luke 4:8). The Father says that "you shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him . . . you shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth" (Deut. 6:13-15).

The Mason who professes to be a Christian must decide whom he will serve: the God of the Bible or the god of Freemasonry. He cannot serve them both.

## **The Masonic Jesus**

The central question that every Christian Mason must ask himself is "Who is Jesus Christ according to the Lodge?" Earlier we saw that Albert Pike was greatly influenced by the occult and that he was responsible for the rewriting of the rituals for all the degree work beyond that of Master Mason.

Because of Pike's influence, Freemasonry has adopted a universalist approach toward divinity. According to Jim Shaw, a 33rd degree Mason who left the Lodge, Masonry teaches that "Jesus was just a man. He was one of the exemplars,' one of the great men of the past, but not divine and certainly not the only means of redemption of lost mankind. He was on a level with other great men of the past like Aristotle, Plato, Pythagoras and Mohammed. His life and legend were no different

from that of Krishna, the Hindu god. He is the son of Joseph,' not the Son of God."(18)

Jesus Christ is not to be looked upon as God incarnate, or as the Savior of humanity, but He is to be considered as no different than any other great spiritual leader or guru. To follow through with this conclusion, the Lodge does not permit the name of Jesus or Christ to be used in any of its prayers or rituals.

As an example, when Scripture is used in rituals the name of Jesus or Christ is omitted lest it offend someone. In essence, the Lodge has rewritten Scripture to suit its own end. The Bible is clear in its warning that God's Word is not to be changed or tampered with. Deuteronomy 4:2 says, "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it."

Masonic prayers are not to include the name of Jesus Christ, but they are to refer to the Great Architect of the Universe. The *Maryland Master Mason* magazine offered this statement concerning prayer in the Lodge: "All prayers in Mason lodges should be directed to the one deity to whom all Masons refer to as the Grand Architect of the Universe."(19)

For the Christian, this idea should cause some real concern. The Bible is clear regarding what Jesus says to those who are ashamed of the Son. "Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."(20)

The biblical Jesus does not allow for the bias of Freemasonry when it comes to receiving His proper place of reverence and worship. In short, Jesus does not seem to be as tolerant as the Mason when it comes to His divine authority.

The Bible gives us further instruction regarding our response to the Christian faith. "And Jesus came up to them, saying,

All authority has been given me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you'" (Matt. 28: 18-20).

The Mason is thus faced with the choice of whom he will serve: Jesus, the Savior of his soul, or the tolerant god of Freemasonry who leads him to destruction.

## **Masonic Light and Darkness**

"Freemasons are emphatically called the Sons of Light, because they are in possession of the true meaning of the symbol; while the profane or uninitiated who have not received this knowledge are said to be in darkness."(21) In other words, the Mason has been delivered from the darkness into the light and is elevated above those who have not received the initiation into the degrees and mysteries of Freemasonry.

The "profane" individual, or the non-Mason, remains in darkness and is in need of light. The Mason, after being enlightened, continues to be in need of more light. It seems that the Mason never comes to fully understand his Craft and all that it means. However, as the Mason gains more light and understanding of the various symbols representing each degree, he becomes more aware of its different meanings. Albert Pike, the Masonic scholar, speaks of this deception, "Masonry conceals its secrets from all except Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it. Truth is not for those who are unworthy or unable to receive it, or would pervert it. So Masonry jealously conceals its secrets, and intentionally leads conceited interpreters astray."(22)

According to Pike, "Masonry is a search after light."(23) The

question that one must ask oneself is, What is the source of this "Light" that contemporary Freemasonry is based on? Pike goes on to tell us that the light of Masonry is based on the Kabalah, or Jewish mysticism. For the Christian this is indeed a difficulty, because the Christian cannot accept the occult beliefs of the mystics. The Bible tells us that "truth" or "light" can only be found in God's Word.

The Mason is taught that as he receives more light he grows in perfection. As he grows in perfection, he believes that he actually increases his personal worthiness and, in the process, gains a deeper appreciation of Masonry. This in-depth understanding leads to a greater degree of enlightenment and enables the Mason to feel as if he has done all he must do for acceptance into the Grand Lodge above. This appeal to human pride is a deadly trap because we all have a sin nature and want to feel that we have "earned" salvation and "deserve" it.

However, the Mason who professes Jesus Christ as his Lord is left in a very difficult position by the Lodge. The Lodge considers the Christian as being profane or unworthy to receive the "Light" of the Craft. The Mason is faced with this dilemma: if the Lodge has the Light that mankind is looking for and if Jesus is that Light, how is it then that Jesus is not to be mentioned in the Lodge if He is indeed the Light of the world?(24) This idea becomes increasingly difficult when the Christian attempts to reconcile what the Bible says regarding Jesus and what the Craft says about the presence of Jesus in the Lodge.

Albert Pike speaks of Lucifer as the Light-bearer! "Lucifer, the Son of the Morning! Is it he who bears the Light, and with its splendors intolerable blinds feeble, sensual, or selfish Souls?"(25) The Bible identifies Lucifer as being Satan and an angel of light. According to Paganism, Lucifer is the bearer of the light that enlightens man's understanding of his Higher Self or his "God Self." Masonic author Foster Bailey says it this way, "Masonry therefore, is not only a system of

morality, inculcating the highest ethics through which result, if followed, the conscious unfolding of divinity. . . . It portrays the recovery of man's hidden divinity and its bringing forth into the light . . . the power to achieve perfection latent in every man." Masonry purports to be the Light that awakens man's mind to his perfection and ultimate divinity.

The question that begs to be answered by each Mason is simply this: "Which Light' will he follow, the true Light of Christ or the dimly lit light of the Lodge?"

## **The Hidden Things of Freemasonry**

There is a great deal of secrecy in Freemasonry. From the very beginning the Entered Apprentice is kept in the shadows regarding the full meaning of the symbols of the Craft. He is not offered any further understanding until he has proven himself worthy to receive deeper truths.

Not only is the Mason to keep the secrets of the Lodge, but he is to swear oaths accompanied by severe penalties if he ever chooses to reveal them. According to Carl H. Claudy, a former Grand Master of Masons, the Masonic penalties are intended to inspire terror in the candidate. Claudy says that if a candidate breaks his oath, he will experience the abasement that any man would feel when he had broken a solemn pledge. But even more so, he would experience "the wrath of God blasphemed. The horror of a sin of which there is none greater."(26)

The above statement is an example of the misinformation that the Mason often labors under. The idea that God recognizes and upholds the Mason's oath to a pagan god is simply not biblical. However, the biblical mandate for the believer is to "swear not at all . . . But let your Yes' be Yes,' and your No, 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."(27) In other words, the Lord makes it very clear that

anything sworn other than yes' or no' is from the mouth of the Devil.

The Christian God is not a god of fear and misery, but He is a God of compassion and mercy. Masonic author and 33rd Degree Mason Manly P. Hall identifies the nature of the cosmic force to which the Mason owes his allegiance. He states that "the average Mason, as well as the modern student of Masonic ideals, little realizes the cosmic obligation he takes upon himself when he begins his search for the sacred truths of Nature. . . . Every Mason knows that a broken vow brings with it a terrible penalty. . . . When a Mason swears that he will devote his life to (Masonry) . . . and then defiles his living temple . . . he is breaking a vow which imposes not hours but ages of misery."(28) The Mason is not offering his loyalty to the God of Christianity, but to the pantheistic god of Nature.

Albert Mackey, author of the *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, offers several reasons why non-Masons object to Masonic secrecy. However, there are only four which he accepts as being true. First, it is an oath. Second, it is administered before the secrets are communicated. Third, it is accompanied by certain superstitious ceremonies. And fourth, it is attended by a penalty.(29)

The candidate is led to believe that the penalties accompanying the oaths that he swears to are indeed carried out. At no time is he told that these penalties are simply symbolic. Mackey states that the penalties are not to be inflicted by the Lodge but by God. He says that "the ritualistic penalties of Freemasonry . . . are in the hands not of man, but of God, and are to be inflicted by God, and not by man."(30) The Lodge is standing on thin ice when it presumes that God will safeguard its paganism by putting its detractors to death.

The greatest problem for the Christian Mason is that by taking the oaths of the Craft, and living his life according to them,



he has opened the door to Lucifer to steal his relationship with the living God.

## **Symbolism and Freemasonry**

“In all time, truth has been hidden under symbols, and often under a succession of allegories: where veil after veil had to be penetrated before the true Light was reached, and the essential truth stood revealed.”(31) These words of Albert Pike, the noted Masonic scholar, sound noble and true. However, the Christian must weigh Pike’s lofty words with the Scripture.

Our Lord was, at all times, eager to help his disciples recognize the truth of His teachings. The only problem they had to overcome was their lack of spiritual understanding. The gospel writer of Matthew 7 tells us that all we must do, is simply ask. “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”(32) The Lord desires to draw us near to Himself. We do not have to pass through veil after veil to reach divine understanding. He has readily given it to us in His Word. According to Dr. Robert A. Morey’s research, “there were no degrees in Masonry two hundred years ago; and that the Master’s degree is no more than 150 years of age.” He goes on to say that “most Masonic historians now admit that it was the Frenchmen Desaguilliers or Dr. Anderson who invented the first three degrees. The few symbols introduced by these two Christian clergymen came from the Bible and were Christian’ in every sense.”(33) Here again we see that the origins of the Craft were rooted in Christian belief.

However, as we have seen earlier, the Craft has undergone a paganization process by those who would subvert it to their own use. Whereas, in the early years of the Lodge, the symbols that were introduced revealed truth, in the present, those very same symbols and hundreds of others are used to mislead the candidate. Albert Pike made it clear when he stated, "part of the symbols are displayed . . . to the initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations."(34)

Jesus taught in parables and made use of symbols in His instruction. He freely offered understanding, and He was quick to help others recognize His Father. But when we look at Freemasonry we find secrecy and the "truth" concealed. A person must prove himself worthy in order for the "Light" to be shared with him. And when it is made known to the initiate, this "truth" is often hidden further in false interpretations.

Masonry has numerous symbols. For the Christian, Masonry utilizes the Bible as one of its symbols as it uses the Koran, the Vedas, the Gita, or any other "holy" book. When the Christian candidate sees the Bible on the Masonic altar and hears the Bible referenced to in the rituals, he assumes that Freemasonry is indeed Christian as he has, most likely, been told. However, the Bible is seen only as a symbol by the Lodge, as are all the other "holy" books of other religions.

This attitude toward the Bible makes it clear that, for Masonry, the Bible is not seen as being inspired by God, useable for reproof, correction, or training in righteousness. Rather, it "is only a symbol of Divine Will, Law, or Revelation."(35)

## **Salvation in the Lodge**

"This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."(36)

The early Masons followed a biblical understanding of salvation and what it meant to be a Christian. However, the pagan writers who rewrote the Masonic rituals omitted the references to biblical salvation and wrote them in a way that would not offend anyone of another religion.

The early rituals for the Master Mason Degree were Christian in their overall meaning. According to Dr. Morey, biblical phrases such as "regeneration," "redemption," and "heaven" were used without question.(37)

The greatest issue for the Mason, at present, is whether he will accept the life and work of Jesus Christ for his redemption or whether he will look to himself for personal salvation. Manly P. Hall says that "a Mason is evolved through ages of self-purification and spiritual transmutation."(38) So, the modern Mason, who follows the Fraternity's writings, looks to himself for purification and acceptance before a righteous God. Hall says elsewhere that the Master Mason's "spiritual light is greater because he has evolved a higher vehicle for its expression."(39)

Foster Bailey, the author of *The Spirit of Masonry*, says that "Masonry is one of many ways to God" and that Masonry "is not only a system of morality, inculcating the highest ethics through which result, if followed, the conscious unfolding of divinity, but it is also a dramatic presentation of regeneration."(40)

In other words, Bailey is saying that Masonry is a vehicle for mankind to discover his divinity and achieve personal regeneration. This idea is totally foreign to the Bible. The Christian cannot, in any way, get beyond the fact that Jesus Christ as the Light giver and redeemer of humanity is opposed to the teachings of the Lodge.

The Bible distinctly teaches that salvation only comes through the person of Jesus Christ. It cannot come by any other means.

The Scripture is clear that if we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, we will receive salvation. It is not based upon our works or deeds; it is solely based upon what Jesus did on the cross.

Masonry does not accept the fact that man is born sinful and is in need of redemption. The Craft does not have a grasp of the depth of man's rebellion against his Creator. Masonic author H. L. Haywood in his book, *The Great Teachings of Masonry*, states that "many think that man was once a perfect being but that through some unimaginable moral catastrophe he became corrupt unto the last moral fiber of his being, so that, without some kind of supernatural or miraculous help from outside him, he can never be saved."(41)

Because Masonry does not have an understanding of the serious nature of man's separation from God, it cannot offer a suitable solution to his problem. The Bible tells us that man is in a state of separation from God and that he is in need of a savior. The Gospel writer of Mark speaks of the fallen nature of humanity. The Scripture says that it is what comes out of man that defiles him. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, adulteries, thefts, murders, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man."(42) Freemasonry cannot offer mankind an adequate solution to his problem of sin.

## **A Christian Response to Freemasonry**

I recall the words of my father when I first spoke to him about his involvement in Freemasonry. He told me that the Lodge taught that "once a Mason, always a Mason." Even as a senior citizen, that idea continued to have a definite hold on his thinking. My father, as a Christian, had not been able to see the vast difference between the teaching of the Church and that of the Lodge.

Once I was able to share the teaching of the Lodge with him, he was then able to make a clear decision regarding his future with the Fraternity. But, even after he had left the Lodge, he was unable to mentally sever the tie that bound him to the Lodge; he still felt the tug: "Once a Mason, always a Mason."

The Mason falls within one of four categories regarding his continued relationship with the Lodge.(43) First, there are some who do not have a clear knowledge of Christianity. They believe that religion and Christianity are the same and that if someone uses the Scriptures, that person must be a Christian. Such people are sincere but untaught. Because they do not know what Christianity teaches, they see nothing wrong with Freemasonry.

A second category would be those who do not know what Masonry is and what it teaches. They are not only uninformed about Christianity but are equally uninformed about the teachings of Freemasonry. These individuals are without any theological foundation on which to discern truth from error. Likewise, they are often ignorant of the occult direction the Lodge has taken over the past few decades.

A third group is made up of individuals who profess Christ, yet continue as Masons regardless of how much they know about Christianity and Freemasonry. They are indeed in a state of rebellion and have chosen not to follow the truth of Christ.

The final group are those who profess Christ and yet have abandoned the Christian faith. Those who have embraced this position are essentially Unitarian in their belief. They no longer hold to the absolute deity of Christ or His blood atonement.

For the most part, all Masons fall into one of these categories. In some cases, it may be that the blame is not to be laid on the individual but on the Christian church for not adequately teaching its truths. The Mason has a choice to

make, but the church has a responsibility to equip its people with the truths of the faith.

Jesus made it quite clear in the Scripture. He said, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing."(44) It is difficult for the Mason to abide in Christ as long as he remains in the Lodge and follows its teachings. It is impossible to bear fruit apart from Jesus. He alone is the one who brings the fruit forth.

It is imperative for the Christian to deal with the question of obedience. It is impossible to serve two masters without loving one and despising the other. The root problem is often the fact that the individual has not been spiritually reborn. Once again Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God . . . unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God . . . you must be born again."(45)

#### Notes

1. Delmar D. Darrah, *History And Evolution of Freemasonry* (Chicago: Charles T. Powner, 1979), 207.
2. Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* (Chicago: The Masonic History Co., 1946), 734.
3. Albert A. Mackey, *History of Freemasonry*, vol. I (New York: The Masonic History Co. 1898): 136.
4. One such incident was the brutal murder of William Morgan in 1826. He had made it known that he intended to write a book exposing the secrets of the Lodge.
5. Albert Pike, *Morals And Dogma* (Charleston, S. C.: The Supreme Council of the 33rd Degree for the Southern Jurisdiction of the U.S.A., 1950), 814.
6. Manly P. Hall, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*, (Richmond, Va.: Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., 1976), 11-19.
7. Ibid., 64; Foster Bailey, *The Spirit of Masonry*, (New York: Lucis Publishing Co., 1979), 109.

8. Hall, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*, 65.
9. Pike, *Morals And Dogma*, 219.
10. Ibid., 213.
11. Bailey, *The Spirit of Masonry*, 29.
12. Pike, *Morals And Dogma*, 105.
13. Hall, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*, 69.
14. Pike, *Morals And Dogma*, 819.
15. Ibid., 226.
16. *Little Masonic Library*, vol. 5 (Richmond, Va.: Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., 1977): 51.
17. Hall, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*, 64.
18. Jim Shaw, *The Deadly Deception* (Lafayette, La.: Huntington House, Inc., 1988), 126-27.
19. *Maryland Master Mason* magazine (March 1973), vol. 2.
20. Matthew 10:32-33.
21. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, 594.
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23. Ibid., 741.
24. See John 8:12 and 1 John 1:5.
25. Pike, *Morals And Dogma*, 321; 2 Corinthians 11:14.
26. Carl H. Claudy, *Foreign Countries: A Gateway to the Interpretation and Development of Certain Symbols of Freemasonry* (Richmond, Va.: Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., 1971), 90.
27. See Matthew 5:34-37 and James 5:12.
28. Hall, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*, 11,68.
29. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, 760.

30. Ibid.
31. Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, 248.
32. Matthew 7:7-12.
33. Robert A. Morey, *The Origins and Teachings of Freemasonry* (Southbridge, Mass.: Crowne Publications, Inc., 1990), 76.
34. Pike, *Morals And Dogma*, 819.
35. Henry Wilson Coil, *Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia* (New York: Macoy, 1961), 520.
36. Acts 4:11-12.
37. Morey, *The Origins And Teachings of Freemasonry*, 113.
38. Hall, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*, 71-72.
39. Ibid., 54.
40. Bailey, *The Spirit of Masonry*, 105,140.
41. H. L. Haywood, *The Great Teachings of Masonry* (Richmond, Va.: Macoy, 1971), 138.
42. Mark 7:20-23.
43. Alva J. McClain, *Freemasonry and Christianity* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1983), 32-35.
44. John 15:4-5.
45. John 3:5.

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# A Course In Miracles – A Christian Worldview Evaluation

*Former Probe staffer Russ Wise looks at the religious movement started by A Course in Miracles from a Christian, biblical worldview perspective. As he examines its origins and its tenets, he finds that it departs from true Christianity in multiple areas and is clearly a false teaching.*

## **Historical Background**

In 1965 a Jewish atheistic psychologist from Columbia University began to channel messages from a spirit she believed to be Jesus. She ultimately produced, or she says Jesus revealed to her, well over a thousand pages of revelation during the next seven years.

According to her testimony, Helen Schucman had a difficult relationship with her department head at the university. In an attempt to move beyond their differences, they set out on a journey to find a base of common agreement. Schucman began having “highly symbolic dreams” and experiencing “strange images.” Her colleague encouraged her to transcribe the content of these phenomena so they might understand them better.

As she began to write, she was surprised to see “This is a course in miracles” appear on the paper. She went on to say that this was her introduction to the “Voice.” This voice began to give her rapid inner dictation that she took down in shorthand.

According to the dictated material, the voice of *The Course* was Jesus. As a result of the influence Christianity has had on humanity, *The Course* chose Christian terminology to convey its message. A 1977 pamphlet published by the *Foundation For Inner Peace* states, "its only purpose is to provide a way in which some people will be able to find their own Internal Teacher"—in other words, their personal "Spirit Guide."

## **Key Players**

There are several individuals who play key roles in spreading the message of *The Course*. Perhaps the most prominent is Marianne Williamson. A former lounge singer and now its most celebrated guru, she has become *The Course's* media star, appearing on numerous television programs. Her most-watched and persuasive appearance was on *Oprah*. She has been *Oprah's* guest on several occasions. Because of her personal interest in New Age philosophy, Oprah Winfrey purchased a thousand copies of *A Return To Love*, Williamson's book, to give to her television audiences.

Another high profile individual, well-known in New Age circles, is Gerald Jampolsky, M.D. He is a psychiatrist, formerly on the faculty of the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco and founder of the Center for Attitudinal Healing in 1975. He has written several books based on what he has gleaned from *The Course*.

In his influential book, *Good-Bye to Guilt*, Jampolsky describes his conversion to *The Course*.

I began to change my way of looking at the world in 1975. Until then I had considered myself a militant atheist, and the last thing I was consciously interested in was being on a spiritual pathway that would lead to God. In that year I was introduced to . . . *A Course in Miracles*. . . . My resistance was immediate. . . . Nevertheless, after reading just one page, I had a sudden and dramatic experience. There

was an instantaneous memory of God, a feeling of oneness with everyone in the world, and the belief that my only function on earth was to serve God.

As a result of the moral and spiritual bankruptcy of our society, namely the baby boomer generation, there is a ready-made market for the “feel good” spirituality of *The Course*. Through the influence of Williamson, Jampolsky, and others, a growing number of Christians are being sucked into this whirlpool of spiritual confusion in which they exchange the truth for a lie.

### **The Course and the Mainline Church**

We have already established that *The Course* uses Christian terminology and its followers believe it to be the revelation of Jesus. As a result, a number of denominations within Christendom have embraced *The Course* as being legitimate and introduced it into their churches.

Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians have used *The Course* in Sunday schools and special study groups within the church. Presently there are over 1,500 official study groups that have utilized *The Course* both inside and outside traditional Christian churches.

### **If It's Not Love—It Must Be Illusion**

Marianne Williamson, author of the best-selling book *A Return To Love*, says that we have “a natural tendency to focus on love.”

Only love is real. All that is negative is illusion. It simply does not exist. If anything negative is in your consciousness, it is real only because you give it reality by holding it in your mind. According to *The Course*, sickness, hate, pain, fear, guilt, and sin are all illusions. The *Cyclopedia In A Course In Miracles* states that “illusions are investments. They will last as long as you value them.” The *Cyclopedia*

continues, "The only way to dispel illusions is to withdraw all investment from them, and they will have no life for you because you will have put them out of your mind."

*The Course* sums it up this way, "There is no life outside of Heaven. Where God created life, there life must be. In any state apart from Heaven life is illusion." There you have it! It is perfectly clear—murder, rape, and other forms of evil do not exist because they do not come from "love." Try explaining to a mother who has lost a son or daughter that their loss is the result of an illusion.

### **The Problem of Evil**

You guessed it, *The Course* also teaches that evil does not exist. It is an illusion that must be overcome by right thinking. *The Text* (i.e., volume one of *The Course*) reads, "Innocence is wisdom because it is unaware of evil, and evil does not exist." In essence what is meant is that evil does not stand on its own, that it only has reality as the individual believes its existence. So, you might say that the rape victim created her own evil situation and thereby caused her own suffering. The victim is guilty; the perpetrator had no choice.

### **The Problem of Guilt and Sin**

A pamphlet published by the *Foundation For Inner Peace* states, "Sin is defined as a 'lack of love.' Since love is all there is, sin in the sight of the Holy Spirit is a mistake to be corrected, rather than an evil to be punished."

*The Course* further teaches that there is no need to feel guilt because there is no sin. Sin does not exist. The problems that man faces are a result of separation from God. This separation is only illusion because it likewise does not exist. It is only a reality for those who believe they are not part of the divine.

*The Text* makes this point clear where it declares that “no one is punished for sins, and the Sons of God are not sinners.” As you might anticipate, there is likewise no need for the cross because there was never a transgression that needed to be dealt with by God, only a mistake. If we are a part of God, how then can we become fragmented by sin since separation (i.e., sin) does not exist?

### **Thought-Reversal**

The stated goal of *The Course* is to change how one thinks, to change one’s belief system by subtle deception. The individual is for the most part unaware of the transformation he or she is undergoing because *The Course* utilizes Christian terminology. *The Manual for Teachers* (i.e., volume three of *The Course*) boldly says, “It cannot be too strongly emphasized that this course aims at a complete reversal of thought.”

### **Religious Recovery—The Thirteenth Step**

Many who become involved in studying *The Course* are active in self-help groups such as Twelve Step programs. They are seeking to make connections in their lives and discover who they truly are. They are willing participants in this transformation.

Many are desiring some form of “spirituality” and for those who see the Bible as being too harsh, *The Course* offers what they believe to be God’s correction of our misinterpretation of the original message of Jesus.

*The Course* becomes the “thirteenth step” in recovery for those who are attempting to escape the rigid fundamentalism that has smothered them in the past. For them, the recovery process becomes a spiritual transformation.

The integration of psychology and spirituality becomes a lure that pulls them deeper into the web of deception and ultimately suffocates them. The biblical teaching of original

sin is dismissed for the more palatable “original goodness.”

This “thirteenth step” regards all faiths as a part of the whole; they are one, and a psychological unity of sorts is achieved. *The Course* becomes whatever the individual desires it to be, it is “Christian,” but not if you don’t want it to be. It’s psychology, but more than psychology. It’s not New Age, but then again it is.

*The Course* claims to have all of life’s answers. It has become the “spiritually correct” solution to bring about peace and unity. However, in the end, this transformation brings spiritual death.

Helen Schucman’s new do-it-yourself psycho-spirituality is not new. The Hindus have been taught for centuries that the world and all that is in it is *Maya*, or illusion.

### **Sense and Sensibilities**

We must be clear that the message of *The Course in Miracles* is *not* the message of Jesus Christ. Schucman and her Course do not teach that Jesus is God incarnate yet fully human, but that He is an highly evolved being who became divine. The Bible does not allow for such an idea.

The Bible also leaves no room for the idea that evil does not exist, but instead that evil entered the world through disobedience. Likewise, the Bible does not allow for the idea that God is a universal oneness rather than a personal Being.

Kenneth Wapnick, a Jewish agnostic who later became a Catholic monk, founded the *Foundation for A Course in Miracles*. Wapnick states that *The Course* and biblical Christianity are not compatible. He gives three reasons why he holds such a view. First, *The Course* teaches that God did not create the world. Second, *The Course* teaches that we are all equally Christ. Jesus is not the *only* Son of God. And third, *The Course* is clear in its teaching that Jesus did not suffer and die for

man's sin.

The above differences clearly show why a Christian cannot in good faith consider *The Course* as a source for his or her spiritual understanding. It is unequivocally anti-biblical and is without doubt promoted by Satanic deception (2 Corinthians 11:14: 1 Timothy 4:1).

### **A Short Course in Doctrine**

*The Course* teaches that there are no absolutes; truth is relative and is determined by one's experience. According to the *Cyclopedia In A Course In Miracles*, "only what is loving is true." So truth is subjective.

Marianne Williamson, the author of *A Return To Love*, made this observation about truth in her book: "There's only one truth, spoken different ways, and the Course is just one path to it out of many." In other words, no one religious tradition has all the truth, but there are many avenues to the truth and the individual has the freedom to choose the path most suitable to him or her.

### **Who Is Jesus?**

According to Williamson, Jesus is one of many enlightened beings. In her text she makes this statement, "Jesus and other enlightened masters are our evolutionary elder brothers." She continues by saying that "the mutation, the enlightened ones, (including Jesus) show the rest of us our evolutionary potential. They point the way." So in reality Jesus is a way-shower.

Williamson makes a telling observation on page 41 of her book by saying that "*A Course In Miracles* does not push Jesus. Although the books come from him, it is made very clear that you can be an advanced student of the Course and not relate personally to him at all." This is an interesting comment regarding the lack of relationship one is to have with their

God. For Christians, faith is built on a personal relationship with Jesus. Without it, their salvation would be in question.

Williamson continues by saying, "Jesus reached total actualization of the Christ mind, and was then given by God the power to help the rest of us reach that place within ourselves." Such a statement brings to mind Matthew 7:23 where Jesus says, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

### **The Christ and Salvation**

*The Manual For Teachers* states that "Jesus became what all of you must be." It continues by declaring, "Is he the Christ? O yes, along with you."

*The Course* identifies with much of New Age thought in that it teaches false Christology. New Age proponents teach that *The Christ* is the one who is the most highly evolved being during a given age. This Christ, whether it be Buddha, Krishna, or Jesus, is the messiah for a given age. They believe, for example, that Jesus was *The Christ* for the Church or Piscean Age. According to their philosophy, Jesus achieved Christhood and by right-thinking we too can achieve Christhood.

*The Text* says that, "Christ waits for your acceptance of Him as yourself, and of His wholeness as yours." Keep in mind that these words you have just read are, according to *The Course*, the "spirit-dictated" words of Jesus. Now hear the true Word of God from the Bible where we read, "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many" (Matthew 24:4-5). The Scripture is crystal clear about the deception of multitudes by signs and wonders based in experience rather than His Word.

The Scripture teaches that Jesus alone is the Christ, the Son of the living God. John 1:20 and 20:31 indicate that we are not His equals.



## Abandoning Your Miracle

There are a growing number of people waking up to the fact that *The Course* cannot adequately meet their growing need to worship a being beyond themselves, much less defend them in spiritual warfare.

Warren and Joy Smith are examples of how *The Course* is totally inadequate when it comes to defending one's spirit from the evil one and his dominion. The Smiths were deeply involved in the study of *The Course*. Warren relates Joy's story in his book, *The Light That Was Dark*.

Joy was being spiritually harassed by a man who was highly proficient in astral projection (projecting his spirit for great distances). Warren relates how they faced the attacks. "We tried every metaphysical and spiritual technique we had ever learned—we repeated our *Course in Miracles* lessons, did visualizations, prayed as best we knew how, sent the spiritual intruder blessings, and kept the whole situation surrounded in white light—but none of it had any effect. We had to wait it out. The spiritual presence was calling the shots."

After an intense time of frustration, they went to their course study leaders for help. Joy explained that they "had repeatedly applied their *Course in Miracles* lessons, such as: 'There is nothing to fear,' 'In my defenselessness my safety lies,' and, 'I could see peace instead of this.'" After explaining that nothing had worked, Frank, their study leader, "made it clear that he agreed with the Course's metaphysical teaching that evil was only an illusion and that the experience was probably something that Joy was working out within herself."

Frank's wife, Trudy, was dazed when she heard herself say, "Put on the whole armor of God and stand fast against the wiles of the devil!" In amazement at herself she added, "Ephesians 6:10. It's in your Bible."

Trudy went on and said, "I'm sorry, Frank. There is a devil . . . read Ephesians!" In the days ahead Joy continued to undergo the harassing attacks. During this time of uncertainty Warren visited a bookstore and discovered a book entitled *The Beautiful Side of Evil* by Johanna Michaelsen. He read it through and decided its message of deliverance was worth a try.

It wasn't long before he had an opportunity to test his newly found discovery—biblical exorcism. Joy fell into a depression as she had on so many occasions, and Warren seized the opportunity to act.

He relates the incident in his book this way, "Reading from my notes the exact words that I had taken from Johanna's book, I firmly addressed the presence. 'Satan, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I command you to be gone! I forbid your presence here. I claim the protection of the blood of Jesus upon us. Go where Jesus sends you!' Immediately Joy's face cleared and the oppression was gone.

Warren later remarked, "We were amazed that the presence left every time we called on his [Jesus Christ's] name. Nothing in *A Course in Miracles* or any other metaphysical teachings had ever talked about this aspect of Jesus."

Warren and Joy's encounter with personal evil ultimately convinced them that the Bible was the spiritual teaching that they could rely on. Warren said it best, "So far it hasn't let us down."

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# Unity School of Christianity

## History

The Unity School of Christianity began as a quest for physical healing by its co-founder, Mary Caroline Page, known as Myrtle, the wife of Charles Fillmore. Even before their marriage in March of 1881 Myrtle had already developed an eclectic theology. Charles had a background in Hinduism, Buddhism, Rosicrucianism, and Theosophy.

They became students of metaphysics and after taking some forty or more courses Myrtle developed what was to become known as Practical Christianity. Myrtle became a practitioner of "mental healing."

A spiritual breakthrough came for Myrtle in 1886 when she attended a meeting lead by Dr. E.B. Weeks, a noted metaphysician. Dr. Weeks made a statement that would change Myrtle's understanding of herself and set her on a new course of spiritual development. Myrtle was in a state of mental and physical illness and had come to a point where she was not helped by either medicine or physicians. Dr. Weeks's statement that day brought her the healing she sought. She cherished each word of the phrase "I am a child of God and therefore I do not inherit sickness."

Myrtle believed that she had discovered a great "spiritual truth" regarding healing, i.e., by repeating this phrase as a positive affirmation she would be healed. She began to offer her services to others and soon developed a following of those seeking divine healing.

The Fillmores were students of Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, a mental healer and metaphysician. Myrtle was also a follower of Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, who was likewise influenced by Quimby. Unity, therefore, was birthed

by the Fillmores, but its roots go back to directly to Mary Baker Eddy and both directly and indirectly to Phineas Quimby.

According to Charles Fillmore the name Unity was adopted in 1895, denoting that Unity was devoted to the spiritualization of all humanity and took the best from all religions. He said the following regarding the eclectic belief system of Unity:

*We have studied many isms, many cults. People of every religion under the sun claim that we either belong to them or have borrowed the best part of our teaching from them. We have borrowed the best from all religions, that is the reason we are called Unity. . . . Unity is not a sect, not a separation of people into an exclusive group of know-it-alls. Unity is the Truth that is taught in all religions, simplified. . . so that anyone can understand and apply it. Students of Unity do not find it necessary to sever their church affiliations.*

Thus many Christians adopt Unity's teachings and bring those back into their churches, not identifying their "new" teachings as Unity's and thereby compromising the doctrinal integrity of the church.

## **Unity Doctrine and Theology**

### **God**

God is not a personality but a spiritual energy "force" or principle of love. Charles Fillmore in his book, *Jesus Christ Heals*, says that "God is not loving. God is love . . . from which is drawn forth all feeling, sympathy, emotion, and all that goes to make up the joys of existence."

Fillmore goes on to say, "God does not love anybody or anything. God is the love in everybody and everything. God exercises none of His attributes except through the inner consciousness of the universe and man." In other words, God is

not a personal being but an energy or force that expresses itself as a pantheistic love that permeates all things.

H. Emilie Cady attempts to reconcile the seemingly incongruous possibility that God can be both personal and impersonal by her statement:

*To the individual consciousness God takes on personality, but as the creative underlying cause of all things, He is principle, impersonal; as expressed in each individual, He becomes personal to that one personal, loving, all-forgiving Father-Mother.*

It's obvious that Unity's understanding of who God is has fallen victim to its own syncretism. Unity, while attempting to identify itself as being biblical, has offered too much on the "altar of tolerance" and, thereby, has prostituted itself on the bed of other gods.

Donald Curtis, former minister at Unity Church of Dallas and author of several Unity books, has this to say about God: "Every one of us has planted within him a God-seed, and the business of life is to see that this seed grows, unfolds, and expresses in our world."

Curtis goes on to say, "As this seed unfolds through the development of the Christ consciousness, we fulfill our highest objective in this world."

The ultimate goal of those who follow Unity teaching is to recognize their "oneness" with the "Force," thereby realizing their true self, the God-Self. The god of Unity is an adaptation of Hindu belief regarding the divine. God is a part of His creation. God is in all things.

## **Jesus the Christ**

Unity also holds an unbiblical view of Jesus. Donald Curtis agrees with Unity theology in that he believes that Jesus the

man is fundamentally different from Jesus the Christ. Curtis says, "Christ is the universal principle of love and wisdom. Christ is the only Son of God, but this only Son of God lives in each one of us."

Curtis makes a primary deviation from biblical understanding in that he holds the position that Jesus is man and that Christ is divine consciousness. He states, "Let us prepare ourself so that the Christ may be born in our own consciousness!" In other words, our spirituality is based on the discovery that the Christ is inherently within each one of us regardless of our personal beliefs or affiliations.

Curtis continues: "When we say 'Jesus the Christ,' we must realize that Jesus represents man and Christ represents God in man." Unity distorts Christ as the Messiah and renders Him as a "universal principle of love" that resides in all of humanity simply waiting to be discovered through self-consciousness.

Unity, along with other New Age belief systems, espouses a mental and spiritual 'transformation' that will raise our consciousness. According to Curtis "there are levels of development through which we grow toward full Christ-consciousness when we are truly transformed, fully reborn."

The pantheistic nature of Unity is expressed in Curtis' declaration that "we let our self be ruled by the Christ within. We let the Christ teaching unfold in and through us in this great new age. We know that this Christ principle indwells every individual, no matter what his religious beliefs may be. . . . We give thanks for the realization of the mystical Christ, for the Christ consciousness alive in our life."

## **Unified Man**

According to Donald Curtis, man's primary purpose is to recognize that he is divine. He states: "There is another

teaching, however a higher teaching. It is that man has always existed as part of God, and that this God-self, which is the living Essence of everything, individualizes itself in man."

Curtis goes on to say that "within each of us there is a great, wise, and beautiful Being. This is what we really are—the living Essence of everything. We are evolving constantly. We have self-consciousness; now we must develop God-consciousness, a sense of universal unity. And we must endeavor to manifest this God-consciousness in our world to solve our apparent differences through love and understanding."

Unity teaches evolution, both physical and mental or spiritual. It teaches that mankind evolves toward Godhood and that this collective God-consciousness will be man's solution to all his problems. This teaching elevates mankind to divinity, a position that is far from biblical teaching.

In his book *The Way of the Christ*, Curtis says that "man is human, but he is first of all divine." He adds that "as we recognize and identify with the Christ within, we become one with the universal Self-God."

This is nothing more than Hindu philosophy dressed in Western garb: everything is a part of God and God encompasses all that is, whether it be animate or inanimate. This idea, pantheism, is widely held in the East and is being imported to the United States via every means available to man.

## **Salvation**

H. Emilie Cady in her book, *Lessons in Truth*, says that "man originally lived consciously in the spiritual part of himself. He fell by descending in his consciousness to the external or more material part of himself." In other words, the fall of man was from the spiritual realm to the physical and this fall has caused him to suffer spiritual amnesia. Therefore man's dilemma is to reclaim his place in the spiritual realm through

right thinking.

Unity teaches that as man discovers his innate divinity he continues to raise his consciousness until he becomes fully God-realized. Once man has achieved this state of understanding he recognizes that he is in perfect oneness with God and is not in need of redemption but that he is indeed the divine.

The unbiblical position regarding salvation held by Unity is clearly seen in the Unity publication, *The Way to Salvation*. This pamphlet states that "Jesus Christ was not meant to be slain as a substitute for man; that is, to atone vicariously for him. Each person must achieve at-one-ment with God, by letting the Christ Spirit within him resurrect his soul into Christ perfection."

Curtis says that "more than ever, we need to become quiet and focus upon the inner. We need to be still and to know that the presence within is God." When one becomes fully aware of this divine presence salvation is realized because the individual no longer has a sense of lostness.

## **Reincarnation**

Unity teaches that the individual lives a number of lifetimes within one existence. Dr. Donald Curtis of the Unity Church of Dallas writes that "it isn't so important that we make it in this particular lifetime, as it is to realize that we do make it, because there is only one lifetime and it goes on forever."

Article 22 of the Unity Statement of Faith states, "we believe that the dissolution of spirit, soul and body, caused by death, is annulled by rebirth of the same spirit and soul in another body here on earth. We believe the repeated incarnations of man to be a merciful provision of our loving Father to the end that all may have opportunity to attain immortality through regeneration, as did Jesus."



Charles Fillmore rejected the standard understanding of reincarnation as described by the Hindu or the Buddhist. He could not accept their respective teachings regarding the Law of Karma or the Transmigration of the soul. For him reincarnation was a much more simple way for God to offer man a second chance at perfection.

This teaching of reincarnation is perhaps the most destructive of all the false teachings of Unity. The belief in reincarnation undercuts the primary tenets of the gospel. One would have to deny the deity of our Lord, His physical resurrection, and His Second Coming to accept the error of Charles and Myrtle Fillmore.

Reincarnation undercuts Christian doctrine in three ways. First, it assumes that God is impersonal and is therefore unknowable. Second, reincarnation denigrates the Atonement of Christ, and third, it denies the fact that Jesus physically resurrected from the dead. We need to look at each of these more closely.

The Bible does not offer any evidence to support these assumptions. On the contrary, the Bible clearly teaches that God is a personal Being and that He is knowable. Isaiah 43:25 and Jeremiah 31:20 tell us that God remembers; Exodus 3:12 and Matthew 3:17 say that God speaks; Genesis 1:1 and 6:5 along with Exodus 2:24 say that God sees, hears and creates. Elsewhere the Bible tells us that God is a personal Spirit (John 4:24 and Hebrews 1:3). Since God is a personal Being, He has a will (Matthew 6:10, Hebrews 10:7-9 and 1 John 2:17). Because God has an expressed will, He will also judge His creation (Ezekiel 18:30 and 34:20, and also 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Unity attempts to denigrate the Atonement of Christ in order to build a better case for reincarnation; however, the Atonement delivers man from the cyclical concept of rebirth. Reincarnation does not offer us either peace or hope. The

Atonement offers us peace because we do not have to rely on our own righteousness, and it offers us hope because of what Jesus did on the cross. Jesus has dealt with our sin on the cross and our response is to simply accept His work on our behalf.

Likewise, Unity cannot accept a physical resurrection for our Lord. Unity holds that the disciples expected Jesus to be reincarnated, not resurrected. The biblical claims that Jesus rose physically, appeared to and was recognized by many, was physically touched by some, and ate fish with others are troublesome and must be explained away or spiritualized into meaninglessness if Unity is to seem plausible. (See Luke 24:16 and 31.)

## **Conclusion**

The Unity School of Christianity is recognized as a cult because it exhibits several cultic characteristics. One such characteristic is syncretism. Syncretism is the attempt to combine or reconcile differing beliefs, usually by taking the most attractive features from several sources and combining them into a something new. Unity has taken what some would call "the best qualities" of various religious view points and combined them into a new and more acceptable faith.

Another characteristic of cults that is true of Unity is the denial of the biblical doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ's person and His finished work on the cross. In Unity, salvation comes by recognizing our inherent divinity and our oneness with God.

Unity is, in my opinion, the most deceptive of the cultic groups that use the word Christian in their name. Unity's distinction is that the follower of its teaching is encouraged to remain in his respective church home whether it be Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, or whatever. The followers of Unity considers their denominational affiliation as a mission field

where they can subtly disseminate their ideas.

I recall that when I first became a believer and was attending a Methodist church, there was a particular woman in the church who often greeted me with the phrase, "Greetings to your higher self." It was a peculiar way to greet someone, yet I never asked her what she meant by it. It was several years later when I became a student of the cults that I understood the significance of her greeting. She was a follower of Unity's teachings, that each of us has the divine residing within us and that the higher self is God.

According to Charles Fillmore, Unity is the blending of various religions and belief systems into one unified system of thought. The Fillmores introduced beliefs into their system that had been commonplace in Eastern religions and occult practices.

The Fillmores introduced a pantheistic view of God to their followers and saw God as being both male and female. God is seen as an energy or force that resides in all things both animate and inanimate. Likewise God is seen as being impersonal and a part of His creation.

Jesus is a principle of "love" that brings oneness to all things. This Christ principle is present within each one of us and ultimately unifies us in a salvation experience.

Unity teaches that man's primary problem is that he has spiritual amnesia and needs to reconnect with his destiny. He needs to regain the realization that he is evolving toward divinity.

Salvation, according to Unity, comes by recognizing one's divine nature. Unity does not recognize the Atonement of Christ but rather seeks what Eastern mystics refer to as at-one-ment or realizing oneness with the divine on a spiritual level.

Since Unity does not recognize the work of Christ on the cross (the Atonement), but rather accepts evolution as a positive ingredient in man's spirituality, it is only logical that they embrace reincarnation as a valid system for spiritual enlightenment. As you can see, then Unity is not based on biblical teaching. To the contrary, it is heavily influenced by Eastern thought and belief. Unity is a classic New Age cult and is not Christian in any aspect of its doctrine or teaching.

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## **Embraced by the Light of Deception – A Christian Critique**

*Former Probe staffer Russ Wise shows that Betty Eadie's best-selling book Embraced by the Light is a combination of biblical images and spiritual deception.*

### **The Popularity of Betty Eadie's Book**

A growing number of Christians are embracing the light of Betty Eadie, the author of *Embraced by the Light*. Ms. Eadie's book, along with several other new-age bestsellers, are influencing the Christian church in a negative way.

The bestseller, *Embraced by the Light*, is one that needs to be dealt with. It has been on the *New York Times* Bestseller List for over a year now and has sold more than two million copies thus far.

Betty Eadie is a woman on a mission and her mission is to introduce the "Jesus" she met in her near-death experience to as many people as she can. She has been on a variety of national television programs and hundreds of local programs. According to her publicist she has spoken in a significant number of churches, and Christians make up a large portion of those who purchase the book. That is scary.

Ms. Eadie has become somewhat of a guru for many. When she was in Dallas in February, 1994, the *Dallas Morning News* carried a lead story expressing the adoration of her new-found followers. One woman said that Ms. Eadie gave her a kind of inner peace and that without it she would have lost her mind. Another woman said that she cried all the way through the book the first time she read it. A man said that the book validated a lot of things he had believed and that he now looks at things differently.

According to the *Dallas Morning News* article the book's greatest appeal "stems from the description of eternal life, a comforting notion for people who have survived a loved one or for those pondering their own fate."

The popularity of Betty Eadie and her book *Embraced by the Light* in Christians' lives raises some important questions for us to ask ourselves. Why is her message so readily accepted by Christians? How has the church failed in its mission, thereby creating an atmosphere where such heresy could flourish?

Ms. Eadie says that she was shown in the spirit world that we were with God in the beginning and that we helped him to create the earth. She tells us that Eve's "initiative" made it possible for mankind to have children, that sin is not our

true nature, and that we are inherently divine.

She continues by saying that we are all God's children and that we are here on earth to learn the lessons we need for our own spiritual evolution. Our key lesson is to remember our divinity and return to heaven. Eadie embraces the idea that all religions and faiths are equal in God's sight and that they are essential in our development. Likewise, spirits from the other side will also help us learn the lessons of life and aid in our progress.

Ms. Eadie says that death is a spiritual "rebirth" as we simply make a "transition" to another state of being. There will be no judgement day and we will judge ourselves regarding our spiritual evolution.

## **Mormonism and Magic**

She also teaches that we choose the illnesses that we would suffer and that some would choose the illness that would end their lives. She further teaches that hell is not forever and that because of "love," in the end, all will be saved.

Before we can fully understand Ms. Eadie's worldview and theology it is important for us to recognize that she is a Mormon and has been exposed to new age paganism. She has, in fact, been a member in good standing of the Mormon Church for the past fifteen years or more.

Betty Eadie's background is a mixture of native American Indian spirituality, Catholicism, and Mormonism. Her mother was a full-blooded Sioux Indian and as a young child Betty attended a Catholic boarding school.

This spiritual syncretism helps us recognize the source of her close encounter with "the Light." As we take a closer look at her new-found belief system we are able to not only see Mormon ideas but beliefs that are found in the occult.

On page 57 of her book Betty tells the reader, "within our universe are both positive and negative energies, and both types of energies are essential to creation and growth. These energies have intelligence—they do our will. They are willing servants."

You may remember "The Force" of *Star Wars* and its "light" and "dark" side. The Force was both "good" and "evil." One simply chose which side of "The Force" one wanted to utilize for his evolutionary development. There was no "right" or "wrong" choice; it was a matter of personal preference.

The Force is similar to "magic." In the occult world magic has a "good" side and an "evil" side. It is also considered to have a "light" side and a "dark" side.

Magic is an attempt by man to gain equality with God. To become a part of the creative process. God spoke the universe into existence by His word. The magician, sorcerer, or witch attempts to speak things into existence by words based on their occult knowledge.

**The Christian desires to obey the will of God, not to force God to do his bidding. This is the essential difference between occult practice, magic, and Christianity.**

Another example of Ms. Eadie's new age belief is the account of her being in a garden while she had her out-of-body experience (OBE). She saw a rose and was struck by its beauty and as she looked at it she felt that she had become "one" with it. She states on page 81 of her book, "I felt God in the plant, in me, his love pouring into us. We were all one!"

"At-one-ment" or the interconnectedness of all things is a primary tenet of new age thought and philosophy. Betty Eadie, through her OBE, experienced the greatest deception Lucifer plays on humanity—that we are a part of the divine, that we are indeed deity. The idea that we are divine beings opens our understanding that we have all that we need "within" us to

progress toward our full potential as a god or goddess.

Our “looking” or “going” within is an attempt to discover our inner allies and gain “deep” learning so we further evolve mentally and spiritually. These allies or inner teachers, helpers, or guides are available to all of us, according to the new age mystics.

This inner teacher is also known as the “Higher Self” or the “True Self” and is in constant battle with our cognitive or conscious self. The focus of knowledge is transferred from the objective and cognitive to the subjective and intuitive or experiential. *It is my contention that the greatest danger Betty Eadie represents for the Christian is that Truth is based on or in experience rather than the Word of God.*

## **Betty Eadie’s View of Jesus**

Ms. Eadie believes that the “Jesus” she met during her OBE was the “real” word of God and not a book that has been corrupted over the millennia. Perhaps some of the most disturbing aspects of her book is what is left out rather than the deception within.

Betty Eadie never mentions the crucifixion or the atonement for sin. In her worldview they simply are not needed. According to her belief we are at-one with God. Likewise, she never mentions the cross of Christ; evidently her “Jesus” is too positive to mention something as negative as the cross or the need of redemption.

There is no mention of evil or victory over sin. There is no resurrection. Ms. Eadie is almost evangelistic in her declaration that “all religions upon the earth are necessary because there are people who need what they teach. People in one religion may not have a complete understanding of the Lord’s gospel and never will have while in that religion.” (see Gal. 1:8 and 2 Cor. 11:13 along with Matt. 24:24)



Eadie continues by saying “as an individual raises his level of understanding about God and his own eternal progress, he might feel disconnected with the teachings of his present church and seek a different philosophy or religion to fill that void. When this occurs he has reached another level of understanding and will long for further truth and knowledge.”

She says, “Having received this knowledge, I knew that we have no right to criticize any church or religion in any way. They are all precious and important in his sight.”

Another concern of Ms. Eadie’s is her unbiblical teaching regarding the person of Jesus. On page 44 of her book Ms. Eadie recounts her meeting the Jesus of her out-of-body-experience:

I understood that he was the Son of God, though he himself was also a God, and that he had chosen from before the creation of the world to be our Savior.

Ms. Eadie’s statement regarding the person of Jesus is legitimate with the exception of one word that causes us to think of how the Jehovah Witnesses translate John 1:1. The article “a” becomes very important when it precedes “God.” However, for Ms. Eadie the use of the article “a” indicates that she views Jesus as another distinct deity rather than the second person of a triune god—thereby exposing her Mormon understanding of the trinity. The Mormons believe in three separate beings who are each divine rather than three persons comprising one God as the Bible indicates.

The Bible is explicit in its affirmation of the Trinity. Deuteronomy 6:4 is clear in its declaration of one God. Elsewhere in Scripture we see God the Father (Matthew 6:9), God the Son (John 1:1), and God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4) as three distinct Persons who are equal in every aspect of their being.

In John 10:30 Jesus says that He is one with the Father,

thereby leaving no doubt of their oneness regarding their essence and that they are not two separate beings or gods as Ms. Eadie would have us believe. Ms. Eadie refers to “the Spirit of God,” although she does not mention the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity by name. The Bible, likewise, is clear regarding the stature of the Holy Spirit. In John 14:26 the Holy Spirit is seen as the enabler in helping God’s people understand divine truth.

Betty Eadie’s view of Jesus comes into focus once Biblical light is shed upon it. It becomes perfectly clear that she does not hold a trinitarian view of God.

## **Deception of New Age Religion**

The unsettling message that Betty Eadie offers in her book is that we are not sinners needing redemption, but that we are spiritual beings who have lost our way. We have forgotten our divinity. Spiritual growth is a progressive process toward self-realization and at-one-ment.

The new-age worldview of Betty Eadie is evident:

- All is One
- All is God
- Man is God
- All is changing
- Man is changing
- All is relative
- Self is the Judge
- The gospel is unnecessary

Ms. Eadie sounds like Shirley MacLaine, the popular new age entertainer and author, when she says that her prior existence “had been purposely blocked from me by a ‘veil’ of forgetfulness at my birth.” Ms. MacLaine had previously made the same statement in her popular book *Out on a Limb*.

In other words, we were with our heavenly Father in the spirit

world and eventually came to the point where we were spiritually dry and realized that the only way to get beyond our dryness was to jump start our spirituality. Thereby, we chose to leave our heavenly home and incarnate on this earth where we might further develop our spiritual essence and advance our possibilities in the spirit world.

Ms. Eadie states that prior to our leaving our spiritual home and incarnating in this world we perfected a plan for growth before we took on this physical shell. She says on page 47 of her book that "the Father explained that coming to earth for a time would further our spiritual growth. Each spirit who was to come to earth assisted in planning the conditions on earth, including the laws of mortality which would govern us."

In the spirit world Ms. Eadie was told "that we had all desired to come here, that we had actually chosen many of our weaknesses and difficult situations in our lives so that we could grow." She continues by saying, "to my surprise I saw that most of us had selected the illnesses we would suffer, and for some, the illness that would end our lives . . . we were very willing, even anxious, as spirits to accept all of our ailments, illnesses, and accidents here to help better ourselves spiritually."

According to Betty Eadie we are basically good. On page 49 of her book Ms. Eadie says "that sin is not our true nature. Spiritually, we are at various degrees of light—which is knowledge—and because of our divine spiritual nature we are filled with the desire to do good." She continues by saying "that there is a vital, dynamic link between the spirit world and mortality, and that we need the spirits on the other side for our progression."

In the above statement Ms. Eadie is allowing her god's eclectic worldview show. The idea that man is basically "good" is commonly held in the field of humanistic psychology rather than in Christian Scripture. The Bible indicates that man is

in need of redemption and forgiveness. Her belief that we, in the mortal world, are in need of the spirits from the other side to aid us in our spiritual progression is taken directly from her Mormon background. We find this teaching in the Doctrine and Covenants (128:15), one of the Standard Works of the Mormon Church.

The Biblical indication is that in the last days many will be deceived. The gospel writer of Matthew seems to agree. Not only will unbelievers be deceived but also those who have trusted Jesus for their salvation may be equally deceived. The Scripture says, "For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect." (Matthew 24:36) The problem that many have in our day is that they seek "signs" and "wonders" rather than Jesus. Experience has become their teacher rather than the Word. Our response is simply, Jesus—the only begotten Son of God. There is salvation in no other. Our hope is not in our experiences, but in a person.

## **Testing the Book by The Bible**

Betty Eadie exposes more of her Mormon worldview with her belief in a pre-mortal existence. When Ms. Eadie first speaks of "Jesus" in her book she said "I knew that I had known him from the beginning, from long before my earth life, because my spirit remembered him." Another example of her "new found" belief in a pre-existence was when "Jesus" allowed her to recall her feelings when creation occurred. She says that "all people as spirits in the pre-mortal world took part in the creation of the earth."

Ms. Eadie offers another example. She relates an experience during her heavenly visitation where she "traveled to many other worlds—earths like our own but more glorious, and always filled with loving, intelligent people." She continues by saying, "I knew that I had been to these places before." She had an experience that she could not deny.

Some have said that a man with an argument is always at the mercy of a man with an experience. A growing problem in our society is the willingness to accept one's experience over the protestation of the facts. As Christians we need to be careful that we do not fall into this trap. Our responsibility is to consider the Word of God and allow **it** to validate the experience or not. We must be extremely careful not to allow our or anyone else's experience to mold our belief system.

Another example of Ms. Eadie's pre-mortal experience was an encounter with those in the spirit world. She said, "I saw again the spirits who had not yet come to earth, and I saw some of them hovering over people in mortality. I saw one male spirit trying to get a mortal man and woman together on earth—his future parents." (I had a brief moment of *deja vu* and thought of Marty McFly in *Back to the Future*).

A growing number of Christians are accepting Ms. Eadie's account of the after-life, and the church is allowing her beliefs to take root by their lack of biblical teaching. The Bible is very clear regarding the individual's moment of existence (Psalm 139:13-16). Nowhere in Scripture does our Lord offer a possibility that we pre-existed with Him in the spirit world. The burden of proof is on the one with the experience and not the objective Word of God.

What can we learn from Betty Eadie and her near-death experience? First and foremost is that near-death experiences tend to alter one's worldview. Raymond Moody in his book *The Light Beyond* offers evidence for such a concern. He states that those who experience a near-death episode

...emerge with an appreciation of religion that is different from the narrowly defined one established by most churches. They come to realize through this experience that religion is not a matter of one 'right' group versus several 'wrong' groups. People who undergo an NDE come out of it saying that religion concerns your ability to love—not doctrine and

denominations. In short, they think that God is a much more magnanimous being than they previously thought, and that denominations don't count.

This idea, that doctrine is of no importance but we should only be concerned about love, is parallel to the teachings found in the New Age worldview. Ms. Eadie is in agreement with Dr. Moody's statement that "love" is our ultimate goal and that religion is simply a vehicle to get us to the party. It makes little or no difference whether we get there in a Ford or a Chevrolet. As warm and cozy as this idea sounds, it does not take into account the words of our Lord in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Jesus was very clear that He wasn't offering one of many ways, but that He was **The Way** and **The Truth**. He was very confident that salvation was found in no other.

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## **Jehovah's Witnesses and the Trinity: A Christian Perspective**

*Dr. Pat Zukeran provides Christians with a biblical perspective on countering the false teaching of Jehovah's Witnesses regarding the nature of God and the Trinity. Countering these non-Christian views will enable you to get to the heart of the matter in sharing Christ with members of this cult.*

# The Trinity

In another essay ([Jehovah's Witnesses: Witnessing to the Witnesses](#)) I discussed effective evangelistic strategies when sharing the faith with Jehovah's Witnesses. We covered some effective techniques such as the Witnesses' record of false prophecy, the name "Jehovah", the bodily resurrection of Christ, and the personality of the Holy Spirit. In this essay I would like to teach you how to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, a truth clearly denied by Jehovah's Witnesses. Before we can defend this doctrine, however, we must have a clear understanding of the Trinity. Too many Christians lack a solid understanding of the Triune nature of God.

The doctrine of the Trinity is the belief that there is one God who has revealed Himself in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three persons make up the one true God. These three persons are of the same substance, equal in power and glory. It is important we understand this doctrine because the wrong Jesus or the wrong God cannot save us from eternal death. Paul makes a clear warning of this in 2 Corinthians 11:4.

The Bible clearly states that there is only one God. Deuteronomy 6:4 states, "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one." Isaiah 44:6 states, "I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides me." Clearly, these verses reveal that there is only one God. Yet, there are three separate persons in the Bible who are called God and have the characteristics only God can have. The Trinity is a difficult concept to grasp, because we are finite beings trying to explain an infinite God who is beyond our understanding.

Let's take a look at some verses that back up our doctrine of the Trinity. The Father is obviously called God as seen throughout the Bible. No one will argue that point. So there is one member of the Trinity, the Father. Jesus the Son, is a separate person but He is also called God. John 1:1 says, "In

the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Titus 2:13 says, "Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." So here we see clearly, the Son is also called God.

The Holy Spirit is also a separate person, and He is also called God. First, let us understand, the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force. He is a person and has the characteristics of a person. He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30), He speaks (Acts 13:2), and He can be lied to (Act 5:3-4). In Acts 5:3-4 the Holy Spirit is called God, "But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?...You have not lied to men, but to God.'"

So we see clearly that there are three persons in the Bible, and all three are called God. Yet, we must remember, there is only one God according to the verses we looked at Deuteronomy 6:4 and Isaiah 44:6. Therefore, we come to the conclusion that the Trinity is made up of three separate persons who are the one true God. At this point we need to look at verses Jehovah's Witnesses use to attempt to disprove the Trinity and learn how to refute these arguments. Then we will look at the best verses to use in demonstrating the truth of the Trinity to Jehovah's Witnesses.

## **Jehovah's Witnesses and the Bible**

I run in to many Christians who tell me, "The Jehovah's Witnesses know their Bible so well, and they've got so many verses memorized." The truth is, they don't know their Bible well, it's just that we Christians are lacking in our Bible knowledge. When it comes to the Trinity, Witnesses only know about 8 verses to defend their view. We'll be studying the main verses they use to try to disprove the Trinity.

In one approach they attempt to show that Jesus cannot be God because He was created. The verse they use here is Colossians



1:15, "And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation." Here the Witnesses say Christ is the *first-born* which they say means, "first created being of God." Therefore, they conclude Jesus cannot be God since He was created.

The key to understanding this verse is understanding the term *first-born*, what does it mean? The Greek word for "first created" is the word *Protoktioti*. If Paul wanted to say Christ was the first created being, he would have used this word but he does not. He uses another term, *Prototokos*. Paul is referring to the Jewish use of the word *first-born* which not only means first one born but also is used as a title of sovereignty and pre-eminence.

Here's an example of the meaning of the word. In Psalm 89:27 God says of David, "I also shall make him My first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth." Let's take a good look and see how first-born is used here. Is David the first-born son of Jesse? No, he is the eighth and youngest son of Jesse. Then how is it that David is the first-born? In the Old Testament use of the word, he is first-born in that he is pre-eminent or sovereign of all the kings of the earth.

Now stick that usage of *first-born* into the context of Colossians 1:15, and it fits perfectly. Not only that, have the Witnesses read on with you to verse 18. Verse 18 shows that Paul is clearly talking about the pre-eminence of Christ for he says, "He is also the head of the body" and "the first-born" for the purpose, "that in everything he might be pre-eminent." If we were to replace *first-born* in verse 18 with the term *pre-eminent*, it would fit perfectly in the context. However, if we replaced it with *first created*, it would not fit in that context.

Another verse the Witnesses use to show Jesus was created is Revelation 3:14, "And to the angel of Laodicea write: 'The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the Beginning of the

creation of God...'" Here the faithful witness is Jesus and He is called, "The Beginning of the creation."

The Greek word for beginning is *arche*, which is used in many ways. It is used to mean "origin or source of, or ruler," but not first creation. Turn with the Witness to Revelation 21:6. In these two verses, Jehovah calls Himself the beginning. Does that mean Jehovah was created? No. Therefore, the Witnesses use of the term *beginning*, is incorrect.

Jesus was never created. John 1:1 states, "In the beginning was the Word" Jesus was with God from eternity past; Jesus has no beginning because He is the eternal God.

## **Is Jesus Inferior to God?**

Is Jesus inferior to God? Another way the Witnesses try to disprove the deity of Christ is to show that Christ is inferior in nature to God. The verses they use here are John 14:28 and 1 Corinthians 11:3.

John 14:28 reads, "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I." They will ask you, "How can Jesus be equal to God if here He states 'the Father is greater than I'?"

The term *greater* refers to position, not nature. The term *better* refers to nature. Here is a good example I use in illustrating this passage. The President is greater than you or I, correct? Yes, as Chief Executive Officer of the United States he is greater than you or I. The Jehovah's Witness will agree. But, is the President *better* than you or I? What I mean is, is there anything about the President that makes him a superior being to you or me? No.

You see, *greater* refers to position, not nature. We see in Philippians 2:6-8, that Christ though He was in the form of God, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped

but emptied Himself and submitted Himself to the Father and took on the form of a servant. Though Jesus emptied Himself, He was always in nature God and equal to the Father in nature. If Jesus wanted to say He was inferior to God in nature, He would have said, "The Father is better than I."

Here is an example of the use of the term *better* in Hebrews 1:4 (NAS); it says speaking of Jesus, "having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they." The NI V reads, "So he became as much superior to the angels..." Here we see that Jesus is a being superior to the angels, so the term *better*, is used. Remember, in explaining this verse, the term *greater* refers to position, not nature.

Another verse the Witnesses will use is 1 Corinthians 11:3, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." Here they say since the head of Christ is God, Jesus must be inferior to God.

Once again you use the same concept of equal in nature, but Christ submitted Himself to the Father. Here the principle of headship and submission established by God is displayed both in marriage and in the Trinity. Now show the Jehovah's Witnesses that in this passage, the head of the woman is man. "Does this mean that the husband is a superior being to his wife?" The answer is obviously, "No." The husband is greater than his wife by way of position but not by nature. The same applies to the Father and the Son. The Father is greater by position, but not better by nature.

Remember when you're Witnessing, you are not there to win an argument, but to show them the error of their ways in a loving and Christ-like manner, but also you are not to be afraid to boldly defend the faith.

## Proving the Deity of Christ

One of the best defenses is a good offense. When defending the Trinity to Witnesses, take charge of the conversation. Don't let the Witnesses run you in circles. You pick the topic and keep them on the topic you choose, instead of having them ask you all the questions, you have some questions ready for them to answer.

The best way to do this, when they appear at your doorstep, is ask them, "What organization are you with?" They will reply, "We are Jehovah's Witnesses." Then ask them, "Whom do you say is the God of the Apostles?" They will reply, "Jehovah." You then reply, "How do you explain the fact that Jesus is the God of the Apostles?" They will be surprised and say, "No, that's not true, where do you find that?" Here you have taken over the conversation. Now, stay in charge of the conversation and don't let them break off on another tangent.

Next, you turn to the first text John 20:28, where Thomas, after seeing the resurrected Lord, proclaims to Jesus, "My Lord and My God." Here, Thomas calls Jesus *God*. The Witnesses have two responses to this. One, they may say, "Well, Thomas was so surprised at seeing Jesus that he shouted, 'My Lord and My God,' in surprise just as we shout, 'Oh, my God,' when we're surprised." There's a problem with that. Thomas was a devout Jew and never would have shouted "my God" in surprise for that would be blasphemy for a Jew. A second response they have is, Thomas looked at Jesus and said, "My Lord," then looked to heaven and said, "My God." There's a problem with that too because the context does not say that. If you look at the passage, Thomas says, "My Lord and My God" to Jesus. So Thomas saw clearly that Jesus was God.

The next verse to turn them to is John 1:1. Now here the Witnesses will think you're falling into their trap for they have a different translation. Their translation says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word

was **a** god.”

Well, the first thing to do is to show them that *both* translations can't be right. Someone is wrong. Ask them, “If we were to go to the local library here, we would find over thirty translations of the Bible. How many would translate it your way?” The truth is only one would, theirs. Then ask them, “Are you willing to say all the translators for the past centuries have been wrong and only yours is correct?” If they're honest, they'll think about it. Others will say, “Yes, ours is the only true translation.”

It is then you say, “Let's say your translation is correct and mine is wrong, you still have a problem. How many gods do you have in that verse?” Then you take their Bible and count the number of gods with them. Say, “Well, here is one God with a capital **G**, what kind of god is He?” They'll say, “A true god.” Then you go on and say, “Here's another god with a small **g**, what kind of god is He?” They must say, “a true god.” Then you ask them, “How many gods do you have?” This is where they get stuck for they must either say two gods and be polytheists or deny their translation. These are two great verses to use when witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses.

## **The Alpha and the Omega**

As I have witnessed to many Jehovah's Witnesses, I have found some verses that work most effectively in proving the deity of Christ. Here are two of my favorite combination of verses.

The first verse is Revelation 1:8. I am reading from the Jehovah's Witness Bible, and it reads, “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says Jehovah God. Ask the Witness, “What does Alpha and Omega mean?” They'll reply, “The beginning and the end.” Then ask them, “How many Alphas and Omegas can you have?” They'll answer, “Only one.” Make sure you get this point across, there is only one Alpha and Omega.

Then turn to Revelation 22:12-13 which says, "Look I am coming quickly, and the reward I give is with me...I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Ask the Witnesses, "Who do you say the Alpha and Omega is?" They will say, "Jehovah." Now take a careful look. The Alpha and Omega in verse twelve is coming quickly. Let's see who is speaking in verse twelve.

Look at verse sixteen, "I Jesus, sent my angel to bear witness to you people of these things for the congregations. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star." It is Jesus speaking in verse twelve. If there is any doubt go to verse 20 which says, "He that bears witness of these things says, 'Yes; I am coming quickly' Amen come Lord Jesus." So it is clear that the Alpha and the Omega in verse twelve is Jesus. Here is a strong proof text that Jesus is God because both Jehovah and Jesus are called the Alpha and the Omega.

Another pair of verses that are effective when used together are Isaiah 44:6 and Revelation 1:17-18. Isaiah 44:6 says, "This is what Jehovah has said, 'The king of Israel and the Repurchaser of him, Jehovah of armies, I am the first and I am the last.'" Ask the Witnesses how many firsts and lasts can you have? It's obvious to anyone you can only have one first and one last. Ask them, "Who is the first and the last?" They will say, "Jehovah." Now turn to Revelation 1:17-18 which says, "Do not be fearful; I am the First and the Last, and the living one; and I became dead but look! I am living forever." Who is speaking here? Obviously, it is Jesus for He died but is now alive, and guess what? He is called the First and the Last. Here again we see Jesus is God.

These are my favorite verses, and I have never had Witnesses refute these arguments. Remember, the Witnesses at your door won't convert right then and there. The key is to get them to start thinking and questioning the organization, and down the road, maybe in several years, they will seek answers and that will lead them out of the organization. Don't give up or be

discouraged when sharing with Witnesses. Though they may be rude and show no signs that they are thinking, the Word of God is powerful and is working in their hearts even if we can't see it.

Remember Dr. Walter Martin (author of *Kingdom of the Cults*) went fifteen years without a convert, but he never gave up. Today we know of hundreds he pulled out of the organization. Continue to study the Word, and God bless you as you defend the faith.

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