“Is a Raffle the Same as Gambling?”

Is a raffle the same as gambling? For example, the church has an article and they ask the brethren to buy a ticket for two dollars, then they will pick one ticket and that person whose number they pull will get that article. What does the Bible say on the subject? Please help me. I think it is gambling but there are others who do not think so.

I know of many churches that sponsor various forms of gambling (Bingo games, raffles, etc.). So your question is not unique.

At the outset, let me acknowledge that there are some differences between gambling in secular arenas and inside the church. The goal of a church-sponsored event is fund-raising, often for a good cause. The goal is not so much to win a large prize but to contribute to a good cause with the possibility of winning something.

But that distinction is often lost on those affected by gambling. Because I have written on the subject of gambling, I have been in contact with many people whose lives have been shattered by an addiction to gambling. For them, the distinction between gambling outside of church and inside church is irrelevant. Their lives have been adversely affected by gambling.

Many Christians have been writing books in the last few years about gambling, calling for the church to provide help and counseling for gamblers and their families. But I would argue that a church loses it moral authority to help those struggling with gambling. How can you reach out to gamblers and their families devastated by casino gambling, racetrack gambling, or lottery gambling when your church sponsors Bingo games and raffles?

Moreover, a Bible-centered church should be a refuge from the world. People addicted to gambling need a safe place to escape the temptations of the world. When we bring gambling into the church, it is no longer a place where an addict can escape from the world.

Norman Geisler in his book *Gambling: A Bad Bet* addresses the argument that gambling must be OK since "they do it in the church." He points out that churches do all sorts of things that can't be morally justified. Cults have promoted sexual orgies, "divine deception," and all sorts of corruption. That doesn't make it right. He and I would argue that even though gambling may help a church raise money for a good cause, we shouldn't use questionable means for a good end. The means and the ends must be moral. As one clergyman put it, "We don't need to use the devil's water to operate the Lord's mill."

Gambling is wrong wherever it takes place. I would encourage you to download my article on gambling. It provides a biblical perspective on this issue. I believe these biblical principles apply to gambling outside the church and inside the church. Thank you for writing.

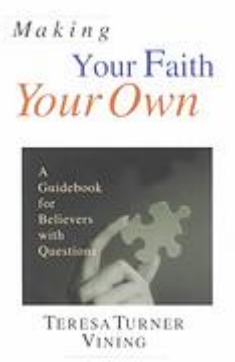
Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

"I'm Having a Terrible Battle in My Mind"

I'm having a terrible battle in my mind. I know in my heart these terrible thoughts are lies, but getting it to my mind is hard to do. I have had thoughts of doubt, disbelief, and the devil has even questioned God's holiness to my mind. About two

years ago I got serious about my walk with Christ and answered the call to preach. I need your prayers very much.

The Bible teaches the principle of "displacement." That is, rather than trying to make thoughts shoo away, we are told to replace them with what is good, true, and perfect (Phil. 4:8). As the truth comes in, the lies are displaced—much like when we fill a bathtub too full of water, and when we get in, our bodies displace the water, which flows out over the top of the tub.



What are you doing to displace the lies with the truth? I suggest that you read and meditate on Psalm 119, memorizing portions of it and reciting them OUT LOUD whenever possible. I also suggest you play good praise and worship music whenever you can, not as background music but as something to focus on. One other thing: it would probably be good for you to invest some time in reading books that will build your faith and send the lies packing, such as Lee Strobel's books *The Case for Faith* and *The Case for Christ*, and Teresa Vining's *Making Your Faith Your Own: A Guidebook for Believers With Questions.*

Also, spiritual battles are fought on the battlefield of the mind, so be sure to put on all your spiritual armor (Ephesians 6). It's all anchored to truth, so fill your mind with truth. That includes being careful what ELSE you're filling your mind with, such as TV, videos, movies and magazines that are filled with garbage. Most of those sources of information or entertainment come from the world, which is Satan's realm. Cut out the garbage, which is flavored with lies about God and about reality.

Let me pray for you, as you requested.

Father God, I thank you that _____ is recognizing there is a terrible battle going on for his mind, and I ask that You show

him what to do about it. Father, give him a distaste for anything other than the truth, and give him a deep desire to immerse himself in Your word and in works—books and music—that bring glory to You. Show him the source of the lies and give him a hatred of them, Father. Give him joy in resting in You and in developing discernment about his thought life. Teach him to love You with his mind as well as his heart and strength.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"How Do You Determine Your Spiritual Gift?"

How do people determine their spiritual gift? Is it through prayer? Or does the Lord reveal it to them in some way?

There are several ways. Praying for guidance about your spiritual gift(s) is the first step, certainly. Also important is educating yourself to find out what the gifts are and what they look like in operation. And ask the people around you what they think your gifts are, if the people around you know anything about spiritual gifts! (They are found in 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11; Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:7; and 1 Peter 4:10.)

I have discovered that when you're operating in an area of supernatural gifting, it's like getting on the moving sidewalks at airports—you can get where you're going twice as

fast as the people walking next to you who *aren't* on the people mover, and there's energy and power and a spring in your step. It's FUN! When you're using your spiritual gifts, you are aware of operating in God's power and strength instead of your own. . . and the Spirit-led response is humility instead of pride.

After studying spiritual gifts, my husband Ray and I compiled a spiritual gifts inventory that some have found helpful. I hope you do too. (These are limited to the ministry gifts and do not include the foundational gifts of apostleship or prophet, nor the sign gifts of tongues, interpretation of tongues, healings or miracles.)

Spiritual Gifts Evaluation

Teaching – *The supernatural ability to explain clearly and apply effectively the truth of the Word of God.*

- Do you love the Body of Christ and desire that others know more about Scripture and how to apply it?
- Do you love studying the Word of God?
- Do you have a passion for sharing the insights and principles you have learned from the Word?
- Do you find it a challenge to make complicated truths simple and understandable?

Pastor/Teacher – *One who is supernaturally equipped to shepherd and feed the flock of God with the result of their growth and maturity.*

- Do you deeply love the people of God?
- Do you feel a yearning to model the principles of Scripture and mentor others so that they can follow Christ also?
- Do you feel God's calling to shepherd His people, tenderly nurturing and nourishing them?

Evangelism – *The supernatural capacity to present the gospel*

message with exceptional clarity and an overwhelming burden for those who don't know Christ.

- Do you find yourself in situations where the topics of Christ and salvation come up?
- Do you gravitate toward relationships with non-Christians?
- When others hear you explain the gospel, do they respond by trusting Christ?
- Do you have a passion for the lost?

Word of Knowledge – *The supernatural ability to receive information and truth directly from God without natural means. To know without knowing how you know.*

- Do you find yourself "knowing" something you did not learn, and unable to explain how you know it?
- If you feel that God has given you a message to give to another Christian, is it confirmed by that person's response as truly coming from God?

Word of Wisdom – *The supernatural ability to have insight concerning God's perspective and relay this insight succinctly to others. "Deep insight with handles."*

- Do you experience flashes of insight on spiritual things, unusual in their clarity?
- Are you able to express this wisdom in ways that minister to people?
- Do you recognize wisdom in others when you hear it?
- Do people consider you unusually wise, and trust your judgment?
- Do you find yourself being quoted, and you recognize the quote as "a God thing"?

Faith – *The supernatural ability to believe God for the impossible.*

- When diverging roads appear before you, are you able to see God's path based on His word, in a way that others miss?

- Do you depend on God’s resources and guidance to an unusual degree?
- Are you able to firmly claim God’s presence in the midst of chaos?
- When God answers your prayers, is your response one of calm satisfaction rather than wonderment?

Exhortation (Encouragement) – *The supernatural ability to come alongside and help others by comforting, encouraging, challenging, and rebuking.*

- Are you especially sensitive to people?
- When you encourage someone, do they respond with grateful appreciation?
- Is the timing of your encouragings usually “perfect”?
- When you challenge or rebuke another believer, is it well received?

Showing Mercy – *The supernatural ability to minister compassionately and cheerfully to those who are difficult to minister to.*

- Do you have the ability to sense when a person is in need, even before they tell you?
- Are you drawn to people with emotional or physical pain, and to those society considers “unlovely”?
- Do you have an intuitive sense of when to be quiet and when to speak, or what to say and what not to say?
- Do people seek you out when they’re hurting? Do they enjoy having you around?

Giving – *The supernatural ability to give of one’s material goods to the work of the Lord consistently, generously, sacrificially, with wisdom and cheerfulness.*

- Are you enthusiastic when presented with an opportunity to give money to meet a need?
- Are you constantly looking for ways to give?
- Do you enjoy giving privately or anonymously?

- Do you REALLY think of money as God's, not yours?

Leadership/Administration – *The supernatural ability to organize and lead projects while handling people tactfully and providing the vision to keep them at the task.*

- Do you enjoy taking a disorganized situation and straightening it out?
- Are you able to motivate others to complete the project? Do people respond when you step in to give leadership?
- Do you enjoy planning and completing projects?
- Do you enjoy sorting out details, or do they frustrate you?

Service – *The supernatural ability to serve faithfully and joyfully behind the scenes, in practical ways, in long-term commitments to service.*

- Do you willingly volunteer to help with details?
- Do you prefer to work behind the scenes?
- Do you gain a sense of satisfaction when others succeed as a result of your behind-the-scenes work?
- Is faithfulness over the long term important to you?

Helps – *The supernatural ability to minister joyfully to God's people in short-term service with flexibility and sensitivity to what needs to be done.*

- Are you sensitive to specific and immediate needs?
- Are you flexible?
- Would you rather meet a one-time need than commit yourself to long-term service?

Discernment of Spirits – *A supernatural ability to distinguish between the spirit of truth and spirit of error, between holiness and evil. Can instantly sniff out when someone's a phony or lying.*

- Do you have an internal alarm that goes off when you

encounter something phony or evil?
• Even when you're the only one who senses something wrong, is your "intuition" eventually validated?
• Do you (and others) consider yourself a good judge of character?

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"How Do We Repent If Those We Hurt Are Dead or Far Away"

If we are asked to make up to those we may have offended, ask for their forgiveness—before prayers are answered or before coming to God, how do we possibly repent if those we hurt are no longer alive, or if many years have passed and they are now married, have good jobs? If we hurt people in the past by our very attitude daily—and everyone, really, we came in contact with for any length of time through negativity and criticism—how can such a lifelong sin be forgiven? How to ask repentence of so many? A very kind woman is praying for me today, and I don't want to get too close, or mislead her, but her prayers are so BIG I almost think I can begin again after many, many years away from life. Don't mean to sound self-pitying. I really do just want to make sure I don't weaken another good person again.

What wonderful questions!! I can sense that God is answering your friend's prayers by opening your mind to a new way of thinking.

Repenting means to change the way we think and to turn 180 degrees around, a U-turn, in our behavior. Repenting of our bad thinking and behaving patterns is the first step. Then comes the step of asking for forgiveness, which is necessary for there to be any reconciliation. They are two separate steps.

If the person we hurt is no longer alive, then we can't ask for forgiveness. We can receive God's forgiveness, but that's where that process ends. The next step may be to grieve the loss of that relationship and the loss of the ability to be reconciled. You just have to leave that in God's hands.

If the person we hurt is still around, then we need to pray and ask God if HE is the one telling us to contact the other person and confess our sins and ask for forgiveness. (In some situations, that would cause even more pain and it's best left in His hands.) As you continue to pray about each person you have hurt, God will give you direction about what you should do concerning each one. The best way to handle it is often through a letter because it gives the other person the opportunity to think about what you've said before replying. And it even gives them the opportunity to decline to reply at all. So you honor that person in several ways.

Your "lifelong sin" can and WAS forgiven in one moment (the moment you trusted Christ—I am assuming you have made that decision) because Jesus paid for it. His love is stronger than your sin, and His blood is more powerful than your sin. He wiped out the penalty for it. You may not have the forgiveness of those whom you offended, but you DO have God's total and unconditional forgiveness. God doesn't command you to secure the forgiveness of everyone (you don't have that kind of power), He tells you to do what is within your power to do. That is, acknowledge and confess your sin, and ask for forgiveness. That's why Romans 12:18 says, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." If someone doesn't grant the forgiveness you humbly ask for, you

can’t be reconciled with them, but at that point it’s not your fault.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“How Do We Discern God’s Will?”

Ray and Sue,

I was hoping I could take a few minutes to ask a question and draw upon your experience and wisdom. It concerns knowing the will of God and faith and confidence. We have a decision to make in our family, and there are good reasons to believe we should go through with it, for the benefit of many of us. There are many factors involved: financial, relational, comfort, influence of the children, etc. And, though I may be convinced it is the right thing, there is still an uneasiness. Now, I know many of the principles of finding God’s will:

- *What is righteous*
- *Peace after prayer / Clear feeling of direction*
- *Open and closed doors*
- *Blessing to others*
- *Wisdom of scripture*
- *Wise counsel (uh, that would be you guys!)*

My question is whether my uneasiness is a lack of faith. In studying science (and especially probability and statistics), we define confidence as a measure of certainty, and it is

always somewhere on the continuum between 0 and 1, exclusive of the endpoints. So, I feel that I cannot say anything with 100% confidence, though I may approach that on the most serious issues in life. And when I want to determine the will of God in the gray areas, my confidence is much less than on things of which I'm doctrinally certain.

If it is a lack of faith, does this have spiritual implications I'm unaware of? I mean you can say I'm sure God exists, and I'm certain Jesus was raised from the dead. To some extent, though, my confidence is based upon my perception of these realities. Any my perception can always have a (remote) possibility of being false, right? The easiest person in the world to fool is myself (Richard Feinman). Even if I know God wants me to walk that tightrope, I may still have an uneasiness as I do it, right? Is this a lack of faith? What am I missing here? What are your experiences regarding this?

Thanks for your time. I'll be very appreciative of any insight you can throw my way.

Dear _____,

Good to hear from you. Glad to know God is leading you into places of uncertainty!

Let me explain. It sounds like you have availed yourself of godly wisdom and sound counsel. Your hesitancy is not so much a lack of faith as it is a normal human reaction to change. It's called fear! Stepping out of our comfort zone! When a soldier is asked after performing a heroic deed in battle if he was scared, he invariably says YES! Courage is not the lack of fear but the ability to do what is right in the midst of fear. Jesus Himself experienced the agony of Gethsemane. It wasn't a lack of faith He wrestled with, but the very real fear of separation from the Father. Once He was convinced that the path ahead was the will of the Father, He went ahead despite the fear.

Each time I was elected chairman of the elders at our church (two consecutive years), I experienced times of wrestling with God whether He really wanted me to do that. I was scared of not being able to measure up. I felt unqualified. But once I was convinced that this was His path, I was still scared and insecure but determined to follow His path for me regardless of the consequences.

I have found that this is precisely where God wants us so we can depend on Him and not ourselves. If we are fully confident in our own abilities and decision-making, then our confidence is in our own flesh and not in Christ. Sometimes we need to be put in a rather squeamish or uncertain position, so we can recognize that it got done by His grace, and God gets the glory and not us.

If God is leading you in an uncertain or slightly scary position or decision, that means He is giving you an opportunity to grow. Will you trust Him or yourself? He won't shout or make it so plain as to be a no-brainer. He wants to see if you are listening to that still small voice despite the contrary noise of your flesh. I have never regretted stepping out when it didn't always make complete sense. The fear or uneasiness often doesn't dissipate until well after the decision is made and the results begin to show.

You are right to say that we are never entirely certain of anything. But that is not a lack of faith, just being human.

As a whole, I am firmly convinced that the church suffers today because too many are unwilling to face their fear or indecision and truly rely upon God and not themselves. I think you already know what is the course He wants you to follow. My advice is to make the decision knowing that at every step you are relying on Him and not yourself.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin

Dear _____,

So good to hear from you, and thank you for honoring us with this question!! I loved what Ray wrote and mega-dittoes to him on everything he said. I just have one thing to add. . .

I think that when we have a decision to make, it's either between two good things OR between the right thing and the wrong thing (or possibly wise and unwise). If it's a choice between good things, we can choose either one and the Lord will be glorified and He will accomplish His purposes either way. In that case, it's been my experience that we don't necessarily get a super clear "YES, DO THIS AND DON'T DO THAT" kind of response from the Holy Spirit. Which can be a little unsettling because we want clear direction and instead what we get is the Lord saying, like a waiter opening the menu before you, "Choose whatever you want and you'll enjoy whatever you choose."

Then there's the other kind of choice, which is between right and wrong or wise and unwise. I like to think of those as "red light/green light" kinds of choices. Either the Lord gives us a red light ("Stop! Don't do it!" or a check in our spirit) or a green light, which is either a sense of being given permission or a lack of any constraint otherwise (and sometimes it's a clear "Go for it!").

So my question is, is your uneasiness due to a "red light," in which case making that choice would be disobedience, or simply the reality that you're not completely sure?

Sounds to me like it's the second, which takes you back to what Ray said about the humanness of experiencing fear as we step outside of our comfort zone.

Hope this helps!

Warmly,
Sue

“Can Deacons Be Divorced?”

Please let me know what your thoughts are on the qualifications for deacons when the Bible speaks in 1 Timothy 3:12 about a husband of one wife. I know of a man that is serving as a Deacon that has been divorced 2 times and now he is married to his third wife. This has really bothered me. I have talked to a couple of people and they cannot give me answer, one of these being a minister. They say that if they go to Christ and ask for forgiveness that it is OK but I do not know what the scriptures say about being a Deacon. Thanks for your help.

I have served as an elder and as a chairman of the elders at our church and have spent a good deal of time studying the qualifications for elders and deacons. The general consensus of evangelical scholars on the phrase “husband of one wife” in both 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 is that it means the husband of one living woman. That is, it allows for a man to serve as an elder or deacon if his wife has passed away and he has remarried. This would seem to allow for a man to serve in these church leadership positions if he has been divorced and remarried. This is where it gets tricky. Jesus seemed to allow for divorce in the case of adultery (Matthew 5:31-32) and Paul added an allowance for divorce if left by an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:15). If a man seeking the office of elder or deacon had an unbelieving wife who left and divorced him, I would consider him eligible for office as long as he meets the other qualifications. However, if a believing wife and husband have sought divorce and the husband has remarried and is now seeking the office of elder or deacon, this would require a much deeper investigation into the circumstances. If the grounds for divorce were not biblical, then the subsequent marriages are suspect. I would not be inclined to allow such

an individual to stand in church leadership because this would reflect poorly on their character and they may indeed be married in the eyes of God to two women. Paul instructs a married woman who leaves her husband to remain ummarried unless it is to be reconciled to her husband (1 Corinthians 7: 10-11).

The question today remains when you have a remarried couple who have sought forgiveness for their sin, what then? They may be forgiven and brought fully into the fellowship of the church but that does not necessarily mean the husband is qualified for an official position of leadership in the church. Elders and deacons are held to a higher standard. If I were divorced while a believer, I would no longer consider myself eligible for official leadership in the church. I can still serve and have a ministry but not as an official elder or deacon. I believe each situation must be evaluated individually and in depth. A man who has been divorced must expect to be questioned thoroughly about the nature of the divorce and whether any sin involved has been fully repented of, if he desires to serve as an elder or deacon. Also please understand that different evangelical churches have come to different conclusions on this question.

I am not a theologian nor a pastor, but this is my opinion as I read the Scriptures and have had to deal with this question as an elder.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Is the United Pentecostal Church a Cult?”

Is the United Pentacostal Church a cult, theologically speaking? And if so, why? What do they believe?

The doctrine of the UPC is definitely heretical; they deny the Trinity in favor of what is called the “oneness” doctrine. Heresy makes groups a cult. Here’s a good article on that from Watchman Fellowship: www.watchman.org/cults/upc.htm

Happy reading!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“How Do I Talk to My Friend Who’s Deceived by Eastern Thought?”

I am hoping you can help me with this huge dilemma: how to talk to a friend who has rejected Christ for Eastern religious thought. I am so ashamed that I have not kept very close to my Lord through His Word, so now I can’t think how to answer this friend who is lost deep in Eastern thought. I am hurtfully speechless when she spews out the “Jesus was a good guy…God is all good and would never create a hell…we are all good…there is no sin” stuff. I am very uneasy around her. I have to keep praying in my mind to keep her awful lies out of my head. Can you help me?!?!

My friend is visiting her dying mother, and will not be here long. So, I am desperate for quick help. I am so grateful for any help and resources you can point me to.

You sound like you are in such emotional and spiritual pain! Bless you for carrying such a deep burden for your friend.

I think the best response to the "no hell/we are all good" stuff—showing how deceived she is!—is to go for the heart. You said she is tending her dying mother, so apparently she cares for her mother. You might try this approach: "What if someone broke into your house and raped and murdered your mother? You know it could happen; it happens every day. What would you want to happen then? Would you send 'happy thoughts' to the raping murderer because he's a good soul? Or would every shred of your being cry out for justice?

"I know you; I know you would want justice. And you know why? Because you are made in the image of God, and God is not only good and loving, He is also just. He wants evil punished. He promises He WILL punish evil. Don't you find that comforting?

"Eastern philosophy doesn't fit reality, because we know there IS evil, there IS sin, and the cry of our hearts is that evil and sin be addressed. And when you go back home, I beg you to read and research and think about the death of Christ. If He was only a good man, why did He have to die? If He was only a man, how could He come back to life, just as He promised He would?"

I suggest you leave your friend with questions instead of preaching the answers, and praying up a storm that the Holy Spirit will put hooks on your questions and not give her any peace until she deals with the truth and its implications.

I hope this helps!

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“How Dare You Judge Edgar Cayce?!”

How dare you judge! I just read your article on Edgar Cayce and he was a Christian. How can you say just because he had a gift that you can’t explain that he must have been in an occult! God gives us gifts and that is something you can’t control so why would you say he was dealing with the devil? Everyone perceives the Bible differently and who is to say that your way is right and his way was wrong? I am Catholic and I believe that God gives us gifts and what you choose to do with them is up to you!

Thank you for writing.

Have you ever been pulled over for speeding? When the police officer said, “You were going 70 in a 55 zone,” did you say, “How dare you judge!”? Probably not, because the officer doesn’t judge the people he pulls over—he compares our behavior with the standard of the law.

The article on Edgar Cayce compares his behavior with the standard of the law that God set down in the Bible. Having been brought up Catholic, I do understand that your perception of the Bible is probably not as accurate as it could be. The Bible is far more reliable than many people think, but they haven’t taken the time to research it. God has spoken very plainly about what constitutes the occult, and Edgar Cayce

clearly fell in that camp. He certainly did have a gift, but it wasn't from God, because God's gifts behave differently than Cayce's.

I hope that if this really bothers you, you will study the Bible for yourself and see that it is a supernatural book, and God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us understand it even further. It's not open to every person's individual interpretation, any more than the newspaper is. Different sections of the newspaper are to be read and interpreted differently, such as the comics, the front page, and the editorial page. The Bible is like that too, and the more familiar we become with it, the easier it is to tell the difference between the sections and the type of literature within it.

One more point: perhaps Edgar Cayce believed in God, but that didn't make him a Christian. The Bible says that the demons believe in God, too. What makes a person a Christian is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, when we realize that He died on the cross for OUR sins and we say "thank you" for His gift of eternal life.

Thanks for writing.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Did Nostradamus Predict the Destruction of the World

Trade Center?”

A friend sent me these writings from Nostrodamus’ Quattrains:

The book of Nostrodamus, called The Quattrains (The Centuries), he has repeatedly predicted the future over and over and over again, from centuries ago. Nostrodamus’ prediction on World War III:

“In the first year of the new century and nine months,
From the sky will come a great King of Terror…
The sky will burn at forty-five degrees.
Fire approaches the great new city…”

“In the city of york there will be a great collapse,
Two twin brothers torn apart by chaos
While the fortress falls the great leader will succumb
The third big war will begin when the big city is burning.”

What is the story on Nostrodamus? Was he a prophet or someone with extraordinary psychic powers? Was he a Christian? Is it true that his predictions have been fulfilled with great accuracy over the years? I’m sure I’m not the only reader that would like to know the answers to such questions.

I am so glad you wrote. I know this “prophecy” is buzzing around the internet in the wake of the WTC/Pentagon terrorist attacks.

First of all, these quattrains weren’t written by Nostradamus. They were written by a Brock University student within the last decade as a fabricated example to show how anybody could write an obscure-enough, impressive-sounding prophecy. (See the Snopes report: http://www.snopes2.com/inboxer/hoaxes/predict.htm)

Secondly, Nostradamus' prophecies were written in a very old French, and much depends on both the translation and the interpretation. Prophecies can only be understood in retrospect, and his "believers" work very hard to try to make his prophecies fit events. His writings are full of symbolism and obscure references that could be twisted to mean anything.

If his writings coincide with later historical events, it's a matter of coincidence, not of writing history in advance like inspired, scriptural prophecy. It is not true that his prophecies have been fulfilled with great accuracy. They have, however, been treated with great relish by those anxious to find a spiritual aspect to life without submitting to the True Author of actual prophecy!

Finally, I don't know if he was a Christian or not.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries