

THE RESURRECTION: WATCHTOWER-STYLE

By Joy Veinot

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WTBTS)* calls itself a Christian organization, yet they deny almost all of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.

They deny the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the existence of Hell, the biblical truth that the soul of man survives death, and so on. They *say* they believe in the veracity of the Bible, but only *truly* accept it as "interpreted" and "fixed" by the leadership in Brooklyn, New York. They claim to believe in the God of the Bible, yet the WTBTS "Jehovah" is a small, limited god who does not even know the future¹, and only can be in one place at a time. They believe in a Jesus, but their "Jesus" is only a man who somehow used to be Michael the archangel in a former life and who never came out of his tomb, but who supposedly was re-created as a mighty spirit creature—yes, Michael the archangel again! The WTBTS claims Jesus—the one who died for you and me—is *forever dead and gone*. They deny the Resurrection of the dead; yet, they claim to believe in it. This denial alone places them outside of the realm of true Christianity.

Resurrection a Foundational Truth

If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith ... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are

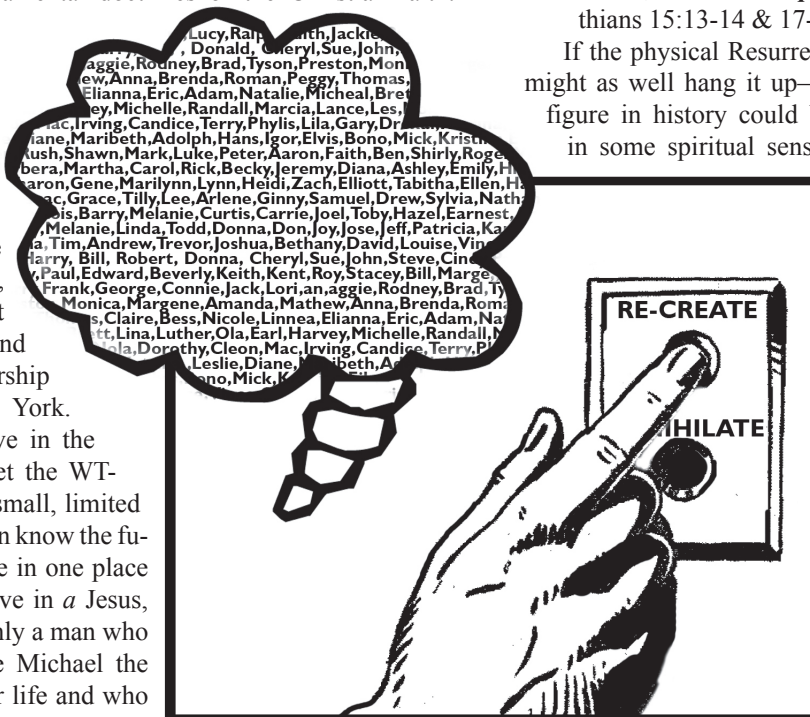
still in your sins. Then those also that have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men." (1 Corinthians 15:13-14 & 17-19, NIV)

If the physical Resurrection of Jesus Christ is not true, we might as well hang it up—our faith is in vain! Any religious figure in history could be said to have been "resurrected" in some spiritual sense; only Christianity has the empty tomb! Yet, I would venture to say that many, if not most, Christians cannot properly defend the biblical Doctrine of the Resurrection, (or, sadly, many other foundational doctrines of our faith), which makes them easy marks for the Jehovah's Witness (JW)** who comes to their door. The JW merely takes him or her on a "guided tour" of the Bible, twisting the Scriptures having to do with the Resurrection, while ridiculing the Christian explanation of the doctrine. At base, the WTBTS has trained the JW to see his or her own religion as being rationally sensible, and has been taught that Christian doctrine is

illogical and based on pagan ideas. "How is it possible," they will ask, "that the fleshly body of an individual who died centuries ago and has largely disintegrated, be raised? There is no body left to raise!"

But, of course, the WTBTS has kept their membership so busy teaching them how illogical and superstitious the WTBTS considers Christian beliefs, and Christians are so busy "playing defense" in any encounter with them, that neither one may have given any thought as to whether the WTBTS's view of the Resurrection is logical or reasonable. It is high time for Christians to turn the tables on the WTBTS and "play offense" for a change:

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Does the WTBS's view of the Resurrection make any rational sense? In a word—NO. ☺

What is the true Christian teaching on the Resurrection?

The WTBS *claims* to believe in the Christian Doctrine of the Resurrection; but through sleight-of-hand and redefinition, they actually believe in something altogether different as well as patently illogical. Before we get into a discussion of the WTBS's teaching on the subject, we need to identify the biblical view of the Resurrection.

Resurrection is the raising of the *physical body* [Gr. *anastasis*=a standing up again (Strong's)]. If the individual's body does not come out of its grave, he has not been resurrected; it is as simple as that. We can learn two things from the words of Jesus in John 2:18-22:

Then the Jews demanded of Him, 'What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all of this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple and you are going to raise it in three days?' But the temple He had spoken of was His body. After He was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what He had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. (NIV)

What did Jesus say He was going to raise? His BODY! His fleshly, physical body! Who did Jesus say was going to raise His body? Jesus, Himself! This is important not only from the standpoint of proving Christ's Deity (only God can raise the dead), but to show that Jesus *did not go out of existence at the point of His death!* He certainly had to *exist* in order to raise Himself from the dead. Non-existent beings can't even tie their shoes, much less raise the dead ... last time I checked.

Paul's Teaching on the Resurrection

The most in-depth teaching on the Resurrection is found in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, where Paul was refuting the heretics of his day who were denying the resurrection of the body. The question at issue:

But someone may ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?' (1 Corinthians 15:35, NIV)

Ironically, the WTBS cynically poses the *very same* skeptical question today:

... what body does he give them? It could not be the same body, of exactly the same atoms. If a man dies and is buried by the process of decay his body is reconverted in to organic chemicals that are absorbed by vegetation. Persons may eat that vegetation. The elements, the atoms of that original person, now are in many persons. In the resurrection it is obvious that the same atoms cannot be in the original person and in all the others at the same time.²

With this question, the WTBS reveals their disbelieving skepticism of what the Bible clearly teaches, and employs a straw-man argument,^{***} as though orthodox Christian belief demands that *every atom of the original body* be included in the new resurrection body. The Apostle Paul exclaims that this type of skeptical questioning is foolish and explains:

When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or something else. But God gives it a body as He has determined, and to each kind of seed He gives its own body. (1 Corinthians 15:37, NIV)

In 1 Corinthians 5:36-38, the Apostle Paul likens the body to a seed, which at death is planted into the ground. Ask yourself: When a peach falls to the ground and is "planted," what happens to it? It rots and is dissolved and goes its way—perhaps, eaten by animals, worms, or the like. Does that eating or dissolving prevent its "resurrection" as a peach tree? Not at all! One little part of the peach—its seed—is the only necessary bridge to the new life to come. We don't care what happens to the original peach that was sown, do we? Of course, not! We don't expect that peach miraculously to be put back together—patched up and reassembled—to jump out of the ground as a *peach*. Just a fractional speck within is transformed into the/its resurrection "body"—the tree. And God does not re-create the new peach tree out of nothing does He? No, there is *physical continuity* with the seed that was planted. The new life springs out of it. We would never plant a seed here in Illinois and expect the new plant to come up in China out of nothing!

That is the whole point of planting any seed; it *becomes* the new plant! And so it is with the resurrected human body. We don't expect the entire old human body—every original atom—to be reassembled and pop out of the grave; yet, that body will be raised! Daniel 12:2 says:

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. (NIV)

What “*dust*” are these people sleeping in? At least in part, the dust of their own mortal bodies! Yet, something of that mortal body—which Paul likens to a “*seed*”—shall be transformed into the glorious resurrection body for the redeemed or a vessel of contempt for the unbeliever. The name of the game is *transformation*, never *re-creation*.

Resurrection vs. Re-creation

The WTBS denies any *continuity* between the old body and the new and, in fact, teaches *re-creation* rather than Resurrection.

Hence, according to God's will for the creature, in a resurrection one is restored or re-created in either a human or a spirit body and yet retains his personal identity by the setting in motion again of the distinctive life-pattern of that individual.³

Is there a difference between *Resurrection* and *re-creation*? Well, if I copy a painted masterpiece of Picasso—thus re-creating it, will it be the *same entity* as the original? NO. Even if the copy is very accurate in every detail, the copy *will never be the original*!

Back to 1 Corinthians 15

Let's go back to Paul's words since the Apostle Paul, not the WTBS, is the certified teacher on the Resurrection.

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, NIV, underlining for our emphasis)

Just to make sure we keep our eye on the pea, what is the “*it*” that Paul refers to? IT is the physical body. Yet, as usual, the WTBS chooses to fudge the issue by grasping at the term “*spiritual body*.” They use this phrase to make their related argument that the new body (at least if you are one of the 144,000 elite JW's) is not a physical body, but it is an incorporeal one—a “*spirit creature*.”

Incorporeal means *there is no material form or substance*. While a “spirit” is incorporeal—non-material, the term “*spiritual*” in the Bible indicates something that is sustained or controlled by the *non-material* Spirit of God. The term “spiritual” does not mean that the *subject* is incorporeal. The same Apostle Paul, who wrote 1 Corinthians 15, also wrote 1 Corinthians 10:3-4:

They [the Israelites] all ate the same spiritual food and drank from the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the same spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.” (1 Corinthians 10:3-4, NIV)

Were the food, drink, and rock of the Israelites incorporeal? No, Moses struck a physical rock which brought forth physical water (Exodus 17:5). The food was physical as well (Exodus 16:4,14), or they would not have been very well nourished.

To take another example: Christians are *spiritual* people because of our relationship to the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9), but we most certainly are corporeal beings. At least I am. Aren't you?

The Resurrected Body of Jesus

As already stated, the WTBS teaches that the elite 144,000 JW's will be “resurrected” (really re-created) as “*spirit creatures*” and go to Heaven to rule over the earth with Christ. The so-called “*great crowd*”—the second-class JW's, which comprise the majority of the group—never get to go to Heaven to be with Jesus; but they are given newly created, physical bodies to live in on this earth—forever inferior and subservient to their elite first-class brethren who make up the WTBS's so-called “*faithful and discreet slave*.” But the Bible teaches the bodies of all of the redeemed—with no class distinction—will be like Jesus' glorified body. So we must take a look at Jesus' body after His Resurrection: Was

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He merely an incorporeal spirit? Let’s look at a very eye-opening Scripture in Luke 24, where Jesus appeared to His disciples:

He Himself stood in their midst. But they were startled and frightened and thought they were seeing a spirit. And He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and feet, that it is I Myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones and you see that I have.’ (Luke 24:36-39, NASB)

When Jesus appeared to His disciples in Luke chapter 24, they misperceived that He was a spirit creature, which is exactly the teaching of the Watchtower Society. But rather than compliment them for their great spiritual insight, He rebukes that thought by asking them: “... ***why do doubts arise in your hearts?***” To doubt the *physicality* of Jesus’ Resurrection body is to doubt the Resurrection itself!

When He had said this, He showed them His hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, He asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They gave Him a piece of broiled fish and He took it and ate it in their presence. (Luke 24:40-43, NIV)

Why did Jesus eat something? Again, to show His disciples that He was *not a spirit!* Spirits do not eat!

What did “doubting Thomas” doubt?

We have all heard of “doubting Thomas.” What did doubting Thomas doubt? He doubted that Jesus had, indeed, risen from the dead since he had not been present when Jesus formerly appeared to the other disciples.

...Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it. A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them ... then He said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here; see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Stop doubting and believe.’ Thomas said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ (John 20:25-28, NIV)

The fact of the physical Resurrection is very plainly taught in the New Testament. When Thomas doubted the Resurrection, what proof did he demand before he would believe? He wanted to see the wounds in the physical body of Jesus! Spirits don’t have scars or wounds. Bodies have wounds. He wanted to touch the body which had those wounds to verify that Jesus had been raised. And we can be thankful today that Thomas reacted as he did, because proof of the bodily Resurrection is just exactly what he and we got. Jesus did not rebuke Thomas, but offered His body with its wounds as proof so Thomas ***“would stop doubting and believe.”*** If He was merely a spirit, would He have done this? Was He trying to deceive Thomas? And us? After this encounter, Thomas no longer doubted that his Lord was raised; and

he knew that Jesus had fulfilled His promise, given back in John 2:19-22, to raise His body up after three days. Thomas also realized that this raising identifies Jesus as ... no mere man, no angelic being ... but the Lord God Almighty! ***“My Lord and my God!”*** Thomas exclaimed [John 20:28, Gr.= *ho kurios mou, kai ho theos mou*=the Lord of me and the God of me]. Jesus’ Resurrection and His Deity are tied together in Scripture. The WTBS denies both, so how do they explain away these passages?

Jesus the Deceiver?

Incredibly, the WTS *admits* that Jesus *did* appear in corporeal bodies, such as in Luke chapter 24 and John 20, but asserts that He *manufactured these bodies* for these occasions, at times *complete with wounds*, but only so His disciples would *think* He had been bodily resurrected!

However, for 40 days after his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples on different occasions in various fleshly bodies, just as angels had appeared to men of ancient times. Like those angels, he had the power to construct and disintegrate those fleshly bodies at will, for the purpose of proving visibly that he had been resurrected.⁵

And so with Jesus’ remarks to his disciples as recorded at Luke 24:37-43. He did not endeavor to explain that he had been resurrected a spirit creature and had now materialized for their benefit.⁶

Hence also he assured them, to allay their fears, that *what they saw* was not a spirit. He at that time was a spirit, but they did not see *him*, but merely the body of flesh which veiled yet represented him; and which, as he intended, helped their imperfect faith and knowledge to grasp the important lesson that he was no longer dead but alive for evermore.⁷

Okay, so Jesus wanted the disciples to *think* he possessed a physical body, even

though He really did not! Can you perceive the wolf peering out of the sheepskin covering? The above statements are breathtakingly devious! Would Jesus have deceived his disciples in this way? Would it have been *right* if he had? (cf. Proverbs 12:22)

“We Cannot So View The Matter”

Why does the WTBS go to such lengths to deny the physicality of Jesus’ Resurrection body? It really is simple: Everything has to be manipulated to fit their preconceived belief system. The founder of the Watchtower, Charles Taze Russell, said as far back as 1908:

‘But he spake of the temple of his body.’ The disciples evidently got the thought that he referred to his fleshly body as the Temple of God, and supposed that our Lord’s prediction was fulfilled three days after his crucifixion. But we cannot so view the matter.⁸

The WTBS actually thinks it knows better than the disciples who were there on the scene and were taught by Jesus, Himself! What a telling statement about the counterfeit nature of this organization.

Okay, so Jesus wanted the disciples to think he possessed a physical body, even though He really did not! Can you perceive the wolf peering out of the sheepskin covering?

Defining Our Terms

In Christian terms, a *person* has a *body* and an inner being—called a *soul* or *spirit*. When a Christian's body dies, his spirit lives on and passes immediately into the presence of Christ. As Paul states:

Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord ... we are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:6&8, NIV)

I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far, but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. (Philippians 1:23-24, NIV)

Note that Paul is *not* his body, but lives *in* his body. Someday "he" will leave his body and go to be with Christ as will all who have been born again through faith in Him, and who die before Christ returns. But this is not the end of the story, nor is it the final state of a Christian to be a disembodied spirit in Heaven. In fact, we will not be completely whole again until the resurrection, where our spirits will be united with our new resurrection body.

The Christian Hope for the Dear Departed

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 NIV)

When Christ returns, He will bring *with Him* the spirits of those Christians who formerly have died, and at that time, their bodies will rise and unite with their spirits. Then any Christians who are alive on earth will be changed and receive their new bodies as well.

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:16, NIV)

When the "*dead in Christ*" return with Jesus, what will rise to meet them? Their bodies!

Recap of Christian teaching: The dead in Christ do *not* go out of existence! Their souls exist in Heaven with Christ until they receive back their glorified bodies in the Resurrection.

The Watchtower's Definition of Soul

The WTBS denies the Bible teaching that man has an inner soul or spirit that separates from the body and goes to be with Christ when he dies; rather, they teach that man *is* a soul.

So it is with a human being. There is a body and a life-principle (or life-force), the union of which makes the soul.⁹

Remember that the sentient creature or soul was produced by the union of the breath of life (life-force) with the earthly organism.¹⁰

To recap WTBS doctrine: A *soul* is the union or combination of a body and an animating force—the spirit, which they refer to as the "**life-force**." According to WTBS teaching, does the soul survive death? No.

Yet someone may ask: Don't humans have an im-

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Who Raised Jesus From The Dead?

Compiled by Corkey McGehee

(All Scripture quotations are from the WTBS New World Translation of the Bible.)

When, though, he was raised up from the dead, his disciples called to mind that he used to say this, and they believed the Scripture and the saying that Jesus said. (John 2:22)

God raised Jesus:

Acts 2:32 This Jesus God resurrected, of which fact we are all witnesses.

Acts 13:30 But God raised him up from the dead.

The Father raised Jesus:

Romans 6:40 Therefore, we were buried with him through our baptism into his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, we also should likewise walk in a newness of life.

Ephesians 1:17-20 and what the surpassing greatness of his power is toward us believers. It is according to the operation of the mightiness of his strength, with which he has operated in the case of the Christ when he raised him up from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.

The Son raised Himself:

John 2:19-21 In answer Jesus said to them: "Break down this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Therefore the Jews said: "This temple was built in 46 years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was talking about the temple of his body.

John 10:17-18 This is why the Father loves me, because I surrender my soul, in order that I may receive it again. No man has taken it away from me, but I surrender it of my own initiative. I have authority to surrender it, and I have authority to receive it again ...

The Holy Spirit raised Jesus:

Romans 1:4 but who with power was declared God's Son according to the spirit of holiness by means of resurrection from the dead – yes, Jesus Christ our Lord,

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mortal soul that survives death? Many have taught this, even saying that death is a doorway to another life. But that idea does not come from the Bible. Rather, God's Word teaches that you are a soul, that your soul is really *you*, with all your physical and mental qualities.¹¹

Adam ceased to be "a breather," or a soul, and went back to the lifeless dust from which he had been taken ... No part of him lived on. He went completely into non-existence.¹²

Again, the WTBS teaches a man *is* a soul; so, of course, the soul dies when he does. Even Jesus suffered this same fate:

Jesus was dead, he was unconscious, out of existence. Death did not mean a transition to another life for Jesus; rather non-existence.¹³

The fact they teach that there is no soul—no "inner man" that survives death—gives them a major resurrection "problem" as we shall demonstrate. The spirit, which they refer to as the "life force," is not at all like the Christian view of the spirit of man. It is merely an *impersonal* force.

The spirit is much like electricity, which activates many things but does not take on their qualities.¹⁴

Thus the spirit could not have personality but must be an impersonal force.¹⁵

According to the WTBS, the "life-force" is similar to electricity, which merely animates the body. It takes on none of the characteristics of the person it animates, just as electricity does not take on any characteristics of the appliances it empowers.



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The False Hope of the Dead JW: Watchtower "Resurrection"

According to the WTBS's apologetics volume, *Reasoning From the Scriptures*:

Resurrection involves a reactivating of the life pattern of the individual, which life pattern God has retained in his memory. According to God's will for the individual, the person is restored in either a human or a spirit body and yet retains his personal identity, having the same personality and memories as when he died.¹⁶

Reactivation? Life pattern? Life-force? Where are these terms or ideas to be found in the Bible?

The "Life Pattern" – What is that?

According to their 1953 apologetics volume *Make Sure of All Things*:

The life pattern is the personal life-long record of the creature built up by his thoughts and by the experiences in the life he has lived from certain habits, leanings, mental abilities, memories and history. It is also the register of the individual's intellectual growth and his characteristics, all of which make up one's personality.¹⁷

The life pattern is essentially one's personality in some type of data form. It is not "you;" rather it is information *about* you; it is a record of your life. This record is stored on your brain, and even in your blood.

Each one of us develops his own personality pattern, and this is stored up in each one's brain, also in the blood to some extent.¹⁸

As an aside, this is also one of the original reasons the WTBS gave for rejecting blood transfusions—they asserted that one may receive bad personality traits from a blood donor:

The Watchtower Resurrection Fantasy

The million-dollar question: If your body is not raised, and you have no soul or spirit which survives death, and if even the so-called "life pattern" ceases to exist when you die, just how are faithful JWs resurrected? Well, lucky for you, God has a sort of "videotape" or data CD of your life pattern, which He duplicates and "downloads" into a newly formed body.

God's ability to resurrect. For the One with the ability and power to create man in His own image, with a perfect body and with the potential for full expression of the marvelous characteristics implanted in the human personality, it would pose no problem to resurrect an individual. If scientific principles established by God can be used by scientists to preserve and later reconstruct a visible and audible scene by means of videotape, how easy it is for the great Universal Sovereign and Creator to resurrect a person by repatterning the same personality in a newly formed body.²⁰

In other words, *God copies you!* In his wisdom, he has created a copy of your "life pattern," which is your personality data plus your experiences and memories, and he has kept it stored up in the big hard drive of his brain. God merely has to download a duplicate "life pattern" into the brain of your newly created body and voila: "You" are back!

Here is the really cool part—your copy/clone now even *remembers* being you, which in WT speak, *makes him you!!* But is it "you?" No, it is just a copy! In fact, it is a copy of a copy!

A copy is *never* the original! It may all be well and good for the new “you”—who never actually lived or died; but what about the old “you” who actually lived your life? The old “you” who did all the hard work to earn eternal life *for your clone*? He/she is forever gone!

The Great Xerox Caper

Even according to the WTBS's own dogma, the copy cannot be “you” since, if you recall, “*you are your soul*”—which is a *combination* of your body and your life-force, neither of which survived your death!

The life pattern, even the original, likewise is not “you”; it is just “**one's personality**” or information *about* you. “Personalities” cannot be resurrected; only bodies can be resurrected! And information certainly cannot be resurrected!

Can you imagine the daughter, who wants her real Mommy (the one she loves and lived with, and gave her birth), being satisfied with this new “copy Mommy?” Oh, but of course, the “resurrected” daughter *never lived either!* She is only a clone who has *memories* of the real Mommy who once existed, but lives no more!

So even putting aside biblical objections, the resurrection scheme of the WTBS does not work logically. The life pattern is only information that never lived or died; it cannot be resurrected. The body is not resurrected. The soul is just a body (which is not resurrected) and a life force (which is not even personal); so the soul is not resurrected either. Sooooo, just what *is* resurrected according to Watchtower theology? Bupkiss!

Questions to Ask JWs about the WTBS

View of The Resurrection

- Are “you” no more than your personal *information*?
- Can data be resurrected from the dead?
- Is a copy the same thing as an original?
- If God can copy you after you are dead, he can easily make a copy of you right now. If confronted with that copy/clone right now, would you be willing to go out of existence so that clone can live and supposedly *be* you? Would you want him or her sleeping with *your* spouse or cuddling up to *your* children, while you meekly go “**out of existence?**”
- Will the Jesus you meet in Heaven (provided you are one of the elite JWs who actually go to Heaven) be the *same Jesus* Who died for you on earth? If he is a different Jesus, who never suffered and died for you, why would you even *care* to meet Him? (2 Corinthians 11:4.)

The Not-so-terrible Fate of the Wicked

What happens to evil people (mostly “unfaithful” ex-JWs or mass murderers) when they die? Are they “re-created,” “re-patterned,” “reactivated,” or whatever? No, according to WTBS doctrine, they are “forgotten” by God. They got erased right off God’s “hard drive” brain, and now they are nowhere. But here is the interesting thing to remember: The wicked dead are essentially *in the same place*—non-existence—as the *faithful* JW who went door to door slaving for the organization for 65 or more years! It’s just that the evil man has no copy/clone living out his memories for him alongside the copies/clones of his family and friends. ☺

The Million-dollar Question

What happened to the body of Jesus? The WTBS has taught many different scenarios regarding the fate of the Lord’s physical remains; all of which are wrong. ☹

1. **1888** — “Our Lord’s human body was, however, *supernaturally removed from the tomb*; because had it remained there it would have been an insurmountable obstacle to the faith of the disciples, who were not yet instructed in spiritual things ...”²¹
2. **1923** — “How God *preserved* it from corruption we may not know; we only know he *removed* it,”²²
3. **1930** — “As concerns the literal body in which the Lord was crucified, this much may be said: that God *disposed of it* according to his own perfect knowledge, likely *dissolving it into dust* ...”²³
4. **1953** — “It was disposed of by Jehovah God, dissolved into its constituent elements or atoms.”²⁴
5. **2006** — “It is hidden in a broom closet at Brooklyn headquarters.”

Okay, so I made up that last one; but who cares! It’s *somewhere*, and the WTBS certainly hasn’t any idea of where it went!

What really happened to the body of Jesus according to the Bible?

Christians *do* know where Christ’s body is:

... *He has risen, just as He said ...* (Matthew 28:6, NIV)

Mark 16:46 states that Joseph of Arimathea took HIM down, wrapped HIM in the linen sheet, and laid HIM in a tomb. HIM who? If Jesus had ceased to exist, then the body of Jesus was no longer HIM! Picking up in Mark 16:6, the angel said, “**HE has risen.**” HE who? HE Jesus, the One Who had been laid in the tomb.

Hallelujah! 🎉

*The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WTBS) is the government or clergy of the Jehovah’s Witnesses

**Members of the WTBS are called Jehovah’s Witnesses

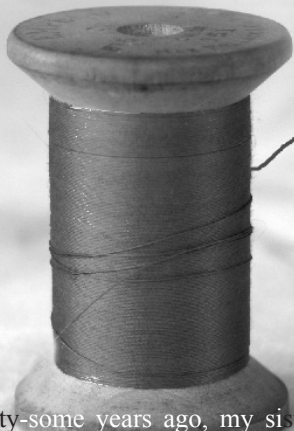
***A straw-man argument is easily knocked down, thus it is used to make your argument seem reasonable.



Don and Joy Veinot are co-founders of Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc., which is a national apologetics ministry and mission to new religious movements based in Wonder Lake, IL. He and Joy, his wife of 35 years, have been involved in discernment ministry as missionaries to New Religious Movements since 1987. Don is on the Board of Directors for Evangelical Ministries to New Religions (EMNR), a consortium of discernment ministries. In addition to being staff researchers and writers for the *Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. Journal* and co-authors of *A Matter of Basic Principles: Bill Gothard and the Christian Life*, they have been published in the *CRI Journal*, *PFO Quarterly Journal*, *Campus Life Magazine* and other periodicals. Don was ordained to the ministry by West Suburban Community Church of Lombard, IL at the Garden of Gethsemane in Jerusalem, Israel in March of 1997. They have two adult children and two grandchildren.

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Thomas Merton:



The Contemplative Dark Thread

By Jackie Alnor

Twenty-some years ago, my sister Janet and I signed up for a field trip sponsored by the Crystal Cathedral to a Vedanta monastery in the nearby Saddleback Mountains. At that time, we were working together on a discernment newsletter called *The New Age Alert* and attended as part of our research. The field trip was being promoted as an educational adventure to examine the similarities and differences of two supposedly opposite extremes of religious expression. The tour guide was a lady who was a long-time member of Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral, and she introduced herself as an aficionado of comparative religions.

The day started with a guided tour of the Crystal Cathedral grounds after all of us met at the statue of Job in the courtyard. Then after the tour of the most decadent, ostentatious, so-called house of God on the planet (that's another story altogether), we boarded buses that took us on a short jaunt to the nearby wilderness. A man with a shaved head, in a red robe, and a blank look on his face greeted us. He told us not to concern ourselves with the fact that we would be ignored by all the Vedanta monks, because they are in silence.

The red-robed automatons kept at their work on the beautiful grounds of this gated cloister without glancing in the direction of this group of mostly trendy Orange County housewives walking past. The blank stares on the faces of these men were a bit unnerving for Janet and me. They gave us the creeps, quite frankly. Their expressions now remind me of the cult leader who led his 39 followers to suicide to catch a ride on the Comet Hale-Bopp some ten years later.

The "holy man" who was our guide to the grounds led us into a beautiful den with a fireplace and a large mahogany desk upon which a vase of freshly-cut flowers had been placed. The room was filled with books in built-in shelving and the furnishings looked like a blast from the past of a bygone era. We stood around in a circle as the monk gave us the history of the den. He told us that this was the retreat of a famous author named Aldous Huxley. Huxley had waited out World War II there as a place to get-away-from-it-all, and as he tried (unsuccessfully) to establish a religious college there. **"After seven years, he turned the property over to the Vedanta Society,"** according to a published report in the July 15, 2006 issue of the *New York Times*. **"They were trying to combine Eastern and Western philosophy and religion but were ahead of their time,"** said Swami Tatatmananda, 70, who leads the monastery.

The monk pointed to a book that was on a side-table that was next to me and said that it was one that Huxley wrote while

he was there. I asked if I could pick it up, and he nodded. I can't recall the title, but the weirdest thing happened when I opened it. It was as if some evil spirit shot out of it and encircled the room. As it did, everyone's stomachs rumbled loudly, one right after another, except for Janet's and mine. Janet confirmed that she, too, could detect the swirling presence of this thing—it was felt, not actually seen. At that point, all the Orange County housewives got uncomfortable because of their noisy tummies, and we all made a hasty retreat out of that haunted den.

At that time, I didn't know who this Aldous Huxley guy was. However, his name would crop up from time to time in my investigations of the rising New Age Movement during the decade of the '80s. Many good Christian books were written exposing the dangers of New-Age influences in the Church; and by the decade of the '90s, born-again believers were pretty-much inoculated against Eastern Mysticism.

Huxley's Influence on Thomas Merton

But now in the decade of the '00s, the latest craze in the church today—known as the Emergent Church/Conversation (EC)—is bringing a revival of Mysticism into Evangelicalism. These EC leaders write books quoting the very Mystics—like Huxley—who in the past sought God in all the wrong places. These books point Christians to the mystical practice of what is called "contemplative/centering prayer" that was popularized by one of Huxley's contemporaries—the late Thomas Merton (1915-1968). Merton was a Roman Catholic Trappist* monk and an anti-war peace activist during the Vietnam War era. He was a prolific writer who coined the term **"centering prayer"** to describe the style of mind-emptying meditation that seeks to empty oneself and lose oneself into the void he interchangeably calls **"the life of the spirit"** and Nirvana. He held to the belief that all religions had the same basic truth, and Christianity could not lay claim to the whole counsel of God. This put him on shaky ground in his own religion that professes to be the **"one true church."**

One Merton biographer traces Merton's affection for Mysticism to Huxley.

In Merton's own words, he held this Occultist Huxley in high esteem. From his own journal entry of November 27, 1941, Merton wrote:

I spent most of the afternoon writing a letter to Aldous Huxley and when I was finished I thought: 'Who am I to be telling this guy about mysticism?' I reflect that until I read his book, *Ends and Means*, four years

ago, I had never even heard of the word mysticism. The part he played in my conversion, by that book, was very great. ... *Ends and Means* taught me to respect mysticism. Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism* was another important influence, and [Wm.] Blake's poetry. ... Anyway, what do I know to tell Huxley? I should have been asking him questions.²

The one thing Merton and Huxley had in common was an interest in Mysticism and the Occult and both studied Eastern religions to learn their techniques of crossing over to the other side, as it were. They opened many a door to evil spirits who gave them the mystical experiences they longed for. The Hindu holy men that they so admired are of the sort you might see on TV programs such as *Mysteries of the Unknown*—the guys sitting on beds of nails or piercing their cheeks with steel knives without feeling any pain. And Merton was so fascinated by these “holy men” that he even adopted the name “Rabbi Vedanta” as an alias. Several months before his death, he wrote to a friend in California:

There will come some mail for me there probably between now and 30th. This will include a mysterious and mystic package addressed to Rabbi Vedanta, care of you. Have no fear. 'Tis only I under the beard.³

Merton's friendship with Huxley spanned several decades until Huxley's death on November 22, 1963 (the same day that President Kennedy was assassinated and the same day that C. S. Lewis died). As Merton's interest in Eastern philosophy grew, he would keep his friend Huxley up-to-date. In a letter dated November 27, 1958, Merton wrote to his friend Huxley taking issue with his observation that the use of psychedelics could be a shortcut to transcendental experiences.

May I add that I am interested in yoga and above all in Zen, which I find to be the finest example of a technique leading to the highest natural perfection of man's contemplative liberty. You may argue that the use of a koan [a puzzle with no logical solution used in Zen Buddhism to develop intuitive thought] to dispose one for satori [a spiritual awakening sought in Zen, often coming suddenly] is not different from the use of a drug. I would like to submit that there is all the difference in the world, and perhaps we can speak more of this later. My dear Mr. Huxley, it is a joy to write to you of these things.⁴

Sufi** Mysticism

By now you can see that Merton was a believer in all religions, —he created his own syncretistic brand of religion while remaining under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. He gave equal attention to the mystical traditions within Catholicism, Zen Buddhism, and Hinduism. But he was an equal-opportunity Mystic who was drawn to the common thread of “... *Satan's so-called deep secrets* ...” (Rev. 2:24) found in all the world's false religions—including his own. He even delved into the mystical branch of Islam and corresponded for many years with a Muslim Sufi cleric by the name of Abdul Aziz.

In November, 1960, Aziz had requested that Merton send him one of his books called *Seeds of Contemplation* that he wrote in 1949, but Merton was too ashamed to send it to him.

He apologized to his Sufi friend saying that it “contains many foolish statements ... and reflects an altogether stupid ignorance of Sufism.” At that time, Merton thought that true spirituality existed only in the Roman Catholic Church. But as he toyed with other religions, they soon got a grip on his mind and soul. (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1)

In the same letter to Aziz (dated November 17, 1960), Merton offered the Sufi information on whom he considered Catholicism's number one Mystic. He wrote:

I might also refer you to the life of St. John of the Cross ... which has some interesting pages on the possible influence of Sufism in the mysticism of St. John of the Cross.⁵

Merton also made the claim that the Sufi Mystics worship the same God as Christianity and all the religions. He wrote:

As one spiritual man to another, if I may so speak in all humility, I speak to you from my heart of our obligation to study the truth in deep prayer and meditation, and bear witness to the light that comes from the All-Holy God into this world of darkness where He is not known and not remembered ... May your work on the Sufi mystics make His Name known and remembered, and open the eyes of men to the light of His truth.⁶

Merton believed that the Sufi, Zen, and Vedanta monks all shared in the same light as he did — and I'm sure that is the case. After all, “... *Satan, himself, masquerades as an angel of light*” (2 Cor. 11:14), and they all recognized that same so-called “light” in one another. Merton even went so far as to redefine the biblical feast of Pentecost to suit the sensitivities of this Sufi cleric. In a letter dated May 13, 1961, Merton wrote to Aziz, I will “keep you especially in mind on the feast of Pentecost, May 21st, in which we celebrate the descent of the Holy Ghost into the hearts and souls of men that they may be wise with the Spirit of God. It is the great feast of wisdom.”⁷ Merton actually believed that these men who worshiped false gods were given some great

wisdom by God, and that Pentecost is a holy day to celebrate a “great feast of wisdom” given to all men regardless of what god in whom one puts faith.

Merton confided in Aziz what he actually believed, knowing that his own church authorities probably would not approve if they knew just how far he took it. In his January 2, 1966 letter to the Sufi cleric, Merton revealed his heretical ideas of an im-personal god.

My prayer is then a kind of praise rising up out of the center of Nothing and Silence. If I am still present 'myself' this I recognize as an obstacle about which I can do nothing unless He Himself removes the obstacle. If He wills He can then make the Nothingness into a total clarity. If He does not will, then the Nothingness seems to itself to be an object and remains an obstacle. Such is my ordinary way of prayer, or meditation. It is not 'thinking about' anything, but a direct seeking of the Face of the Invisible, which cannot be found unless we become lost in Him who is Invisible. I do not ordinarily write about such things and I ask you therefore to be discreet about it. But I write this as

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a testimony of confidence and friendship. It will show you how much I appreciate the tradition of Sufism ... I am united with you in prayer during this month of Ramadan and will remember you on the Night of Destiny.⁸

Another Way to Perfection

Merton was a prolific writer which was partly due to his isolation in a Trappist monastery in Kentucky where his fellow monks held to vows of silence. But Merton had a lot to say, and he couldn't share it with his fellow monks; so he corresponded with religious leaders, including his friend the Dalai Lama—a man that many Buddhists believe to be an ascended master.*** Merton biographer Alexander Lipski wrote that **"Merton argued that Zen meditation shatters the false self and restores us to our paradisaical innocence which preceded the fall of man."**⁹

Can Zen Buddhism really restore mankind to the innocence that the biblical Adam and Eve enjoyed in the Garden of Eden? If that were possible, then such men would not die, because it was only when Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that death entered into the human race (Rom. 5:12). The Zen restoration claim is tantamount to saying that Zen meditation is the means for spiritual perfection and justification, totally stepping on the blood of Christ (cf. Heb. 10:12-14). Thomas Merton might have truly committed the unpardonable sin with this heretical belief.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened ... and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. (Hebrews 6:4-8).

Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:29)

Many people today who have a fascination for contemplative prayer and the writings of Thomas Merton run the risk of following him into perdition.

Poet/Artist William Blake

Merton's philosophy in life can be seen clearly in his admiration of the poet and artist William Blake (1757-1827). Scripture did not enter into Merton's search for experiencing the Divine; it was not sufficient for him. In fact, I have read all of his journals and can count on one hand the Bible verses he quoted. The Word of God did not factor into Merton's life. He was basically a hu-

manist who worshipped imagination and human reasoning.

William Blake influenced Merton's choice of Catholicism as the organizational structure in which to live out his brand of spiritualism. Merton biographer Raymond Bailey documented how this took place.

An important link in Merton's thought is the work of his master's thesis, written in 1938. It was a study of William Blake, whose ideas influenced both his theology and his poetry ... Tom said that it was through Blake that he had come to the Church and to Christ. The thesis was an exposition of Blake's philosophy; indeed, it was an apologetic for the poet's Christianity. 'As mystic,' Merton argued, 'Blake belongs to the Christian tradition of the Augustinians and the Franciscans.' Already Merton was cognizant of similarities between Christian and oriental mysticism. He called attention to Blake's acquaintance with Hindu philosophy. He drew attention to ideas common to Blake and Meister Eckhart, in whose thought Merton was to develop a vital interest during the sixties.¹⁰

And yet, both Blake and Eckhart were steeped in the Occult and got their Mysticism from Hindu sources. Eckhart's ideas were considered heretical even by Catholic Church authorities, because his teachings expressed a belief in pantheism†. And

Blake's poetry is some of the darkest and most demonically inspired drivel one could read. Like attracts like, no doubt. Perhaps that is why the demonized lead singer of the '60s group The Doors—Jim Morrison—named his group after one of Blake's poems and chose dark sayings of Blake's to use in one of his songs.

The Doors' Jim Morrison

The group's name was taken from Aldous Huxley's book on mescaline, *The Doors of Perception*, which quoted William Blake's poem, **"If the doors of perception were cleansed / All things would appear infinite."** Morrison identified with Blake and:

... famously lived by an oft repeated quote from William Blake: 'The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.' (from wikipedia)

Morrison once confessed that 'We're more interested in the dark side of life, the evil thing, the night time.' (from geocities)

The last two lines of a Blake poem were incorporated into The Doors' 1967 song—"End of the Night:"

**Every morn and every night
Some to misery are born
Every morn and every night
Some are born to sweet delight.
Some are born to endless night.**

A former girlfriend of Morrison's (Nico) gave some insights into his fascination with William Blake. In the late 60s, she used to go out to the desert with him to use Peyote and see strange visions. Morrison had believed that the spirit of a dead Indian Shaman inhabited his soul, and he connected to the spirit out there in the desert. **"We had visions in the desert,"** she wrote of her and Morrison's experiences in a book called *An Unholy Alliance*:

"It is like William Blake; he would see visions like Blake did, angels in trees, he would see these, and so

Morrison had believed that the spirit of a dead Indian Shaman inhabited his soul, and he connected to the spirit out there in the desert. "We had visions in the desert," she wrote of her and Morrison's experiences in a book called *An Unholy Alliance*:

would I. And Jim showed me that this is what a poet does. A poet sees visions and records them.¹¹

Merton recognized that Blake communed with angels, though he would not come right out and admit that they were fallen angels. Merton had written a Foreword to a book about, of all things, wooden furniture made by the Shakers religious sect. He wrote:

The peculiar grace of a Shaker chair is due to the fact that it was made by someone capable of believing that an angel might come and sit on it. Indeed the Shakers believed their furniture was designed by angels – and Blake believed his ideas for poems and engraving came from heavenly spirits.¹²

Same Vocabulary; Warped Definitions

Both men confused the gifts of the Holy Spirit for man's natural talents. They believed that through the use of the imagination, they were exercising their gifts. Merton wrote in the Shaker book:

When imagination, art and science and all intellectual gifts, all gifts of the holy Ghost are looked upon as of no use, and only contention remains to man, then the Last Judgment begins ... For Blake, as for the Shakers, creative imagination and religious vision were not merely static and contemplative. They were active and dynamic, and imaginative power that did not express itself in creative work could become highly dangerous.¹³

Besides getting Pentecost and the filling of the Holy Spirit wrong, Merton also distorted the biblical meaning of the New Birth. By accepting the false religious systems of the world, he adopted their corruption of Christian doctrines. Merton wrote to a Sufi cleric in a letter dated March 22, 1968:

I also enclose a copy of something I wrote last fall 'Rebirth and the New Man in Christianity,' which will show that I was already in complete agreement with you. It may also give you some introduction to the idea of rebirth which is so important in Christianity – just as it is in Sufism.¹⁴

Merton admitted that venturing into the recesses of the mind via contemplative methods could be highly dangerous, because it led to a dark and foreboding place. In a letter written to the abbot of a Cistercian†† monastery, Merton said:

My brother, perhaps in my solitude I have become as it were an explorer for you, a searcher in realms which you are not able to visit – except perhaps in the company of your psychiatrist. I have been summoned to explore a desert area of man's heart in which explanations no longer suffice, and in which one learns that only experience counts. An arid, rocky, dark land of the soul, sometimes illuminated by strange fires which men fear and peopled by specters which men studiously avoid except in their nightmares.¹⁵

When Merton said that "explanations no longer suffice," was he referring to Bible doctrine that he didn't see as sufficient? In that same letter, he said that he distrusts the language of Christianity. And what are those "specters" and "strange fires" he said he encountered? When Merton could find no Bible teaching to endorse his experiences, he quit looking there for answers and turned to other religions. Some things never change. This perceived inadequacy of the Word of God drives many unregenerate professing Christians to other places for their reassurance.

Merton is consistent in his descriptions of his spiritual path's dark side. He wrote a fellow pacifist on February 13, 1967, telling him about his spiritual experimentation using tongue-in-cheek humor but getting his message across quite clearly. He wrote:

I guess my head is so addled with Zen and Sufism that I have totally lapsed into inefficiency, and am rapidly becoming a backward nation if not a primitive race, a Bushman from the word go, muttering incantations to get the fleas out of my whiskers, a vanishing American who has fallen into the mythical East as into a deep dark hole.¹⁶

From Eckhart to Blake to Huxley to Morrison and to Merton, the common denominator they all shared was a mystical, metaphysical experience, via Eastern meditation, or psychedelic drugs that were a shortcut to the same dark place. And tragically Merton influenced so many young minds when he was alive and his influence continues to poison professing Christians to this day. People are unknowingly opening doors to the evil influences of demonic hosts.

Merton Continues to Corrupt

One newspaper published an article about Merton in 1998:

Thirty years later, what Merton has given to his countless spiritual devotees has never stopped; through his books and books about him, Merton might exert more global influence than ever.¹⁷

Merton's writings are quoted by today's advocates of his contemplative prayer methodology that he derived from dark sources as already documented. Look in the notes of any modern book on prayer, and see if you find Merton quotes. This leaven of doctrines of devils has found its way into such popular "Evan-

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There Are Still Dates Available!
MCOI is currently taking requests for the fall and winter speaking schedule. If you would like to have Don Veinot visit your church, please contact us for details and to make arrangements. Whether it's for one day or several nights, Don and his staff have a variety of topics to choose from, all of which are relevant to the Church today.

“Dark Thread” Continued from page 11

gelical” books as Richard Foster’s *Celebration of Discipline* and Brennan Manning’s *Ragamuffin Gospel*, books that adorn the shelves of many Christian bookstores.

Chuck Smith Jr., pastor of Capo Beach Calvary (though he’s no longer affiliated with Calvary Chapel, the movement founded by his father Chuck Smith Sr., but still retains the name), often quotes Merton in his own sermons, such as in his March 12, 2006 message: “It Is Enough.” In fact, a woman who attends Capo Beach Calvary wrote this writer an e-mail on March 17, 2006 singing the praises of the man her pastor admires.

I also thoughtfully enjoy the writings of Thomas Merton, Brennan Manning (that great ragamuffin!) and of course the writings of Richard Foster! These men have something worth listening to. Blessings, B.

She seemed to get pleasure in rubbing my nose in the success of the apostasy.

In fact, a common term used by Emergent Church leaders, like Chuck Smith Jr., is the word **transformation**. This word is thrown around a lot by today’s contemplatives in a way to distort the Bible teaching of being transformed into the image of Christ.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:29)

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2)

Yet, here’s how Merton and contemplatives who emulate him see the use of the word **transformation**:

While considering certain external imitations of Zen unsuitable for westerners, Merton, to the end of his life, believed that the transformation of personal consciousness through Zen would bring about a more equitable, peaceful society.¹⁸

So it is through Zen meditation that Merton and his breed achieve this “**transformation of personal consciousness**” that amounts to a New-Age paradigm shift right out of the confines of Christianity.

Another Merton biographer described it this way:

This ancient Christian method, as it was taught and shared in this renewal, received a new packaging and a new name. The name given it was Centering Prayer, a name inspired by Father Louis’s [Merton’s real first name] teaching. In speaking about this kind of prayer, he would say things such as this: ‘The fact is, however, that if you descend into the depths of your own spirit ... and arrive somewhere near the center of what you are, you are confronted with the inescapable truth, at the very root of your existence, you are in constant and immediate and inescapable contact with the infinite power of God.’ And like this: ‘A man cannot enter in to the deeper center of himself and pass through the center into God unless he is able to pass entirely out of himself and empty himself and give himself to other people in the purity of selfless love.’¹⁹

Another biblical-sounding term Merton and other Eastern contemplatives throw around is **incarnational**. Jesus is God *incarnate* in human flesh. However, this word is brandied about to sound biblical, but the meaning of it changes to apply to those calling themselves Christians and not uniquely to Jesus. Another biographer (seems

Merton has an endless supply of them) put it this way:

For Merton conceives Christ as being at the center of the universe and hence, it is in Christ and only in him that the world can truly make sense. Because everything converges on Him, the person most closely related to Christ in contemplative prayer is, in Merton’s view, the person who is most deeply embedded in the world. For such a person is no longer limited by narrow provincial views [Bible views?] ... Rather, detached from such superficiality because of his own closeness to Christ, he is ... thus is able to find a truly incarnational involvement that will bring him into the deepest contact with reality.²⁰

The “Christ” Merton speaks of is not the Jesus Christ of the Bible since Merton’s “Christ” can be conjured up by anyone, in any religion, at any time of their choosing. This “**cosmic Christ**” is what the Bible refers to as a “**false Christ**” (Matt. 24:24).

Merton’s quest for the so-called undiluted reality of Zen was a liberation from all “**structures, forms, and beliefs**,” that brings one to the true transcendent self of Buddhism. In other words, Merton hated the very form of religion that held him in Catholicism, but was in bondage to the security he got from the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani where he could live and write in isolation without having to think about how he might make an honest living. Merton’s words with Catholic authorities were guarded and totally different from his openness with his Eastern religious friends.

Merton Grovels Before Popes

Two letters to two different popes were preserved and published. No hint of his Eastern proclivities were revealed to either of them. In the November 10, 1958 letter to Pope John XXIII, Merton began his letter with the words: “**My dear Holy Father: This is one of your children who comes to kneel at your feet ...**” In this letter, Merton quoted Scripture—something he rarely ever did. He wrote:

Humbly prostrating ourselves before Your Holiness, my novices and I beg you to grant us the favor of your Apostolic Blessing, so that we may be holy monks and deeply fervent priests, that we may unite in our hearts perfect contemplation and apostolic zeal and that Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the way, the truth and the life, may be known and loved by all.²¹

And to Pope Paul VI, on July 26, 1963, after greeting the pope with “**Most Holy Father: Humbly prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness**,” Merton wrote:

It will be my own devoted effort to help the novice to become true contemplative monks, men of God, totally devoted to the love and contemplation of Jesus Christ (one of the few times Jesus’ name is mentioned in his letters), and deeply concerned, at the same time, with all the interests of His Church in the troubled times in which we live.²²

Had Merton revealed what he actually was teaching the under-monks, the pope just might have stripped him of his hair shirt. Not long ago, a Catholic priest was excommunicated for promoting ideas of pantheism and the Cosmic Christ. His name was Matthew Fox, and his main protagonist was Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger—better known today as Pope Benedict XVI. Another Merton biographer described just how far into error Merton delved at the end of his life:

In his last years Merton became engrossed in the commonplaces of Eastern and Western mysticism. He

was one of those for whom 'ecumenical' meant 'world-wide or universal in extent and influence.' His understanding of the unity of the world, a panentheistic+++ God, and a cosmic Christ prohibited a narrowly defined humanity or limited theater of God's action. The universality of the human quest for authentic being seemed to hold for him the potential for establishing a transcultural family of man.²³

Is the Monk Catholic?

There was a part of Thomas Merton that remained very Catholic—his attraction to icons and statues. He saw them as doorways to his contemplative, invisible, inner world. And his devotion to the Queen of Heaven—the many faces of Mary—drew him as well. And yet even in this, he found a way to connect these facets of Catholicism to Eastern religions. On September 12, 1959, he wrote a letter to his friend Czeslaw Milosz, one of Merton's Catholic spiritual guides who shared his attraction for Buddhism, which revealed his devotion to Mary:

Christ loves in us, and the compassion of Our Lady keeps her prayer burning like a lamp in the depths of our being. That lamp does not waver. It is the light of the Holy Spirit, invisible, and kept alight by her love for us.²⁴

In a letter dated January 30, 1961, he also told his Muslim Sufi friend about their mutual attraction to Mary:

Mary is believed to have appeared at a village in Portugal called Fatima: but this name certainly derives from the time when the area was under the Moslems and the village must have been named after the daughter of the Prophet. Hence there is a mysterious joining of Christian and Moslem elements in this devotion to Our Lady of Fatima.²⁵

Merton's attraction to icons far exceeded most Roman Catholic tradition. On December 5, 1965 he wrote to his friend Marco Pallis, a student of Tibetan art, religion and culture and author of the book *Peaks and Lamas*, who had sent him a gift of an expensive icon of the "virgin and child"—a common Catholic view of Jesus as a child subordinate to His mother. With the icon, Pallis wrote Merton a note, "**Here is a small token of my love: this ikon ... Your karma evidently wished you to receive it ... the Mother of God ... four saints in attendance.**"

Merton responded:

Where shall I begin? I have never received such a precious and magnificent gift from anyone in my life. I have no words to express how deeply moved I was to come face to face with this sacred and beautiful presence granted to me in the coming of the ikon to my most unworthy person. At first I could hardly believe it. And yet perhaps your intuition about my karma is right, since in a strange way the ikon of the Holy Mother came as a messenger at a precise moment when a message was needed, and her presence before me has been an incalculable aid in resolving a difficult problem ... Let me return to the holy ikon. Certainly it is a perfect act of timeless worship, a great help. I never tire of gazing at it. There is a spiritual presence and reality about it, a true spiritual 'Thaboric' light, which seems unaccountably to proceed from the Heart of the Virgin and Child as if they had One heart, and which goes out to the whole universe. It is unutterably splendid. And silent. It imposes a silence on the whole hermitage ... I see how important it is to live in silence, in isolation, in unknowing. There is an enormous battle with illusion going on everywhere, and how should we not be in it

ourselves?²⁶

One Orthodox on-line dictionary defines the *Thaboric Light* as *the light that surrounded Christ in the Transfiguration, the goal sought in contemplation by the hesychasts, was a theophany, or manifestation of God, through His uncreated energies.*²⁷

Merton tosses around terms like "karma" and "Thaboric Light" more than he ever quotes God's revelation to man: the Bible. If any presence accompanied this icon, it surely wasn't from God since He has forbidden the idolatry of religious idols such as this. Perhaps, the Roman Catholic Church opened itself up to such deceiving spirits by removing the second commandment out of their catechism. [*Exodus 20:4 is the commandment that was removed, and Exodus 20:17 about coveting neighbor's possessions was incorrectly divided to be two.*]

Invisible, but not Forgotten

It is remarkable that elements within the church today would point to dead heretics such as Merton as a source for any kind of spiritual truth. The man was truly demonized and corrupted many undiscerning souls who no doubt are with him in Hell to this day. And that brings us to the details of the untimely death of Louis "Thomas" Merton.

Here is a chronology of the events leading up to Merton's

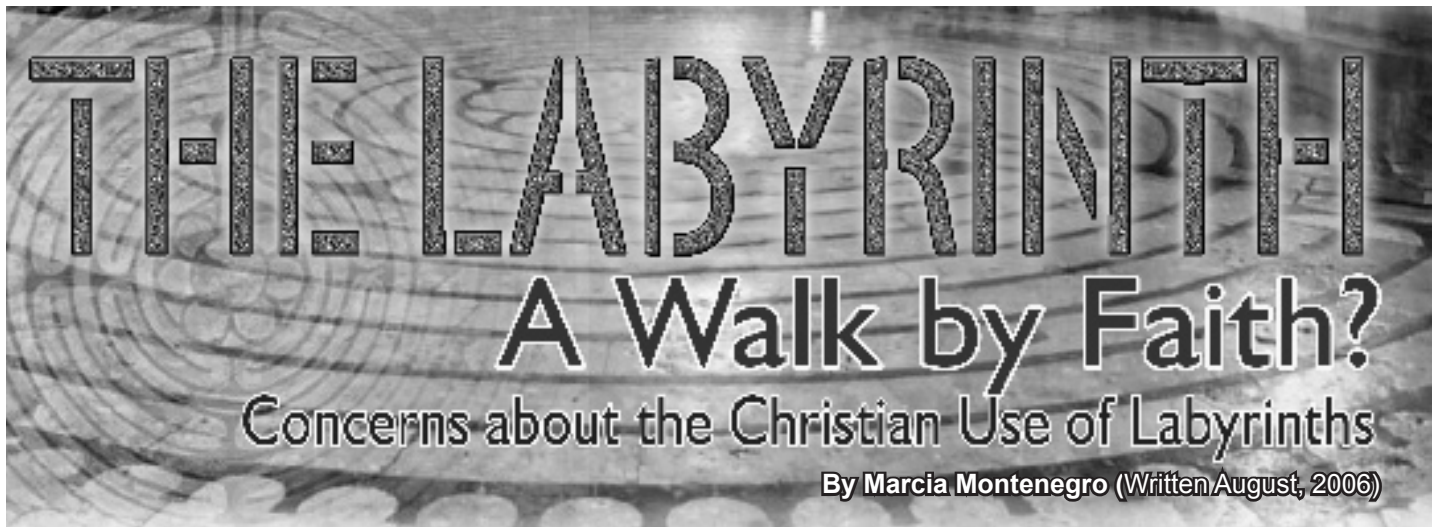
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***“For we walk by faith,
not by sight.” (2 Cor. 5:7)***

A *labyrinth* is a flat circle or square consisting of a path that winds round to the center (not to be confused with a maze, which is enclosed). In Greek mythology, the Labyrinth was the name for the maze-like enclosure for the half-man, half-bull Minotaur.¹ The history of the labyrinth is murky; there is Christian use of it as early as 324 AD found in a basilica in North Africa.² However, the purpose of these early labyrinths is unclear, and it appears they were chiefly decorative or symbolic. Smaller labyrinth designs have been found carved on rocks or stones, and these are thought to have been symbolic—possibly for luck or protection.³

Though mazes are more complex, labyrinths and mazes originally were the same thing. Mazes “filled a magical function” in the traditions of the esoteric Kabbalistic alchemists, to whom it symbolized the “work” of alchemy and were associated with Solomon.⁴ This is why the labyrinths in cathedrals came to be called Solomon’s Maze. To the alchemists, entering and emerging from the maze possibly signified death and resurrection through their secretive magical practices.⁵

The better-known, larger labyrinth is the thirteenth-century labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral in France, which originated in the Middle Ages and served as a substitute for going on pilgrimage to Jerusalem when the Crusades prevented this journey.⁶ After the Crusades, the labyrinth remained largely unused until the 1990’s. So where does this recent trend of fascination with labyrinths come from, and why are people walking them?

Lauren Artress, an Episcopal priest at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, is widely credited with initiating the labyrinth movement in the United States in the 1990s. After visiting the thirteenth-century French labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral, she brought the idea back to her church (Grace Cathedral) and in 1996 founded Veriditas—a non-profit organization dedicated to introducing people to labyrinths.⁷

The description on the Grace Cathedral web site illustrates the concept of the labyrinth that is promoted today:

The Labyrinth is an archetype, a divine imprint, found in all religious traditions in various forms around the world. By walking a replica of the Chartres labyrinth,

laid in the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France around 1220, we are rediscovering a long-forgotten mystical tradition that is insisting to be reborn.⁸

Artress also is the author of *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*. The labyrinth has come to be used as a spiritual and psychological tool and has been promoted as a way to approach God.

What are some of the concerns regarding the labyrinth?

The concerns fall into three categories:

1. The labyrinth has no biblical prototype or pattern as a way to approach God.
2. The labyrinth as used today is often advocated as a way to have a spiritual experience with God. However, we are to “*walk by faith, not by sight*” (2 Cor. 5:7) or by seeking experiences.
3. God is not obligated to provide spiritual experiences simply because we initiate or expect them. We are reconciled with God through faith in Christ, and it is through our daily walk—in Bible reading, prayer, and worship—our relationship with Him grows.

Concern One

The labyrinth has no biblical prototype or pattern as a way to approach God.

- The labyrinth is based on man’s design. Since it is marketed principally as a spiritual tool, we should ask, “What is a spiritual tool and is such a thing biblical?” The labyrinth is usually promoted as a way to feel spiritual or become close to God, but the Bible does not teach the use of man-originated tools for such purposes. In the Hebrew Scriptures (O.T.), any design of a physical object or structure that was used in a spiritual manner—such as the design of the Tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex. 35-40) or the Temple and its fixtures built by Solomon (2 Chron. 3-7)—was based on instructions given directly by God, who gave specific directives on how to build and furnish it. These edifices originated with God, were built to signify His presence among the Israelites, and were used to worship and glorify God (Ex. 40: 34-38; 2 Chron. 7.1-3,12),

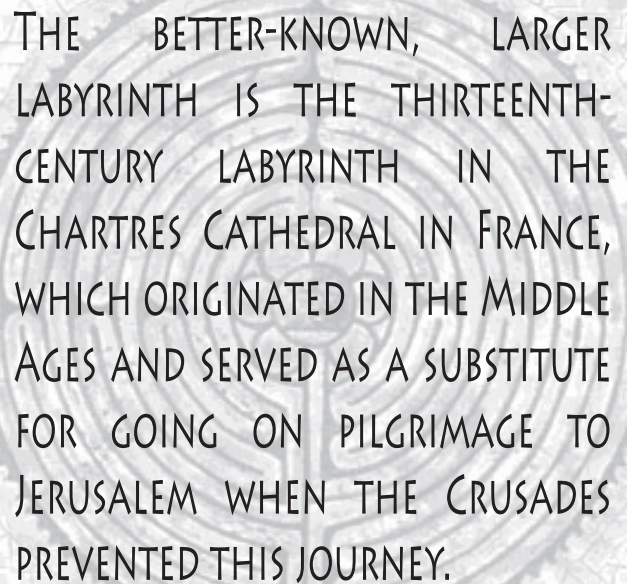
not to evoke experiences for man's satisfaction. Water baptism and communion—both participatory physical events for the Christian—were initiated and commanded by the Lord, not as vehicles to satisfy the participant, but to represent the sacrifice and redemption provided by Christ.

- The biblical pattern for approaching God in the New Testament is through belief in Christ as the Savior Who atoned for sins and bodily rose the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-4). We have access to God through Christ (Eph. 2: 6-7, 17-18; Heb. 10:19-22).
- The labyrinth is publicized as a spiritual tool, not just for Christians, but also for *anyone* who is seeking a spiritual experience, or even just as a tool for self-reflection.
- The labyrinth gives many the misleading impression that one can be close to God without Christ.

Concern Two

The labyrinth is advocated as a way to be close to God; however, we are to ***“walk by faith, not by sight”*** or by seeking experiences.

- We are told ***“Without faith, it is impossible to please God ...”*** (Hebrews 11.6) and faith is defined as ***“... the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”*** (Hebrews 11.1). ***“Hoped for”*** here does not mean wishing for or hoping for something in the sense of maybe not getting it. Biblical hope is *knowing* God's words and promises will be fulfilled. We do not need to “feel close” to God to know He is with us; we are not instructed to walk by sight or feelings, but by faith.
- Seeking to evoke an experience often can bring one on. This may create an appetite for more experiences because people can feel good doing it. Then it induces not only a desire for more experiences, but also a sense that one *must* experience or feel something in order to believe one is genuinely in relationship with God.
- Seeking an experience is self-oriented, not God-oriented. Since we can pray and think about God anywhere, walking a labyrinth automatically sets up an expectation that something special should happen. And disappointment results if there is no feeling or experience.
- Experiences and feelings can be deceptive. Even if walking a labyrinth gives a powerful experience, it does not mean it is from God or that the person actually is closer to God. Experiences and feelings are not the measure of truth. It can lead a non-Christian into believing they have encountered God when they haven't. In fact, there is nothing about walking a labyrinth that prevents one from having a counterfeit spiritual experience, even for a Christian. Feeling “close” to God is not the way to gauge our relationship with Him. Rather, our relationship with God is reflected in the fruits of that relationship (Gal. 3.22-23) and other behaviors. *Not all spiritual experiences are from God.* Labyrinths have been used at youth group rallies and retreats, thus possibly leading teens to believe that feelings indicate contact with God.
- Seeking experiences feeds the sensual self, not the spiritual self. We should take note of the fact that one of the charges against false teachers is their appeal to sensuality (2 Peter 2:18). Since Satan can present things in the guise of spirituality and goodness (2 Corinthians 11:13-15), we need to watch appeals that claim spirituality but cater to



THE BETTER-KNOWN, LARGER LABYRINTH IS THE THIRTEENTH-CENTURY LABYRINTH IN THE CHARTRES CATHEDRAL IN FRANCE, WHICH ORIGINATED IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND SERVED AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR GOING ON PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM WHEN THE CRUSADES PREVENTED THIS JOURNEY.

bodily or emotional feelings. There is nothing wrong with wanting to feel God's presence, but that should flow from a Christian's daily walk with the Lord, reading His Word, prayer, and worship. It should be initiated by God, not us.

Concern Three

God is not obligated to provide an experience or feeling at our command or demand.

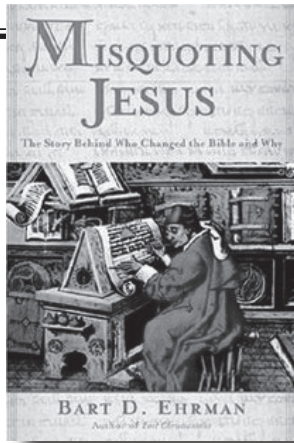
- The labyrinth raises an expectation and assumes that we should have a spiritual experience as a result of walking the labyrinth. Pagan religions use rituals, incantations, and techniques to call forth their gods. Christianity is the opposite: God has reached down to us and given us the means for reaching Him – faith in Jesus Christ. It is God who laid out the pattern for communication and relationship with Him; we do not generate the pattern.
- Our desire for intimacy with God is sufficiently met through faith in Christ and the biblical blueprint for our interaction with God. It grows over time, and it is not an instant, drive-in, take-out experience we obtain through a technique.

The Black Hole

Because of teachings invading the culture and the church that promote experience over doctrine and feeling over faith, Christians might get the idea they are missing out on something and need “deeper” experiences with God. Although we have a Savior who died for us, and we have the Scriptures—which are ***“... profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work”*** (2 Timothy 3:16,17), it is being suggested or implied that these are not enough.

Could it be that Christians are not immersing themselves in the study of God's Word, and thus, are trying to fill that void with ways to have spiritual experiences? We should remember the power of God's Word, and that it is our spiritual nourish-

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To Error Is Ehrman

Randal Ming and Randall Birtell Examine the book *Misquoting Jesus*

Truth And Meaning As It Relates To History

Bart Ehrman, in *Misquoting Jesus*,¹ intends to explain New Testament textual criticism. One theme Ehrman uses to explain textual criticism is that the scribes, copyist, and the people of power who controlled the early Church did not preserve the New Testament but slanted the New Testament texts to read as they believed and collected the books that agreed with the theology of the people in power. For Ehrman, there is no true theology and no historically true Christian doctrine. He alleges the New Testament is a collection of books preserved and collected because the group of people who controlled the early Church agreed with the theology in these texts. Ehrman believes the New Testament canonical books are not the work of God and so preserved, distinguished, and used by the early Church because they were true and corresponded with the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ; nor were the writers directed by the Holy Spirit to teach, instruct, and rebuke the Church. According to Ehrman, the Bible is not based in history, because there is no history.

The Evangelical world traditionally has held a particular view and understanding about the fact of history. *Evangelical understanding* is that *history is what corresponds to the facts about events of the past*. This idea does not rule out people twisting the facts they recorded to make themselves look good or the fact of people being blinded by their sin nature. Most historians would agree that many of the inscriptions made by the Egyptians about their battles and conflicts were intended to make the pharaoh look good even if the pharaoh had lost the battle. But, we must remember that we only can make such a statement about the Egyptians historians if there really are historical facts that do not line up with what the historian has recorded. A true base of what really happened must exist in order to state that people have changed the facts to suit their purpose. History must have a factual foundation before anyone can say recorded history is true or false.

Ehrman's history is defined to be *a collection of people's perspectives about what happened with no foundation for historical truth to say this happened and this did not happen*. No truth exists to be recorded about the events of Christ's earthly ministry. Thus,

As Creator, Jesus has not only defined the physical world, but He - as the Word - has also defined Scripture. Jesus is the connection between words and actions. Jesus - as Creator - has defined truth and meaning.

the Gospels are personal opinions about the events recorded in them and what the Gospel writers thought motivated Jesus to do what he did. As well, any event may be modified to suit the purpose of the writer to build a "moral truth" as they saw it.

Ehrman comes to this conclusion because his understanding of meaning and reality has been shaped by agnosticism. Having no basis for truth and meaning, Ehrman's hermeneutic cannot help but be skewed by postmodern thought.² For Ehrman, the only truth is personal belief. Truth must be redefined to *what one believes is history* rather than *what corresponds to the reality of history*. In

Ehrman's world, the Bible only can be a collection of religious thoughts about God by various people and at various times. Ehrman explains:

Just as human scribes had copied, and changed, the texts of scripture, so to had human authors originally written the texts of scripture. This was a human book from beginning to end. It was written by different human authors at different times and in different places to address different needs. Many of these authors no doubt felt they were inspired by God to say what they did, but they had their own perspectives, their own understandings, their own theologies; and these perspectives,

beliefs, views, needs, desires, and understandings, and theologies informed everything they said."³

Any person left to employ personal truth as the gauge for truth will end in relativism. The consequences of this are moral deconstruction, historical deconstruction, literary deconstruction, and biblical deconstruction. Scripture soundly renounces these positions, *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God"* (John 1:1). As Creator, Jesus has not only defined the physical world, but He—as the Word—has also defined Scripture. Jesus is the connection between words and actions. Jesus—as Creator—has defined truth and meaning.

The philosophical movement—Post structuralism (PS)—has gathered steam over the past 40 years. PS removes any certainty to the reading and meaning of a text. This can be termed the "death of the writer" and "the birth of the reader." The reasoning is: Time, social situations, and a host of other elements change

the meaning of a text. Thus, when a reader comes to the text, they come with a list of their own interpretive ideas. Each reader has a personal hermeneutic. The intent of the author is trumped by the understanding of the reader. Listen to *Columbia History of Western Philosophies* examination of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida:

Given Derrida's assertion of the radical indeterminacy of all signification that follows from his investigation of language, his proclamations of the inevitable and unavoidable instability of meaning and identity portend the evisceration of metaphysics. He mounts this radical critique of metaphysics, identity, and meaning by pushing it to the very level of signification and challenging the possibility of stable meanings or identities on the basis of their reliance on a metaphysics of presence ...

"Deconstruction thus purports to expose the problematic nature of any—that is to say, all—discourse that relies on foundational metaphysical ideas such as truth, presence, identity, or origin to center itself."⁴

Ehrman's position is similar:

And so to read a text is, necessarily to change a text.⁵

Ehrman's problem is, thus, threefold. First, there is no true history to be recorded, so the New Testament is a record of people's "truths." Second, the New Testament as we have it today has the theological view of those people and scribes that collected and edited the New Testament. So, orthodoxy is not a reflection of truth. Lastly, were there a true history to be recorded and were that history to be handed down to us in the New Testament, we still would have no idea of what is true because we—the reader—and *not the author* are lord of the meaning of the text. However, all meaning is lost without God.

God has given all men the light of Creation, the light of conscience, and a basis for understanding of truth (moral and otherwise).⁶ This allows men to think, make sense of reality, and draw closer to God. Man in his depravity backs away from this moral calling of God to renew the mind (Romans 12:2) in favor of becoming his own god and having his own truth.

Orthodoxy

Is there any truth in religion? Is there any truth in Christian orthodoxy? Or, as with "history," the group who ultimately wins the battle of supremacy gets to define "orthodoxy" as Ehrman explains. The Christian understanding of orthodoxy is no different than her understanding of truth. Orthodoxy must correspond with reality. Orthodoxy is not a matter of taste or feeling. Orthodoxy is the foundational truths of the Christian faith as taught by the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the writers of the New Testament as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit to remember the teaching of Jesus or lead by the Holy Spirit to record the nature of God, man, and the Church.

Ehrman contrasts this understanding of truth and orthodoxy:

Each and every one of these viewpoints—and many others besides—were topics of constant discussion, dialogue, and debate in the early centuries of the

church, while Christians of various persuasions tried to convince others of the truth of their own claims. Only one group eventually 'won out' in these debates. It was this group that decided what the Christian creeds would be: the creeds would affirm that there is only one God, the Creator; that Jesus his Son is both human and divine; and that salvation came by his death and resurrection.⁷

Ehrman also states:

The group that established itself as 'orthodox' (meaning that it held what it considered to be the 'right belief') then determined what future Christian generations would believe and read as scripture.⁸

The idea that there is one God, as Ehrman explains, is not based on what is true but on who won the struggle for power. The ideas recorded in the Christian creeds are not true but are a literary snap shot of the political situation in the late Roman Empire. Orthodox teaching is a record of what group outwitted their rivals for power and in so doing preserved their theological ideas as well. Ehrman's usage of the word *proto-orthodox*⁹ helps us to understand his twist or definition of the term *orthodoxy*.

Paul and all the New Testament writers, in the eyes of Ehrman, did not write about truth but about what they believed. This is in complete contradiction to what Scripture has to say about itself. *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."*¹⁰ The position of Ehrman and Scripture are in logical opposition to one another—both cannot be true.

Inspiration

Scripture is authoritative because it is divinely inspired—another idea Ehrman rejects. The ideas found in the pages of the Bible came not from man, but from God. An important point in the orthodox understanding of inspiration is that inspiration refers to the original writings. Manuscripts whether written in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English, or any other language are copies of the original inspired works, and as such, most contain minor errors.¹¹

Ehrman traces his loss of faith in the Bible as he left Wheaton College and began studying at Princeton. His own words speak how his view of inspiration changed:

... I began seeing the New Testament as a very human book. The New Testament as we actually have it, I knew, was the product of human hands, the hands of the scribes who transmitted it. Then I began to see that not just the scribal text but the original text itself was a very human book. This stood very much at odds with how I regarded the text in my late teens as a newly minded 'born-again' Christian, convinced that the Bible was the inerrant Word of God and that the biblical words themselves had come to us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.¹²

His critique of the orthodox view of inspiration can be sum-

—Continued on page 18

marized as follows:

1. Meaning only can be found in the original language. (p.7)
2. We do not have the original manuscripts. (p.7)
3. We do have "error-ridden copies". (p.7)
4. The authors also made errors. (p.11)
5. The Bible originated in the mind of men. (p.11)

Ehrman hardly gives a logical argument. For instance: In point four, he gives no defense for his conclusion that the original authors made mistakes. How does he know they error when we do not have the original writings—the very thing Ehrman points out again and again! Ehrman suggests that a simple cough during the recitation of the original author to a scribe could have occurred, and thus, a mistake in the original would have resulted. He gives no evidence to support his theory. Ehrman seems to have faith in events for which there is no record.

Further, point one is false. Objective meaning is transcendent of any particular language. Language only describes reality; it does not create it. As an example, let's say my daughter Kayla tells a young Mexican boy, "Jesús te ama." I turn to ask her what she said to the boy. She tells me she said "Jesus loves you." I do not have to understand the originating language to

understand what Kayla meant. All I needed was a translator. That is precisely what Hebrew and Greek linguistic scholars aim to do—translate the original language into the common vernacular without losing the meaning.

Inerrancy

A deduction made by Ehrman, as he looks at the manuscript evidence, is that the Bible is not inerrant. He states that some scholars claim 400,000 or more variants.¹³ He uses this evidence to support his idea that the Bible is error-ridden. But is this the case? It should be noted that when textual critics count errors, they are looking at a multiplicity of manuscripts.¹⁴ Drs. Norman Geisler and William Nix note in their book *A General Introduction to the Bible* that:

There is an ambiguity in saying that there are some 200,000 variants in the existing manuscripts of the New Testament because those represent only 10,000 places in the New Testament. If one single word is misspelled in 3,000 different manuscripts, it is counted as 3,000 variants or readings. Once this counting procedure is understood ... the remaining significant variants are surprisingly few in number.¹⁵

Ehrman, himself, seems to concede this point:

To be sure, of all the hundreds of thousands of textual changes found among our manuscripts, most of them are completely insignificant, immaterial, of no real importance for anything other than showing that scribes could not spell or keep focused any better than the rest of us.¹⁶

However, Ehrman gives many examples of passages that he believes supports his conclusion of an error-filled text. We shall choose three of those passages to examine.

First is the passage Luke 11:2-4. Ehrman suggests that this passage was originally truncated and at a latter time scribes "harmonized" the passage by adding length and content to make it similar to Matt. 6:9-13.¹⁷

We shall look at this from two sides of the inerrancy coin. On one side we must ask, "Is inerrancy challenged if Matthew recorded the entire prayer of Jesus and Luke penned only a portion of the prayer? Did Luke make an error?" To suggest that Luke erred in not recording the entire prayer of Jesus would be to misunderstand inerrancy. Inerrancy does not necessitate that all Gospel writers record an event in the exact same words, for to do so would make three of them unnecessary. *Inerrancy* only necessitates that *what is written is true*.

Authors today have different audiences and themes they write to and about. Take, for example, the topic of steroids in baseball. A sports writer might focus on whether Barry Bonds should be credited as passing Hank Aaron on the all-time-home-run list if he used steroids. A medical writer would be interested in communicating the details of the different types of steroids Bonds allegedly used. And a legal writer may investigate if Bonds did anything illegal. It was no different for Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each had a unique audience and a specific focus for their writings. Matthew may have chosen to include "... *Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*" (Matt. 6:10), because it was important to Matthew's goal of explaining the Kingdom of God to his Jewish audience. In particular, His Kingdom has a heavenly aspect and an earthly one.

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The other side of the inerrancy coin is that not all English versions of the Bible handle this passage in the same manner. The KJV and the NKJV do, indeed, contain the lengthened version. However, the ESV, NASB, and NIV chose the shorter version. This shows that since we have an increasing number of manuscripts our translations are continually improving in their quality. It may be the case that certain scribes—those producing the Majority Text—added to the original writings. But, one does not need to conclude, as Ehrman does, that Scripture is in error. As we have already noted: If Luke did record a few less words of our Lord's Prayer, it does not make him wrong. Further, if we accept Ehrman's hypothesis that the Alexandrian manuscripts are more accurate, albeit fewer in number; isn't it plausible to conclude that the KJV and the NKJV reading is less preferred since they tend to give priority to the Majority Text rather than the Alexandrian texts?

Applying textual criticism rules suggested by Professor Gleason Archer further supports the original Lukan reading as to containing the "shortened" version of the Lord's Prayer. Archer notes that the older and shorter readings are to be preferred.¹⁸ Older manuscripts are preferred, because they are closer to the original; and in the case of the Alexandrian manuscripts, they were transcribed by better scribes. The shorter reading is preferred because scribes tend to "add to" the text rather than reduce it. So, Ehrman may be correct when he says that scribes "added to" Luke, but he gives no evidence to support his assertion that Luke made a mistake.

Second is the passage Mark 1:2a where Mark writes, "***As it is written in Isaiah the prophet ...***" Mark has made a mistake according to Ehrman. That mistake is that Isaiah did not write the quoted Old Testament words that follow in Mark 1:2b-3. And according to Ehrman, "***... there can be little doubt concerning what Mark originally wrote: the attribution to Isaiah is found in our earliest and best manuscripts.***"¹⁹ What Ehrman is suggesting is that Mark got it wrong, and the scribes got it right by correcting Mark 1:2 to attribute the Old Testament sayings to "***the prophets.***"

A suggested resolution to this apparent mistake is given by John Grassmick, contributor of the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*:

Mark prefaced this composite quotation from three Old Testament books with the words: *It is written in Isaiah the prophet.* This illustrates a common practice by New Testament authors in quoting several passages with a unifying theme. The common theme here is the 'wilderness' (desert) tradition in Israel's history. Since Mark was introducing the ministry of John the Baptist in the desert, he cited Isaiah as the source because the Isaiah passage refers to 'a voice ... calling' in the desert.²⁰ (Emphasis in the original.)

It also should be noted that when referencing the thoughts of another individual, ancient writers, as well as modern writers, do not always quote verbatim. Different words may be chosen to convey the same idea. It is a mistake to hold New Testament writers to a standard that was not present then nor today. While it is the case that exact quotes are often used in research work such as what you are presently reading, it is not necessary to do so. Mark need not quote Isaiah verbatim and, yet, still attribute the saying to Isaiah. Concerning this passage the authors of *Hard Sayings of the Bible* agree:

When we accuse him [Mark] of inaccuracy, far from

pointing out a reality in Mark, we are exposing our own lack of knowledge about how he and other ancient authors used Scripture.²¹

Third is an apparent discrepancy as to where Paul went after his conversion on his way to Damascus.²² Galatians 1:16-17 tells us that Paul went to Arabia, while Acts 9:26 states that Paul went to Jerusalem. Galatians 1:17 clearly states, "***nor did I go up to Jerusalem ...***," but that he went "***... to Arabia ...***." In contrast, the Acts narrative places Paul in Damascus, and then describes that he "***... came to Jerusalem ...***" in verse 26.

However, this is not a contradiction. It is like the husband who tells his wife that he went to the local hardware store after work, and he tells his son that he went to the golf course after work. Do his stories contradict one another? No. It is perfectly reasonable to assume that he stopped by the hardware store to pick up some materials, and then he continued on to play a round of golf. He did *both* after work.

A similar reconciliation can be given to these two passages. Paul went to Arabia and Jerusalem after leaving Damascus. It is important to note that the charge leveled against Scripture by Ehrman is that "***the first thing he [Paul] did after leaving Damascus***" was to go to Jerusalem. The narrative of Acts does seem to indicate a quick progression of Paul's locality from Damascus to Jerusalem. However, in Acts 9:23 Luke uses the phrase, "***When many days had elapsed ...***," which indicates a span of time occurred between verses 22 and 26. What happened during those "***many days?***" Concerning this passage the late Oxford Professor and Archaeologist Sir William M. Ramsay offers this:

Moreover, Luke divided Paul's stay in Damascus into two periods, a few days' residence with the disciples (9:19), and a long period of preaching (9:20-23). The quiet residence in the country for a time, recovering from the serious and prostrating effect of his con-

—Continued on page 21

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"Resurrection" Continued from page 7

ENDNOTES:

1 The Watchtower Society's "Jehovah" just makes educated guesses about what will happen in the future. He draws prognostications from the past to determine what might happen in the future. Absurdly, they argue that *if God did* know everything in advance, he would be *responsible* for all the sins and crimes of mankind. This limited-god teaching of the Watchtower Society goes way back to its founder. Charles Taze Russell, who wrote back in 1915: "**To assume that God is in every place, in every niche of space throughout the Universe, seems to us an absurdity, not taught in the Bible; and to assume that God knows about every little tadpole, pollywog, microbe, or that He even takes knowledge of every act of each one of the human family, when there are millions of these, is beyond our understanding. If we should limit God's attention to the Church, still there are thousands of these; and the capacity to understand and deal with ten or twenty thousand people in an instant seems to us to be an impossibility.**" (The WATCH TOWER, February 15, 1915, p.55). Rather than being omniscient, all-knowing, their god needs to learn things. The WATCH-TOWER of January 15, 1964 states: "**But as soon as the first human pair sinned God knew it or learned it, because now they felt guilty and hid themselves**" (emphasis mine) Jehovah could tell by their *guilty actions* that Adam and Eve had sinned; otherwise I guess they would have gotten away with it! It is absolutely true that the god of the Watchtower Society does not know the future, which only proves that the god they promote is not the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, unlimited God of the Bible! For further information of the limited-god view of the JW's, please see Duane Magnani's book, *The Heavenly Weatherman*. 2 *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol 2, p790 WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC, International Bible Students Association, Brooklyn New York, USA, 1988

3 *Make Sure of all Things*, 1953, p311; (Underlining added for emphasis) WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA.

4 The Watchtower Society teaches a unique two-class system of salvation. The 144,000 elite, variously referred to as "**the faithful and discreet slave,**" "**Christ's brothers**" or the "**anointed,**" enjoy first class status and will go to heaven at their supposed resurrection as a "spirit creature," where they will rule over the Earth. The others, known as the "**great crowd**" or the "**other sheep**" must fly second class – they are re-created as physical human beings and are confined to Earth, where they shall serve Christ and the 144,000, working and slaving to clean up the earth after Armageddon and preaching to other "resurrected" people who were not JW's in their former life. Their eternal future is not even then secure, as they can be destroyed at any time, should they step out of line and become "unfaithful." Some salvation!

5 *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol 2, p786 WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC, International Bible Students Association, Brooklyn New York, USA, 1988

6 The WATCHTOWER, Sept 15, 1960, p576, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC, Brooklyn New York, USA,

7 ZION'S WATCH TOWER, June 15, 1896, p142, Reprints

8 ZION'S WATCH TOWER, January 15, 1908, p27, Reprints

9 THE WATCH TOWER, January 15, 1913, p23, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA

10 AWAKE!, July 8, 1949, p26 WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC, Brooklyn New York, USA,

11 What Hope For Dead Loved Ones? 1987, p2, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA

12 Good News to Make You Happy, 1976, p89, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA

13 Awake, July 22, 1979, p27 WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA,

14 Is This Life All There Is? 1974, p51, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA

15 AWAKE!, August 8, 1972, p27, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA

16 *Reasoning From the Scriptures*; pg. 333,

17 *Make Sure of all Things*, p. 311 WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA

18 The WATCHTOWER, April 15, 1963, p242, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA

19 *The Watchtower*, May 15, 1962, 302, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA

20 *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, p 784, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC, International Bible Students Association, Brooklyn New York, USA, 1988

21 *The Time is at Hand*, 1888, p.129, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA

22 The Watch Tower, March 15, 1923, p.91, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA

23 The Watch Tower, August 15, 1930, p250, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA

24 The WATCHTOWER, September 1, 1953, p.518, WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., Brooklyn New York, USA

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

by Corkey McGehee

The WTBS teaches that both humans and animals are souls.

"Yet, the Bible shows that humans have a number of things in common with animals. For example, both humans and animals are souls." ("In the Image of God or Beast?" *Awake!*, June 22, 1998)

If the JW believes that the souls of humans and animals are the same, ask them if the animals survived Noah's flood. If so, there would have been more than eight souls! 1 Peter 3:20 (NWT) **"who had once been disobedient when the patience of God was waiting in Noah's days, while the ark was being constructed, in which a few people, that is, eight souls, were carried safely through the water."**



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"Error" Continued from page 19

version (for a man's life is not suddenly reversed without serious claim on his physical power) is the dividing fact between the two periods.²³

Paul, himself, gives us some insight in his letter to the Galatian churches. In recounting the days and years after his conversion, he notes that he did not "... *go up to Jerusalem ...*" (Gal. 1:17) but rather he "... *went away to Arabia ...*" (Gal. 1:17) and then "... *returned once more to Damascus*" (Gal. 1:17). So, it seems a reasonable conclusion to understand Paul's post-conversion sojourning to include an initial trip to Damascus proclaiming in the Synagogue the identity of Jesus as the Son of God (Acts 9:20). From Damascus he traveled to Arabia (Gal. 1:17) for some unknown amount of time, and then he returned to Damascus for "*many days ...*" (Acts 9:23). His second stay in Damascus ended with him being lowered over the wall in a basket (Acts 9:25). From there, he traveled to Jerusalem (Acts 9:26). So, Luke and Paul were *both* correct. After his conversion, Paul went to Arabia *and* Jerusalem. Contrary to Ehrman, this is not a case of a mistaken biblical author. The Bible once again shows that it can be trusted. In Ehrman's vigor to find errors in the Bible, he overlooks a very plausible explanation to the text.

Conclusion

While many of the facts Ehrman records are true, it is the conclusions from these facts that we reject. His spiritual situation—agnosticism—causes truth in all forms to cascade into a deconstruction of meaning, history, and orthodoxy. This leaves him with no basis for truth beyond personal experience. This understanding of truth and orthodoxy has modified his ability to look objectively at the text.

Commenting on orthodoxy Ehrman writes:

Each and every one of these viewpoints—and many others besides—were topics of constant discussion, dialogue, and debate in the early centuries of the church, while Christians of various persuasions tried to convince others of the truth of their own claims. Only one group eventually 'won out' in these debates. It was this group that decided what the Christian creeds would be ...²⁴

Commenting on hermeneutics, Ehrman writes:


For the more I studied, the more I saw that reading a text necessarily involves interpreting a text. I suppose when I started my studies I had a rather unsophisticated view of reading: that the point of reading a text is simply to let the text 'speak for itself,' to uncover the meaning inherent in its words. The reality, I came to see, is that meaning is not inherent and texts do not speak for themselves. If texts could speak for themselves, then everyone honestly and openly reading a text would agree on what the text says.²⁵

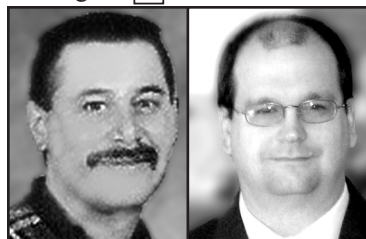
Is this how Ehrman wants his reader to approach his text? If Ehrman's conclusions about text and meaning are to be accepted, then the reader is perfectly justified in concluding Ehrman's acceptance of orthodoxy to be true and inerrancy of Scripture to be real. But, this is precisely what Ehrman rejects. This view is logically inconsistent. As an example of the incompatibility of Ehrman's idea, think of the automobile driver. Would we drive our cars if traffic signs were understood at the discretion of the reader? Chaos would most certainly follow. Ehrman's idea is completely unlivable.

Ehrman may confuse the *existence of truth* with the diffi-

culty of *discovery of truth*. When looking at a biblical passage, there are possibilities of disagreement. For instance, if person A and B disagree on the understating of a text there are several possibilities. Both A and B are wrong, A is right and B is wrong, or B is right and A is wrong. What is not possible is that A and B are both right. This goes against the Law of Non-Contradiction. [Editor's note: See July/Aug. 1996 *MCOI Journal* article on p.4: "Do All Paths Lead to God?" for more about this law.]

The book does not live up to its billing. Inferred within the title—*Misquoting Jesus*—is some factual knowledge of Jesus' own words—the *exact idea Ehrman rejects!* He cannot consistently claim that Jesus was misquoted and say that we do not have the original text. How can one know that Jesus was misquoted if we do not know what he actually said? There must be a real, objective truth before one can claim something is false. He has rejected the basis necessary to claim that Jesus was misquoted.

Something is only false if it does not correspond to reality. Christian orthodoxy was God-inspired and revealed through Jesus. If Jesus is misquoted, there was a truth in what he taught. 



Randal Ming and Randall Birtell are the Scranton, KS Branch Directors of MCOI. They also are completing their Master's Degrees in Apologetics at Southern Evangelical Seminary in Charlotte, NC.

ENDNOTES:

- 1 Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2005)
- 2 What if we have to figure out how to live and what to believe on our own, without setting up the Bible as a false idol—or an oracle that gives us a direct line of communication with the Almighty? (Ehrman, 14)
- 3 Ehrman, 11-12
- 4 Richard H. Popkin, *Columbia History of Western Philosophy* (Columbia University Press, New York: 1999), 739
- 5 Ehrman, 217
- 6 Romans 1
- 7 Ehrman, 153
- 8 Ibid. 154
- 9 Ibid. 169, 171, 173
- 10 2 Tim. 3:16
- 11 It is possible to have a manuscript that is an exact replica of the original. However we are aware of no current consensus of scholars who claim to have such a copy.
- 12 Ehrman, 211
- 13 Ibid. 89
- 14 The very thing that brings increasing accuracy to our translations, namely the vast and growing number of manuscripts available, Ehrman uses to point out inconsistency and error.
- 15 Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 468
- 16 Ehrman, 207
- 17 Ibid. 97
- 18 Geisler and Nix, 478
- 19 Ehrman, 95
- 20 Walvoord, John F., Roy B. Zuck, and Dallas Theological Seminary. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985
- 21 Walter C. Kaiser and others, eds., *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 404
- 22 Ehrman, 10
- 23 William M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*, Revised and Updated, ed. Mark Wilson (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 47.
- 24 Ehrman, 154
- 25 Ibid. 216

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"Labyrinth" Continued from page 15

ment. *"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."* (Hebrews 4:12)

Successful marketing techniques induce in consumers the yearning for something they really may not need and then offer a product to fulfill that desire. Similarly, promoting the thought that we must have experiences to feel close to God creates an impatience and dissatisfaction with the challenge of walking by faith and implies that we are not getting truly deep or intimate experiences with God. Experiences are fleeting; they come and go. They are like black holes that are never filled and lead to futile attempts—over and over—trying to fill them. Offering the labyrinth as a spiritual tool can create such a black hole, because each experience is never enough—there always must be more.

The labyrinth, itself, is merely a design. Simply walking a labyrinth is not the issue; the problem lies in attempting to evoke a spiritual experience or believing that walking a labyrinth must bring one closer to God.

Seeking to conjure up experiences can become a substitute for the authentic deep relationship with God that flows from a day-to-day relationship with Christ and comes by faith, not feeling. Faith does not rely on feelings for the true peace or satisfaction we have in Christ; because true peace is not based on feeling, but rather on the historical fact that Christ rose from the dead—proving He is Who He claimed to be and reflecting the constancy that is Christ Himself.

"I tell you ... when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) 



Marcia's ministry is CANA/Christian Answers for the New Age, and she is a missionary with Fellowship International Mission, an independent mission board based in Allentown, PA. CANA is an informational and outreach ministry.

She is now enrolled in a long-distance program at Southern Evangelical Seminary, Charlotte, NC, working toward a Master's Degree in Apologetics and Cults. Marcia is a member of Cherrydale Baptist Church, Arlington, VA.

ENDNOTES:

1 Jean Chevalier, Alain Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols*; trans. John Buchanan-Brown (Paris: Robert Laffont S A, Jupiter, 1982; NY: Penguin Putnam, 1996), 642

2 Jeff Saward, "Labyrinths In Ireland," <http://www.labyrinthos.net/ireland.htm>

3 Saward, "The First Labyrinths," <http://www.labyrinthos.net/firstlabs.htm>; Abegael Saward, "The Rocky Valley Labyrinths," <http://www.labyrinthos.net/rockyvalley.htm>

4 Chevalier, 643. Note: Solomon was and still is seen by those involved in esoteric magical practices such as alchemy as having possessed magical powers.

5 Ibid

6 Ibid. 642.

7 See www.veriditas.net

8 "The Cathedral Labyrinths," <http://www.gracecathedral.org/labyrinth/>



"Thread" Continued from page 13

demise in his own words:

- **To Dorothy Day, July 25, 1968:** "I have a big thing coming up. I am to go to Asia as peritus for a regional meeting of abbots and also to attend a meeting of leaders from non-Christian religions. I hope this may mean a deepening of understanding and a chance to enter more deeply into the mind of some of the Asian monastic traditions."²⁸
- **To W. H. Ferry, California friend, July 28, 1968:** "No plans need be made for meeting people, except maybe a poet or two in SF, and I may stop at the Esalen Inst [a new age center to this day]. In Big Sur as they are hoping I'll give them a conference some time."²⁹
- **Nov. 21, 1968 from Merton a month before he died:** "I have been in India about a month & have met quite a few interesting people. Seen monasteries, temples, lamas, paintings, jungles – not to mention the arch-city of Calcutta. Quite an experience. I will be going on soon to Ceylon and Indonesia. Hope you are both well. It was good to see you in SF. Best, Tom Merton"³⁰
- **To Richard S. Y. Chi, a Buddhist philosopher, Nov. 21, 1968:** "I have been in India over a month, mostly in the Himalayas, and have had good conversations with the Dalai Lama and with many others high in the Tibetan Buddhism – including some extraordinary mystics ... During my stay here I have added a bit to my knowledge of Madhyamika. [School of Mahayana Buddhism developed by Nagarjuna in the second century A.D. It stressed the notion of emptiness: 'Everything is the void.'] I am eager to reread Shen Hui in the light of this study and look forward very much to seeing your book."³¹

On December 10, 1968 Merton was in Bangkok, Thailand preparing to gather with local Buddhist monks. He got into the shower that had a fan above blowing on him, and he reached up and accidentally touched it and was electrocuted. He was 53-years-old. He reached the place in the afterworld that fascinated him so much in life. I seriously doubt that it impressed him once he arrived with no way out. Both he and a fellow monk had had premonitions that he would not be coming back from Thailand alive. By a strange coincidence, it has been noted that he concluded his last conference in Bangkok with the words:

'... so I will disappear.' 

*Trappist Monks are noted for austerity and vow of silence.

**Sufi Mystics are followers of Mohammed who hold to pantheism and extreme asceticism in their lives.

***Ascended Master a term for one who has attained a higher self or god-self and is not limited by time or space.

†Pantheism is a belief that everything is god.

††Cistercian Monks are noted for austerity and vow of silence.

†††Panentheism believes that the universe is a part of the god or goddess, but not the whole of the divine being.

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Jackie Alnor is the editor of *Apostasy Alert* www.apostasyalert.org a web-zine dedicated to reporting the prophesied Great Apostasy as it happens. Jackie writes for many Christian publications both in-print and on-line. She also produces videos that document errors within the church. Thousands of copies of her production of *The Great Apostasy: The Lost Sign* have been distributed around the world. Jackie Alnor co-founded *The Christian Sentinel* magazine (www.cultlink.com) where



Christian

her articles in the area of the defense of the faith date back to 1993. In the mid-1980s, Jackie published a newsletter called *The New Age Alert* that sounded the alarm against Eastern Mysticism invading the church. Jackie studied apologetics at Simon Greenleaf School of Law, church history and theology at Philadelphia College of Bible, and has a degree in Communication/Media from Texas A&M University. She lives in the Bay Area with her husband and three teen-aged children.

ENDNOTES:

- 1 Alexander Lipski, *Thomas Merton and Asia: His Quest for Utopia*, ©1983, Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, MI, page 5.]
- 2 Thomas Merton, *The Secular Journal of Thomas Merton*, ©1959, Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, New York, pp. 268-269
- 3 *The Hidden Ground of Love: The Letters of Thomas Merton*, edited by William H. Shannon, ©1985 Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, p. 243.
- 4 *Hidden Ground*, p. 439.
- 5 *Hidden Ground*, p. 44
- 6 *Hidden Ground*, p. 45-46
- 7 *Hidden Ground*, p. 49
- 8 *Hidden Ground*, p. 64, Emphasis added
- 9 Alexander Lipinski, *Thomas Merton and Asia: His Quest for Utopia*; ©1983, Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, MI, page 29
- 10 Raymond Bailey, *Thomas Merton on Mysticism*; ©1974, Doubleday & Co., Inc, Garden City, NY, p. 44
- 11 <http://archives.waiting-forthe-sun.net/Pages/Players/Women/nico.html>
- 12 Edward & Faith Andrews, Introduction by Thomas Merton. *Religion in Wood: A Book of Shaker Furniture* ©1966 Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, pg xiii
- 13 *Religion in Wood: A Book of Shaker Furniture* p. xiv
- 14 *Hidden Ground*, p. 42
- 15 *Hidden Ground*, pp. 156-157, emphasis added
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- 18 *Thomas Merton and Asia: His Quest for Utopia*, 35-36
- 19 M. Basil Pennington, *Thomas Merton Brother Monk: The Quest for True Freedom*, ©1987 Harper & Row, San Francisco, p. 160
- 20 John J. Higgins SJ, *Merton's Theology of Prayer* 1971, Cistercian Publications, Spencer, MA, p. 125.
- 21 *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p 487
- 22 *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p 487
- 23 *Thomas Merton on Mysticism*, p 15
- 24 *Striving Towards Being: The Letters of Thomas Merton and Czeslaw Milosz*, edited by Robert Faggen, ©1997, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, p. 53
- 25 *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 48.]
- 26 *The Hidden Ground of Love*, 473-474
- 27 <http://www.themystica.com/mystica/articles/h/hesychasm.html>
- 28 *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p 154
- 29 *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p 241
- 30 *Striving Towards Being: The Letters of Thomas Merton and Czeslaw Milosz*, p 178
- 31 *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p 125

Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.
(Acts 20:28-30)

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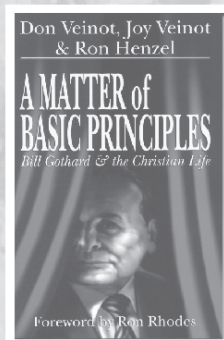
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