

Exposing Religious Deception

In the World Today

— Exposing —
Falseness, Hypocrisy, and Deception
in Religion—Especially in Christianity

The Apostle Paul wrote about:
“those who.....by smooth words and flattering
speech deceive the hearts of the simple”

— Romans 16:18

How many of today’s ministers fit this category?

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Intro

In the last 50 years, I have studied many religions and Christian denominations. After visiting very many churches, and having talked to many ministers and studied their writings, I have become convinced that the whole world of religion—Christianity as well as the non-Christian religions—is in a flood-tide of religious deception and confusion. Very many ministers have crossed the fine line from being God’s true servants to becoming false prophets or hypocrites or self-serving deceivers. This document exposes many of their tactics, deceptions, cunning devices, and hypocrisy. I have included several specific examples or case studies in this book.

A Tough Question

To those who call themselves Christians, I ask this question: How much similarity is there between the Christianity depicted in the Book of Acts and the kind of Christianity we see in most of the churches in the world today? It seems to me there is hardly any similarity. Consider these facts:

In the Book of Acts, the believers gave all of their offerings [sometimes all of their possessions] to helping poor, needy people. There is no mention that they used their offerings to build church buildings or any religious organizations. In this passage, I used the word offerings because the words *tithe* or *tithes* are not found in the book of Acts.

Please note:

The words tithe or tithes are found only 7 times in the New Testament [KJV]:

- ①&② The two passage that speak about paying tithes of mint and other herbs [Matthew 23:23 & Luke 18:12].
- ③ In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector [publican] when the Pharisee “reminded” God that he pays tithes [Luke 11:42].
- ④-⑦ In Hebrews 7, the discussion about Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek.

In Matthew and Luke, Jesus was speaking to those Jews who were under the Law. Even Moses permitted people to give part of their tithes to the poor rather than to the priesthood/clergy/ministers of the day: See: Deuteronomy 14:28-29 and 26:12-13. How many modern-day pastors or priests tell their people to take their tithes [or part of them] and give them to the poor?

In the Book of Acts, the believers had such an anointing that they were able to heal many sick ones, and had almost a continuous stream of miracles among them. Most modern churches send the sick ones to medical doctors to heal them. Yes, there are a few ministers that heal the sick. Many times I have seen churches and ministers try to heal the sick by praying for them, but I have hardly ever seen any of those prayed-for people get healed. Rather, sometimes it is the same people who come week after week asking for prayer for healing, but never receiving. It is obvious that the church that Jesus built has lost the glory, power, and anointing that were once her crowning glory!

Consider this: In the Book of Acts, no minister, preacher, evangelist, or apostle ever took up an offering for his own ministry or for himself or for ‘his’ church. The Apostles Peter and Paul did take up offerings, but they were all designated to help poor people. Yes, there are some such ministries in the world today, but they are very rare. How many do you know that never take up offerings, or take up offerings only to help poor people? How many ministers do you know who refuse to take up offerings for themselves or for their own ministry?

Also, in the Book of Acts I noticed that the church met “daily.” This word, “daily” is found in the book of Acts 7 times.¹ How many times are “weekly” meetings mentioned in the Book of Acts?

The above paragraphs, devastating as they are, are but a small portion of the massive deception that is rift in almost all churches today. Check out this illustration:

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A teenager is sitting in church with his parents. As he watches week after week, it seems to him that the pastor or priest is continually trying to think up new ways to get more money out of his people. The whole service impresses the teenager as a show, a sham, a put-on, a pretension. The pastor always expresses sympathy with needy, hurting people, but hardly ever is he able to help them. More and more frequently, he seems to be unavailable when hurting or needy people seek his help or advice. All of this boils down to one word: hypocrisy!

In this scenario, teens usually quit the church by the time they finish school. Some turn to atheism, some to street gangs, and some to those religions we call cults or occult—seeking a tangible contact with the spiritual world. These young people usually turn away from family and the Bible. The parents and church leaders call them rebellious—not considering they are rebelling against the hypocrisy in the pulpits!

Who carries the major portion of the blame for this scenario, the young people or the leaders of the church? Isn’t the ultimate blame for those young people’s rebellion on those religious leaders who may be described as hypocrites?

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<sup>1</sup>Acts 2:46, 5:42, 6:1, 16:5, 17:11, 17:17, 19:9.

Another scenario will help. Following is the testimony of a young preacher (still a teenager) who loved God and did not preach for money. He said:

Many pastors advised me that I would never get anywhere preaching the way I was preaching. I would never be the pastor of a prosperous church or have any of the nice things that “compromising” ministers had. One minister brought me into his study and said, “Well, young man, that was a fine message you preached; but if you expect to get anywhere [in our religious association], then you can’t continue preaching like that. That’s not what the people want to hear.” He walked to the window, pulled aside the drapes, pointed to his brand new Cadillac, and said, “The church buys me a new one every year.” Then he opened up a closet in his study, and he showed me some fabulous looking clergy robes that the church bought for \$500 each, and a leopard skin cape costing \$300. He said, “You’ll never have any of these things if you keep preaching that way. And another thing,” he added shaking a finger at me, “you’re too puritanical or prudish. If you want to be a successful preacher, you’ve got to keep the sisters happy. If they want you to go to bed with them, do it—just use discretion. Someday those sisters will do you a favor when you need it.” I don’t know how many times I got that kind of *advice* from clergymen!<sup>2</sup>



To get a better understanding, we must know that sin and evil come in two categories: the physical sins (adulteries, violence, drunkenness, criminal behavior) and spiritual sins (hypocrisy, pride, deception, hatred for God, atheism, and the lure of spiritual power from the world of darkness: the occult). All of us understand physical sins, and all of us are tempted by them. But to understand the massive confusion in the world of religion today, we need to take an in-depth look into the spiritual sins.

Many people do not believe in the existence of a devil. Consider this: if there were a devil, who would he be after? Would he be out to tempt, deceive, and destroy those who are complacent in their faith in God, mediocre in their service to God, or lukewarm in their love for God; or would he be out to tempt, deceive, and destroy those individuals who are doing a lot of damage to his kingdom of evil, those who are recruiting his

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<sup>2</sup>Taken from The Unfinished Rumble Plans by Tom Skinner, Editor: Mr. James See last page for availability.

followers into their churches or religions? As long as people are complacent, mediocre, or lukewarm in their relationship to God, they are right where the devil wants them, even if they are church members, deacons, Sunday school teachers, preachers, clergymen, or priests. Many of these people go to churches, but they don’t really believe; some are agnostics, and some are even atheists. That suits the devil just fine. Even though he claims to be a god, he just loves atheists. To those who do not believe in the existence of a devil, I ask: Doesn’t this description fit perfectly the above scenario of the teen sitting in church and being turned off by all of the hypocrisy? And to those who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ, doesn’t the Bible tells us that Satan appeared in person to Jesus Christ and tried to persuade him to bow down and worship him? Isn’t there a devil? However, if many people do not believe in the existence of a devil, that also goes right along with what the devil is trying to accomplish. It’s just fine with him if they keep thinking that he doesn’t exist. He deceives those people in a completely different way than those who say they believe in him, and in a completely different way with those who hate him.)

This scenario may also be compared to a nation at war that sends out both soldiers and spies. The soldiers represent the ones who tempt people with fleshly sins: prostitution or adulteries, drunkenness, criminality, and violence. The spy represents those who infiltrate the ministry or the priesthood—clergymen who have allowed their faith to be compromised so that they are now more interested in higher salaries, more prestige, more influence, more power, more luxury or comfort; rather than in promoting pure and simple truth, rather than helping the poor and needy, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and the addicts. Don’t spies do a lot more damage to the enemy than soldiers? It’s the same way in the spiritual realm. A hypocrite in the pulpit will do a lot more damage than an adulterer or a seductress or a drug pusher—but his damage is so deceptive that many look to him as servants of God.

How did those fallen clergymen get that way? How did those ideas get into their minds? Did they just think up those thoughts? Is it possible that the devil sent one of his demons to whisper into their minds: “Hey, I’m doing pretty good now; I’ve got a comfortable living and a good position. I don’t want to do anything to lose the position that I have; I’ll do anything necessary to keep what I have.” Those thoughts were placed in the person’s mind by a demon saying, “I’m doing pretty good,” rather than, “You’re

doing pretty good,” thus the man thinks that he originated those thoughts—not realizing that those thoughts came from a demon in the spiritual realm.

Millions have gone down that road; few have ever recognized the true nature of what was going on in them and turned back. Our churches are full of preachers, pastors, ministers, or priests who have gone down that road. Those whose eyes are open to spiritual truth and have humbled themselves down, and kept themselves in the passion of God’s love, are rare indeed.

Who does the most damage: the temptress who seduces a man (who may repent and ask forgiveness the next week) or the religious leader who may be described as a hypocrite? (Rarely do such people ever repent or ask forgiveness, perhaps one in a thousand will repent of this sin.) Jesus recognized that the spiritual sins are the ultimate cause of physical sin. Once he said to the religious leaders of his day, “All of the righteous blood that has been shed on earth...will come on you....I tell you the truth, all of these things [tragedies] will come on this generation!”

— Matthew 23:35-36

## Why Religious Symbols?

Why is it that most of the people of the world cling so tenaciously to the symbols of religion or truth, but they seem to have little of the reality of the truth or of their religion? And if they have the truth, the true religion, if they have God in their hearts (as they say), why do they still need the symbols? Don’t the symbols distract from pure and simple truth, and from a proper relationship with our fellow man?

How interesting that both Christianity and Buddhism were started by men who did not use any symbols, ceremonies, rituals, priestly robes, cathedrals, or altars. Yet after Jesus and Buddha departed from this world, most of their followers took their simple teachings and turned them into a ceremony or a ritual or an organization or a program or a mass or a denomination or a corporation or a dictatorship or a religion!

An example: Once Jesus taught that if a person brings his gift to God, and there at God’s altar he remembers that his brother has a grudge against him, he ought to leave his gift there at the altar, go and make things right with his brother, and then come back and offer his gift to God. Isn’t it plain that Jesus was teaching us that making things right with our fellow-man is

more important than offering a gift or a sacrifice to God, than participating in a religious ceremony? If going to an adversary and making things right brings us peace in our hearts, what further need is there of a religious ceremony or symbol? That peace in our hearts is the reality; the symbols merely symbolize that reality. If we have the reality, why do we need the symbol—a cross, a trinket, a fetish, a rosary, an idol, a ritual, or a priestly robe?

In the Jewish religion, men added laws and by-laws to the law that God had given them through Moses. In the Buddhist religion, men added laws, by-laws, and ceremonies to the teachings that Buddha had given them. In the Christian religion, men added laws, by-laws, rituals, priestly robes, and a host of religious symbols to the simple teachings that were given to them by Jesus Christ, Israel’s Messiah. Is there any difference between what the Jews, the Buddhists, and the Christians have done? Haven’t all of them added to pure and simple truth —added things that are powerless to do anything for them?

Once Jesus confronted some religious leaders about this very subject. He asked them why they had added certain traditions to the commandments that God had given them through Moses. Jesus pointed out that the religious leaders were breaking God-given traditions or commandments in order to keep their own man-added traditions. (Matthew 15:1-6) The denominations of Christianity have done the same things, and they have not only done the same thing, but some of them even claim that their church or denomination has a right to add their own (man-added) traditions to the (God-given) teachings that Jesus gave them. Most of those denominations are loaded down with many traditions that have been added by men since the Bible was written!

These churches are so deeply entangled in those traditions that they are unable and unwilling to remove them. Once a priest admitted this. He was asked why the church people call the priests ‘father’ when Jesus told us not to call any man on earth ‘father.’ (Matthew 23:9) This is the answer that he gave: “Well, it is such a deeply-ingrained custom that it would be impossible to change it”—thus he confessed that the church is putting its own traditions above the commandments of the Lord Jesus, Israel’s Messiah, whom they claim to be serving.

What good does it do for a Christian who is following the one who said, “Love your neighbor,” to build a nativity scene at Christmas time and not love his neighbor? Or, what good does it do for millions of Christians

to go to church every Sunday and light candles, when Jesus said, “I am the light of the world,” and “You are the light of the world”? Wouldn’t it be better to give light to the world by doing good deeds—rather than by lighting a candle?

Can the symbols of religion take the place of the reality? Isn’t this the reality: to have God’s peace, love, and joy in our hearts? If we have these things, what good do the symbols do? Why are many still clinging to the symbols? Is it because they have lost the reality and they are really covering up their shortcomings, their backslidings? If you are one of those Christians who is trusting in rituals or ceremonies conducted by a priest each Sunday, please consider this verse from the Bible:

If you search after the Lord your God  
with all your heart and with all your soul,  
you will find him.

— Deuteronomy 4:29 quoted in Jeremiah 29:13&14

Is a man searching after his God with all of his heart and soul when he is trusting in a religious ritual, or does a man search after his God with all of his heart and soul by loving God and worshiping and obeying him out of a heart full of love?

Symbols are not the only things that have side-tracked many people in the world of religion. To those who are following the Christian religion, I ask, did Jesus spend his time conducting ceremonies or rituals? Or did he spend almost all of his time teaching and healing the people? For what reason did the church fathers institute the rituals, the masses, and the ceremonies that predominate so much of Christianity? Are they using the rituals because they lost the reality? Are they using the rituals of worship to cover up their shortcomings? They have a form of godliness, but lack its reality or power to set men free from all their hang ups, strong-holds, addictions. The Apostle Paul predicted this would happen. He wrote that in the last days men would have “...a form of godliness, but deny its power.” Today, millions of religious leaders have forms of godliness (rituals, ceremonies, programs), but are unable to give any real substantial help to those who are under sin’s strongholds/addictions.

Isn’t it quite obvious that Jesus never wore priestly robes, never told his disciples to wear any, and that none of his disciples wore priestly robes?

Once Jesus said to the religious leaders of his day:

You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are nothing but man-made rules.” — Matthew 15:7-9

He said this about the Jewish leaders, but the ***same spirit is in very many of the Christian leaders today!*** He is saying the same thing to these Christian leaders today: *You honor me with your lips, but your hearts are far from me!*

Who were the ones who persecuted Jesus? Was it the atheists, the criminals, and the common people? Or was it the religious and political leaders of his day? The same spirit is still in the world today. Most of the persecution of Jesus’ true followers comes from religious people and their political leaders, and it has been that way during the past 20 centuries of church history!

Did Jesus come to start another religion, or to bring us life, true life, abundant life, and truth, the real truth? He himself answered that question when he said, “I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10) When Jesus came about 2000 years ago, the world was already full of religion. It did not need another religion, it needed life, the truth about life, the pathway to a meaningful life. The world needed an understanding of God’s purposes! These are the things that Jesus taught them, but what did most of Jesus’ followers do with these simple and beautiful teachings in the next few centuries? Didn’t they turn them into another religion, an organization, a bureaucracy, a welfare agency, a denomination, and sometimes even into a philosopher’s club or a mutual-admiration society or a social club?

The world has always preferred religion to pure and simple truth. One of the founders of Communism once said, “Religion is the opium of the masses.” He was right, the masses of people are addicted to religions with elaborate ceremonies or rituals. Even the poorest people will donate their last penny (their widow’s mite) to support a religious bureaucracy that is spending millions of dollars on religious symbols such as cathedrals and priestly robes.

An example from the days of the Communist revolution in Russia: In those days there was massive oppression of the poor people by the nobility and the czar (king), who were being supported by the church leaders. Millions were crying out for relief from the oppressions—the

Communists were only one group. One day, some of the bishops of the church were discussing with the leader of the church in Russia what color a certain item on the priestly robe should be. This is what the church leaders were doing at the time that one of the greatest revolutions in the history of the world was going on right outside of their door! The church leaders should have been out in the streets relieving the oppressions of poor and rebuking the leaders of the government for their oppressions. Rather, they were defending that oppressive government, and they were so sidetracked from their mission that they were discussing the color of an item on the priestly robes in the very hour that one of the greatest revolutions in the history of the world was going on right outside their doors! And the poor people were so blind that they followed them, thinking they were godly men. Jesus called them “...blind people leading blind people.” (Matthew 15:14)

But the Russian church leaders were not the only ones. The same spirit was in the Muslim leaders of Iran. While massive oppressions were in their nation, rather than relieving the oppressions, the congressmen were discussing what color women’s scarves should be. Do you ever wonder how governmental leaders get so side-tracked? Isn’t this a trick of the enemy, the devil, to release destructive forces by getting the leaders to waste their time discussing the color of a woman’s scarf?

Why does the world love religion? Is it perhaps because religion provides excuses for sin? Don’t millions of religious people hold on to their sins while doing religious things such as joining a church, getting baptized, going to confession, listening to platitudes on Sunday morning on how much God loves them and how he always forgives them—all this instead of deep and hearty repentance from their sins? Doesn’t the religious world say, “Well, nobody is perfect” or “Everybody is doing it”? Isn’t it true that the religions of this world devise the most complicated systems of theology and write hundreds of books about them—making excuses for their sins—rather than giving up their sins?

Now I realize that the above is a devastating indictment against almost all forms of religion—and that’s what it was meant to be! May the God of heaven use this writing to open many eyes!

In recent years I have come to realize that the word *religion* (as most people use it) signifies the symbols of the truth and has nothing to do with the reality of the truth. For these reasons, I have come to this conclusion: I hate religion, but I love pure and simple truth, just as it was taught by Jesus of Nazareth, Israel’s Messiah!

Some will ask, “Isn’t it true that there are still plenty of genuine churches in the world, and plenty of people are still being saved from their sins? Haven’t great revivals swept various communities in times past?” Answer: Yes, in some cases that is true; but it is also true that many of those who have had great miracles and revivals and deliverances in times past have today settled down to another routine of worship which is nothing but another ritual. Isn’t it also true that many who started out with a powerful anointing from God and saved many sinners, have since gotten:

side-tracked into money-raising projects or  
side-tracked to some pet doctrine or  
side-tracked to a building program or  
side-tracked into church politics —

so they no longer have time to stay before God and be prepared for the ministry that God called them to? I have seen churches that once had so much of God’s anointing and victory, that people danced for joy because of the victories that God had given them. Today many of those churches are more like funeral parlors! They lost it. The devil is a master deceiver. He came and whispered in their minds: “Aren’t we over-doing this? What will our friends and neighbors think? It was good while it lasted, but we need to get back to normal church services. People will think we are fanatics.”

Don’t most church leaders seek out a place of attention in their public appearances? Notice what Jesus told his disciples to do:

You should not be called rabbi (teacher); for you have one master, and you are all brothers.....Don’t be called leaders, you have only one leader: Christ the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever promotes himself will be demoted, and whoever demotes himself will be promoted [or: whoever humbles himself, will be exalted; and whoever exalts himself, will be humbled].

— Matthew 23, verses 8-12

Like the symbols of religion, like the rituals of religion, so are the titles that the religious leaders have taken on themselves. God conferred these titles on a few; most conferred them on themselves—for self-promotional purposes. Consider just a few of these titles:

|            |            |        |
|------------|------------|--------|
| apostle    | evangelist | pope   |
| archbishop | father     | priest |



|           |               |                 |
|-----------|---------------|-----------------|
| bishop    | metropolitan  | prophet         |
| cardinal  | minister      | rabbi           |
| clergyman | most reverend | rector          |
| deacon    | overseer      | reverend        |
| doctor    | pastor        | superintendent  |
| elder     | patriarch     | (and many more) |

Isn't it true that in the Bible times Pharisees and false prophets appropriated such titles on themselves, and our religious leaders today are doing the same thing? Aren't most leaders seeking self-promotion when they appropriate titles on themselves?

Some say, "A doctorate degree will open doors for us that would not otherwise be opened." Wasn't it only the anointing spirit of God that opened doors for Jesus and his apostles? When men say such things, aren't they confessing that they have lost whatever anointing they once had? The Apostle Paul said that he considered all of his college degrees equal to a "pile of dung"—bodily excrements. (Philippians 3:8) How many of the modern religious leaders are unlike Jesus Christ who told us we should be servants, and that we are all brothers, and we have only one master! (Matthew 23, verses 8-11) Are these not the ones that Jesus said would come in sheep's clothing, but on the inside they would be voracious wolves? (Matthew 7:15)

I realize that there are some in the world today who are true apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and bishops. If we stay humble, we will not appropriate any titles to ourselves, but our heavenly father will allow our true ministry to be proclaimed by others.

Ever notice how often religious, political, and educational leaders get together to bestow honors, degrees, and titles on each other? Have they all forgotten that Jesus Christ told them that it is impossible for them to believe as long as they "...accept honor from one another and fail to seek that honor which comes from the only God?" (John 5:44)

When men started organizing religions, churches, and denominations, did they do so by God's authorization, or did they act on their own authority? Here is an example of how man-made rules have perverted God's purposes: Many churches have added their own standards of holiness or dress codes for their church members. God's standard is for us to have such an anointing or presence of God in our meetings, that the spirit of God

himself<sup>3</sup> will convict those rebellious ones who may come into our meetings immodestly dressed. They would leave and never return, or else return properly dressed. The only ones who need a code of conduct or a dress code in their churches are the ones who have lost the anointing spirit of God that convinces men of the sin in their hearts! Some have fallen so low that they have not only lost the anointing that comes from God, but they have even done away with their own standards of holiness—now anything goes in their churches!

## Tricks of the Devil

Many ministers have turned from God's purity to a desire to promote themselves socially and financially, rather than to win souls into God's kingdom. By charisma and a charming personality, they managed to persuade thousands of poor, deluded souls that donations would be used more effectively for God's work in their ministries than in anyone else's.

Other ministers have gotten side-tracked to preaching one doctrine, one doctrine only, and harping on their one pet doctrine all of the time. All of the people who joined their churches became converts to their favorite doctrine rather than converts to Jesus the Messiah. Many have gotten side-tracked to doctrines of baptisms, special days, dress codes, church attendance, special diets, one style of church music, one language or version of the Bible, emotionalism, speaking in tongues, rituals, rosaries, or commitment to one man [pastor, priest, evangelist, bishop, prophet, monk, or patriarch or pope].

Other pastors have become lackadaisical, negligent, lax, indifferent. Before long, the members of those churches started sinning, getting drunk, and committing adulteries. Now those pastors are afraid to preach against those sins, because they know that they will lose their positions and salaries. Soon their messages have become more and more conciliatory, compliant, appeasing, and before long, the whole church has lost all of the blessings that they ever had. The devil now has them right where he wants them, and

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<sup>3</sup>The word spirit is neuter gender in the Greek language, feminine gender in the Hebrew language, and both masculine and neuter in the King James Version of the English Bible.

they don't even know it!

Some priests become jealous when a priest in their hometown start drawing bigger crowds, and becoming very popular. Without realizing it, they allow that jealousy to grow until it becomes hatred. Before long, they are finding fault with their peer or counterpart. Not much longer after that, they are spending most of their time preaching against the other priest rather than proclaiming God's word/truth/love to the people.

Many pastors really cared about their people, and poured out their hearts preaching to them. The people could sense God's love in those men, and many responded—committing themselves to follow God's way. However, seeing such a good response to their ministry caused the pastors to begin thinking: "Hey, I'm getting good results. I must be a pretty good preacher." Those pastors came to the next meeting trusting in their own ability rather than trusting in God's ability. The meeting fell flat on its face. The people sat back and wondered why their pastors no longer had the anointing that attracted them to Jesus Christ. The things I have written above I have seen happen many times, and some have happened to me. (I'm speaking as one who has carefully observed these things for over 50 years.) More examples:

One man was a salesman. His reason for joining his hometown's most prestigious church was to meet prospective customers. When going to church, he always made sure that he was immaculately dressed as well as his family. And he made sure that his whole family marched into the church at precisely the right moment—five minutes before starting time—to attract as much attention to themselves as possible. They always sat together near the front. Everyone thought he was a good, fine, upstanding Christian and church member, but God looked into his heart and saw greed and love of money.

Another example: Once there was a 17-year-old high school boy who wrote a school essay on *The Union of Believers in Christ*—a discussion of Jesus' discourse in the 15th chapter of John. The 17-year-old portrayed the origin, the essence, the unconditional necessity, and the effect of this union. His teachers marked it as a thoughtful, copious, and powerful presentation of the theme. This young man was named Karl Marx. After writing this paper in 1835, young Karl turned from his faith and became an atheist. Thirteen years later, he wrote the Communist Manifesto, which became the foundation for all of the Communist regimes of the 20th century. What lies did the devil come and whisper into young Karl's mind?

Another example: One time there were two brothers, One became a pastor, but the other was a drunkard. Now the pastor had gotten caught up in the business and politics of Christian ministry, and his primary motivation was to prosper and promote himself. His heart was not in serving God or the people. But by using charisma, smooth talk, and cunning tricks, he persuaded many of his hometown's most influential people to come to his church and donate their money.

Meanwhile, his brother was sitting in a bar, and with a beer in his hand, he was thinking these thoughts: "I'm sick and tired of this life. Oh, God, help me, I want to get out of this life style. Help me, oh God!" Which one of these brothers will be better off on the day of judgment? The answer should be quite obvious.

Another example of how true men of God get side-tracked:

One day I met an older minister named Johnson (not his real name) who told me this story: "A few years ago, God gave me a dream. I saw myself preaching in a large camp-meeting at which 50 people were filled (or baptized) with God's Spirit in one night. A few years later, I was preaching a Pentecostal camp-meeting where I saw the fulfillment of that dream. Fifty people were filled with the Holy Spirit in one night." I believe Mr. Johnson was a true servant of God; however, later he quit the ministry. One day I heard him say, "Preaching, pastoring, and evangelizing are hard work. I don't want to do it anymore." So he quit. He went to his denomination's Bible college and got a job as cafeteria manager. The last years of his life were spent walking around that cafeteria holding a portable radio to his ear, listening to ball games. Finally he died of cancer.

What caused this man, who at one time had been one of God's truly anointed ones, to forsake the ministry and the holy calling and anointing God had given him, and turn to the temporal things of this world? The truth is that there are many like him, and while following God's ways for the past 50+ years, I have met many of them.

In the above example, Johnson did a lot of damage to Satan's kingdom, and doubtless Satan laid a trap for him, and he fell into it. Let's imagine that we are in hell's council room and are listening in on Satan's plan to destroy Preacher Johnson: In the council that Satan called to lay plans for preacher Johnson, he asked, "What are we going to do about this man Johnson? He is doing a lot of damage to my kingdom." Probably we would hear several demons suggest several traps to destroy the man:

alcohol, adultery, pride, going out on a doctrinal limb, and many others. However, Satan interrupted with, “No, he doesn’t succumb to any of these. We will have to hit him at his weak spot. This man’s weak spot is a revulsion to helping people with their personal or intimate problems, and he still has some love for the world of sports.” Then Satan assigned a demon who had experience in that field to go and stand beside Johnson [the demon was invisible] and implant this thought in his mind, “I sure would like to retire from this ministry. I’m always having to travel. When I go to my bed at night, all I do is worry about the people who are bugging me for help. I sure would like to come to my own home every night and forget all of the affairs of the ministry. I’ve been in it long enough. Let some of the young preachers take up the work.” The minister thought that he originated these thoughts—not realizing that it was a demon spirit that had planted those thoughts in his mind.

Once Jesus told a similar story. However, instead of using a discouraged minister, in his story, he used a tax collector. [In those days, the Romans hired Jewish people to collect taxes. Jewish people considered the tax collectors traitors because they collaborated with the enemy.] Jesus called the other man a Pharisee—the name of a religious denomination. The Pharisees in those days were the “holiness” people, that is, they believed in keeping strictly to the letter of the law. Jesus said:

One day, two men went to the temple to pray: a Pharisee and a tax collector. In his prayer, the Pharisee told God how good he was. “Lord, I attend church (synagogue), I pay my tithes, I fast twice a week, I keep your laws; and I am not a traitor like this tax collector.”

But the other man, the tax collector, wouldn’t even lift his head up to heaven. Rather, he crawled off in a corner, bowed his head, beat on his breast, and cried out, “Oh God, have mercy on me, I’m a sinner.” Jesus concluded: “I’m telling you the truth, when they left the temple, this man was right with God rather than the Pharisee.”

May each one of us pray this same prayer: “God, have mercy on me a sinner!”

About these men of God that failed, were they true men of God? Following are examples of men in the Bible who failed:

Adam walked in God’s paradise and talked with God every day, but that did not prevent him from choosing to disobey. Abraham failed to wait

on God for the son God had promised him. To help God fulfill his promises, he fathered a son by a woman not his wife. The descendants of his two sons are still fighting today—3500 years later! King Saul was God’s chosen and anointed, but he chose to take religious matters in his hands rather than leaving them in God’s hands and in the hands of the man God had chosen. He even turned to a witch for advice—breaking his own laws. Then God withdrew his presence or blessing from King Saul.

But perhaps King Solomon was the most outstanding example. God appeared to him twice. Was there ever a man who had more blessings, wealth, wisdom, or honor than Solomon? Why did he fall to worshipping the false gods of the heathen nations? An understanding of the reasons he forsook the true God and chose to follow after false gods or devils will help us to keep from ever falling into the same snares of Satan. Is this the reason that Solomon fell: In the false gods that he turned to, he saw supernatural events manifested physically (similar to the two magicians who threw their rods down before Pharaoh, and they turned into serpents). Many are seeking something they can see, but are not willing to live holy and believe God. These things become “entertainment” rather than worship. Many are attending “entertaining churches” and think they are worshipping God. (A full discussion of what caused Solomon to fall would take many pages.)

Judas walked with Jesus for three years, and he was sitting in one of the most sacred gatherings in the history of the world when he made his final decision to betray Jesus. Peter also walked with Jesus for three years, but Jesus called him Satan one time. Another time, Peter denied him. Thomas doubted him, but all of the disciples abandoned Jesus in his darkest hour.

God himself spoke to Apostle Paul to take Barnabas with him as a traveling companion, but Barnabas and Paul later had such a strong disagreement that they could no longer walk together. If all of these men were so weak in their spirits, is it any wonder that many today are abandoning the faith they once followed and proclaimed? Yes, true servants of God do fail. Few ever come back and repent.

## The Genuine and the Imitation

An imitation always looks very much like the real thing. It has to, otherwise no one would accept the imitation. In spiritual things also, there seems to be only a *very thin line* between the genuine and the imitation.

### Honor

Many preachers, ministers, and priests started out honoring the people, but in a few months, their words crossed the *thin line* from honor to flattery (insincere honor). Why did they turn to flattery? Honor comes from God's heart. Flattery comes from our own human hearts. It is easier to follow our own hearts than to continually submit to God and follow his heart.

### Friendliness

By showing themselves friendly, some religious people have won many others to their own faith. But after some time, many of these religious people crossed the *thin line* from friendliness to flirtiness. How many relationships started in spiritual love, but ended up in natural or human love and frequently even in an adulterous relationship?

### Wisdom

Many of our preachers, ministers, rabbis, and priests have spoken words of wisdom that inspired many people. But later many of these same ministers crossed the *thin line* from wisdom to cunning—tricky words that sound like wisdom, but whose goal is some devious ulterior purpose. Most of their followers were deceived and continued to believe that they were godly men and hung on their every word.

Why did they turn from wisdom to cunning? Was it perhaps spiritual laziness—they became tired of continually submitting to God, but rather found their own cunning to be intriguing?

### Zeal

Being zealous for God is a natural result of having a great change in one's life and being a true believer. However, many true believers started out serving God zealously, but later crossed the *thin line* from zeal to fanaticism. Why? To have godly zeal, a person has to continually humble or submit himself to God; whereas, fanaticism arises from the human heart. Millions have been deceived by their own hearts!

## Miracle-Working Faith

Plenty of times we have heard of some people who had such faith that they had real miracles in their lives. But we have also seen them later pray "in faith" believing for another great miracle, but nothing happened! Why? There is a *thin line* between faith and its false imitation: presumption. Why do many who have once had real faith later slip backwards into presumption? It takes simple, child-like faith to work miracles. Once we have had such a miracle in our lives, it is easy to become self-confident rather than God-confident. ("Hey, I know God, I've got the real faith, God hears my prayers!")

### Salvation

Many preachers, ministers, or priests have brought salvation to their followers, but later their spiritual activities became routine, rote, repetitious. They fell from the freshness and excitement and newness of salvation to its *thin line* imitation: religion. It looks like a *thin line* only because religion imitates salvation. Actually, salvation and religion are worlds apart!

### Testifying About God's Blessings

Some have gotten up with a heart full of love for God and given testimony about God's goodness to them, but later they have gotten up and bragged or boasted about the blessings God had given them. Is there only a *thin line* between testifying out of a heart full of love for God and boasting or bragging about God's goodness to one's self?

### Happiness

Many have experienced true happiness through helping others and teaching others to do the same. But later they fell to seeking happiness in momentary pleasure and started teaching that momentary pleasure can bring true happiness. If momentary pleasure is an imitation of true happiness, does that mean that there is only a *thin line* between happiness and pleasure?

### Evangelization

In Christianity, turning people to God is called *evangelizing* (this is a Greek word that means *spreading the good news or spreading the gospel*). But when ministers stop turning men to God and start turning them to their own pet doctrine, to their own brand of truth, their own organization or

denomination, then they have crossed the *thin line* from evangelizing to its false imitation: proselytizing (this word might be defined as *high pressuring someone to turn to his own brand of religion*).<sup>4</sup> Millions are proselytizing church members, thinking they are evangelizing—doing God’s work.

### Compassion

What is the difference between compassion and its false imitation: sentimentality. Sentimentality is a human emotion; whereas, a compassionate nature comes from God. If God were sentimental, would he have killed one billion people in Noah’s day? or would he have ordered Abraham to sacrifice his own son as a burnt offering? If God were sentimental, would he have ordained that his own son be crucified? or would he have punished anybody for any sin? Would he allow anyone to go to hell?

### Glory

Looking around many of our richer churches, we see gilded chairs on the platforms, exquisitely-tailored priestly robes, stained-glass windows, attention-attracting steeples, plush carpets, intricately-carved doors, padded pews, elegant statues, polished communion vessels, and polished sermons. Looking at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, we see rough-cut lumber with nail-fastened bodies, brow-piercing thorns, blood mixed with sweat, dying criminals, lethal weapons, anguished people, tear-stained faces on women—the most painful, the ugliest, the most repulsive, the most horror-inspiring. Which of these scenes is glamorous, and which is glorious?

### Unity

In their efforts to unite, many people compromise their principles. Is Compromise perhaps a false imitation of Unity?

### Humility

Why do many of us shun humility which God calls a virtue? Is it because we have been repulsed by its *thin line* imitation: shame? Should we be ashamed to walk in the humility that some of the greatest saints in the history of the world walk in?

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<sup>4</sup>Proselytizing is a word that is proper in some languages. Even in English it is considered proper in a few cases. In the Bible, when non-Jews turned to following the Jewish Jesus, they are referred to as proselytes.

The following is a re-cap of the above:

- Flattery • is a false imitation of Honor
- Flirtiness • is a false imitation of Friendliness
- Cunning • is a false imitation of Wisdom
- Fanaticism • is a false imitation of Zeal
- Presumption • is a false imitation of Faith
- Religion • is a false imitation of Salvation
- Boasting • is a false imitation of Testifying
- Pleasure • is a false imitation of Happiness
- Proselytism • is a false imitation of Evangelizing
- Sentimentality • is a false imitation of Compassion
- Glamour • is a false imitation of Glory
- Compromise • is a false imitation of Unity
- Shame • is a false imitation of Humility

Do you want more? The following is adapted from Neil T. Anderson’s book, The Bondage Breaker:<sup>5</sup>

Ask yourself these questions:

When you make money, are you using a God-given ability to profit; or are you motivated by greed and avarice?

When you enjoy the good things that God has given you, do you do so with a heart full of thankfulness to God, or are intemperance or gluttony ruling your life?

When you do things to make yourself more presentable to people, are you motivated by respect for God’s house, or are conceit and pride the motivating forces in your life?

When you talk about people, is it appropriate communication; or is it gossip?

When anger rises up in you, do you allow it to turn into rage or bad temper? Do you show *loving-kindness* to your children; or could your actions be better described as *overprotection*?

Can you make a judgment about a matter without being critical?

When you make a charitable donation, do you know the point at which generosity turns into wastefulness?

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<sup>5</sup>Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon 97402, 1993.

# What is True Christianity?

## First Example: Peru

In Peru, South America, a strong Communist movement arose; so strong that the Communists controlled vast portions of the countryside. Also in Peru, there was a single young man named José (not his real name) who was a true believer. He had such love for the Lord Jesus and for his fellow countrymen that he did not want to do anything else but persuade men to follow Jesus. He had a special burden to reach out to the Communists with Jesus' message. This burden grew in him until it almost became an obsession. However, when he tried to speak to any Communists, it seemed that he was a total failure at persuading any of them to turn to Jesus. Nevertheless, the burden lay heavily on him, and he kept trying.

Finally, he spent so much time with the Communists that the officials suspected him of being a revolutionary, and eventually they arrested him and put him in a jail. In the jail, he prayed and earnestly sought God as to why his efforts to persuade the Communists had failed and why he himself had gotten into legal troubles rather than having a successful ministry. He got no answer, but he kept seeking.

However, in the jail there were many young Communists (some still teenagers) who became disillusioned with Communism and their own failures. When José spoke to them about Jesus, they were open to listen to him. Many listened and many of them believed. Some changed drastically and became devout followers of Jesus. So it was (and so it is with many of us), that when everything seemed a failure, when the circumstances seemed impossible, that José accomplished what he set out to do—he won many Communists at the prime of their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ! The Communists never took over Peru. (Though at this writing, they have not been defeated yet. If many more Christians in Peru had a real burden like José to win Communists to Jesus Christ, no doubt the Communist movement would have failed by now.)

Is this not an example of true Christianity? Would the Communists have listened to José had he not been imprisoned as a revolutionary? Doesn't our heavenly father have all things under his control if we hold on to our faith—especially when everything seems to be a failure?

## Second Example: Korea

About 1950, before the Korean war started, Korea experienced very great revival. Very many people turned to the Lord, and their church houses were full. They were so devoted that they started meeting every morning—before going to work. Very many of the Christians in Korea met at 4:30 in the morning, spent a half hour in Bible study and one and a half hours in prayer. They left at 6:30 to go to their jobs.

However, at the same time, Communist agitators were rapidly subverting the northern part of Korea. Many Christians were becoming hysterical, and many fled to the south. Among them was a pastor named Kim (not his real name). He too considered fleeing to the South. However, being a true servant of God, he asked God for directions. The answer that came into his spirit was: “Will you abandon your flock?” He asked, “Lord, do you want us to stay here and let the Communists rule over us?” However, directions came from heaven: “Take the whole congregation with you, the weak ones as well as the strong ones.” In his congregation were many old people and little children. They could not flee. Kim kept praying, “Lord, how can I take old, feeble people on such a dangerous, difficult journey.” The answer came, “If you do as I tell you, I will take care of you and see to it that your flight is successful. If you abandon your flock, you will be abandoning me, and you will not have my blessings on your flight.”

So it was that Pastor Kim gathered his congregation and told them that they were all going to flee to the south. Yes, he met many difficulties. When they did not have food, Pastor Kim stepped aside and prayed to his heavenly father. Something always worked out. When they faced eminent danger, something always worked out.

When this little band of pilgrims reached Seoul the capital city, they were still in desperate condition: no homes, no jobs, no money, no food, ragged clothes. Again Pastor Kim prayed and went out and found an abandoned factory building which he rented on credit. Again he prayed to his heavenly father, and from some unexpected source, provision was made for a primitive manufacturing operation to start. The band of fugitives had to live in the factory building for a few months until housing could be arranged. Prayers were made daily in the factory and God prospered that manufacturing operation. From its primitive beginnings, it quickly grew until it provided for all of the families. Is this genuine Christianity? Isn't it true that many pastors would have fled alone before the Communists, abandoning their flock?

### Third Example: Soviet Union

About 1945, there was a pastor in the Soviet Union who was being persecuted by the Communists. He had to conduct his meetings secretly, and he did not even have a whole Bible; however, because God had changed him so much, he was able to turn many people to the truth despite his extremely difficult circumstances.

One day, a well-educated Bible scholar from the free world visited him and tried to teach him some systematic theology (this word, ‘theology’ means the ‘study of God’). He explained about the 1. Unity of the Godhead in three persons, 2. Original sin, 3. About the fall of Adam, 4. About Salvation, 5. The true nature of the Church, 6. The sacraments (baptism and communion in the Lord’s supper), 7. The infallibility of the Holy Scriptures.

After the visitor finished, the pastor asked him, “These people who have thought out these theological systems and wrote them down in such perfect order, have they ever carried a cross?” He continued: “A man cannot think systematically even when he has a bad toothache. How much less can a man who is carrying a cross think systematically? But a Christian has to be more than a bearer of a heavy cross; he shares Christ’s crucifixion [I am crucified with Christ - Galatians 2:20]. The pains of Christ are his [...if we suffer with him, we will also be glorified with him. - Romans 8:17], and the pains of all creation [...we are members of one another. - Ephesians 4:25]. There is no grief and no suffering in the whole world which should not grieve him also. If a man is crucified with Christ, how can he think systematically? Can there be that kind of thinking while hanging on a cross? Even Jesus thought unsystematically while he was hanging on the cross. First he offered paradise to a robber, but then he thought God had forsaken him. Is that systematic thinking? Then he thought about his mother, but his thirst was so great, that he forgot about her and asked for a drink; then he spoke to his mother. Is that systematic thinking? When he surrendered his spirit to his Father, he should have been serene, but rather, he cried out. Is that systematic thinking?”

Still speaking to his visitor, the pastor in the Communist country said, “Thank you for trying to teach me, but it seems to me that you are only repeating, without much conviction, what others have taught you. **Systematic theology of any kind is incompatible with true Christianity.**”

This visitor went back to his own country, Romania, which was later taken over by the Russian Communists. Before long, the Communists called

together all of the religious leaders in that country, saying they were going to allow total religious freedom to everyone. However, this visitor, the former missionary to Russia, whose name was Richard, and his wife, Sabina, were skeptical about the Communists’ intentions. There were 4000 religious leaders in that meeting—Christian (Protestants and Orthodox), Jews, Muslims, bishops, pastors, etc.

The Communists leaders invited the leaders to come and speak. All who came praised the Communists for the promise of Total Religious Freedom. They were praising the Communists leaders rather than God. Their speeches were broadcast all over the world directly from that hall.

Sitting next to her husband, Sabina leaned over and whispered to her husband: “Oh, Richard, will you not wash this shame from the face of Christ? You must say something; they are spitting on the name of Christ.”

Richard replied to his wife: “Okay, I can get up and speak, but if I do, you will no longer have a husband.”

This was Sabina’s reply: “I don’t want a coward for a husband.”

Yes, Richard did request to speak, and the Communists were glad, because he was known as an influential leader. Before that vast assembly, Richard spoke these words:

“Thank you for allowing me to speak freely. When the children of God meet, angels also gather to hear the wisdom of God. So it is the duty of every believer, not to praise earthly men or leaders who come and go, but to praise God the Creator and Christ the Savior, who died for us on the cross.”

Immediately the Communist leader jumped up and said, “Your right to speak has been terminated.”

But Richard ignored him but continued encouraging the believers to place their courage and trust in God, and not in men. The audience broke into applause. They all knew that he was right, but he was the only one brave enough to say what needed to be said.

Again the leader of the Communists screamed: “Cut the microphone! Get his man off the stage.” The audience broke out into a chant: “Pastor, pastor!” Richard snuck out the back door before anyone could apprehend him.

This one act cost Pastor Richard 14 years in a Communist prison—most of it in solitary confinement. He was tortured frequently. Sabrina also spent three years in a Communist prison.

The well-educated visitor in the above story was Richard Wurmbrandt of Romania. Later he was rescued by Christian leaders in the

free world. Mr. Wurmbrandt has written several books. I wish to recommend his first book, Tortured for Christ. Over three million copies of this book have been printed—in several languages. It is available from: Living Sacrifice Book Co.

Box 2273, Bartesville, OK 74005 U.S.A.

#### Fourth Example: Lady Jane Gray

In 1553, England had a queen who reigned only nine days. Her rule was overthrown by “Bloody” Mary, Queen of Scots who was her half sister, and became the next queen of England. Lady Jane Gray was only 17 years old at the time of her nine-day reign. Six months later, “Bloody” Mary had her executed—her head was chopped off.

Lady Jane Gray was a most devout follower of Jesus Christ, and she humbly submitted to her martyrdom. Her behavior and speech at the execution site are an example of a level of faith and devotion that is extremely rare in this world—especially among royalty. Jane Gray did not go to the place of execution screaming and fighting. She walked there with dignity, serenity and victory—considering martyrdom a privilege for which few people in this world had been chosen. Following are some excerpts from her letters and speeches during the last six months of her life which she spent in prison (the tower of London).

During her six months imprisonment, Jane Gray wrote a letter to a man who was also condemned to die, but who was wavering in his faith. Jane Gray wrote: (paraphrased into modern English)

Dear Mr. Harding,

I often think about what God meant when he said that, *He who puts his hand on the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of heaven*, and his instruction to: *...forsake our own way to follow God's way*. You, Mr. Harding, were once such a devout follower of Jesus Christ, and now you seem more of an imp or a devil. I can't help crying out to you. Why have you preached God's law and will to others, and you yourself shamefully shrink when your time comes? Your body and soul are choosing to live miserably in this world, rather than to die and gloriously honor and reign with Christ—in whom even death is life. [This letter had many more

words of encouragement.]<sup>6</sup>

The night before her execution, Jane Gray wrote to her sister:

As touching my death, rejoice as I do, dear sister, that I will be set free from this corruptible body and take on an incorruptible body. I am assured that I will, in losing a mortal life, I will gain an immortal life...

On the scaffold, she was permitted to speak to the people before her head was chopped off. In her speech, she said:

“I pray you all to bear me witness that I die a true Christian lady, and that I do not look to be saved by any means other than by the mercy of God through the blood of his only Son Jesus Christ.

“I confess that when I knew God's word, I neglected it, but loved myself and the world, Therefore this plague and punishment have come on me appropriately and deservingly because of my sins. And yet I thank God that in his goodness he has given me a time of respite to repent. And now, good people, while I am still alive, I pray you, assist me with your prayers.

After this, she knelt and asked permission to sing a psalm. Permission was granted. On her knees, with her eyes up to heaven, and with tears streaming down her cheeks, she sang a psalm of love to God.

Then she stood up, gave her gloves and handkerchief to her maid, her book to a bystander. She untied her royal gown and removed it and her frowes, paaft, and neckerchief. She gave an exquisite handkerchief to her attendant to tie around her eyes.

The executioner knelt down and asked her forgiveness. She gladly gave it. She said to him, “Please dispatch me quickly.”

With her eyes blindfolded, she reached out with her hands, felt for the chopping block, and laid her neck on it saying, “Lord, into your hands I commend my spirit!” This was February 12, 1554.

About five years later, “Bloody” Mary, her half sister and Queen of England, was also dead. The judge who sentenced Lady Jane Gray thought that she was following him for the rest of his life. He became insane!

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<sup>6</sup>Foxe's Book of Martyrs, editor: Marie G. King, Spire Books, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1968, pages 182-183.



The executioner's request for forgiveness before chopping off her head was not unusual in England in those days. Many devout believers in Jesus Christ were burned to death or had their heads chopped off by the religious and political powers of the day.

Another account of a man who forgave his executioner comes from the same book, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*: About ten years before Lady Jane Gray's head was chopped off, a man named George Wishart had a similar experience. This well-educated servant of God was accused by the political and religious powers of the day of heresy, and sentenced to be hung and burned. At the execution site, the hangman walked up to him, kneeled before him, and said, "Please forgive me, sir. I am not guilty of your death."

Wishart said, "Come here." When the hangman approached, Wishart kissed him on the cheek and said, "That's a token of my forgiveness. Do your job."

Wishart was hung and his body burned. The crowd of people who watched this execution were mourning and they complained that an innocent lamb had been slaughtered.<sup>7</sup>

### Fifth Example: The Disabled Man

In the early years of our nation (USA), there was a disabled man who was a true believer. John (not his real name) decided that he was not going to allow his physical condition to stop him from serving God. But being unable to walk, there was little else he could do but pray. And pray he did!

John was familiar with about thirty churches in his community, and he decided to start praying for each of them in particular. He spent almost all of his time praying for those thirty churches, and in the next few months and years, real revival occurred in each of those churches.

Someone who knew John noticed that he had a list of the 30 churches and that he prayed for one church until revival came to that church before he started praying for another. His friend noticed that revival not only came to each of the churches, but came to each church just as he was praying for them—in the same order as he prayed.

What a powerful man of prayer! What an indictment against those believers who seldom or never pray—and those of us who have allowed a disability to depress us and stop us from serving God.

### Sixth Example: American Indians

Also in the early days of the United States there was a man (I'll call him John also) who was burdened to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the native American Indians.

The story goes that in one village, John asked for someone who could translate his message into the language of the native Indians. The only man in that community who was qualified to translate English into the language of the Indians, was so drunk that he could not even stand up. However, even that did not stop John. He got somebody to hold the drunk man up and got him to translate his message to the Indians. The anointing on John was so great that many of the Indians trusted in Jesus Christ and had life-changing experiences. This is what God will do through a man who so loves and believes God. Nothing is impossible for the believer who trusts God.

### Seventh Example: The Satan Worshiper

The scene was in the bowels of Tennessee's notorious Brushy Mountain Prison. As soon as he got there, Ralph immediately sat down and started writing a suicide note. After worshipping and serving Satan for 19 years, he was finished, washed out. He couldn't live with himself any longer. He had hurt too many people, and when he shut his eyes, all he could see was the tears of suffering coming down his mother's cheeks and the tears of suffering coming down the cheeks of the very many people that he had hurt, cut, cheated, abused, deceived, and helped destroy. He couldn't live with himself any longer. The pain was too great. The torture in his mind was unbearable.

Hey, who's this? While Ralph was still writing the suicide note, suddenly a big burly Black prisoner stood at his cell door. "Hey brother, my name's Rick."

As Ralph later told his story:

When I saw him, the first thing that came to my mind was, "What the hell does this nigger want?" I hated Black people—so much so that if I saw one on television, I immediately changed channels.

However, I talked with him for a while, and as usual, I used God's name with his fictional last name: Damn. Rick said, "Please don't use God's name like that; I'm a Christian." Again my mind went blank. I was thinking, "So, who does this nigger think he is? He's just a criminal and a prisoner like the rest of us—and a Black one at that!"

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. page 83.

Rick also asked me if I were saved, and I lied “Yes.” (Actually, Satan had convinced me that I was saved, whatever that might mean in his kingdom.)

Rick added, “Something just told me to come down here and tell you that God forgives all sin, and he loves you.” Then Rick looked at me and added, “And I want you to know that I love you too, brother. If I can ever be of any help, just give me a holler. Remember, God forgives all,” and he walked off.

When he told me that he loved me, it was like he was speaking a foreign language to me. I didn’t understand anything about that kind of love. It didn’t register with me. I couldn’t relate at all to it. It was completely foreign to me. I just stood there so dazed that you could have knocked me over with a feather. I just stood there like a dead man, and suddenly the things in my past life seemed like they were dead; they did not relate at all to my present state of mind. In my mind I was thinking, “How could this Black man, whose race I have hated all of my life, offer me help, and even tell me that he loved me?” Especially I thought about what this statement meant: “God forgives sin.” That was a totally new concept to me. All of my life I had loved my sins. The concept that God forgives all kinds of sins, brought a whole new challenge to my thinking. Well, of course I had heard that *God forgives sins* before in my life, but before that Black man named Rick spoke to me, this concept never registered with me. The state of mind that I was in was so astonishing that I even forgot to finish the suicide note and hang myself! It was not long before I yelled for Rick.

In the next few weeks, this 27-year-old man named Ralph changed completely from Satan worship to Jesus worship, and from hatred for the Black African race, to a close, intimate relationship with Rick who showed him love, true love, godly love, for the first time in his life.<sup>8</sup>

What is it that wins men from crime to Jesus Christ, from Satan worship to the worship of the true God? Is it well-articulated sermons on Sunday morning, or is it a friendly greeting as Rick gave to Ralph at the very moment that he was writing the suicide note? Is it correct doctrine, or

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<sup>8</sup> The story about Ralph and Rick is in a 20-page pamphlet named, *I Forgot to Hang Myself*, written by the same author as this book. To order Ralph’s story, please see the last page of this book.

is it an *I-care-about-you* attitude? Is it properly trimmed priestly robes and proper poise, or is it a *be real, be yourself* attitude? Is it going to the greatest cathedral, mosque, or temple in the world, or is it just recognizing God where you are—even in a jail cell? What set Ralph free from the strangle hold that sin, crime, and drugs had on his life? Was it a well-planned three-hour exorcism session, or was it just a kind word and a smile?

### Eighth Example: Another Satan Worshiper

David<sup>9</sup> was also a Satan worshiper and a priest of Satan when he was a young man. In those days, the Satanists wanted to recruit military men into Satanism, and David joined the army—only for the purpose of recruiting soldiers into Satanism.

In the training camp, the barracks buildings were divided into three-man rooms, and David was put into a room with two for-real Christians. As soon as they saw him, their new roommate, they started out with words like, “Hello, brother, praise God!” Over the next few weeks, they stayed after David, with words of encouragement, truth, life, wisdom, and quotations from the Bible. Of course David was turned off by all of this talk, and steadfastly refused to submit to their advice. Several times he got so mad at them that he cursed them, threw things at them, and did anything to persecute them. Once he threw his boot at one of them, who took the boot, shined it, and put it neatly under David’s bunk.

Finally, a day came when their talk got to him so much that angrily he knocked one of the men down. This man’s head hit the edge of the bunk so hard that he started bleeding out of his mouth. With blood running out of his mouth, the man looked up at David and said, “I love you, brother, and I forgive you.”

That did it. That one act of love and forgiveness got to David and convinced him that these men were for real. At that time he started examining the teachings of Jesus Christ. What he found in Jesus’ teachings convinced him even more, and in the next few weeks, he made a commitment to follow Jesus Christ and abandon Satan. This man David later became a nationally-known evangelist and gained many followers all over the country.

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<sup>9</sup>Not his real name. I heard this story many years ago, but I no longer have access to the source.

What changed David? Was it any religious ceremonies, or was it seeing first-hand a lifestyle devoted to following the teachings of Jesus Christ?

### Ninth Example: Hong Kong

In the days when Hong Kong was a British colony—before the Communists took over the sovereignty of that metropolitan city—there was a slum area in that city that was so bad that even police and taxi drivers refused to go into it. The government even built a wall around that slum—and it was known as “The Walled City.” Mafia-type criminals ruled The Walled City.

One day, a lady missionary from England walked into The Walled City. God’s compassionate love-nature drew her into this “hell hole” to share his light in that darkened world. After faithfully ministering to some of the worst of opium addicts, prostitutes, and members of the crime organization, one day she saw an old prostitute sitting by the side of the road waiting for another client. Jackie,<sup>10</sup> the lady from England, felt a compassion or pity going out of her to this old prostitute and she went to talk with her. It took only a few minutes to determine that this lady was an opium user, and she was using prostitution to pay for her opium and rice. Also, she was unable to read and write. Also, it was obvious that the prostitute was past the flower of her youth, and was having a harder and harder time finding clients so that she could pay for her opium and rice. She was becoming desperate—wondering what would become of her after she was no longer able to sell her body.

Wanting to bring some light into the old prostitute’s darkened world, Jackie spoke kind words to her and told her about a man who really loved her—not for what he could get out of her, but as a kind father who cared about his daughter’s well-being. The old prostitute lit up when she heard that there was a man in this world who really loved her. Jackie shared God’s love with her for about 30 minutes. Before she left, she prayed for the old prostitute, and prayed specifically to God that he would make a way for her to get rice without having to sell her body—and that she would no longer need the opium.

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<sup>10</sup> From Chasing the Dragon by Jackie Pullinger, Regal Books (From Gospel Light), Venture, California, U.S.A.

When Jackie left, she wondered what would ever happen to the old prostitute. It was about a week later that Jackie happened to pass by the same spot where she had met the old prostitute. She was still there, and when the old prostitute saw Jackie, her face lit up and she said, “That God you prayed to heard your prayer. I now have rice and I don’t need opium any more. I don’t have to sell my body any more. Thank you so much!”

Is this not an example of true Christianity? So it is, that many of God’s greatest miracles often take place in darkened corners of the world where none of the fashionable people of this world ever take notice! Many of those who call themselves Servants of God will only go to minister when they can be in the limelight, when they can have huge crowds, where they can be sure to take up huge offerings.

### Tenth Example: Haiti

For hundreds of years, Haiti was a country that was dominated by voodoo, santaria, and Satan- or Devil-worship. Also, corrupted forms of Christianity had merged with these religions.

It all started on August 14, 1791 when several of the devil’s worshipers got together at a place called Bois-Caiman. There they dedicated Haiti to the devil and sealed their dedication by sacrificing a pig as a offering to the devil—and drinking the pig’s blood. Satanic high priests repeated this sacrifice at the same spot on August 14 every year till 1996. As a result, Haiti suffered extreme poverty and many other horrors for 206 years.

In 1997, some true believers in Jesus Christ decided to do something about this stranglehold that the devil had on Haiti. They announced that they would go to Bois-Caiman on August 14 and *cleanse* it. On that day, a group of them first stood in front of the presidential palace and rebuked all of the evil spirits around there. (They had hundreds of friends around the country praying and fasting for them that whole day.) Then they traveled six hours to get to the spot at Bois-Caiman that the Satanists considered most sacred. Satan’s priests knew they were coming and were afraid to go near that place.

As the Christian believers entered Satan’s *sacred* ground, most could feel oppressive spirits. One of the organizers of that meeting wrote: “As we approached that satanic field where no Christian had ever been, it was not easy for us. The power of witchcraft was very strong and the air was so

heavy! As we pushed our way towards the big tree where the pig was slain, we really had to be violent in the spirit: praying, rebuking, fighting, and casting out the devil and all of his spirits. The battle raged until we broke into a Jericho march seven times around the big witchcraft tree...and...at the seventh time, we all felt the heavy power of the devil lift. God gave a vision to many of the people there who saw the devil fleeing that place. Joyful and victorious shouts went up to God as we praised God for his victory! We took communion together and applied the blood of Jesus to the land under the same tree where the blood of the pig had been shed. We canceled the satanic contract, broke the curse, and consecrated the place to Jesus Christ as a prayer center—claiming all of Haiti back for God forever....”

On that day, thousands of believers marched and had big crusade-type meetings. Many Haitian people committed themselves to follow Jesus Christ—*including several satanic priests!*

Three days later, the witch doctors gathered at Bois-Caiman to call on their spirits and to offer sacrifices. After a couple of days of trying desperately to conjure up the spirits, none came up. Those witch doctors complained to the government and the news media—thus admitting that the Christians had more power than the satanic spirits. At first, the government protested the actions of the Christians and rebuked them sternly for “violating the sacred Voodoo High Place.” Even the United States Ambassador expressed his disapproval—so the U.S. ambassador also admitted that the Christians had power over the devil!

However, the leaders of the Christians defended their rights before the government and the news media. The government changed its position and even permitted any church group that wanted to, to have meetings at Bois-Caiman. Many Christian groups have gone there for meetings, prayer, and fasting.

Everyone in Haiti knows that Haiti’s contract with Satan has been canceled; the curse has been broken. Even some Christian churches that were afraid, have now sided with the true believers! Haiti is now free and is God’s country, but much remains to be done there.

The above information was extracted from writings by:

Bishop Joel R. Jeune, P.O. Box 1778

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

G.C. ←(G.C. stands for God’s Country)

## Eleventh Example: Two Chinese Missionaries

Several high-ranking church leaders from Europe visited a pastor in Hong Kong, China, who took them to visit two young women missionaries who had just returned from their mission station for a short visit. The pastor asked these two ladies to come to the hotel to meet the leaders from Europe.

These young ladies had become Christians when they heard the gospel on a radio while they were still teenagers, and they each felt the call to be a missionary. Their pastor had tried to convince them to do the work of the Lord right where they were but they said, “No. In the Bible, Jesus told us to go to all the world. We will go.”

The pastor protested, “You have only been Christians for six months, and you are so young.”

They replied, “Pastor, we have read everything Jesus said, and nowhere does He ask people how old they are. We want to go.”

The pastor replied, “Very well. We need some workers on Hainan Island. But it is very rough. The people there are fishermen. There are no Christians there. For young ladies it might be dangerous.”

Excitedly they responded, “How soon can we go? We will go to this place.”

They had been there for two years and were now back for a short period of time to try to get Bibles for their new churches. [From the above facts, these two young ladies may still have been teenagers when they came back from this visit, and could not have been more than 20 or 21 years old.]

The pastor went to the lobby that night at the appointed time and waited for the ladies to arrive so he could escort them to meet the visitors. While he waited, he watched the bellboys in their crisp, tailored uniforms, and the tourists who attempted to be casual in their designer clothes. Then he spotted them. “Oh, no!” he thought, as they walked in. Their black pyjamas and broad-brimmed fishermen hats stood in stark contrast to the appearance of the sophisticated hotel crowd. Tourists ogled them with that “how quaint” look so often directed to the nationals.

Several people stood staring as he greeted them as politely as possible without drawing too much attention. “Come, we will go to my room to meet some people from Europe.” The women looked at each other, then apprehensively followed behind, looking down at their bare feet sinking into the carpet. They attempted to step more lightly, as though they were afraid they would sink into this beautifully colored ‘mud’. The pastor

pushed the elevator button, keeping his head down and afraid to watch any of the many eyes staring in his direction, The elevator arrived and the doors slid open, and the women greeted it with a look of great astonishment.

Several tourists smiled at them as they stepped on. There were more 'how quaint' looks. The elevator operator pretended not to notice his passengers as he asked for the floor number. The women's wonder changed to fear as the doors closed and their first elevator ride began to ascend.

Once in the room, the two European church officials graciously greeted them and motioned for them to sit down. The pastor pulled chairs toward them, so they would not sit on the floor.

The visitors began, "Pastor, ask them how many churches they have established on Hainan."

They put their heads down and answered, "Oh, Pastor, we have only been there two years. Not many. Not very many." Their voices were apologetic.

"How many?"

"Oh, not many, not many. We have only been there a short time. The people were not very friendly; no, not very friendly. Sometimes they became very vicious. Yes, sometimes they told us they were going to drown us in the ocean. Several men threatened us. Oh my, and because we were so young, even some of the ladies did not like us. Yes, some even called us terrible names...so, not many churches...no, not many."

The pastor interrupted and slowly repeated the words, "How many?"

There was a moment of silence, then one of the women looked up with embarrassment and anguish, as though confessing to a crime, "Only thirteen."

The pastor looked astonished and interpreted for the guests, "Thirteen." One of them repeated the number, "Only thirteen! Oh, my, goodness, I haven't planted that many churches in my lifetime!" One of the pastor's assistants interrupted, "No, Pastor, she did not say 13, she said 30!" The pastor looked at them and asked, "30?"

"Oh, yes, not many. We have done very poorly. Only 30."

"How many people are in the churches?"

Again both heads went down, apologizing for their failure. "Not many." Finally, the pastor looked like he was ready to shake them and practically yelled, "How many?"

"Only 220 people. Not many, no...not many."

Quickly multiplying in his head, the pastor said, "Two hundred and

twenty in 30 churches?"

"Oh no, in only one, but that one is a very small church, very small. There are bigger ones..."

The guests repeated the numbers, "220 is small? Dear Lord, I wish I had some that large. Ask them how many are in the big churches."

With a more reverent manner, the pastor inquired, "And how many in the big churches? I mean, the biggest one."

They began again, "Oh, not many..." when he asked them, "Please, ladies, how many?"

"Oh, less than 5000. Only 4,900. Yes, less than 5000. We have just started." From behind the pastor came the sound of weeping: "Dear Lord, forgive us! What did they do? How did they do it? Ask them what they did!"

When asked, they looked astonished. "What did we do? Why, nothing. Yes, we did nothing, nothing."

"You did nothing? You have 30 churches; the smallest with 220 people, the largest with almost 5000 new Christians! And you did nothing?"

"No, nothing. We just prayed."

"I know you prayed, but what else did you do?"

"After we prayed, the Holy Spirit would tell us exactly what to do. We would keep praying and He would tell us what to do, and we would do it. Then we prayed and then He would tell us what to do. We would do it and keep praying..."

"Dear Lord, they just prayed and the Holy Spirit told them exactly what to do and they prayed..." The pastor laid his hands on the shoulders of the two sisters. Behind him his two guests, on their knees, weeping, joined as they just prayed.

## Twelfth Example: Two Hundred Martyrs

The year was 1946, the year the Communists consolidated their authority in China. The location was near Tsin Tsui in Western China, near the Tibetan border. The Communists would not tolerate any one who refused to submit completely to their authority. This description of the martyrdom is adapted from the writings of British missionary Gladys Aylward.

The Communist party took complete control of the university. Their first act was to ask each of the 500 students in a written form if they were

for the new Communists government. Those who would agree would be given good jobs working for the government; the others would not be able to get a job and would be poor.

However almost all of those five hundred students had started their education in Christian schools. When the five hundred forms were tallied, three hundred agreed that they were for the government, but 200 were against it. The Communists were desperate. For the next several months, they put a lot of pressure on the other 200 students to support the government.

After a few months, the Communists again passed out the forms asking each student the same question. Surprise! Even more were against the Communists this time! The Communists started using even more pressure and persecution. What did the Christian believers do? They started praying together every morning before breakfast. What did the Communists do? They tried everything to disrupt the Christians' prayer meetings. The Christians moved the prayer meeting one hour earlier. The Communists came after them again. Again the Christians moved the prayer meeting another hour earlier. Again the Communists tried to disrupt them.

At the end of the three months the students who were believers were all forced to appear in the market square. Under a huge squad of Communist police, the two hundred students were marched into the square. One of the leaders had a list of the names of the 200 students. He stood on a platform and called out the first name—a seventeen-year-old girl. With a bellowing voice he asked this refined and beautiful girl, "What position are you standing in now?" Walking to the platform, she faltered a little; some thought she would fall. Some questioned, "Why put this slim, frail girl up first? Poor child, how can she stand?"

But then her voice suddenly rang out clear and strong. "Sir, when I went for my three months' indoctrination I thought Jesus Christ was real. I thought the Bible was true. Now I know Jesus Christ is real, I know this Book is true!" Immediately she was cruelly beheaded.

As each of the rest of those two hundred names were called out, not one faltered—even though they knew the Communists would show no mercy. Every one of them was beheaded that very day in a public marketplace. Before each execution the victim was given one last chance to recant. However, even though those at the end of the line had seen their friends butchered, none of them flinched." How many of us would stand if we were put to such a test?

This pattern of Chinese martyrs was repeated throughout the world—by the millions—throughout the 20th century, as it was in the early Church under the Romans.

Taken from The Little Woman by Gladys Aylward, Chicago: The Moody Press, 1970. (Chapter 15 Even Unto Death, pages 131-134)

— End of Examples of True Christianity —

## The Churches' Mistakes

In this section, I wish to present two (2) church doctrines that were started over a thousand years after the Bible was written: One by the Catholics and one by the Evangelical/Fundamental branch of the Protestant churches. Neither one of these two doctrines were heard of a thousand years ago, yet today, many of these churches swear by them and some will even condemn to hell anyone who does not agree with them! The Catholic doctrine (that was started in the last thousand years and was unheard of before that) is called Transubstantiation. A very popular doctrine in the Evangelical/Fundamental community of believers is that all true believers will be raptured out of this world before the time of the Great Tribulation that Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24:21. Let's start with this Rapture doctrine first:

### The Rapture and the Seven-Years' Tribulation

As a young person, I heard some preaching a rapture of the church followed by 7-year period of great tribulation as taught by Jesus in Matthew 24:21. For many years I never heard anyone preach otherwise, yet I was never able to find any such teaching in the Holy Bible—in any version. Finally after 40 years, I ran across some research into the origins of these two teachings:

- ① That the church [or the true believers in the church] would be raptured out of this world before the time of the Great Tribulation, and
- ② The Tribulation would last 7 years.

Evangelist John Bray of Lakeland, Florida [and a few others] researched the origins of the teaching that the church would be raptured out of this world before a 7-year period of great tribulation. John Bray found that in former centuries, no Christian preacher, pastor, evangelist, priest, or bishop taught

that the church would be raptured out before the Great Tribulation. Almost all taught that the church would go victoriously through the tribulation.

John Bray offered a \$500 reward to anyone who could find evidence that anyone taught a pre-tribulation rapture of the church before 1790. Someone finally found records that a pastor from Kentucky named Morgan Edwards, taught the pre-tribulation rapture in his church in 1788. Dr. Bray paid the \$500 reward and withdrew his offer.

Following are 4 well-known ministers that took a stand against the teaching of a rapture of the church before the great tribulation:

|                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Charles Finney | Charles Spurgeon   |
| George Mueller | G. Campbell Morgan |

Besides these 4, before 1790, the following made statements clearly showing that they did not believe in a rapture of the church before the time of great tribulation:

|                 |                  |                   |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Martin Luther   | John Calvin      | John Wesley       |
| John Wycliffe   | John Knox        | George Whitefield |
| William Tyndale | Jonathan Edwards | David Brainerd.   |

Bray published his research in 1980 in a book entitled: *The Origin of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Teaching*. Fish House Pub., Fort Myers, Florida. This book is now out of print.

According to Bray, John Nelson Darby, the founder of the Plymouth Brethren denomination, started teaching the rapture of the church followed by a 7-year period tribulation about 1828.

These teachings became quite popular and were picked up by C.I. Scofield, editor of the now-famous Scofield Reference Bible. Scofield taught these doctrines in the footnotes of his Bible, which sold millions of copies. It was through those footnotes that these teachings received widespread acceptance. They did not come through the Bible written in ancient times.

Didn't Daniel go through his time of tribulation in the lion's den and come out victorious? Didn't Daniel's 3 friends come out of their tribulation in the over-heated furnace victoriously? Didn't Paul teach that "...we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God"? —Acts 14:22. Doesn't our God expect us to take the same stand that Daniel and his three friends took?

## Transubstantiation

The above article about the Rapture is predominant mostly among the Fundamental or Evangelical Christians. The Catholics also have a very popular doctrine that was started over a thousand years after Christ. In their doctrine, they teach that in the communion (also known as Eucharist), the bread and the wine are turned into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. This Transubstantiation doctrine originated in the ninth century. A monk named Paschasius Radbertus of Corbie (later declared a saint) presented this doctrine in an article which he wrote. This doctrine was officially accepted by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 A.D.<sup>11</sup>—well over a thousand years after the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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So it is that the Protestants and the Catholics each have a very popular doctrine that was unheard of for a thousand years after the death of Jesus Christ! Are you wondering how many other doctrines the church leaders have made up? Check these three (3) out:

## Let's Go To Heaven

*Going to heaven* is one of the favorite subjects for many preachers, pastors, evangelists, and ordinary Christians. One day while studying the Bible, I noticed that Jesus never used the expression *Go to heaven*.<sup>12</sup> Only one book, Matthew, has this expression: *Enter into the kingdom of heaven* [KJV]; one, Mark, has this expression: *He was received up into heaven* [NKJV]; and one, Luke, has this expression: *He was.....carried up into heaven* [NKJV]. And Peter used this expression: [Jesus] went to heaven [1st Peter 3:22]. No where is this expression mentioned: *go to heaven*.

So, why is it that Jesus and the gospel writers never used the expression *go to heaven*, and what did Jesus mean when he used the expression *enter into the kingdom of heaven*? Here is an illustration:

How does a person join or enter a political party? Does he join up by going to a certain location? Or does he become a good member by believing in his heart the political agenda of that party? It is quite obvious that a

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<sup>11</sup> Taken from *The Story of Christianity* Volume 1, by Justo L. Gonzalez, page 271-2, 1984. Radbertus presented this doctrine in a treatise called *On the Body and the Blood of the Lord*.

<sup>12</sup> King James Version of the Bible.

person can be at party headquarters and hate that party's agenda, or even worse, he may be a hypocritical member of the party; and it is quite obvious that a person may never have a chance to attend a political rally or convention, and still be devoted to that party's agenda.

So, doesn't a person enter in by believing in his heart, and not by going to some geographical location?

Is heaven a geographical location? Is it beyond the clouds or beyond the grave? Or is it a spiritual kingdom that we enter when we believe? Here is another of Jesus' sayings that confirms the spiritual nature of the kingdom of heaven: "The kingdom of heaven is within you." (Luke 17:21) An another place when Jesus referred to himself as "...the son of man who is in heaven..." However, he was standing right in front of them when he said that.

We enter in when we hear God's word, believe his word, and obey it. If we do not do these things while we are still in these bodies, it will be too late when our bodies are being put into a casket.

The conclusion of the matter is that millions of pastors, preachers, clergymen, priests, and evangelists make many statements about things that they don't know anything about. God help us!

### Praying for the Sick

How many times have we heard people in church say, "Pray for me, I'm sick"? One day I noticed that Jesus *healed* the sick; he never *prayed for* sick people. I also noticed that he told his disciples to *heal* the sick. He never told them to *pray for* the sick. Also, in the book of Acts I read that the disciples *healed* the sick. I never read that they *prayed for* them. Now, I know that the above is a very controversial statement. Please note: When Peter went into Tabitha's bedroom, he prayed and then he got up and healed Tabitha [Acts 9:40]. It does not tell us what he prayed about. Perhaps he re-consecrated himself.

When Paul went into Publius' father's bedroom [Acts 28:8], Acts says he: "...prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him." Same here. We do not know what he prayed. Perhaps he prayed that God would be glorified in that man's healing.

Yet today in most of our churches, people are still saying "pray for God to heal me;" and the pastors are saying, "Let me pray for you to be healed." Have the pastors and the churches all got it wrong? Most of the

ministers even say, "I can't heal anybody," thus canceling out the gift that God would have them to receive! No wonder they can't heal anybody!

### Let's Join a Church

Very many preachers talk to their people about "joining the church" and many millions of people pride themselves for having "joined a church." There is just one problem with that: Nowhere in the Bible is *joining a church* ever mentioned." This phrase, *join the church*, is not found in the Bible.

So, what does the Bible say about it? It says:

- ① On the day of Pentecost, it says 3000 were added to their number.
- ② Acts 4:4 says the number of men grew to about 5000, and
- ③ Acts 5:14 says more men and women...were added to their number: So, people ① *were added*, ② *their number grew*, and ③ *more were added*. Nobody joined! In Acts 5:13, it specifically says "No one *dared join them*." So, there was no such thing in Bible days as *joining a church*! *God added whom he choose!*

### Have Christians Compromised Their Standards?

Let's look at a standard that was used by the apostles to judge false prophets and false apostles: The early apostles wrote:<sup>13</sup>

An apostle or prophet who asks for more than bread for the road—especially one who asks for money or one who asks to be put up for more than two days—is false.

By these standards (that is, asking for money), virtually every one of our ministers, priests, bishops, pastors, and evangelists are false apostles or false prophets.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The name of this apostolic document is *Didache*, a Greek word that means *The Teaching* or *The Doctrine*, written about 90 AD. This quote was copied from *Faith and Wealth* by Justo Gonzalez, page 93. This document is also available on the internet at: <http://wesley.nnc.edu/noncanon/fathers/ante-nic/didache.htm>

<sup>14</sup> A well-respected writer who has taught this is Watchman Nee. Please see Chapter 8 of Nee's book: *The Normal Christian Church Life*



## THE ENEMY'S BATTLE PLAN

[Following is an article written May 2, 2000, by Hollie L. Moody of Michigan. Ms. Moody was shown in a vision a level of deception that exists in the church world that will shock millions — or be disbelieved by them. Nevertheless, it is true. The enemy is working desperately to destroy as many of God's people as he can. He knows that his time is short according to Revelation 12:12] Ms. Moody wrote:

### LAUGHING AND TALKING WITH THE LORD

As I was praying on April 25th, 2000, I began to see in my mind a picture of the Lord. He was sitting on a rock and groups of people of all ages were gathered around Him. They all seemed to be laughing and talking together. I felt joy and peace and happiness as I viewed this scene. At times, the Lord would reach down and bring a child onto His lap. Or, He would reach out and a baby would be placed into His arms. He would then gaze down into the face of the baby and speak softly and tenderly to the baby. At other times, someone would draw close to His side, and He would place His arm around them, and draw them closer to Him.

An angel approached the Lord. The crowd before the Lord parted to allow the angel to draw near to the Lord. A silence fell over the laughing, joyous crowd as the angel stopped before the Lord and began to speak. From the way this angel was dressed, I sensed immediately that this was a warring angel. Being a warring angel and well aware of the coming battle plan of the enemy, he spoke with a strong sense of urgency and even perplexity in his voice. He was very concerned.

"There is work to be done," the angel said to the Lord. "Why do the people only sit here idly? These are dangerous times. The people should be doing battle in prayer and in the spirit. Instead, they sit here at Your feet, laughing. They are completely unaware of what is even now transpiring in the courts of hell." With great concern in his voice, the angel asked, "Why are You allowing this?"

[Before continuing the vision, as a side bar to that conversation, I had the impression the angel and the Lord had been in each other's presence numerous times and had many conversations with one another. What the angel said did not sound disrespectful or challenging at all. I could feel how he was feeling, and it was a genuine question in the midst of such perplexing opposition to come.]

The Lord gazed with love at the angel before Him. "Before I answer your questions," the Lord replied, "take this child of mine and show her what is being planned by the enemy."

Both the angel and the Lord then turned their heads and stared at me. "This will be too much for her," the angel protested.

"Take her, and show her," the Lord repeated. (The angel bowed his head to the Lord, then turned towards me.)

I began to back nervously away as the angel approached me. "Where are you taking me?" I asked the angel.

"To the enemy's camp," the angel replied.

"Go with him," the Lord instructed me.

I felt very nervous and afraid, but allowed the angel to touch me. As soon as the angel touched me, we were in darkness. I felt fear engulf me.

"Fear not," the angel said to me, and instantly, the fear vanished. The darkness seemed to dissipate, and I discovered that the angel and I were in what appeared to be a great court. A man was sitting on a large throne, and before him were gathered all types of creatures and men. (This "court" had the appearance of a cave. When I first viewed this scene, I felt stunned. I'm not sure why. It was like something in me "rebelled" at what I was seeing.)

"Who is that man on the throne?" I asked the angel. "And who are the creatures and men gathered before him?"

"That is the accuser of the brethren and his armies," the angel replied.

I then realized that I was in the presence of Satan. (When the angel informed me that this man was Satan, the fact that he was sitting on a throne amazed me. Later, when I prayed about this aspect of the vision, I felt that the Lord said that Satan was trying to copy everything that was God's in heaven, for himself.)

Satan was speaking, and I heard him say, "This will be our strategy." He then got up from his throne and went to stand in front of a large map on the wall behind him. As I stared at the map, I became aware that it was a map of the entire world. (It is very hard to describe this "map." The map wasn't actually "pinned" or "hanging" on the wall, but it was in front of the wall. But, it was like I could see it from all angles. And also, I could see like "air waves," "wind currents," the tides of the seas, etc. I could also see the hemisphere around the world — moons, stars, planets, etc. I really have no words or way to correctly put down on paper the appearance of this "map.")

Satan began to divide the world into sections. Then, he called out some names. I saw the creatures and the men gathered before Satan part, and very large and strong looking angelic beings approached Satan. (I saw four of these mighty looking angelic beings.) I could sense the power of these beings, and sensed the evil and wickedness of that power. A hush had fallen over the crowd.

“Who are these beings?” I whispered to the angel who I was with.

The angel I was with seemed concerned. “They are Satan’s princes.”

Satan began speaking again, and he was assigning sections of the world to each of these ‘princes.’ “You will need your armies,” Satan said to them. “Choose whoever you will. All are at your disposal.”

The large beings then began to pick and choose who would be in their particular army. (This was by no means “orderly.” There was a great deal of arguing, bickering, etc.) When they were finished, they all turned back to Satan and stared at him.

“Each prince will teach you our strategy to deceive and to destroy and to slay mankind,” Satan said. “Go with them.”

The princes and their armies began to exit from the presence of Satan. The angel and I began to follow one of the groups. They went into what appeared to be a school room. The prince went to the front of the room and began to instruct his army on how to deceive, destroy and slay the people in their particular section of the world that had been allocated to them. The angel and I then went to each “classroom.” The same plans and strategies were being “taught” in each “classroom.” (By the “same” plans, I don’t mean each class was teaching the exact same thing. What I mean, is that each class was very thorough in what it was teaching, and on how to apply what was being taught.)

In some of the classrooms, they were studying political leaders. Their families, homes, lifestyles, etc., were being closely scrutinized. I felt very frightened and helpless, very overwhelmed, as I saw and heard how very thorough these “lessons” [for lack of a better word] were. Nothing was left to chance. Every area of these political leaders’ lives was being dissected and investigated and studied. Demons were being assigned on how to “attack” and influence and “control” each of these political leaders, their families, and even their friends and co-workers. Nothing was left to chance. Nothing was overlooked. The books they read, the radio stations they listened to, etc.; everything, everything was being discussed. The enormity of all of this was absolutely mind-boggling to me. This also occurred with the religious leaders.

It was the “religion” classes that frightened and shocked me the most. In these classes, the religions of the nations were being studied and discussed. Even New Age and occult, Wicca, tarot, etc., were being discussed. Buddhism, Hinduism, etc., were being discussed. The bibles and books and other writings for all of these religions were being read and studied. Each denomination of Christianity was being studied. The Bible being studied was the major source of information for these “lessons.” This was truly horrifying and shocking to me that demons were reading and studying the Bible. And, it was all for the intent to twist what was written, and to seek ways to misinterpret, misrepresent, etc., it to Christians. The demons were discussing ways to “dilute” the Gospel. They were discussing ways to “incorporate” major beliefs from all the religions into one big acceptable “gospel for humankind.”

Some of the demons in these religion classes who were ordered to “infiltrate” churches, were being taken into actual churches, and were watching how the people prayed, worshiped, sang, etc. They were studying how messages were being delivered to the congregations in numerous churches. They were studying the individuals who were used in the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. These individuals were followed around constantly by assigned demons, who watched and listened to everything these people said and did. The friends and family members of these individuals were also studied. The demons discussed ways to drive wedges, etc., between those people who were truly being used of God, and the people they went to church with, and even how to cause these peoples’ own pastors and spiritual leaders to lose faith and confidence in these people who were used in the gifts of the Spirit. I felt so angry and frustrated and helpless as I saw and heard how this was to be accomplished, and how it had already been initiated in many, many congregations, and how it was largely succeeding.

Many of these “religious” demons [for lack of a better word] were being taught how to sing in churches, how to dance in the Spirit, how to pray and teach. I felt at times as if I were going to vomit as I witnessed many demons in these classrooms “practicing” how to worship the Lord, and how to be a Christian. Seeing a demon “dancing before the Lord” is so awful, and so sickening, that there are just no words to describe it adequately.

Some of these more “major” demons, could also work “signs, and wonders, and even miracles.” Some of these demons, were also being taught how to be “Christ.” This was being done, by actually studying the scriptures. Seeing some of these demons acting and speaking like Christ, shocked me speechless. Seeing them reading the Bible, was like an abomination to me. In some of these classes, even UFO’s and aliens were being discussed, and how to deceive people through these phenomenon. There were classrooms where food and dress and slang words — yes, slang words(!) — were being studied. Crops were being studied and discussed. All of this was just so vast, it overwhelmed me.

Suddenly, the “classes” began to leave the rooms. The angel and I followed them. They congregated back in front of Satan.

“Report,” Satan said. “How will we deceive, destroy and slay mankind?”

One of the princes came forward and began to outline their plans and strategies to Satan.

“The people want signs and wonders and miracles from their religious leaders,” the prince said. “We know that our enemy will do, and has begun already, to grant this unto his children. We will slip in with a counterfeit move and deceive many. We have taught our armies how to mimic worship, praise, and looking and acting like a true believer. We will give unto our armies the ability to work signs, wonders and even miracles. But while all become focused upon these outward manifestations, others of us will begin behind the scenes to dilute the message of the gospel. We will accomplish this partly through speaking to the people about God’s ‘true’ nature. We will allow the people to create God into what and who they want Him to be.”

“Good,” Satan said. “Very good.”

The prince began to speak once again. “When the people have created their own version of God, then, we will give them OUR god.” The crowd before Satan began to cheer wildly.

“We must depart!” the angel urged me. Suddenly, we were back before the Lord. He was still in the midst of His children; laughing with them, talking to them, touching them.

A silence fell over the group once again as the angel I was with once more approached the Lord. The angel reported to the Lord all we had heard and seen in hell.

The angel was very concerned and distressed, asking, “Why are You just sitting here with the people? Why haven’t they been sent to begin

battle? How will they be able to discern this coming great deception if they aren’t even aware that one is coming?”

The Lord became grave. His face as He looked at His children was alight with His great love for them. I noticed tears in His eyes. Then, He turned His head and looked at the angel speaking with Him.

“My children will know the false, by knowing the true,” the Lord said. “The longer they spend in My Presence, the more they will know My voice when they hear it. A voice of a stranger, they will not follow.”

“But the enemy has those who have been taught to speak just as You do,” the angel protested. “They sound almost just like You.”

“Almost,” the Lord replied gently. “Almost they sound like Me. Only My sheep who have lingered long in My Presence will know the voice of their true Shepherd. And this is why I spend so much time with My children. I spend as much time with them as they allow Me to. I know very well what the enemy is planning. My plans are plans of love and fellowship.”

The angel and the Lord both fell silent as they gazed at the crowd before the Lord. “Love them well!” the angel replied.

“Yes, a battle is coming,” the Lord sighed, and I saw tears in His eyes. “Great wickedness and persecution upon My children — My true children who know My voice. A time of wickedness and persecution such as has never been seen or experienced. Yet in the midst of it all, I will move, I will bless, I will speak, I will love, I will win. There are those of My children who sense much of this. They are the ones who will never stop praying and interceding, not even in times of seeming peace.”

“What about me, Lord?” I asked.

The angel and the Lord looked at me. “Pray,” the Lord replied. “Tell the prayer warriors to strengthen themselves and their brothers and sisters in the times of peace. I will be pouring out of My Spirit upon all nations and peoples. It will spread to even the most unlikely of places — television, magazines, newspapers, radios, even the Internet. And it will be here that the battle will truly begin — and the deception begin.” The Lord stood up.

“Is it time?” the angel asked Him.

“It is time,” the Lord replied. Then, I was no longer with the Lord or the angel, but praying once again.

John 10 is in my mind; especially verse 14: “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known by my own.”

—written May 2, 2000, by Hollie L. Moody of Michigan

## Roger

The following story is an excellent example of the very thing that Ms. Moody saw in her vision [previous message] about Satan's school:

I spent over 20 years working as a teacher in a prison. One day, I met a new middle-aged prisoner who seemed like an intelligent, business-like individual; not a street gangster. I wondered what he was in prison for, but, as a policy, I never asked prisoners what they were in prison for. He seemed quite depressed, and I started talking to him [I'll call him Roger] from day to day. Finally, one day, he confessed the following to me:

He had been a praise-and-worship leader in one of the larger churches in one of America's medium-sized cities [100,000]. There were times when he led praise and worship before thousands of people. Also, he was a construction superintendent for a building contractor. Also, he had a wife, children, a home, etc. However, he admitted to me that he started supplementing his salary by robbing banks. He admitted that he robbed seven [7] banks before he was caught.

Roger's confession seems to be a direct result of the thing that Ms. Moody saw in Satan's throne room and in his classrooms. These things are going on in our churches, and we [almost to the very last one of us] are of a spirit that is too dull or too gross to discern the spirits of those who lead our worship services. I confess: If I had been sitting in the congregation when Roger was leading praise and worship, I probably would have been following along in the worship and praise that was being led by a bank robber!

## The Fishless Fishermen

The following story [by an unknown author] is an excellent example of how the enemy, the devil, sidetracks Christian people from doing what Jesus told them to do:

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Now there happens to be a fraternal organization of fishermen. And lo, there are many fish in the waters all around. In fact, their whole area is surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish. And the fish are hungry.

Year after year those who called themselves fishermen meet and talked about their 'calling to fish', the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing. Continually they search for new and better definitions of fishing. They sponsor costly nationwide and worldwide congresses to

discuss fishing and to promote fishing and hear about all the possibilities of fishing. These fishermen built large, beautiful buildings called "Fishing Headquarters." The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish.

One thing they didn't do, however; they didn't fish. They organized a board to send out fishermen to where there were many fish. The board was formed by those who had a great vision and courage to speak about fishing, to define fishing, and to promote the idea of fishing in far-away streams and lakes where many other fish of different colors lived. Also the board hired staffs and appointed committees and held many meetings to define fishing, to lobby for fishing rights, and to decide what new streams should be thought about. But the staff and committee members did not fish. Expensive training centers were built to teach fishermen how to fish. Those who taught had doctorates in Fishology, but the teachers did not fish. They only taught fishing. Year after year, graduates were sent to do full-time fishing, some to distant waters filled with fish.

Furthermore, the fishermen built large printing houses to publish fishing guides. A speakers' bureau was also provided to schedule special speakers on the subject of fishing. Many who felt the call to be fishermen responded, and were sent to fish. But like the fishermen back home, they never fished.

Some also said they wanted to be part of the fishing party, but they felt called to furnish fishing equipment. Others felt their job was to relate to the fish in a good way so the fish would know the difference between good and bad fishermen.

After one stirring meeting on "The Necessity for Fishing," a young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he quit his fishing in order to have time to tell about the experience to the other fishermen. He was also placed on the Fishermen's General Board as a person having considerable experience.

Now it's true that many of those who called themselves fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near bodies of water and bore the smell of dead fish every day. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of their fishermen's clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen yet never fished. They faithfully attended weekly meetings at which everyone talked about better fishing methods,

and they wondered about their brother fishermen who never attended the weekly meetings. After all, were they not following the Master who said, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men”?

One day a person who was not a fisherman pointed out that those who never caught any fish were not real fishermen—he even referred to them as hypocrites. This caused a tremendous stir in the fishing community, and many fishermen were upset, became angry, and some even threatened this person. Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fisherman if, year after year, he never catches a fish or never goes fishing?

—author unknown, edited slightly by Mr. James, Knoxville, Tennessee

## Was Jesus a Radical?

Consider these statements by Jesus:

1. When he told the people if someone wants to follow him, ‘...he must hate his own father, mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and his own life’, wasn’t that an extremely radical message? (Luke 14:26)
2. When he told the Jews to eat his flesh and drink his blood, wasn’t that an extremely radical message? (John 6:53-58)
3. When he told the people to deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow him, wasn’t that an extremely radical message? (Matthew 10:38, 16:34; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23, Luke 14:27)
4. When he told a rich man to sell everything and give it all to the poor, wasn’t that an extremely radical message? (Matthew 19:16-21; Mark 10:17-21; Luke 18:18-22)
5. When he told us that we ought to lay our lives down for one another, wasn’t that an extremely radical message? [1<sup>st</sup> John 3:16; John 15:13]
6. When he told his disciples that few would be saved, wasn’t that a radical message? (Luke 13:23-24)
7. When he told his followers that the end would be “...as it was in the days of Noah,” and “...as it was in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah,” wasn’t that an extremely radical message? In Noah’s day, civilization was wiped off of the face of the earth. In the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, the whole district was wiped off of the face of the earth. Isn’t that extremely radical? (Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-30)
8. When he told the religious leaders of his day: “The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation that will bring its fruits,”

9. When Jesus told his disciples that they would all be:
    - a. beaten in the synagogues and (Mark 13:9; John 16:2)
    - b. killed by people who think they are serving God (John 16:2)
    - c. be hated by all nations”; (Matthew 24:9)aren’t these an extremely radical messages?
  10. When he went into the temple and chased out the money changers, wasn’t that an extremely radical act? (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46; John 2:14-16)
  11. And, there are quite a few other messages in the Bible that would probably be considered extremely radical.
- Yet, most of the modern church world is scared to death of radicalism.

## Does the Bible teach Tolerance?

When John the Baptist rebuked King Herod for marrying his brother’s wife, was he being tolerant? — Matthew 14:13-14; Mark 6:17-18; Luke 3:19

When Elijah proclaimed to King Ahab that there would be a drought, because of his sins, was he being tolerant? — 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 17:1

When Elijah told King Ahab that he and his father’s house were the ones who had caused the trouble [famine] in Israel, was he being tolerant?

When Elijah said to King Ahab, “...you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD”, was he being tolerant? — 1 Kings 21:20

When Moses took the golden calf that the Israelis worshiped, ground it to powder, put the powder in the water, and made the people drink it, was he being tolerant? — Exodus 32:20

When Moses said to the Israeli people, “I testify against you...”, was he being tolerant? — Deuteronomy 8:19

In Noah’s day when God wiped civilization off of the face of the earth [except for 8 people], was he being tolerant? — Genesis 6

When Jehu told the eunuchs to throw Jezebel out of the window, was he being tolerant? — 2nd Kings 9:33

When Jesus rebuked the political/religious leaders of his day, calling them a liter of poisonous snakes, was he being tolerant? — Matthew 23

When Peter asked Ananias and Sapphira why they lied to the Holy Ghost, was he being tolerant? — Acts 5

When Elisha said to Gehazi, “Naaman’s leprosy will come on you,” was he being tolerant? — 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 5:25&26

When Paul turned a man over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh body.....was he being tolerant? — 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:5 [Actually he was being intolerant to his body so that his spirit may be saved; so, actually he was being tolerant to his spirit.]

Yes, there are a few statements in the Bible that teach tolerance.

The following message was written by a Jewish lady who seems to have a prophetic anointing just as she received it from her heavenly shepherd.

## **The Way We Worship<sup>15</sup>**

My little ones, consider the way worship and praise is being conducted in your church/world. In spiritual battle the power of worship and praise is extraordinary when focused on the right cause—on something that is on My heart. Worship is a weapon against the enemy.

But, consider this also: Can these songs and actions become rote and familiar? Do you find yourself falling from your first love for your shepherd and losing the spontaneity of your worship? Do your mind and heart wander and focus elsewhere while supposedly worshipping?

Yes, these things happen frequently among My flock. When you set up rigid rules and time schedules, and set up established songs and dances, aren't you restricting the spontaneity of your worship? By your controlling worship, you are dictating what is acceptable to Me and are setting up your own standards to please Me. Aren't you curtailing the freedom of the human soul to worship spontaneously without any inhibitions? Aren't you enforcing the rules of your own soul rather than My holy order? Aren't worship leaders making an assumption that their own abilities to lead in worship are what I require?

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<sup>15</sup>From Whispers of the Shepherd, by Kathleen D Mitchell, of Cincinnati, Ohio. Permission requested.

In many portions of My flock there are people leading worship with a heart for it, but not with the anointing from Me to do so. Doesn't this kind of worship results in little power for warfare against the enemy? How much of this kind of worship reaches the place of My habitation? How much impact does your warfare/worship make in My kingdom? In a time of real warfare [spiritual warfare], this kind of worship is a weapon that will not expel the enemy.

However, I allow the worship times to be dry and unsatisfying. I allow for discord to abound in those seeking to enforce human control over worship. I allow a barrenness of unity and a famine of true unbounded joy to accompany the current practices of empty, dry, unsatisfying worship. My reason for bringing you into the wilderness experience is to provoke My worshipers and their leaders to seek that intimate worship that becomes a true weapon in this warfare. The worship that I seek is a totally-surrendered spirit/soul, new spontaneous songs, and a tune generated out of My Spirit.

The songs and the dances that please Me are devoid of pre-planned performances, and consist only of adoration of Me. Those who recognize that they are in the wilderness in this area of worship/warfare can come up to a high level of worship by laying aside the old familiar worship styles and launching out into the fresh new ones that I am always bringing.

My flock has not yet seen the full power of this weapon of worship that decimates the enemy and attains My victory. To empower My worshipers, I allow the wilderness because of the discipline that it brings. Those who refuse to enter into My discipline in the wilderness and be broken by it, will not be able to enter into and be empowered by My presence. I need for you to have My empowered worship in the time of warfare.

The above message adapted from the writings of Kathleen Mitchell.

## **Is this a Man of God?**

Once there was a young man whom I'll call Thomas . When he was young, Tommy really hungered and thirsted for God. While he was still young, he started ministering to others and preaching. Soon people recognized the spirit that was on him—the passion and the anointing. Many people started following him and many turned to the Lord Jesus. The crowds increased, and so did the money. After a few years, the offerings and the bank account grew so much that Thomas started thinking about a

building for a ministry base. Thomas got a state charter and named his ministry The Dr. Thomas International Ministries, Inc. As the ministry grew, the bills increased, and Reverend Thomas started spending more and more time raising funds, and he found less and less time and money to help hurting, needy people.

Dr. Thomas also made some mission trips to foreign countries where he preached to very large crowds. When he went to those countries, he took only one person with him: his photographer. He used those pictures to raise more funds to ‘feed the poor, the orphans, and the widows’.

In the later years of his life, he built a larger modern ministry headquarters and placed a life-size poster-picture of himself in the lobby. A show-case in the lobby had many pictures from his ministry campaigns that showed him preaching to thousands of people. Also, there were small plaques hanging in the lobby honoring the dozens of people who contributed large sums of money for the building.

So, what is wrong with this picture? Thomas built a memorial to himself. Was it a memorial to himself, or was it bordering on being an idol? The name of Jesus was not seen anywhere in the lobby, or it was such small print that hardly anyone noticed it. What about the plaques: Why weren’t there any to honor the widow who gave the 2 mites/pennies?

Oh, but Brother Thomas was still blessing, winning, and saving many! Many were astonished at the number of souls he was able to win. He had not lost any of his knack for soul-winning.

What does the Word say? “If any come in his own name, you will receive him” —John 5:43

What about the plaques honoring large donors? Didn’t Jesus tell us to do our alms in secret?

Now, notice this verse: The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable —Romans 11:29<sup>16</sup> So, when God gave Thomas a calling and a ministry gift, will he [God] revoke it? So, isn’t Thomas using the gift that God gave him to build a memorial to himself?

I, the writer of the above, have seen many go down that route—I’ll even say very many. But the Word tells us not to judge, and this is the reason that I am not revealing the names of the individuals that I have seen go down this road.

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<sup>16</sup>The King James version reads “...are without repentance.” Most of the newer translations use this term: “irrevocable”.

Recently in a certain town, I saw two such “memorials”. I knew both of those men in their younger days. Both were truly gifted by God. One of them prophesied over me, and was able to tell me something about my background, my current activity, and my future. He got all three correct, but he too ended up building a memorial to himself.

Where will these men stand on the day of Judgment? What about their converts? Were they converts to Jesus, or converts to Dr. Thomas’ church? Or should we call them proselytes?

Yes, this world is in a flood-tide of religious deception—both ministers and laymen—and the devil is laughing as he watches the ministers take their offerings to their bank.

I find it interesting that when Jesus gave us the signs of the end of times, there was one sign that he listed four times: Deception (Matthew 24:4, 5, 11, 24). Will deception be so bad at the end of time that Jesus felt compelled to repeat it four times? And if the shepherds go astray, where will the sheep end up? The shepherds will be held much more accountable on the Great Day of Judgment.

## Conclusion

This book is not finished. What I have written covers only a few aspects of this subject. I have not written about the horrible abuses that went on in the middle ages in the name of Christianity: simony (selling of bishops’ offices), selling of indulgences (pardons for dead relatives in purgatory), and the inquisition (a vicious persecution by the leaders of the church against anyone who would not agree with them even in the smallest detail). God’s word says: ***Come out of her [the false church and the world’s systems that support/promote the false church] my people.*** [This admonition to “***Come out of her my people,***” is found seven places in the Bible: ① Isaiah 48:20 ② Jeremiah 50:8 ③ Jeremiah 51:6 ④ Jeremiah 51:45 ⑤ Zachariah 2:7 ⑥ 2nd Corinthians 6:17 ⑦ Revelation 18:4.]

Again I say what I have already said in this book: Millions have been and are being deceived. How can you keep from being deceived? Stay humble before God and seek him with all your heart. Don’t put your trust in people. Get to know God for yourself. If you do nothing else except what is written in this paragraph, in the end you will be saved (even though in the meantime, you may be deceived many times).

If this book has stirred your emotions, if you wish to write to me, please feel free to do so.

May God’s light come to all of the readers of this book!

## Satan tried to kill me for writing this book!

Yes, Satan ordered that I be killed the very next day after I finished this book. At five minutes to five in the morning, while I was asleep, I saw a huge serpent coming in my bedroom window. He spoke very clearly. I distinctly remember his words: "I have orders to kill you." Instantly I threw my hand up and caught the serpent by the throat. He came within an inch of my face, but I managed to push him back. At that moment I woke up and thanked my heavenly father for sending his angels to protect me. Satan has not been able to do any harm to me.

Actually, when this demon spirit first appeared to me, he was a huge lizard. (In India some lizards are 10 feet long and weight 300 pounds.) He was coming at me very fast and turned into a serpent or snake before he got to me. I clearly saw his forked tongue sticking out of his mouth. Because he was moving so fast, the whole event took about one or two seconds. I do not know the significance of the lizard turning into a snake.

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### Examples of *Religious Deception*:

One Christian minister said:

"A doctorate degree will open doors for us that would not otherwise be opened." Wasn't it only the anointing spirit of God that opened doors for Jesus and his apostles? When men say such things, aren't they confessing that they have lost whatever anointing they may have once had?

Being zealous for God is a natural result of having a great change in one's life and being a true believer. However, many true believers started out serving God zealously, but later crossed the *thin line* from zeal to fanaticism. Why? To have Godly zeal, a person has to continually humble or submit himself to God; whereas, fanaticism arises from the human heart. Millions have been deceived by their own hearts!

Great sermons lead the people to praise the preacher.  
Good preaching leads the people to praise the Savior.