

“Wicca is Not a False Religion!”

You sound like a very knowledgeable person but when I was searching the web and came upon your website I was not angry but I wanted to email you and explain something about [the young girl someone took in](#). Well when you said that Wicca is a false religion you are quite mistaken. Wicca is another word or newer version of Paganism which is actually a very old and sacred religion. Paganism was even hundreds of years before Christianity. I am not sending this to you as hate mail but as a young pagan teen who is very tired of religious people saying that we need help. I would very much appreciate if you refrain from speaking about or making false accusations about other religions who do not agree with you.

Thank you for the respectful, gentle way in which you disagreed. I appreciate that so very much!! That says something lovely about you.

My statement about Wicca being a false religion is from a perspective that believes it is opposed to the one true religion. I do realize that may sound arrogant and foolish, and it absolutely would be if Christianity (with its roots in Judaism) were a man-made religion. But it is the one way of connecting with God that originates with Him. All man-made religions, including paganism and Wicca, are the result of man trying to find his way to God, or to various kinds of spirituality. The Judeo-Christian story is God reaching down to and communicating with us, and actually becoming one of us. I do know that Wiccans and pagans worship the creation. But how did that creation get here? It makes sense to worship the one who created it! (And us.)

I do understand that this is a time for you to search out what you believe and how you want to live your life. You are

obviously a smart, thoughtful young lady; I hope you are wise enough to receive this piece of wisdom. As you work your way through this very important part of growing up, don't merely look for *what works*; look for *what is true*.

Blessings to you,

Sue Bohlin

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“Is A Course in Miracles Heretical? How Do I Talk to My Friend Who Believes It?”

My friend says he believes in “A Course in Miracles.” I’ve been trying to help him to start to read the Bible instead so he sees the truth about Jesus. I’ve read [your article](#) that says the Course is anti-biblical and the work of an evil spirit.

I wonder now if this text is heretical also—not only anti-biblical? Also I’d be happy if you would describe more what heretical really mean according to the Bible. Because I think that I’ve read in the Bible that we shouldn’t associate with people who are heretics.

I really would be glad if my friend would become a christian who believes in Jesus Christ described in the Bible. So I’m wondering what attitude I should have towards him. I’ve read about Paul who in his apologetical work in Athens speaks about the unknown God worshipped in Athens. Is a similar approach good in this case? To speak about that all the love he wants

is in fact in the Biblical Jesus?

Or is it better to simply declare that I believe ACIM is the work of evil? But if it's heretical—can I associate with him more than to just state my faith in order to help come to believe in the Biblical Jesus Christ?

Thank you for your inquiry regarding *A Course in Miracles* as it relates to heresy. Allow me to give you a definition of heresy from which I tend to operate. I trust you will find it adequate! A heresy is a crime of perception—an act of seeing something that, according to some custodian of reality, is not truly there. Heresy, therefore, is always relative to an orthodoxy.

In the case of ACIM it is a heresy of orthodox Christianity. That is to say that the teachings of The Course are opposed to biblical orthodoxy. An example would be that The Course teaches that “no one is punished for their sins, and the Sons of God are not sinners” (p. 88). The Bible teaches a different understanding of man and his relationship to sin. Romans 3:10 tells us that no one is righteous. Romans 3:23 tells us that all have sinned. The word all is all inclusive—it means everyone, no one is exempt. We have all sinned. Our sin has separated us from God (Isaiah 59:2).

Another example that clearly shows us how different or unorthodox The Course is related to the Bible is the idea that “the separation is a faulty formulation of reality, with no effect at all” (p. 241). Ephesians 2: 1-3 tells us that we were dead in our transgressions and sins. Spiritual death is to be separated from God. Without God's intervention those of us who are without God are destined to eternal death. The Course erroneously teaches that we are not really separated from God, but that our perceived separation is a faulty understanding of who we really are—we are One! There is no separation. The Bible, on the other hand, is quite clear—we are self-deceiving if we do not recognize our sin and its

result, our separation from a holy Creator God.

There are numerous other examples that could be pointed out as opposing teachings between the two texts (The Course and the Bible); some are included in my article. According to Helen Schucman The Course was given to her by Jesus. She sat in a trance state and auto-wrote what he dictated. However, the teachings of Ms. Schucman's "Jesus" are diametrically opposed to the teachings of Jesus in the Bible. Therefore, if we view the Bible as being orthodox (Truth), then we would by definition consider the teachings of The Course as heresy. In other words we have two Jesuses at play. One as represented by Ms. Schucman in The Course and another as revealed in the scriptures—the Bible: an authentic Jesus as the Bible reveals and a false "Jesus" found in the pages of ACIM.

The Law of Non-contradiction comes into play at this point. The Law of Non-contradiction simply states that two opposing statements cannot be true at the same time. They can be true at one point in history, but not concurrently. It also says that two opposing views can both be in error or that one of the two may be correct, but once again they both cannot be true at the same time. In our case we believe the Bible to be True and since the Bible teaches doctrine that opposes the teachings found in ACIM then The Course must be in error and exemplifies false teaching. The "Jesus" of ACIM is a false Christ (see Matthew 24: 20-24).

In regards to your concern whether you should continue your relationship or friendship with a friend who accepts ACIM as a legitimate teaching of Jesus, allow me to make a brief comment. I would continue to interact with them and allow them to share their thoughts. If they showed a desire to continue seeking God's Truth I would lovingly point out to them the discrepancies between the two texts. Once I had established the inconsistencies between the two I would then attempt to help my friend come to an awareness of the Law of Non-contradiction. Once I have had success regarding the above I

would, then, begin a discussion concerning the trustworthiness of the scriptures. I would recommend Josh McDowell's text *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. It can be found at your local Christian bookstore or on Amazon.com. It is well worth the read and it will be a tremendous resource for you in sharing with your friend. [Ed. note: Also check out the ["Reasons to Believe" section](#) of the Probe website.]

If your friend, on the other hand, is not open to dialoguing and openly sharing his or her thoughts and beliefs about The Course and God's revealed Word then I would reconsider another course of action. I would remain open to them and offer my friendship, but they would not be my confidant or my closest of friends. I would be cordial and agreeable as long as they continued to show an openness concerning their knowing God's Truth. I believe Paul's example on Mars Hill is highly instructive for us and how we might proceed in sharing our faith with someone who stands outside orthodoxy.

I pray that you would have God's favor as you share your faith with your friend. May the Holy Spirit guide and direct your ways as you make Him known to those whom you come into contact.

Blessings,

Russ Wise
Christian Information Ministries
www.christianinformation.org

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“What Resources Can Help Me Witness to Hindus?”

Please could you send me details about how to share my Christian faith with Hindu friends and any literature that I could use with them. At present I am running a large parent toddler group here in the UK [United Kingdom] and many Indian Hindus are coming and I need some good literature and advice on how to share Jesus with them. If you can help me please reply.

Thanks for your letter. One of the most useful resources I've found for this purpose is [The Compact Guide to World Religions](#). This book not only includes chapters on the history and doctrine of various religions (including Hinduism), but it also includes helpful suggestions on how to share the gospel with such people.

Helpful articles on the Probe site include “[Hinduism](#)” and “[Do All Roads Lead to God?](#)”

Of course, by far the most important thing you can do is pray for these people, show them the love of Christ, and offer them peace and rest in their hearts through the forgiveness of sins by faith in Christ Jesus.

Hope these resources are helpful to you. Blessings to you in your ministry!

Michael Gleghorn

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“Will I Go To Hell For My Doubts?”

I have been a Christian my whole life. I have been struggling with faith lately. I am mostly intellectually convinced in Christianity, however I have a lingering doubt based on a few intellectual things. One is the battle between old earth and [young] earth [creation] and the other is the age of the book of Daniel—which online resources I have read seem to prove that it was written after the fact. (I have seen the Christian responses and they do not deal with all of the facts.) Anyway, none of these doubts would bother me except that Hebrews 11:1 and James 1:8 imply that any doubt might be cause for exclusion of me from heaven. I can't even sleep at night because I am so afraid of going to hell. Is there any hope for me?

I would suggest that Hebrews 11:1 and James 1:8 do not imply that at all. In fact, doubt isn't even mentioned. Hebrews is about the nature of faith, and James simply says that the double-minded person—one who continually wavers back and forth between trusting and not trusting—is inherently unstable in his thinking.

See, the Lord understands that we see through a glass darkly, as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians. He understands that we are trying to make sense of a fallen world through a fallen intellect, and we don't have all the puzzle pieces. He gives much more grace than you know, I think. The issue is not about having doubts, which usually just means we haven't figured things out. God's indictment is on those who refuse to trust. They are not the same thing. The Lord Jesus said to love God with our minds, and wrestling through the hard, meaty issues of apparent contradictions and complications is one way we do that. The very act of pursuing truth to attack our doubts and questions is a kind of worship!

Let me encourage you that there are answers, even if you haven't found them. For instance, Probe's position on the age of the earth question has brought great peace to my husband, Dr. Ray Bohlin's spirit; he's been diligently studying this issue for 30+ years. He has looked at the evidence for a young earth and universe, and an old earth and universe, and found compelling evidence for both. They clearly cannot both be true. So he says he is an agnostic on the age issue. He doesn't know. And can live with that, especially since: 1) the issue is not WHEN but WHO created, and 2) the Bible doesn't tell us, which means it doesn't matter enough to get caught up in it. How long ago God created the heavens and the earth has nothing to do with whether Christianity is true or not.

I just read my answer to him to get his approval, and he added that he would be VERY careful about trusting online resources on the book of Daniel. Why should you believe them? The nature of the web is that anyone can publish anything, whether they have any expertise or not. Are they qualified? Biased? Especially sources like Wikipedia, which are going to reflect the anti-Christian bias of the culture, since the entries come from people whose thinking is pickled in the brine of secularism. I invite you to read another [answer to email at Probe.org about the book of Daniel](#).

I would also spend some time shoring up your understanding of your security in Christ if you have placed your trust in Him. If you became a Christian years ago, you became a new creature, a forever child of God. You cannot lose your relationship with your heavenly Father, no matter how many doubts plague you, any more than you can become unborn from your mother. Our founder, Jimmy Williams, wrote an article "How Can I Know I'm Going to Heaven?" here: www.probe.org/how-can-i-know-im-going-to-heaven/

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

“Are You Relativistic Toward Moderate Muslims?”

This article is no longer available. We regret any disappointment or inconvenience this may cause.

Probe Ministries Administrator

“Can Christians Practice Buddhism?”

Dear Mr. Zukeran,

As I was searching the net for local Buddhist temples I came across Probe's website and came to [your explanation of the differences between Jesus and Gautama](#). It was very eye opening, and I've never heard it explained that way before. I was raised in a Christian home but am also interested in Buddhism. Do you think there is a way for Christians to also practice Buddhism? Or is that not possible?

Generally speaking, Christianity and Buddhism are built on two different worldviews. So at their foundations they teach contradictory positions. Northern Buddhism usually adheres to a pantheistic worldview while Southern Buddhism and schools

like Zen Buddhism teach atheism. Buddhism may have some teachings that agree with Christianity such as some of the ethical teachings, but at the basic level the two have contradictory teachings.

For example, what happens after death? Most Buddhist schools teach reincarnation while the Bible teaches “It is appointed for each person to die once, and then comes the judgment” (Hebrews 9:7). Jesus taught His disciples to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.” Buddha taught to relinquish all desires. The Bible teaches that life is found in a relationship with God through Christ. Buddha taught life is about the emptying of the self. Buddhism teaches that man is basically good and the answer to man's problem is enlightenment. The Bible teaches that man is sinful and the answer to his problem is not within him but in a perfect savior who died for his sins, Jesus Christ. So at the foundational issues, the two systems are contradictory.

Can a Christian study about Buddhism? Sure, but as in all things, one must be discerning and measure all teachings with God's word, the Bible.

Thanks for your question.

Patrick Zukeran

“Accepting Jesus as Your Savior Means You Won't Have to Suffer Bad Karma Anymore?”

I have friends who believe that people will suffer bad karma

from past lives and it will be carried over to this life. Now, I read in the Bible that if you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and ask him for forgiveness with a sincere heart, He will wipe away your imperfections and you won't have to suffer "bad karma" anymore. Is this correct? If not, then what's the point of asking for forgiveness? Isn't this what Christ died on the cross for? I need the truth because it will set me free.

What Eastern religions call karma is the Bible's principle that "a man reaps what he sows" (Galatians 6:7). God created a cause-and-effect universe where our choices have consequences.

In the Eastern systems, each person has to work off his own bad karma. . . over and over and over, through as many lifetimes as it takes. In contrast, the Bible offers the marvelous gift of forgiveness and grace (God's blessing that we don't deserve) through Jesus Christ. You are right that Jesus takes away the guilt of our sins and the eternal punishment of being separated from God forever. However, although forgiveness takes away the obstacle of sin that separates us from friendship with God, it does not take away the consequences of our choices. In the same way that a parent disciplines his child because he loves him, God allows us to suffer the consequences of our choices so that it builds character and helps us to grow and mature and become wise.

Christ died on the cross to reconcile us to God, but He does not take away the effects of our choices. For example, let's say I steal something from a store. Stealing is a sin, and I then confess it to God, who forgives me because Jesus paid for that sin on the Cross, but He will still let me experience the shame and humiliation of being arrested and having to go to trial and then jail. My relationship with God has been restored, but I still have to experience the consequences of my actions. In the process, He will develop my character and help me to grow from this painful experience, making me more mature and less selfish, preparing me for this life and my

life in heaven. But once I die, it's all behind me, forgiven and never to be suffered again.

Does this make sense?

Sue Bohlin

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“What Makes You Better Than Others to Critique ‘Embraced by the Light’?”

What makes Russ Wise or Probe Ministries greater than anybody else to say this is heresy or false teachings of God in [his analysis of *Embraced by the Light*](#)? What makes you better than anybody else?

If you are really intelligent then you can analyze everything down to the “perfection of God.” There is no way man can really understand the “Divinity of God.” Our mere words cannot even explain or at least understand it. I think Russ Wise should keep his opinions to himself and not say his words are better than any other. I wonder what kind of belief or religion Russ has? He must be in a perfect religion.

I noticed that something seems to be missing from your complaint about Russ Wise and Probe Ministries: God's perspective. It seems that you are unhappy with Russ' analysis of *Embraced by the Light* as if it were nothing but human opinion. But both Russ and Probe Ministries analyze ideas from a perspective based on what God has told us in His word. In the same way that we can tell how crooked a stick is by

placing it next to one that is absolutely straight, we can tell how incorrect the ideas in a book are by comparing them to the straight truth of God's word.

It has nothing to do with believing that we are better than anyone else. We know better. We know it's not about us at all. It's about having confidence that God really has revealed His truth to us in the Bible, so we can confidently analyze anything that contradicts His word. This confidence can be erroneously confused with arrogance, but it's not arrogance because we are simply agreeing with what God has said. Like I said before, we know it's not about us.

I respectfully must disagree with you that "There is no way man can really understand the 'Divinity of God.' Our mere words cannot even explain or at least understand it." If mankind had no choice but to try and figure out God on our own, you would be absolutely right. But the message of the Bible and the even more stunning message of Jesus Christ, the God-man who left heaven to come to earth, is that we don't have to speculate about God. He has reached out to us. He has spoken truth to us. He has revealed Himself to us. He passionately wants to be known and loved (even if we can't fully understand Him because He is so *other*, so much more than us), and He has made Himself knowable by speaking to us in His word and in His Son. And it is on the basis of that revelation that we can compare works like *Embraced by the Light* to what God has said, and identify where they are wrong because they contradict God. Not our mere human understanding of God they contradict what God Himself said.

Thanks for writing.

Sue Bohlin

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“Is Judaism a Cult?”

I go to your website often, and I always learn something new so thank you! I was reading about cults, and by the definition, it would seem that Judaism would be considered a cult. Can this be true?

Hello _____,

Thanks for your letter. I'm sorry it's taken so long for me to respond. Scholars have not always found it easy to define precisely what is meant by terms like “religion” or “cult.” Thus, there is some dispute about exactly what a cult is and how it should be defined.

In Walter Martin's classic, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, he cites with approval Dr. Braden's definition of cult:

By the term cult I mean nothing derogatory to any group so classified. A cult, as I define it, is any religious group which differs significantly in one or more respects as to belief or practice from those religious groups which are regarded as the normative expressions of religion in our total culture.

Walter Martin then writes, “I may add to this that a cult might also be defined as a group of people gathered about a specific person or person's misinterpretation of the Bible.”

According to these definitions, then, Judaism would be more appropriately classified as a religion (alongside other religions like Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism). And this, I think, is correct. I've never read any serious scholar who classified Judaism as a cult. And I personally think it would be a serious mistake to do so.

At any rate, that's my view.

Shalom in Christ,
Michael Gleghorn

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“How Does Pantheism View Good and Evil?”

I found your website very helpful in offering information on yoga and Christianity, especially Michael Gleghorn's [article](#).

I came across a quote for a guru:

Life has a bright side and a dark side, for the world of relativity is composed of light and shadows. If you permit your thoughts to dwell on evil, you yourself will become ugly. Look only for the good in everything so you absorb the quality of beauty.

Can you comment on how pantheism views evil and good? If you can shed some light on this quote, it would be helpful for me to understand how to address this with someone with this belief system.

Hello _____,

Thanks for your letter. Pantheism ultimately makes no distinction between good and evil. If all is one, and all is “God” (or Brahman), then the distinction between good and evil must ultimately be illusory. If not, then evil infects the very being of “God” itself. Thus, pantheism has a real problem with evil.

Of course, there is much truth in the guru's quote (although it's not terribly consistent with pantheism). However, one can find preferable advice (in my opinion) in the Bible. As Paul told the Philippians, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Philippians 4:8).

Shalom in Christ,
Michael Gleghorn

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