

## **Of the Spirit of Christ or a Cross Hewn of Man?**

**Are we following the true original uplifting quickening spiritual guidance of a Savior of faith, following the universal Commandments to "love God", and our fellow man? (see Luke 10:27) or has religion succumbed to the tricks and traps of commercial oriented entertainment, creeds, dogma and charismatic showmanship?**

**Do we heed the Christ;** "(Matthew 5: 20) *"For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven "...And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others."*

*"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me,"* (John 14:9)

**Or do we follow the sign of the Cross, bidding,** "Onward Christian soldiers marching off to war, with the Cross of Jesus moving on before. Do we allow enticing accoutrements, creeds, rituals, or let fancy parochial sectarian preaching or business concerns, override the essential private prayerful worship of God given as so essential in the Gospels, Qur'an, Bhagavad-Gita, Zend-Avesta, Baha'i and other Scriptures of Faith?"

*"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."* ( Matthew 6: 24)

Jesus explicitly warns, *" Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!"* (Matthew 7:21-23)

### **Do we recognize the validity and close similarities in other faiths?**

In many faiths, the common theme is; only to worship God and God alone, not to follow or worship anything along with Him. That would include ancestral habitual forms creeds and the like such as found in churches, synagogues and temples.

**Hindus** are often seen as worshipping and praying to many gods but, it is evident, this is in error. The Bhagavad-Gita itself says (see P26 down) only one God must be prayed too. Yet, God, through his mercy does hear prayer even though it is wrongfully done.

**Jewish:** *" You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make yourself an idol...You shall not bow down to them or worship them,"* ( Exodus 20: 2-5)

**Islam:** *"Heraclius said, 'What does he (Mohammad) order you to do?' I said, 'He tells us to worship Allah (God) and Allah alone and not to worship anything along with Him, and*

*to renounce all that our ancestors had said. He orders us to pray, to speak the truth, to be chaste and to keep good relations with our Kith and kin.'* (Hadith, Bukhari Vol 1)

**Christianity: Jesus' 1st Commandment,** *"Of all the commandments, which is the most important? 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these."* (Mark 12: 29-31)

**Zoroasterianism:** *"As an offering Zarathushtra [Body of Christ, the Word of Truth] brings the life of his own body, the choiceness of good thought, action, and speech, unto Mazda, [Lord] unto the Right, Obedience, and Dominion."* ( Yazna 33:14 Zend-Avesta); Is this a Jesus-like sacrifice?

Are church authorities using favorite habitual (self endorsed traditionalized ritualized) ancient Sumerian/ Hebrew ideologies with which to address and persuade, instead of focusing on what Jesus taught himself? Why this negative oriented church emphasis on original sin? Why keep beating the drum " you need to be saved?"

Do formalities of a formal faith formalize a faith/interface with God? Is there a real Covenant between humanity and the Divine? If so, within a multitude of clamoring differing faiths, how is it to be found and followed? Is a structured " thou shalt" or "shalt not" paradigm required on either one or both sides?

What gives Christianity the right to claim exclusive right to God's grace and salvation; then to historically do their utmost to destroy "heathen" temples, objects, writings, rituals and practices, considered unholy, in the name of God?

### **A little introduction:**

It is through much thought and ever-evolving meditation that I write. This has evolved into a new search for faith. Seeking God through independent investigation. Finding God through means not associated with any particular creed sect, custom or religion.

It is a search based on objective reasoning. Traditional subjective parochial sectarian "only one way" thinking has been carefully set aside. Instead, the focus has been on seeking evidence of Divine Reality through aspects of modern scientific reasoning and thought, along with perusing knowledge of the Ancients through various writings revered as "Holy". The Bible, Qur'an, Zen-Avesta, Bhagavad-Gita, Baha'i Writings and more were looked at with an eye of discovering universal truths to be found in all.

My personal "Finding Faith" journey goal is really a need to rediscover. Recently, when I was asked if a close dear just deceased friend," had excepted Jesus as her personal Savior," then stated," If not, she was going to Hell," something in me broke. It was almost as if a last vestige of even occasionally feeling the urge to attend a church service was severed. This reinforced my long standing view of institutionalized religion being such a divisive force and ,historically, a major source of terrorism and warfare the world

over. But, at the same time, the pure act of "knowing and worshipping God" has been a vital impulse for much of humanity's expressive art, literature, education, moral and spiritual enlightenment. It is the decadence, hate, sectarian dogma rituals, literalist exclusivist blinded thinking that constitutes such a serious malady for us all.

*"There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed."*  
(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 217)

A balance is needed to be forged between reason and faith, the sacred and secular.

Religion, without science, can slip into organized habitual superstition and vain imaginings. Witness the horror of Holy Inquisitions, the stifling of objective research and open unbiased understanding. Religion can cause the intellect to wither and die within the confines of oppressive orthodoxy, creed and dogma! Much ungodliness is done in the name of God!

Science, without religion, can become a vehicle for monstrous destruction. Witness modern instruments of war and inhumane actions performed in the name of "science". Witness also what we are doing to the Earth in the name of technology, progress and profit!

### **Part One: Fundamental Questions:**

*"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. For what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"* 7:7-11 Matthew (King James Bible)

*"O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. Thou hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence they are all Thy servants, and all mankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle; all have gathered together at Thy Table of Bounty; all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence. O God! Thou art kind to all, Thou hast provided for all, dost shelter all, conferrest life upon all. Thou hast endowed each and all with talents and faculties, and all are submerged in the Ocean of Thy Mercy. O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony."* (Compilations, Baha'i Prayers, p. 99)

**Whatever your beliefs might be, surely it is a good thing to ask yourself fundamental questions and openly think about issues such as:**

Why does being a follower of the Light of Christ seem to also demand a certain presumption of Bible inerrancy? Is this a requirement of Jesus or the church? What does "thinking Biblically" entail? What are the implications of such thinking on our thought processes? Why is this church encouraged thinking important for salvation or morality?

Verses within the Christian Bible, Islamic Quran, Jewish Torah, Hindu Bhagavad-Gita etc. are read and studied, in their respective faiths, as an "only source" offering the most complete exclusively inerrant truth of the "Word"; whereas ethnologically similar mystery "faith foundation" teachings and legends from other "outside" sources are passed by simply as "myths" of little value, Why?

Why are ancient ancestral beliefs of faith, often imposing an inflexible rigid unquestioning "certainty principle" upon modern minds, seen as a necessary means of attaining salvation? Why is sincere reason and questioning often deemed "inappropriate in God's House"? Is religion a positive or negative force? Why?

What is the impact on modern science and reason? How about questions of international law or morality; social concerns of modern technology finding, in many cases, ancient wisdom to be inadequate and obsolete; being unable to give clear guidance for our time.

Are all scientists considered "on the wrong path" simply because they see solid evidence refuting Biblical literal interpretation, i.e. believing the earth to be no more than ten thousand years old? Would a loving God provide the means and instill the desire; giving us cognitive capability enabling us to observe, discover and discern; then turn around and admonish, "this I give unto you as a means of deception through which you will be encouraged to follow false paths leading to eternal separation"? Would you, as a loving father, put your child into such a predicament?

History is replete with "godless deeds done in the name of God". Humanity seems to have a penchant for making places "holy" and claiming them as their own. Indeed, many invading people representing a multitude faiths throughout history conveniently believed that it was their "God given right" to occupy desired land; declaring, "This land was "given to us by God and is ours by manifest destiny". Examples of such thinking are found from the time and place of Moses to United States history, from modern Palestine and Israel to the Crusades.... We hear from the victors; what about the vanquished?

Do formalities of a formal faith formalize a faith/interface with God? Is there a real Covenant between humanity and the Divine? If so, within a multitude of clamoring differing faiths, how is it to be found and followed? Is a structured "thou shalt" or "shalt not" paradigm required on either one or both sides?

## Part Two: The Exclusivity Principle:

Krishna, Mithraism, Horus and other cultural belief systems have many elements comparable, and often similar, to what is told in the Bible; such as virgin birth fathered by a god spirit, a December 25th or 21st birthday, performing of miracles, a Herod-like evil king figure and even a resurrection after three days. These gods are commonly worshipped savior figures. They are followed as if they themselves were," the way, the truth and the light; that nobody comes to the Father and achieves Grace except by me".

Christians tend to condemn Hindus for their seeming polytheistic thinking. But Hindus do acknowledge a single Supreme Deity. Hindus have a multitude of gods and goddesses that symbolize the one abstract Supreme Being or Brahman (God). The most fundamental of Hindu deities are the Trinity consisting of; 1. Brahma, the Cosmic Mind, or Creator; 2. Vishnu, the Cosmic Lord, or Sustainer; and 3. Shiva, the Transcendent Godhead, or Destroyer. Krishna ( a Christ like reality?) is the ninth avatar of Vishnu, the Godhead of the Hindu Trinity. Words and wisdom of Krishna are told in the Bhagavad-Gita (Song of God), the "Holy Bible" of their faith.

Yes, it is sometimes true an aspect of Divine Reality, as depicted by different names and stories in different cultures, may be worshipped or called upon for protection. Is this really so different from the Christian Trinity or the pantheon of Catholic Saints?

*" I recognize Thee, O Mazda, [Lord or God] in my thought, that Thou the First art (also) the Last --that Thou art Father of Vohu Manah; -- when I apprehend Thee with mine eye, that Thou art the true Creator of Right [Asha], and art the Lord to judge the actions of life."*

*"When Thou, O Mazda, in the beginning didst create the Individual and the Individuality, through Thy Spirit, and powers of understanding - when Thou didst make life clothed with the body, when (Thou madest) actions and teachings, whereby one may exercise one's convictions at one's free-will." (Yazna 31: 8,11 Zend-Avesta)*

As found in the passage below: If one thinks of bodily sacrifice along with the "eating of My body" and the food of the spirit allegorically symbolizing the "bread of Life", the connection between Zarathustra and Jesus is compelling.

*"As an offering Zarathushtra [Body of Christ, the Word of Truth] brings the life of his own body, the choiceness of good thought, action, and speech, unto Mazda, [Lord] unto the Right, Obedience, and Dominion." ( Yazna 33:14 Zend-Avesta)*

Here is a **Native American legend containing a claim of a "virgin birth.** "virgin births" are not that uncommon in the realms of legends and myths, gods and goddesses. Yet, those of faith profess only their own exclusive story as possessing either literal or symbolical truth. As in other Native American Traditions, there are many concepts, ethics, morality and much wisdom Christians habitually claim as their own.

This story of Dekanawidah describes how he united the Native American Iroquois Tribes into a confederation. It illustrates spiritual truths of the battle between “good” and “evil” so common to world Faiths.

It tells how Adodarhoh, the evil one of crooked stature, the one whom everyone followed in a time of war and bloodshed, was made straight by the “Hymn of Peace”. It describes Dekanawidah changing the hearts which, in turn, causes them to accept his mission of bringing the five warring tribes together.

Read this as you would a Bible story, with the same search for understanding. This story originates from a time before European contamination.

*“North of the beautiful lake, in the land of the Crooked Tongues...in the village lived a good woman who had a virgin daughter. Now strangely this virgin conceived...The daughter about this time went into a long sleep and dreamed that her child should be a son whom she should name Dekanawidah. The messenger in her dream told her that he should become a great man and that he should go among the Flint people to live and that he should also go to the Many Hill Nation and there raise up the Great Tree of Peace.*

*Then in those days there was no great law. Our founder had not yet come to create peace and give united strength to the Real Men, the Ongwe-oweh. In those same days, the Onondagas had no peace. A man's life was valued as nothing. For any slight offense a man or woman was killed by his enemy and in this manner feuds started between families and clans. At night, none dared leave their doorways, lest an enemy's war club strike them down. Such was the condition when there was no Great Law.*

*South of the Onondaga town lived an evil-minded man...His body was distorted by seven crooks and his long tangled locks were adorned by writhing living serpents. Moreover, this monster was a devourer of raw meat, even of human flesh. He was also a master of wizardry, and by his magic he destroyed men but he could not be destroyed. Adodarhoh was the name of the evil man.*

*Notwithstanding the evil character of Adodarhoh the people of Onondaga, the Nation of Many Hills, obeyed his commands and though it cost many lives they satisfied his insane whims, so much did they fear him for his sorcery.*

*Dekanawidah requested some of the Mohawk chiefs to call a council, so messengers were sent out among the people and the council was convened. Dekanawidah said, "I, with my co-worker, have a desire to now report on what we have done on five successive midsummer days, of five successive years. We have obtained the consent of five nations. These are the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas, and the Senecas. Our desire is to form a compact for a union of our nations. Our next step is to seek out Adodarhoh. It is he who has always set at naught all plans for the establishment of the Great Peace. We must seek his fire and look for his smoke.*

*Then Dekanawidah taught the people the Hymn of Peace and the other songs. He stood before the door of the longhouse and walked before it singing the new songs. Many came and learned them so that many were strong by the magic of them when it was time to carry the Great Peace to Onondaga.*

*The frontier of the Onondaga country was reached and the expedition halted to kindle a fire, as was customary. Then the chiefs of the Onondagas, with their headmen, welcomed them and a great throng marched to the fireside of Adodarhoh, the singer of the Peace Hymn leading the multitude.*

*Then Dekanawidah himself sang and walked before the door of Adodarhoh's house. When he finished his song he walked toward Adodarhoh and held out his hand to rub it on his body and to know its inherent strength and life. Then Adodarhoh was made straight and his mind became healthy.*

*When Adodarhoh was made strong in rightful powers and his body had been healed, Dekanawidah addressed the three nations. He said, "We have overcome a great obstacle. It has long stood in the way of peace. The mind of Adodarhoh is now made right and his crooked parts are made straight. Now indeed may we establish the great peace.*

*Before we do firmly establish our union each nation must appoint a certain number of its wisest and purest men who shall be rulers, Rodiyaner. They shall be the advisers of the people and make the new rules that may be needful. These men shall be selected and confirmed by their female relations in whose lines the titles shall be hereditary." (Paul Halsall Aug 1997 [halsall@murray.fordham.edu](mailto:halsall@murray.fordham.edu) )*

From all the forgoing examples, added to much more that has survived the plunders and wars of history, what gives Christianity the right to claim an exclusive right to God's grace and salvation; then to turn around and historically do their utmost to destroy "heathen" temples, objects, writings, rituals and practices, considered unholy, in the name of God? Is it not time to seek and find, and come to recognize enlightened truth wherever it may be found?

*"There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. All of them, except a few which are the outcome of human perversity, were ordained of God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose.*

*Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you. This, verily, is the most exalted Word which the Mother Book hath sent down and revealed unto you. To this beareth witness the Tongue of Grandeur from His habitation of glory." (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 217)*

*"the Bible record shows that as Christ in His time overshadowed the peoples, so did Abraham and Noah likewise in their time. Each was supreme in his own Day over the people committed to him, and was remembered and venerated long ages after his Day had passed away. Of Moses, God said to Aaron: 'He shall be to thee as God.'*  
(George Townshend, *The Heart of the Gospel*, p. 50)

*"The faith of God and religion of God hath been revealed and manifested from the heaven of the Will of the King of Preexistence only for the union and concord of the dwellers upon earth: make it not a cause of discord and dissension."* (Abdu'l-Baha, *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 84)

### **Part Three: Compassion and Understanding, or Sect, Judgment and Condemnation?**

<sup>1</sup> "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. <sup>2</sup> For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

<sup>3</sup> "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. <sup>6</sup> "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."  
(Matthew 7:1-6 NIV)

I mentioned needing to attend and take part in my close friend's burial service. Immediately two of my Christian "friends" asked, "Did Pat accept Jesus as her Lord and Savior before she died? Did she accept Jesus' ransom for her sins through the Cross of Salvation?" I immediately attempted to avoid the judgment call I knew was coming by simply stating, "we simply shared different interpretations and embrace a different philosophy than what is given by Christian Fundamentalism. I do not want to get involved in further discussion on this issue".

At this point a third member joined in saying, "If Pat failed to accept Jesus' gift of salvation, she is going to Hell!" The statement was blatant and, to me, the recipient, cold hearted. Agreement was heard from others as they voiced, "you really need Jesus; it is only through Jesus...alleluia amen...praise Jesus"!

Pat was a dear close friend and confidant. She was loved and respected by many in the community. Her service as a volunteer at the local hospital for many years was exemplary; she certainly did not deserve this...nor did I! I felt the whole verbal assault was very rude and diametrically opposed to what Christ taught!

If one sincerely looks at Bible verses, especially the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) seen by many as an example of Jesus' greatest sermon representing the core fundamental Message of his ministry, it becomes inescapable; not only the tone and emphasis, but the Message itself is very different to what is heard from pulpits and street corners. Jesus

gives guidance for nurturing spiritual growth and development. The emphasis is on love, meekness, forgiveness and learning, not threat of eternal damnation. Little is mentioned of "only in the name of Jesus can you be saved," or a God directed need for rituals of Baptism or Holy Communion. In fact, I would suggest, quite the opposite is the case. (see Matthew 6 and 7) as quoted throughout this "Faith Search".

### **Churches against churches:**

I have a friend who was, on a recent Sunday, not allowed to sing for the service at a church she was visiting. The pastor of a certain Baptist Church told her, "I would be performing 'spiritual idolatry' if I let you sing as you wished. I would not be doing the right thing if I let you add to the service with a song. You are not of our church family."

The next week my friend attempted to further understand what the preacher was telling her. From what I could gather from her phone call, she reported the pastor said, "Our church is considered by us to be the 'Bride of Christ'. We feel members of other churches will still go to Heaven but, at the same time, members of outside churches cannot actively contribute to our own particular church service". My friend explained she shared the same beliefs and personal relationship with the 'Lord Jesus Christ' as evoked in this church as well, but to no avail.

Of course, this brings up the question, 'If members of other churches are "heaven bound", too, does it make any difference what church you attend? Isn't being "heaven bound" in itself, through a relationship with Christ, the primary concern? Why all this fuss and bother about a specific church claiming to be the "Bride of Christ"?'

Another instance of sectarianism at work: Some churches; such as Catholic, Anglican, Episcopalian, a few Baptist sects etc: claim an exclusive station of direct unbroken Apostolic Succession for their Ministers through 'laying on of hands' clear back to the time of Peter and Jesus. These churches often will say, "As you are not connected to Christ through our holy ordained Apostolic Connection back to Peter, you cannot be allowed to take Communion. However, we do have the ultimate valid Communion experience. Join our fellowship as a member, and you can partake of the real thing!"

*"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." 12:25 Matthew (King James Bible)*

I vividly recall a time when a dear friend was cautioned, "Not to continue our friendship as we would not be capable of fellowshiping with each other because we were 'unevenly yoked' due to our different beliefs regarding church held teachings". My friend strongly disagreed. She believed in following the example given by Jesus, actively seeking out and ministering to all, including the social outcast, unfortunate and needy. Years later, we are still best of friends and enjoy fellowship in each other's company.

Can one really believe such closed sectarian based behavior is truly done in the spirit of God? So much is committed according to this doctrine or that. Hairsplitting dogmas become fertile ground for nurturing ever evolving established ritual and division.

Do these "sect nurturing" practices reflect the inherent truth in Jesus' teachings? Are many preachers trying to protect their flock, their church and, at the same time, promote their business?

Could much of the above mentioned sectarian practices be but a ploy to gain and keep membership? Are these followed hallowed church sect instituted doctrines but clever effective psychological tricks and traps? Might many churches now days be setting themselves out as a lure, bated with some attractive sales pitch proven message, offering a crowd pleasing unique promise of salvation?

Here are a few teachings from Matthew 6 that might be worth studying.

**Fasting: Keep acts of worship private, not an excuse for public display.**

<sup>16</sup> *"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."* (Matthew 6: 16-18)

How does the above relate to the Sadducees and the Pharisees? How much is done in the name of showmanship; to look good in the public eye?

<sup>22</sup> *"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, <sup>[l]</sup> your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> But if your eyes are unhealthy, <sup>[m]</sup> your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! <sup>24</sup> "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."* ( Matthew 6: 19-24)

Of course, Jesus is referring, not to the physical eye allowing only physical sight, but, rather, the inner eye of the soul, the eye that is open to recognize the truth of Divine Light.

**Baha'i Writings** say, *" Strive diligently to acquire virtues befitting your degree and station. Be as lights of the world which cannot be hid and which have no setting in horizons of darkness. Ascend to the zenith of an existence which is never beclouded by the fears and forebodings of non-existence. When man is not endowed with inner perception he is not informed of these important mysteries. The retina of outer vision though sensitive and delicate may nevertheless be a hindrance to the inner eye which alone can perceive.*

*The bestowals of God which are manifest in all phenomenal life are sometimes hidden by intervening veils of mental and mortal vision which render man spiritually blind and incapable but when those scales are removed and the veils rent asunder, then the great signs of God will become visible and he will witness the eternal light filling the world.*

*The bestowals of God are all and always manifest. The promises of heaven are ever present. The favors of God are all-surrounding.*

*But should the conscious eye of the soul of man remain veiled and darkened he will be led to deny these universal signs and remain deprived of these manifestations of divine bounty. Therefore we must endeavor with heart and soul in order that the veil covering the eye of inner vision may be removed, that we may behold the manifestations of the signs of God, discern His mysterious graces, and realize that material blessings as compared with spiritual bounties are as nothing. The spiritual blessings of God are greatest." (Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 266)*

**"O MAN OF TWO VISIONS!**

*Close one eye and open the other. Close one to the world and all that is therein, and open the other to the hallowed beauty of the Beloved." (Baha'u'llah, The Persian Hidden Words)*

Suffice it to say the well known phrase, "Money is the root of all evil". *"You cannot serve both God and money" (Matthew 6: 24)*

### **Do Not Worry**

<sup>25</sup> *"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?"*

<sup>26</sup> *Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life<sup>[n]</sup>?" <sup>28</sup> "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.*

<sup>29</sup> *Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Matthew 6:25-34)*

Reliance on God is a fundamental teaching. Scripture everywhere extols this principle.

### **The Narrow and Wide Gates**

<sup>13</sup> *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. <sup>14</sup> But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."*

Stumbling blocks abound causing us to trip, fall and be lead astray in our search for Truth, meaning, happiness and fulfillment in our lives. How much can be attributed to the social order, dictates and norms of Church and State, rhetoric and salesmanship?

### **The Wise and Foolish Builders**

<sup>24</sup> *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. <sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”* (Matthew 6:24-27)

Foundations and practices of faith must be hewn of solid search and reason. Habit, borne of tradition given by some passed down inherited formula, is not of rock but of sand!

### **Part Four Is Church Building, Business Building?**

#### **Treasures in Heaven:**

<sup>19</sup> *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

How much does "product", "price", "place" and "promotion" dictate activities of church administration? Is this necessary? Does the Bible condone such practices?

Often churches promise salvation by assuring the people, "Praise the Lord, you can be sure of going to Heaven when you join our church. We have the enlightened way. Of course, we will do the best to make it an entertaining fun time for all. We will give you what you want and answer to your social/emotional needs. Please come and be a part of this congregation." . You can rely on this church for direct 'representation in God's Kingdom!' We are the "true" church!

The result of this propaganda, from their administrative "business" point of view then would be, 'You support us with tithes and offerings and we will lead you down the only true path of certainty and faith'.

#### **Clergy, moneychangers and Pharisees.**

*"And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves."* Mark 11:15-17 (King James Bible)

*"And some of them there are, illiterate folk, that know not the Book, but only idle tales; for they do but fancy. But woe to those who write out the Book with their hands and say*

*'this is from' God; to buy therewith a little price! and woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they gain! And then they say, 'Hell fire shall not touch us save for a number of days.' Say, 'Have ye taken a covenant with God?' but God breaks not His covenant. Or do ye say of God that which ye do not know? Yea! whoso gains an evil gain, and is encompassed by his sins, those are the fellows of the Fire, and they shall dwell therein for aye! But such as act aright, those are the fellows of Paradise, and they shall dwell therein for aye!'"*(The Qur'an (E.H. Palmer tr), Sura 2 - The Heifer)

**Competitive Evangelism? Inspiring Reliance on Religion?** I do not think anyone can argue the point that evangelism often resorts to basic manipulative psychologically sound business principles to bring in converts.

**The first job is to "create a need for your product".** This, for churches, is done by convincing people "all are inescapably born into sin". Thus, as a sinner, you are in "need of salvation". It is preached, "through Adam, all have sinned. You carry the guilt of Adam's sin upon our souls. Heed this warning or face eternal damnation!"

**The product offered to cleanse you of sin is Jesus,** "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him, shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16 NIV). Of course, attending, supporting and tithing to the church is a very convenient God ordained way to find, reconfirm, strengthen faith and find fellowship. The church also offers a bulwark of protection from being led astray by any counterfeit thought of satanic origin that may lure you away from the church fold, and hence, salvation. Again, if people can be led to believe a certain church represents the most direct avenue to Heaven and the Holy Spirit, so much the better.

**Reward or consequence, along with an urgency "deadline" factor, are all motivators:** Heaven or Hell (An ancient Zoroastrian based dualism.. not originally Christian), is used as a basic sales or behavior modification technique. Applied as eternal reward or punishment, it becomes a powerful persuasive tool when used by skilled orators. As for the marketing need for urgency, it is often heard from street corners and pulpits, "Life is fleeting. Death could come at any time. You do not know the hour. Armageddon is imminent. The signs are here. The Rapture is at hand! Repent now before it is too late!"

As I listen to or catch a phrase of a sermon, it seems, no matter what their intent may be, I walk away with the impression the congregation truly believes, "a jealous, covetous god must be placated through offerings, worship and sacrifice. Jesus' blood was that needed sacrifice. In order to be safe and find salvation, you must except and drink his blood shed for you on the Cross of Calvary". Worship is what the church provides. Church attendance keeps God from feeling jealous." So goes on the very abasing anthropomorphic humanizing god imaging of God!

Does all of this create guilt and reliance on religion? How does this impact on a balanced reasonable thinking process? For that matter, how much is individual "church-based" belief itself based on their own scheme of suggestive advertising? Is this conducive to a

socially psychologically healthy frame of mind? How much does the media "flirt" with our daily lives by, in turn, influencing our needs, desires, fears, hopes and dreams?

It seems commercial competitiveness, not the Word of God in itself, is what really drives many modern churches. Bigger buildings with gymnasiums and swimming pools, bedecked with fancy furnishings, rock bands and other forms of entertainment, are all indicators pointing to the reality of what is going on.

Does the above truly cater to a "personal relationship" with God? Would Jesus have supported constructions of large buildings and fancy accoutrements?

Yes, God's Word is, once again, for sale. salvation. A gift freely given by God is bought and sold as a commodity in a marketplace! It seems to me, I recall a Bible scripture where Jesus rates such practices as hypocritical!

What about Solomon's Temple; you know, the one that was rebuilt a third time by Herod the Great. What did Jesus say about the Temple? Indeed, it was destroyed in 70 AD, just as Christ prophesied!

*"Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. 'Do you see all these things?' he asked. 'I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down'" (Matt.24:1-8 NIV). See also Lk.21:5-6.*

Jesus was not kind to the Jewish authorities. Nor did he think highly of the gleaming Temple made by Herod. <sup>16</sup>*Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!*

<sup>17</sup>*Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold*

<sup>18</sup>*And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.*

<sup>19</sup>*Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?*

<sup>20</sup>*Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.*

<sup>21</sup>*And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.*

<sup>22</sup>*And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.*

<sup>23</sup>*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." ( Matthew 23:16-23 KJB)*

What role do you truly think many modern day preachers and church leaders might find themselves in between Jesus and the Pharisees? Does the Temple, in the Matthew quote above, represent the "Throne of God"? What about modern churches and clergy?

## **Part Five: Concerns of Doctrine:**

### **Baptism: of water, or of the Holy Ghost?**

A few years ago, I took my son to visit a Methodist Church adult Sunday School. I wanted him to learn about and experience matters relating to church and Christian faith. As it turned out, the "need to be baptized" was part of the discussion. The group made it clear, "unless you were properly baptized, you would never be "acceptable" unto God."

As I understood it, the baptism event was held to have two distinct meanings. The first was a sacrament of the church through which, by water, someone was ritually consecrated to God and the congregation. The second, more importantly, was the honest personal act of cleansing as a consecration of one's life to God.

Yet, in what appeared to be a somewhat contradictory practice, it seemed the church ritual by water was deemed of utmost importance. It was almost as if the ritual performance somehow made you intrinsically different. I asked, "What do you think of my son sitting over there and reading in class?" they answered, "He is a fine young man." I asked, "Do you see any fundamental difference between my son and other youth attending church?" They said, "No, he is a fine boy." At this point I mentioned, "Well, he has never been Baptized and has no wish to be. Now, can you truly believe this, non-baptized boy, is any different in God's eyes than the other children here?"

*"I (John the Baptist) indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh...he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." 3:17 Luke (King James Bible)*

Luke 3:17 does not mention a need to be literally baptized by water. Instead, it is plainly evident, one needs to be "baptized with the Holy Ghost". This can happen totally independent of any baptism ritual as performed in any church.

As an aside: Of course, the horrors of ritual baptism of centuries ago; turning one dogmatically forever into a Christian, opening the door to Inquisition, torture and death through prosecution of condemned heretical practices; is well known to modern historians. Also, my son, while attending a public school, was obliged to be earnestly invited to various churches. He was considered "unchurched" and therefore "unsaved".

The Apocalypse itself may be a self-fulfilling prophecy of our own making. It seems inevitable that soon the resources of the earth will be used up by the insatiable growing hordes of mankind. What then? Do we hide our head in the sand thinking, "do not worry, we will leave this wasteland and be taken up in the Clouds of Rapture"? Is this a responsible response to the legacy of greed we are leaving to the generations that follow?

### **Trinity: A Three in One?**

Mysteries of a "Universal Trinity" are extolled in many different ways.

The Trinity is hard to grasp! Frankly, it is beyond human capacity to understand. This fact has led to endless debate on the subject. No one can agree for no one knows. Thus, this enduring enigma has been a source of confused abuse and a deep source of contention for literally thousands of years.

Scriptures are explored addressing two fundamental issues: First: Is God, in essence, indivisible, or is there some sort of plurality?

Second: How is the idea of a Trinity expressed? Is the Trinity indicative of some plural reality within God or is it better understood as a relationship or covenant between God and mankind?

Genesis: 1: 26-27 reads, " *Then God said, " Let us make man in our own image, in our likeness. - So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him".* (Here God is referred to as "Us" "Our" and "He".)

"Hindus not only believe in the divinity of Lord Krishna but in being "born again". The Trinity is central to their doctrine. "The Brahmin caste of the Hindus are said to be "twice-born" and have a ritual in which they are "born in the spirit." Could this be the ultimate source of the Christian "born again" concept expressed in (John 3:3)?

**Hinduism has a Trinity (or Trimurti):** Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, who have the appellations the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer and Regenerator.

3

In the Bhagavad-Gita Gait, there is a story of the second person of the Hindu Trinity, (Vishnu) who took human form as Krishna. Some have considered him a model for the Christ, and it's hard to argue against that when he says things like, "*I am the beginning, the middle, and the end*" (BG 10:20 vs. Rev 1:8). (A Tribute To Hinduism source :<http://www.infidels.org/library/magazines/tsr/1994/3/3hare94.html> - By Stephen Van Eck)

Looking up **Rev; 1:8** it says, " *I am the Alpha and the Omega" says the Lord God, " Who is, and Who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.* "

In old Testament times, long before Jesus was on earth, **Isaiah in 48: 12-13** is recorded as saying, " *Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them they all stand up together.* "

In the **Bhagavad-gita in 10:19-20** it says, " *The Blessed Lord said: Yes, I will tell you of My splendorous manifestations, but only of those which are prominent, O Arjuna, for My opulence is limitless. I am the Self, O Gudakesa, seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings.* "

**Buddhism:** Mahayanists developed a theology of Buddha called the doctrine of "**The Three Bodies,**" or **Trikaya.** The Buddha was not a human being, as he was in Theravada Buddhism, but the manifestation of a universal, spiritual Being. This Being

had three bodies. When it occupied the earth in the form of Siddhartha Gautama, it took on the Body of Magical Transformation (nirmanakaya). This Body of Magical Transformation was an emanation of the Body of Bliss (sambhogakaya), which occupies the heavens in the form of a ruling and governing God of the universe.

“Trinity” is seen in traditional instrumental **Japanese Shinto Gagaku music**.

Sounds of antiquity, Elegance enduring

**1. Sho** ... The light that penetrates from the Heavens

**2. Ryuteki** ... The dragon that ascends dancing in the Sky

**3. Hichiriki** ... The voices echoing on the Earth

When all sound together a Cosmos can be heard

Imagined by those now distant Elegant in the flickering candle of time

Trinity and spiritual meaning is central to Native **American Pow-wow Drum music**.

The song is in three parts.

**1. Lead:** The high pitched lead (A) melody is sung by a solo voice and then is joined in and repeated by the group. This is a “calling” to/or by the Great Spirit or Word of Enlightenment. The joining in of the group portrays opening the heart in acceptance to the Message from on High.

**2. Chorus:** The Chorus represents knowledge given and partaken. The relationship between God and Man, good and evil, temporal and eternal, is reflected as the (B) melodic pitch descends from high to low. The chorus is sung twice.

**3. A Coda or Tail:** is symbolic of meditation on the above truths and personal life meaning. A lower pitched (C) melody symbolizes earthly existence.

This representation and thinking of Trinity by Native Americans suggests much the same concepts as found in the **Baha’i ring stone symbol**.

Three horizontal lines (upper, middle and lower) represent

**1. The world of God**

**2. The world of and station of Revelation.**

**3. Humanity and the world of creation.**

A vertical line connects all three. This shows the Primal Will or Holy Spirit proceeding from God through the Manifestations to humanity.

**Baha'i:** *"Let us, free from past tradition, investigate the reality of this matter. What is the meaning of the father and the son? This fatherhood and sonship are allegorical and symbolical. The Messianic reality is like unto a mirror through which the sun of divinity has become resplendent. If this mirror expresses "The light is in me" it is sincere in its claim; therefore Jesus was truthful when he said, "The Father is in me The sun in the sky and the sun in the mirror are one, are they not? - and yet we see there are apparently two suns." (Abdu'l-Baha, Divine Philosophy, p. 152)*

**Christian:** John introduces his Gospel with words concerning the WORD of God.

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing*

*was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.” (John 1: 1-5)*

### **Original sin and sinning:**

*"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:12 NIV)*

It seems, Jesus did not say, or imply, we are all sinners. Rather, He came with a message of acceptance, of "peace on earth good will to men". Jesus brought comfort and grace. His message was aimed towards the poor, needy, sick and despised. Jesus himself did not utter scare tactic "fire and brimstone" condemnation to those "not of his flock" (although members of his own flock may have at times). Why then this negative oriented church emphasis on original sin? Why keep beating the drum "you need to be saved?"

Are church authorities using favorite habitual (self endorsed traditionalized ritualized) ancient Sumerian/ Hebrew ideologies with which to address and persuade, instead of focusing on what Jesus taught himself? Would a just merciful Father-God impose some inherited unforgivable sin upon generations of people because of something done by a long dead ancestor, making everyone, somehow, fundamentally unacceptable to their own Heavenly Father? That sounds a bit like a child abuse scenario to me!

### **The "Blood of Life".**

Preachers proclaim, " Unless you accept the sacrifice of God's "only begotten" son by being washed clean by his blood... even by drinking it"??? What age and mentality are we living in? This pulpit pounded "sinners needing salvation" which can be had "only through the blood of Jesus" doctrine sure sounds like a tactic to scare people into submission. Again, an urgent need is put upon potential customers by those hoping to generate a sale. People are cleverly manipulated into embracing the need to participate in church endorsed actions and rituals. "There is no alternative, accept our product or face the unpleasant eternal consequences!"

Assuredly, many of the ancient Bible writers, as selected and Canonized by a committee of bishops over three hundred years after Jesus, mentioned the body and blood of Jesus' as a ransom sacrifice for payment of sin. Jesus is quoted by others as saying, " Take, eat of my body, drink of my blood" etc. Yet, Jesus often seems to speak symbolically of " partaking of the bread of life," and,"being born again". Being "washed in the blood" may well be the spiritual equivalent of being baptized or washed clean by the Holy Spirit.

Scholars of ancient history will point out that blood was an element representing the mystery of life to the ancient Hebrews. They observed that blood leaving the body would often cause weakness and/or death. Logic then would dictate that, somehow, the "life force" must reside in the blood itself. When Jesus speaks of "blood" may he not be speaking of this "blood of life"?

But, alas, the churches, searching for souls to save, seem to make a point of presenting literal dogma in the place of reason; of feeding rhetoric, guilt and fear while offering emotional delusional fantasy and "well-being"; rather than pursuing an abiding spiritual spirit of understanding and ever evolving discernment. Again I ask: Do the "advertising schemes" practiced by church "salespeople" reflect the true uplifting message invoked by Jesus?

More food for thought: it is historical fact that " Saint" Constantine killed both his son and wife. Might this be a factor in Christian history and belief, as propagated from ancient times, as well? Remember, Constantine was the Byzantine Emperor who called together the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. The books of the Bible were Canonized and the Nicene Creed was ordained, thus establishing much of the church as known today. Other sects and Christian based philosophies fell by the wayside due to persecution.

Of interest: A main objection of Martin Luther, during the Reformation, was the Catholic Priests taking it upon themselves to grant salvation for an offering. The priests even sold Indulgences for sins not yet committed!

### **A Bodily Resurrection: A Foundation of Faith:**

Many Christians believe that Jesus' body literally regained life after death. That the Resurrected Jesus appeared to the disciples and others in physical form after His execution by crucifixion. Indeed, upon talking with Christians it seems a physical Resurrection provides a crucial basis for their faith- without a literal "brought back to life" body risen from a tomb there is no faith at all!

This is indeed at the very core of Church doctrine, but perhaps, just maybe, present day church followers are falling into essentially the same trap the Jewish Pharisees did so long ago when they failed to recognize their "long waited prayed for Messiah" simply because he did not fulfill the expectation of the popular excepted orthodoxy of the time. Once again, literal interpretation is preached to an accepting congregation. A remarkable collection of books canonized by the church is seen as "The Book". Every letter of every letter is revered as the inerrant Word of God.

**Baha'i:** Question. -- What is the meaning of Christ's resurrection after three days?  
 Answer. – *"The resurrections of the Divine Manifestations are not of the body. All Their states, Their conditions, Their acts, the things They have established, Their teachings, Their expressions, Their parables and Their instructions have a spiritual and divine signification, and have no connection with material things.*

*For example, there is the subject of Christ's coming from heaven: it is clearly stated in many places in the Gospel that the Son of man came from heaven, He is in heaven, and He will go to heaven. So in chapter 6, verse 38, of the Gospel of John it is written: "For I came down from heaven"; and also in verse 42 we find: "And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?" Also in John, chapter 3, verse 13: "And no man*

*hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."*

*Observe that it is said, "The Son of man is in heaven," while at that time Christ was on earth. Notice also that it is said that Christ came from heaven, though He came from the womb of Mary, and His body was born of Mary. It is clear, then, that when it is said that the Son of man is come from heaven, this has not an outward but an inward signification; it is a spiritual, not a material, fact.*

*The meaning is that though, apparently, Christ was born from the womb of Mary, in reality He came from heaven, from the center of the Sun of Reality, from the Divine World, and the Spiritual Kingdom. And as it has become evident that Christ came from the spiritual heaven of the Divine Kingdom, therefore, His disappearance under the earth for three days has an inner signification and is not an outward fact. In the same way, His resurrection from the interior of the earth is also symbolical; it is a spiritual and divine fact, and not material; and likewise His ascension to heaven is a spiritual and not material ascension." (Abdu'l-Baha, Some Answered Questions, p. 103-104)*

There are, indeed other resurrection stories as well. What if you were to read these others much as the Bible might be read, with the same degree of acceptance and desire to understand?

**Adonis 500BC:** "Greek myth described Adonis as a beautiful youth with whom both the goddesses Aphrodite and Persephone fell in love. Persephone was the daughter of Zeus and a goddess of fertility in competition with Aphrodite. She presided over Hades, the place where the spirits of the dead resided. According to the myth of Adonis, Persephone, wanting Adonis, held him captive in Hades, and Aphrodite, also wanting Adonis, freed him from Hades and Persephone's captivity.

Then, while hunting, Adonis was killed by a wild boar, which sent him back to Hades and Persephone. Aphrodite bitterly mourned his death and pleaded with Zeus to restore Adonis to her. Zeus decided to be impartial between the desires of Persephone and Aphrodite, and he decreed that Adonis would spend his winter months with Persephone -- an annual death. And he spent his summer months with Aphrodite -- an annual resurrection. These deaths and resurrections coincided with the seasonal cycles and the growth of crops. Adonis had become a fertility god. Every year, Greeks celebrated Adonis' death and resurrection, often with wailing and the beating of one's own breast with one's fists." See [Adonis Resurrection](#)

**Osiris: Founder of ancient Egypt: 5,000 BCE:** "The oldest religious texts refer to Osiris as the great god of the dead, and throughout these texts it is assumed that the reader will understand that he once possessed human form and lived on earth. As the first son of Geb, the original king of Egypt, Osiris inherited the throne when Geb abdicated. At this time the Egyptians were barbarous cannibals and uncivilized. Osiris saw this and was greatly disturbed.

Therefore, he went out among the people and taught them what to eat, the art of agriculture, how to worship the gods, and gave them laws. Thoth helped him in many

ways by inventing the arts and sciences and giving names to things. Osiris was Egypt's greatest king who ruled through kindness and persuasion. Having civilized Egypt, Osiris traveled to other lands, leaving Isis as his regent, to teach other peoples what he taught the Egyptians.

During Osiris' absence, Isis was troubled with Seth's plotting to acquire both her and the throne of Egypt. Shortly after Osiris' return to Egypt, in the twenty-eighth year of his reign, on the seventeenth day of the month of Hathor (late September or November), Seth and 72 conspirators murdered him. They then threw the coffin in which he was murdered into the Nile, with his divine body still inside.

Isis, with the help of her sister Nephthys, and Anubis and Thoth, magically located Osiris' body. Upon learning where his brother's body was found, Seth went to it and tore it into fourteen pieces and scattered them throughout Egypt. Isis once again found every part of his body, save his phallus (it had been eaten by the now-cursed Nile fish). She magically re-assembled Osiris and resurrected him long enough to be impregnated by him so that she could give birth to the new king Horus." see the [Osiris complete story](#)

Here is a list to several "resurrected" deities. Male examples include the ancient Near Eastern and Greek deities [Baal](#)<sup>[5]</sup>, [Melqart](#)<sup>[6]</sup>, [Adonis](#)<sup>[7]</sup>, [Eshmun](#)<sup>[8]</sup>, [Tammuz](#),<sup>[9]</sup> [Asclepius](#), [Orpheus](#), as well as [Krishna](#), [Ra](#), [Osiris](#)<sup>[10]</sup>, [Jesus](#), [Zalmoxis](#), [Dionysus](#),<sup>[11]</sup> and [Odin](#). Female examples are [Inanna](#), also known as [Ishtar](#), whose cult dates to 4000 BCE, and [Persephone](#), the central figure of the [Eleusinian Mysteries](#), whose cult may date to 1700 BCE as the unnamed goddess worshiped in Crete.<sup>[12]</sup> (From Wikipedia)

### **Spring, rebirth and Salvation:**

Ancient tales of resurrection were often symbolic of the rebirth of spring, where dead plants come back to life once again, and furnished food, a Bread of Life for the living. Might Jesus' Resurrection also symbolize the rebirth of the Spring season?

Jesus, throughout the Gospels, often used his body as a metaphor for spiritual food taken in through his teachings, such as: His, "body and blood shed for you," equivalent to saying, 'bring my offering of the Word into your life. Make my words as part of your being'. Look at John below. Jesus makes it clear he comes from heaven and brings the eternal bread of life which also comes from heaven, especially in verses 6: 50, 51, 54, 56, 58 and especially, 6:63, where the message is reiterated.

(John:)"*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life.*

*6:49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.*

*6:50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.*

*6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

*The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*

*6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

*For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*

*6:56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

*As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*

*6:58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.*

*Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

*6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

*But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." ( John 6: 47-65 KJB)*

Yet, the churches so often dilute the commanding truth within this rich spiritual metaphor into a Rite of Communion. In addition, many will not allow people outside their church family to even partake of the ritual itself. Is the church claiming to be the necessary connection for receiving God's Word? I have overheard clergy talking about such topics as "transubstantiation"; "Do the bread and wine served in Holy Communion actually become the body and blood of Jesus"? and, "Is the ritual of Communion itself necessary for salvation"?

Perhaps we need to simply , without Doctrine or ritualized fanfare, open the door and let the Christ's Guidance into our heart; to ingest (digest) the body of his teachings into our lives. Jesus and his Message came from heaven. It seems, churches try to contrive physical derivations to use for their own ends.

*"Rely upon God, thy God and the Lord of thy fathers. For the people are wandering in the paths of delusion, bereft of discernment to see God with their own eyes, or hear His Melody with their own ears. Thus have We found them, as thou also dost witness. Thus have their superstitions become veils between them and their own hearts and kept them from the path of God, the Exalted, the Great." (Compilations, Baha'i Prayers, p. 210)*

## Words of Letters: Traditional "Proof" of Incarnate Godhead?

So much traditional belief in Jesus being God Incarnate seems to rest more on letters and writings from the apostles rather than on what Jesus said about himself. These letters of Paul to the Colossians and Philippians express Paul's own beliefs. Yet, the church erects a whole Trinitarian theology based on self authorized declaration, "These letters of the Apostles, being part of the Holy Bible, represent inerrant truth and thus must be followed as such." I ask: Does this assume the writings of Paul and all the apostles have the same authority as the sayings made by Jesus himself? I wonder what Paul himself would think if he knew his letters would be "theologized and incorporated as a foundation for deifying Jesus into a Triune Godhead? Actually, this idea reminds me of the Hindu Trimurti or Buddhist Trikaya! (see P16 above)

***The Supremacy of the Son of God:**<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!*

*<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:5-11 NIV)*

*<sup>15</sup> "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.<sup>16</sup> For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.<sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.<sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.<sup>19</sup> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,<sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." (Colossians 1:15-20 NIV)*

*9: "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, 10: and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. 11: In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, 12: having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.*

*13: When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14: having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15: And having disarmed the powers and authorities,*

*he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." (Colossians 2:9-15 NIV)*

### **What has happened to the "Spirit of Truth" and basic humanity?**

Social behavior at large, including many religious and nonreligious people, reveals a deeply fundamental all-pervasive church-related perceptual influence over how citizens relate to each other in daily secular outlooks and relationships. An example I witnessed illustrates a public reaction as voiced by those of the "silent majority" experienced at a local Senior's Center.

For over nine months now, a good friend of mine has been incarcerated in the County Jail waiting for a Trial that never comes. He has been charged with two Counts of child molestation but there is no evidence to support this. Yet, he has been arrested. Now he has no job or place to call home. He sits in Solitary, months on end, as a safety security measure. He has been assaulted by previous cellmates. I saw him wearing a caste for weeks from a self defense inflicted injury.

Often, when I tell my friends at the Senior's Center 'I need to go visit the jail', I hear remarks such as, "There he goes again visiting that child molester". or, "Now don't do anything for him. Don't give him any money. Don't get involved and stay out of trouble, we don't want to see you in there with him!"

The media has painted such a bad picture of him. People truly think he is some sort of habitual serial child molester who must be kept off the streets, lest he forcibly molests one of their own children; all this with no real evidence against him, only a seemingly "coached" testimony of an unstable unreliable four-year-old girl.

With this in mind, I replied to the senior's comments, "I believe in one being presumed innocent until being found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt through a just equitable Hearing in a Court of Law. In spite of everything, arrest does not equal guilt!

Such judgment and condemnation! Is this culture wide either/ or, black or white, saved or sinner thinking a long term result of a whole intergenerational society being fashioned by a church fostered: " "You are a Sinner, Payment is needed for sin, Satan must be subdued" paradigm? Why is my friend being held and treated punitively, as if he were guilty? He could be free if he had bail money. Does lack of money constitute a crime? It seems, in this case, he is being obliged to suffer treatment at the jail because of his inability to post Bond. The result, the poor, as a whole, get treated differently than those able to pay. Additionally, private attorneys are free to do a more thorough job representing their clients than an over worked Public Defender can hope to do.

How does justice for the poor compare with justice for those of means?

How would Jesus have responded at the Senior Center? Did not Jesus make a special effort to contact and administer to the unfortunate?

***The Parable of the Good Samaritan*** (Luke 10:25-37 NIV)

<sup>25</sup> "On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" <sup>27</sup> He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'<sup>[a]</sup>; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'<sup>[b]</sup>" <sup>28</sup> "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

<sup>29</sup> But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" <sup>30</sup> In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

<sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

<sup>36</sup> 'Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' <sup>37</sup> The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Again, I ask: What has happened to the "Spirit of Truth" and basic humanity; of love, forgiveness and charity? What motivates the U.S. Justice System, profit or justice?

Again: Suffice it to say the well known phrase, "Money is the root of all evil". "*You cannot serve both God and money*" (Matthew 6: 24)

*"Depart from me, ye cursed...: For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not...Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."* 25:41-45 Matthew (King James Bible)

**The Cross on the Church Steeple:**

The cross symbol, in its various forms, has been seen in many applications ranging from the Ankh of ancient Egyptian ceremonies, representing the key of life as carried by their gods, to the Nazi Party Swastika. Importance and prevalence of the cross used as a symbol in very early Christian history is not clear. most authorities claim the cross was seldom used until the time of Emperor Constantine'. Others point to passages such as seen in Colossians 2:15 (P 25) as evidence the cross was, from the beginning, a central

point of faith. Regardless as to its actual usage in antiquity, the cross symbol has, for well nigh a millenia, been a long standing icon placed at the top of church steeples everywhere.

### **In contemporary Christianity**

According to Wikipedia: "In Christianity the cross reminds Christians of God's act of love in Christ's sacrifice at Calvary—"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." The cross also reminds Christians of Jesus' victory over sin and death, since it is believed that through His death and resurrection He conquered death itself. They venerate it not as a material object seen in isolation but as the symbol of the sacrifice by which Christ saved them, as the instrument of Christ's triumph, according to Colossians 2:15 ("Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross"), and "as the instrument of our God's saving Love".

But it does seem, the usage of the cross parallels and accompanies belief emphasis on "required death as ransom and payment of sin" and "bodily Resurrection". What ever happened to the old symbols of the fish and the good shepherd? These are rarely seen. Instead, we see the cross, an instrument and reminder of man's inhumanity to man, of godless deeds done in the name of God, of atrocities committed in the name of faith!

**Paradox of the Passion:** Several times, I have been offered by church clergy to take me to see a movie graphically showing the horror of crucifixion in "The Passion". It seems, the Pastors were trying to convince me of the love of Jesus, saying, " Jesus, being perfect himself, his acceptable sacrifice for payment of sins through death on the cross proved his love for us". In other words, watching mistreatment, torture, agony and a slow awful death; one of the most hideous forms of execution devised; is supposed to bring me to the love of Christ? I have repeatedly declined their "kind" offer. Assuredly, the movie would be an emotional memorable experience. But I would see it, not as "Jesus taking on the sins of the world" but rather as, what the ancient Romans did as a form of Capitol Punishment. Thousands of non Roman citizens were crucified. Jesus' death seems to be a tragedy of the times, not a necessary sacrifice ordained by God. Again, Church authorities often tend to portray the love of Jesus through his death, not so much by what he taught and how he lived. Is not this whole idea containing a rather gruesome paradox?

Each time I see a cross on a church, I try not to look at it as symbolizing a wayward truth as wrought by ancient Bishops under the rule of Constantine. Death, resurrection, salvation and sin are so emphasized; even by a few of the Bible writers themselves. Yet, when reading the fragmentary surviving remnants reporting the message as given by Jesus himself (not biased on a personal writer's interpretation) There is little mention of what is so strongly emphasized in present day church doctrine or a necessity for observing standard church Sacraments.

**Yes, I am Skeptical. I fear churches follow the doctrine of the cross, not the Love and forgiving Light borne of the Christ.**

A stock response quoted by Christians when confronting a skeptic is, " What if you're wrong"? I would ask them back, " what if you yourself are wrong"? Basing a faith in God

on some "lottery" of choosing the "one correct way" from a multitude of sects and faiths, to me, is belittling to God. To think the Almighty would set up salvation as a prize winning ticket through some game of chance is, in itself, unthinkable.

To belong to a church preaching, "We surely know we are bound for Heaven when we die," is also unthinkable. To me, this represents the height of collective arrogance! It seems to me, in the Beatitudes, humility is an important virtue for attaining salvation, as is not judging your neighbor. I wonder how the act of claiming salvation for one self; loudly forcefully rudely, spouting it out to the masses as "God's only Way"; is seen in the eyes of God?

It seems, to be convinced you "have the only truth" can lead to your downfall, especially when confronting others who also "know of a certainty" their truth from their own faith as well. How does this apply when confronting people of other faiths differing from yours? How does this apply to United States history, when the Civil War was vehemently fought on both sides between Christians themselves believing, "our side is God's side"?

*"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." (John 14:9-14 KJB)*

Jesus is not claiming authorship for what he teaches. All Jesus did and said was done in submission too and to glorify the Father in Heaven. Jesus said, "*that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: ? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in [sent] me, he doeth the works. ... I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*" ) Note: John 6:44 Jesus says, "*Father who sent me.*"

I ask: Why do the churches insistently glorify the name, even worship the name of Jesus? The Christ Spirit Son of God glorifies God, the Father. Jesus is not the Almighty, he is simply a clear obedient channel through which the Will of God is made known. It seems fundamentalist believers and their churches are following the ancient, much older, spirit **in Hinduism**, glorifying the Father through the Son, worshipped as deity and godhead! Jesus' First Commandment was to "Love the Lord Thy God." Not himself! How then, do modern church practices relate to what is given as the actual words of Jesus?

A friendly conversation revealed just how much thought and reason are influenced by the church and "Biblical thinking". When belief in the virgin birth of Jesus was mentioned, I assented but went on to point out, "there are other "virgin birth" legends within other faith traditions as well". I told her of the birth story of Dekanawidah from Iroquois tradition

and mentioned Mithra and Horus. Her response was categorically, " Well, if these (or any other) claims are not found in the Bible they are just not true and cannot be trusted." I asked, " How does this make sense? At this point, she changed the subject. Of course, the unasked question in my mind was " How could every legend, story and parable from all other sources, no matter how similar they may be in moral intent to that found in the Bible, be automatically without question, denied validity as tools of guidance; almost as if," All people outside of Judeo-Christian Tradition are being led by forms of a counterfeit belief authored by Satan, leading not to salvation but damnation". Sadly, I can see many of my Christian friends wholeheartedly agreeing with this statement!

### **By what authority is the church Canonized Bible given to be the complete absolute authoritative exclusive Word of God?**

The Bible is a collection of many works by many authors as taken from thousands of years of oral tradition. Is it reasonable to assume that all of these selected books, letters and writings infallibly reflect God's Will; while writings outside the Canonized Bible are automatically deemed as fundamentally "inferior", " faulty" "misleading" or even of the devil? Are the translations of men absolutely inerrant, without bias, with complete understanding of context, wording and allegory as possibly used thousands of years ago?

From the above it might be asked: Even if the collective Biblical writings are given to be God's Truth on Earth, does it necessarily follow there can be no other instance of the Word of God being given anywhere outside the Bible? What infallible source deems that no other claims or beliefs can possibly be valid? Why do religions the world over claim only their explicit Holy Word writings and traditions give the most valid direction in the search for spiritual truth and all others are, at best, misleading enticements of deception? Maybe, just perhaps, if one religious tradition does indeed, give us valid direction towards any aspect of attaining Universal Divine Enlightenment; other faiths and guidance, as given by their own original Masters are, in the Kingdom of Light, just as valid for the time and place of their origin as those very faiths they condemn.

There is a wondrous rich world of diversity and beauty out beyond the confines of any one particular creed or faith, yet eyes are tightly closed, ears also deafened to the outside world beyond the limited horizons of blind beliefs and heresy oriented fear tactics!

### **"Faith-logic"**

I know many who read and re- read the Bible. Endless study classes are devoted to church endorsed lessons and topics of Bible and doctrinal beliefs. Yet, little to nothing is known outside the self circumscribed world of churchdom. A, " God said it. I believe it. that settles it", paradigm seems to be the reigning axiom of a Fundamentalist based "faith-logic". From this is supported a virtually unquestioning acceptance (God said it) of traditional church teachings, authority (God meant it) and, of course, its own compilation of books known as the Bible (I believe it). Obviously, no room is left for open discussion (that settles it). Believers are locked into a rigid, yet fragile, relationship with a "truth bondage" that must be protected and "nurtured" by a church fellowship.

**Testing of faith in 'Blessed Water':** Another example of faith-logic in action was presented to me in a graphic way. Without foreknowledge, I was taken to a church (sect not important) where a minister was handing out jars containing water "purified and blessed by the Holy Spirit". He claimed, " This blessed water would purify any other water it was poured into, removing all impurities." I asked, " Can I test this by putting a fish in fresh chlorinated tap water that has been treated with this "blessed" water to see if it will still be killed, as usual, by the chlorine?" The minister said, " sure". The goldfish I used as a test subject was dead within ten minutes. A week later, when the minister was told, he exclaimed, " Of course it did not work. You did not have faith!"

Applying this same logic: If a product is found faulty and, upon returning it, the salesman responds, " this did not work because you lacked faith". How would you respond? Something is deeply flawed about this thinking. Yet, churches, in a time of science and modern rational thought, expect educated people to seriously consider this line of reasoning!

**Social Consequences:** If one looks closely at all, it becomes evident the outcome of a "faith-logic" based society falls little short of mankind becoming a race of obedient unquestioning robots. There would be no independence. Individual rights and free will would be subjugated to a ruling royalty. Yes, a sort of theocratic monarchy would again reign supreme. No questioning would be allowed. Education, research, art, music, writing; even marriages and funerals; would be held under strict obedience to specific church doctrines. There would be no advancement or discoveries. Any thinking along a questioning, testing, scientific based method of discovery would be strongly discouraged. Progress, as we know it, would grind to a halt. Humanity would slip backwards into another Dark Age governed by Medieval thinking ruled by gargoyles, witches, angels and spirits. Fear of Satanic forces would grip the land while demons haunted the deep.

**'Blessed Water' Questions:** Here is a shared observation about the above mentioned "Blessed" water activity that is hard to understand from a practical point of view. During the service and presentation, members of the congregation were each given a bottle of water along with a string with a key tied to one end. After a few words were spoken and prayers said, participants sat in quiet meditation while holding a string, letting it dangle over an open bottle of water. Soon, my own string, along with others, began to slowly describe a circle around the bottle. Even though I was keeping my hand as still as I could against my other arm, the key did a very definite clockwise motion around the vessel.

After a few minutes, from no discernable motion of my own, the rotation slowed to a halt and then resumed its pattern in the opposite counterclockwise direction. Minutes later, rotation ceased. The string hung motionless until it was pulled up. The minister had all sorts of mystical explanations as to what was going on claiming, " the water had 'energy' that was being transferred to the key suspended over the water causing the rotation to occur. This rotation was proof the water had indeed been 'Blessed'.

I wonder what properties of applied physics would have caused this phenomena to occur? Might the string have been wound somehow causing it to simply unwind? If that was the

case, what caused the key to swing out and around describing a circular cone shaped motion? Also, the key was not spinning on its axis as it would if a string was simply unraveling. If inadvertent motion of my arm influenced the motion, what explains the succession of actions; the definite clockwise, then counterclockwise swinging circle which eventually stopped; while all the while exclaiming, "I do not understand why this is moving like this. I am not doing anything."

Would dirty "unblessed" water yield the same result under the same conditions? Could the original "blessed water" experiment be duplicated allowing us to obtain the same results? Many people of faith would not agree, for whatever reason, to test or retest any result. Besides, they could just as easily respond, "It did not work because you lacked faith. Your lack of faith was the cause of it not working. If you had faith it would have worked. Therefore, the fact it did not work proves nothing except your lack of faith." And where, pray tell, does this get you; Circles of faith?

Even though some say this experience may not have a physical explanation that reveals itself within a limited understanding of physical phenomena, that does not mean a mystical supernatural reality should be ascribed to it either. All things considered, it makes far more sense to search for hypothesis based on an objective well tried and testable theory rather than simply assign it a supernatural cause relating to some unprovable subjective emotional laden faith system. It seems, the more we advance in knowledge, the more these dark superstitious demons, angels and other haunting spiritual forces get driven out by the clear light of knowledge.

### **Part Six: Spirit of Truth and the Christ: The Law Restated.**

let us look at what Jesus himself is recorded as saying and see how his teachings agree with what other religions reveal. or preachers preach.

**Matthew:5** *"Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, <sup>2</sup> and he began to teach them.*

#### ***The Beatitudes:***

He said: <sup>3</sup> *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

<sup>4</sup> *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

<sup>5</sup> *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

<sup>6</sup> *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

<sup>7</sup> *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

<sup>8</sup> *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

<sup>9</sup> *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

<sup>10</sup> *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

<sup>11</sup> *Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.*

<sup>12</sup> *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you...*

**The Fulfillment of the Law** (17-20) Jesus restates or updates the laws. **Murder** (21-26), **Adultery** (27-30) and **Divorce** (30-32) can be found in the Bible in the verses as numbered.

**The Fulfillment of the Law: cont:** Matthew:5 <sup>17</sup> *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

Jesus goes on to describe several Laws. Some he reaffirms, others he expands while others are abrogated. Below are a few picked out to illustrate how cross referencing with other writings, as Jesus did as recorded in Matthew, can be utilized to further understanding and deepening in the Gospel Message. The old original tradition presented, then followed by what Jesus says and "updates" about it.

**Oaths: As originally written in the Zoroastrian Zend-Avesta:** the religion of the "wise men" who followed the star to Bethlehem.

*"Before the boiling water publicly prepared (This clause is intended against false oaths taken in the so-called Var-ordeal) [see par. 54 n.] O Spitama Zoroaster! let no one make bold to deny having received [from his neighbor the ox or the garment in his possession." 54: "Down there [Hell] the pain for that deed shall be as hard as any in this world: to wit, the deed of a man, who knowingly lying, confronts the brimstoned, golden, truth-knowing water with an appeal unto Rashnu and a lie unto Mithra." ( Vendida 4: 46, 54 Zend-Avesta)*

**Oaths: Jesus refurbishes the old Zoroastrian Law. (Matthew 5)**

<sup>33</sup> *“Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ <sup>34</sup> But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; <sup>35</sup> or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. <sup>36</sup> And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup> All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.” (Matthew 5: 33-37 NIV)*

Close study of various scriptures, as read together, can bring added depth and possible understanding to their respective meanings. Jesus agrees with the Avesta when he says, "Do not break your oath," but then, Jesus goes on to refurbish, or update, this old Zoroastrian Law. Just what is he doing? What lessons can we glean? what questions should we ask?

When Jesus says, "*Do not swear an oath at all...all you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'*": Is he referring to, "*the deed of a man, who knowingly lying, confronts the brimstoned, golden, truth-knowing water with an appeal unto Rashnu and a lie unto Mithra.*"? What is the connection between lying and breaking an oath? Just what is "Truth-knowing water"? Might this refer to the Holy Spirit? Might Rashnu and Mithra be seen as false gods? Remember, the ancient Zoroastrians called on the name of Ahura-Mazda (Wise Lord) when invoking the Almighty. Also, an appeal to one god while lying to another is certainly not a standard for good behavior!

### ***Eye for Eye* Exodus 21 ( *Old Mosaic Law*)**

<sup>18</sup> "If people quarrel and one person hits another with a stone or with their fist<sup>[d]</sup> and the victim does not die but is confined to bed, <sup>19</sup> the one who struck the blow will not be held liable if the other can get up and walk around outside with a staff; however, the guilty party must pay the injured person for any loss of time and see that the victim is completely healed.

<sup>20</sup> "Anyone who beats their male or female slave with a rod must be punished if the slave dies as a direct result, <sup>21</sup> but they are not to be punished if the slave recovers after a day or two, since the slave is their property.

<sup>22</sup> "If people are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely<sup>[e]</sup> but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. <sup>23</sup> But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, <sup>24</sup> eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, <sup>25</sup> burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

<sup>26</sup> "An owner who hits a male or female slave in the eye and destroys it must let the slave go free to compensate for the eye.

<sup>27</sup> And an owner who knocks out the tooth of a male or female slave must let the slave go free to compensate for the tooth."

### **(Jesus restates the Law) Matthew 5**

<sup>38</sup> "*You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'*<sup>[h]</sup> <sup>39</sup> *But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.* <sup>40</sup> *And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well.* <sup>41</sup> *If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.* <sup>42</sup> *Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.*"

From the following, it seems Jesus is reinstating the spiritual meaning of the Law while refuting the literal Law. According to the Book of Exodus, Normally some form of equitable compensation is required. Only in the special circumstance of a pregnant woman receiving serious injury from a premature birth resulting from a fight is an " eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" required. ( see Exodus 21: 22-25 )

### ***Love your Neighbors... and your Enemies* Leviticus 19 ( *Old Mosaic Law*)**

<sup>18</sup> "*Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.*"

**(Jesus adds a new dimension to an old Law.)** Matthew 5 “43”*You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor<sup>[i]</sup> and hate your enemy.’* 44 *But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,* 45 *that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.* 46 *If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?* 47 *And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?* 48 *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

Jesus reemphasizes the spiritual perspective on this Law. Not seeking revenge or bearing a grudge against anyone is very different than hating your enemy. Jesus seems to be addressing the Law as it was presently being applied, not the actual Law itself. He is graciously reinstating and reinforcing the part "missing in action". Jesus then adds the challenge to "love your enemies". His mission is not only to correct and make things right but to also encourage development and growth.

### ***Giving to the Needy* Exodus 22 (the Old Mosaic Law)**

25 *“If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not treat it like a business deal; charge no interest.* 26 *If you take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset,* 27 *because that cloak is the only covering your neighbor has. What else can they sleep in? When they cry out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.”*

### **(Jesus restates the Law.)** Matthew 6

1 *“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.* 2 *“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.* 3 *But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,* 4 *so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”*

**Giving to the needy is a central tenant of Islam:** It is considered the third of Five Pillars of the Faith.

Giving money to the poor is an emblem of Islam and a sunna of the Prophet. Allah (God) says, *“If you give charity openly then what a good thing it is; and if you give to beggars hidingly it is better for you than every thing, and He will remove some of your sins. And Allah (God) is aware of what you do.”* (Qur'an 2:271). <http://www.alahazrat.net/islam/charity-in-islam.php>

How do you think the Muslim act of giving to the poor compares with what Jesus advised when he said, *“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them”*.

I think the modern day banking business should heed Exodus 22: 25 *“If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not treat it like a business deal; charge*

*no interest.*" The financial world of business and government is so deep into debt! Might this be a very real cause for a future Armageddon like crash of world markets? Soaring debt and interest rates are simply unsustainable economic burdens.

### **Part Seven: Prayer and Ritual of Prayer.**

The meaning of prayer is seen from Holy writings of different faiths. There is a lesson here for all; if one would just open their eyes to see it.

**Hindu:**10 *"Agni, may we show forth our valor with the steed or with the power of prayer beyond all other men; And over the Five Races let our glory shine high like the realm of light and unsurpassable."* (Vedas, Rig Veda - Book 2)

Prayer can be a means of support, strength and valor. This can either be a good or a bad thing. Prayer certainly is used as a fortifying battle cry as well as Communion with the Spirit of Truth.

**Jewish:** (Psalms:) *"Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.*

*The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man. But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.*

*Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.*

*5:10 Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee. But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.*

*6:1 O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed."* (King James Bible, Psalms 5:2 - 6:2)

It seems, so often, asking for vanquishing of enemies is a part of a prayer. ( see 5:10 above) But, for oneself, ( 6:1) an emotional jealous personified "Jehovah God" is pleaded too," not to show his anger or hot displeasure." How many battles have been fought with a "God is on our side" mentality?

**Muhammad's prayer,** After being stoned out of Ta'if was this:

*"O Lord! I make my complaint unto Thee, out of my feebleness, and the vanity of my wishes. I am insignificant in the sight of men, O Thou most merciful! Lord of the weak! Thou art my Lord! Forsake me not. Leave me not a prey to strangers, nor to mine enemies. If Thou art not offended, I am safe.*

*I seek refuge in the light of Thy countenance, by which all darkness is dispelled, and peace cometh in the Here and the Hereafter. Solve Thou my difficulties as it pleaseth Thee. There is no power, no strength, save in Thee."*

(Islamic Miscellaneous, Gail - Six Lessons on Islam, p. 21)

### **Prayer as taught by Jesus: Matthew 6<sup>5</sup>**

*"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.<sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.<sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.<sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

<sup>9</sup> *"This, then, is how you should pray:*

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.<sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.*

<sup>12</sup> *And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

<sup>13</sup> *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'*

<sup>14</sup> *For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

<sup>15</sup> *But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."*

### **Part Eight: Monotheistic worship of a one single God:**

**Jewish:** (Exodus:) *"You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make yourself an idol...You shall not bow down to them or worship them,"* (Exodus 20: 2-5)

**Hindu:** Hindus are often seen as worshipping and praying to many gods. But here, it is evident this is in error. The Bhagavad-Gita itself says only one God must be prayed too. Yet, God, through his mercy does hear prayer even though it is wrongfully done.

*"Nay, and of hearts which follow other gods, in simple faith, their prayers arise to me. O Kunti's Son! though they pray wrongfully. For I am the Receiver and the Lord Of every sacrifice, which these know not; Rightfully; so they fall to earth again! Who follow gods go to their gods; who vow their souls to Pitris go to Pitris; minds; To evil Bhuts given o'er sink to the Bhuts. And whoso loveth Me cometh to Me. Whoso shall offer Me in faith and love,"* (Hindu, Bhagavad Gita (Edwin Arnold tr))

**Christianity: Jesus' 1st Commandment,** *"Of all the commandments, which is the most important? 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with*

*all your mind and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12: 29-31)*

**Islam:** *"Heraclius said, 'What does he (Mohammad) order you to do?' I said, 'He tells us to worship Allah (God) and Allah alone and not to worship anything along with Him, and to renounce all that our ancestors had said. He orders us to pray, to speak the truth, to be chaste and to keep good relations with our Kith and kin.'" (Hadith, Bukhari Vol 1)*

As in other faiths, the common theme is; only to worship God and God alone, not to follow or worship anything along with Him. That would include ancestral forms creeds and the like such as found in churches, synagogues and temples.

### **Part Nine: Of Christ or the Cross?**

#### **True and False Prophets**

<sup>15</sup> *"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. <sup>16</sup> By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them."* (Matthew 7: 15-20 NIV)

Why do Christian authorities feel the need to emphasize fear and shun other faiths and beliefs? What is their purpose in labeling all other works deemed outside the church categorically as counterfeits of Satan that should be banned and prudently destroyed? Matthew 7:15 makes it clear "you can recognize goodness by its fruits". We are to openly search and judge for ourselves, not hide in a superstitious shell thinking, "Satan might be deceiving me if I question; so I had better "just have faith" and be safe.

#### **True and False Disciples**

<sup>21</sup> *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!"* (Matthew 7:21-23 NIV)

How do you think the passage in (Matthew 7:21-23) applies to modern day Charismatic Pentecostal related practices of speaking in tongues and snake handling? As viewed from the outside, such activities, as promoted by charismatic churches, seem to rely more on firing up a self reinforcing crowd euphoria. This induced "high" becomes the main focus. Beseeking too and "bringing down the holy spirit" on cue, in the right setting, at the right time is the goal. The Holy Spirit is invited to actively participate, as bidden, within the confines of a service made by men. Is not God seen then as some sort of "entertainer" of men? I thought we were supposed to be humble servants of God; such as taught in Hindu, Islamic, Native American Traditions etc.

Fervent followers go so far as to test the Almighty Himself! Those speaking in tongues and snake handlers profess faith in God by literally following the resurrected Christ's words when, " *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people and they will get well."* After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it." ( Mark 16: 15-20 NIV)

Given the above: How can ( Mark 16: 15-20 NIV) be reconciled with (Matthew 7:21-23)?

Might it be that we need to be watchful of individual followers and authority figures "peddling" personal opinion and understanding as "truth"? Are handed down stories and legends, as seen through the eyes of even the Apostles themselves, worthy of the same consideration as what Jesus taught while he was on Earth? Might it be that, the very act of lumping together hearsay and fact seriously clouds the issue of truth. Might this be the birthing ground of errant understanding leading to dogma and ritual, which then blinds faith rendering it little more than superstition!

#### **Slaves must be set free after six years servitude.**

<sup>2</sup> "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, he shall go free, without paying anything. <sup>3</sup> If he comes alone, he is to go free alone; but if he has a wife when he comes, she is to go with him. <sup>4</sup> If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the woman and her children shall belong to her master, and only the man shall go free." (Exodus 21: 2-4)

Slavery was an accepted way of life in the Ancient world. Yet, instead of lifelong bondage lasting for generations; even centuries, as happened in United States history, the Hebrew slaves would be set free. How different is this from what supposed enlightened Christians have inflicted upon the backs of Black and Native Americans!

#### **Sacrificing your firstborn son! It is here in the Bible!**

<sup>29</sup>...<sup>30</sup>"You must give me the firstborn of your sons. <sup>30</sup> Do the same with your cattle and your sheep. Let them stay with their mothers for seven days, but give them to me on the eighth day." ( Exodus 22: 29-30)

On the surface, this verse, if taken just as it reads, could easily be seen as instructing parents to sacrifice their firstborn son as an offering. Thankfully, those who staunchly believe in every word of the Bible as absolute literal inerrant truth do not go so far as to kill their firstborn! I am firstborn, My only son is firstborn. Yet, reading this, it would be thought it "must be done". Of course, scholars come up with allegories and symbolism to explain the meaning as relating to Jewish Passover traditions etc. But, if that is the case here, why not other passages as well which also cannot be accepted but by blind faith, or by any educated mind of reason, such as: describing Jesus' physical virgin birth, being God Incarnate, bidding us to eat of his transubstantiated body, various empty tomb and

resurrection stories, bodily raising up into the heavens to meet his Father, a Rapture of only believers being taken up into the clouds, etc?

**Our God is a jealous God:** <sup>23</sup>...*"Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee. For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."* (Deuteronomy 4:23-24 KJB)

There is a popular hymn sung in the churches proclaiming, "Our God is a jealous God". Is not jealousy regarded as sinful by the church? Is not covetousness mentioned as a "thou shalt not" in the Jewish Ten Commandments? Why then is God portrayed as "jealous"? What does "jealously" mean in the context of the Almighty? Might it be that, as it is only through coming to God we can find true happiness and reap the harvest of the fruits within our selves, a personal relationship is essential? Divine "jealously" is not about some negative possession or passion. It is, rather, an expression of that inexpressible love where it is said,

3. O SON OF MAN! *Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty.*

4. O SON OF MAN! *I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. Wherefore, do thou love Me, that I may name thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of life.*

5. O SON OF BEING! *Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant.*

6. O SON OF BEING! *Thy Paradise is My love; thy heavenly home, reunion with Me. Enter therein and tarry not. This is that which hath been destined for thee in Our kingdom above and Our exalted dominion.*

8. O SON OF SPIRIT! *There is no peace for thee save by renouncing thyself and turning unto Me; for it behooveth thee to glory in My name, not in thine own; to put thy trust in Me and not in thyself, since I desire to be loved alone and above all that is.*

9. O SON OF BEING! *My love is My stronghold; he that entereth therein is safe and secure, and he that turneth away shall surely stray and perish.*

12. O SON OF BEING! *With the hands of power I made thee and with the fingers of strength I created thee; and within thee have I placed the essence of My light. Be thou content with it and seek naught else, for My work is perfect and My command is binding. Question it not, nor have a doubt thereof.*

13. O SON OF SPIRIT! *I created thee rich, why dost thou bring thyself down to poverty? Noble I made thee, wherewith dost thou abase thyself? Out of the essence of knowledge I gave thee being, why seekest thou enlightenment from anyone beside Me? Out of the clay*

*of love I molded thee, how dost thou busy thyself with another? Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful and self-subsisting. (Bah'u'llah: The Arabic Hidden Words)*

**Part Ten:  
Man's Worth and the Word.**

For man to realize his created spiritual reality of "coming to know and worship God" it is essential for us to love God in order for the love of God to be allowed into and change our lives. (see #5 above) Also, it is made clear in( #13) We were created noble, yet we abase ourselves. Turning to God is essential (demanded) by a "jealous" God if we are to attain true meaningful fulfillment in our lives.

In the Bible, much the same principle is revealed when it says, "*Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he showed thee his great fire; and thou heard his words out of the midst of the fire.*" (Deuteronomy 4:36 KJB)

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."* (King James Bible, John 1:1)

This "Word" (John) or "Fire" (Deuteronomy), being in "the beginning", and hence "unborn" is further described: "*Never the spirit was born; the spirit shall cease to be never; Never was time it was not; End and Beginning are dreams! Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the spirit forever; Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems!*" (Hindu, Bhagavad Gita (Edwin Arnold tr))

**Hindu:** "Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all sentient beings, I still appear in every millennium in My original transcendental form. Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion--at that time I descend Myself. In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium." Bhagavad-Gita Chap 4:6

**Islam:** "*O ye children of Israel! remember my favors which I have favored you with; fulfill my covenant and I will fulfill your covenant; me therefore dread. Believe in what I have revealed, verifying what ye have got, and be not the first to disbelieve in it, and do not barter my signs for a little price, and me do ye fear. Clothe not truth with vanity, nor hide the truth the while ye know. Be steadfast in prayer, give the alms, and bow down with those who bow.*" (The Qur'an (E.H. Palmer tr), Sura 2 - The Heifer)

**Zoroastrian:** 7: "*As the holy one [Christ body, Word of Truth] I recognized thee, Mazda Ahura, [God] when Good Thought came to me and asked me: "Who art thou? to whom*

*dost thou belong? By what signs wilt thou appoint the days for questioning about thy possessions and thyself?"*

*8: Then I said to him: "To the first (question), Zarathushtra am I, a true foe to the Liar, to the utmost of my power, but a powerful support would I be to the Righteous, that I may attain the future things of the infinite Dominion, according as I praise and sing thee, O Mazda."(Yazna 35:7-8 Zend-Avesta)*

Here is a creed for Zoroastrianism. Does this sound much the same as the Nicene or Apostles creed followed by various sects of the Christian faith?

*In the name of God: "I profess myself a Mazda-worshipper and a Zoroastrian, opposing the Daevas, accepting the Ahuric doctrine. For Hawan....2. To Fire, the son of Ahura Mazda. To you, O Fire, son of Ahura Mazda. With propitiation, for worship, adoration, propitiation, and praise. 3. 'Yatha Ahu Vairyo', the zaotar should say to me 'Atha ratush ashatchit hacha', the knowing Ashavan should say. Ashem Vohu ...(3). Yatha Ahu Vairyo ..*

*.(2:4.) I praise good thoughts, good words, and good deeds and those that are to be thought, spoken, and done. I do accept all good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. I do renounce all evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds.*

*(2:5) I proffer to you, O Amesha Spentas, sacrifice and prayer, with thought, with word, with deed, with [my] being, with the very life of my body,6. I praise Asha." (The Zend-Avesta, Avesta - Yasna)*

Scriptures of five different faiths have attempted to explain, in poetic verse full of deep symbolic wisdom and spiritual cosmic connected truth, the mystery and wonder found in the relationship between God and mankind. Yet, it seems, the true meaning has been lost; buried in the mire of narrow minded parochialism. Regrettably, churches will use the term "jealous" as ascribed to God as a "fear tactic" to promote sales and membership. Seemingly, it sure appears to be preached in Fundamentalist churches,"

Reread and meditate on the quoted scriptures above. How different is the tone and sublime meaning of these verses when contrasted to what is advertised as," the way, the truth and the light," by institutionalized churches, mosques, synagogues and temples! There is a wondrous rich world of diversity and beauty out beyond the confines of any one particular creed or faith, yet eyes are tightly closed, ears also deafened to the outside world beyond the limited horizons of blind beliefs and heresy oriented fear tactics!

### **Part Eleven:**

#### **Evolution and Revolution: A New Race of Men?**

So much change is happening, even the way we believe and question is being reborn in a matrix of new age transformation!

*"From every standpoint the world of humanity is undergoing a re-formation. The laws of former governments and civilizations are in process of revision, scientific ideas and theories are developing and advancing to meet a new range of phenomena, invention and*

*discovery are penetrating hitherto unknown fields revealing new wonders and hidden secrets of the material universe; industries have vastly wider scope and production; everywhere the world of mankind is in the throes of evolutionary activity indicating the passing of the old conditions and advent of the new age of re-formation.*

*This is the cycle of maturity and re-formation in religion as well. Dogmatic imitations of ancestral beliefs are passing. They have been the axis around which religion revolved but now are no longer fruitful; on the contrary, in this day they have become the cause of human degradation and hindrance. Bigotry and dogmatic adherence to ancient beliefs have become the central and fundamental source of animosity among men, the obstacle to human progress, the cause of warfare and strife, the destroyer of peace, composure and welfare in the world." (Abdu'l-Baha, Foundations of World Unity, p. 10)*

**The lamp radiates Light of divine enlightenment upon all. Religion, in its various guises, can either give us blinders or let it in.**

Perhaps any means of uniting people in love and fellowship, which results in true wellbeing and spiritual advancement, is a good thing. The Ten Commandments given to the Jews, the Eightfold Path shown to the followers of Gautama the Buddha, the Four Directions common to Native Indian heritage, the Beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount containing the sublime wisdom spoken of by Jesus; all this and more, when seen as teachings extolling higher virtues in mankind, have all been necessary vehicles leading us in a step by step evolutionary progression towards a time when all will see each other as citizens of a single country and dwellers upon a single Earth.

With this in mind, it becomes evident that even practices of creed and doctrine, if it truly results in loving guidance and enlightened fellowship, can be a positive force in our lives. Life focusing faith direction, seen as a "descriptive prescription" for attaining an enlightened "end of suffering", then becomes a vital element improving all aspects of daily life. Culture, philosophy, the arts, and learning are invigorated. Action and creativity help followers rise above simply attaining basic survival needs as civilization moves forward bearing new fruits of material and spiritual awareness.

In contrast, it is unequivocally clear that components of a misdirected, misapplied and sorely abused religious fanatical fervor founded in literal narrow scripture interpretations, especially when reinforced with the perceived political necessities of the time, can have a deleterious affect on social progress, equity, justice and stifle the lives of all concerned.

Spiritual enlightened applied concepts, originally conducive to uniting a tribe, city or guiding a civilization to the fullness of its maturity; but later misapplied resulting towards a downward decadence and "ungodliness done in the name of God" is seen throughout history. Bible teachings quoted to excuse slavery, torture or Inquisition; or Quran passages recited in support of Jihad, subjugation of women and application of harsh Shariah Islamic justice; are all symptoms of civilization turning away from Divine Enlightenment and focusing on the lower animal nature, where the most heinous offenses

are committed between men, which easily clouds and renders, tarnished and hidden, the true spirit abiding within us.

Might it also be true that, "if religion becomes a source of conflict, condemnation, hate, oppression and dissension, it is better not to have religion at all?"

**The password is "open-minded Balance". Either/or thinking causes conflict, in which case, both sides are wrong.**

*"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matthew 7:12 (King James Bible)*

Is it possibly categorically wrong to argue and confront in the first place? is the focus and elements of possible mutual divine insight buried under the emotional fervor of "inerrant bringing salvation" thinking"? Maybe it is best to uncover shared agreement points and not concentrate so much on a, "poor heathen, you need to be saved", based dialogue.

Here is a thought: The only really appropriate attitude for man to have about the big philosophical questions is; not the arrogant certitude, which often deteriorates into such a threatening hallmark of organized practiced religion; but doubt. Doubt reflects humility; and that is how man needs to be. History is full of instances where "beliefs", concepts and "guidance" deemed as "holy", inerrant and absolute have later been found to be completely wrong. Rigid unyielding practices lie at the core of much unbalanced behavior and stifling superstitious types of thinking.

Perhaps, in the needed balance of thought, we might ask: could either faith or doubt be either a good or a bad thing? Doubt is often condemned by the faithful. Fruits of faith: certitude, strength, inner tranquility and radiant love are surely gifts given by the Holy Spirit of Truth. But doubt can also be a good thing if it leads to humility, community, flexibility, compromise and acceptance; which is also good for the human spirit.

Balance; that elusive quality, serving outward acceptance and service while relying on inward steadfastness and reliance; is the standard.

Yet, is religion only a childhood type fantasy catering to immature juvenile needs of humanity? Or, is it, in its varied original pristine forms and teachings, as uttered by the original Founders, a necessary vehicle, evolving stage by stage, leading the development of a spiritually adolescent human race? Will religion be the cause of our material destruction or reveal itself as the ultimate Savior leading us down the path to a golden age of growth, maturity, enlightenment and salvation?

*(So) "bitter is the conflict between sects and denominations. Christ was a divine Center of unity and love. Whenever discord prevails instead of unity, wherever hatred and antagonism take the place of love and spiritual fellowship, Antichrist reigns instead of Christ. Who is right in these controversies and hatreds between the sects?"*

*Did Christ command them to love or to hate each other? He loved even His enemies and prayed in the hour of His crucifixion for those who killed Him. Therefore, to be a Christian is not merely to bear the name of Christ and say, "I belong to a Christian government." To be a real Christian is to be a servant in His Cause and Kingdom, to go forth under His banner of peace and love toward all mankind, to be self-sacrificing and obedient, to become quickened by the breaths of the Holy Spirit, to be mirrors reflecting the radiance of the divinity of Christ, to be fruitful trees in the garden of His planting, to refresh the world by the water of life of His teachings -- in all things to be like Him and filled with the spirit of His love. (Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 6)*

**Detach yourself from bias-based thinking. Do not habitually blindly follow dictates of men but rather, open your eyes to the uplifting presence of the Divine!**

At times, there will be people that comment to me, "You don't believe in anything". Well, when it comes to the organized politics, philosophies, accepted organizations and mythologies of Man, there really is not much I find appealing. The Spirit of Truth, wonder and awe, as emancipated from formalities, is more in line with my thinking; But, at the same time, if one looks at major positive advancing historical revolutionary milestones as paralleling fundamental evolutionary worldwide faith happenings, might the case for a very real Divine Connection in human events be evident?

Does the appearance of a religious "Savior Figure" such as Moses, Abraham, Jesus, Muhammad, Krishna, Buddha, Deganawida etc. have an impact on world history? ? What went on in history during and following the lives of the above mentioned "Saviors"? How did medicine, mathematics and learning in Muslim Andalusia compare with Christian Catholic medieval Europe? Did the "Articles" of the Iroquois Confederacy, as set down by Deganawida, help inspire the United States Constitution?

For millennia mankind watched the flight of birds in wonder; yet, he remained earthbound. Then suddenly, within a span of sixty six years (1903-1969); not only was powered flight itself achieved but our species had landed on the Moon! Information and technology is continuing to explode. Is something else going on in our time? What is driving our present worldwide revolution of scientific enlightenment?

Is a "new age" world awareness finding the old "wineskins" of ancient teachings and foundations of belief to be inadequate for our time? Is humanity changing? If so, Why? Does man's inhumanity toward his own species play a significant role in graphically illustrating our need to follow Divine Love and principle? Are both religion and science truly needed as fundamental elements for designing the chariot and giving us the road map to follow allowing us to build an ever-advancing world civilization?

### **Part Twelve:**

**Science and Religion: Can both disciplines work together in mutual discovery?**

**Science and Religion Set Side by Side:** Science, and the discipline it represents, is seen as a tool allowing us to question, explore and verify shared findings. Science gives us

evermore reason to be humble in the Face of the Divine. The more discoveries we find, the more pathways of investigation are opened. Knowledge increases, as does awe of what wondrous mysteries are revealed unto the minds of men! The fruits of science include technologies, medicine, instruments for exploration and implementation unheard of a few centuries ago. The "information age" is upon us. An evolutionary revolutionary change is at hand.

Religion, gives us faith and direction. We are servants of God. Our capacity to build ever-advancing civilizations involving communication, the arts, education and spiritual values is testimony to the validity of the surrounding uplifting bounty of Divine Grace. Indeed, all of humanity's central purpose, as ordained by the Beyond; is to know and worship God; not necessarily through public programs of church, synagogue, mosque or temple but living a life, bearing fruits beneficial to all.

Of course, the above statements concern true science and true religion, followed and practiced, as given by original founders and scientists themselves. To often, religion and science can lose their original pure ideals. Politics, social needs and authoritarian constructs fueled by short sighted goals, go far in "abducting" science and religion and altering them for their own parochial oriented self serving ends.

True science relies on open complete sharing. There are no "sides" in pure applied science; no political agendas or doctrines of religious fervor to erode or taint the unfettered search for knowledge and understanding.

This is the beauty of science. The methodology it uses does not rely on long held hereditary traditional values or "matters of faith" to provide answers. Instead, direct current observation and reason are utilized to arrive at working explanations describing a set of given phenomena. Scientific hypothesis and theories are never seen as unchangeable infallible truth, they can be altered or overturned at any time.

Of course, religion itself can also be a valid avenue of discovery; just on a different level than science. If we were to truly understand and adhere to the teachings given by original major founders of faith, there would be little need for laws governing social conduct and morality. Humanity would live in a paradise of love and mutual nurturing respect. Social Laws and doctrines of church, synagogue, mosque and temple would never be needed. We would be living, as Native Americans believe, in our original Garden of Eden.

But it seems, the essential "sinning" nature of Man compels us to transform these spiritual teachings of nurturing love into platforms of violence.

Many continue to hang on to ancient millennium old beliefs and customs; from a time when celestial beings literally inhabited the sky and monsters were considered a danger from the deep. By what reason, by what assumption, authority or particular faith is this done? Is this a good thing; something ordained by God?

It is so evident: Science, without religion, can become a vehicle for monstrous destruction. Witness modern instruments of war and inhumane actions performed in the name of "science". Witness also what we are doing to the Earth in the name of technology, progress and profit!

Religion, without science, can slip into organized habitual superstition and vain imaginings. Witness the horror of Holy Inquisitions, the stifling of objective research and open unbiased understanding. Religion can cause the intellect to wither and die within the confines of oppressive orthodoxy, creed and dogma! Much ungodliness is done in the name of God!

**A Historically Rough Relationship:** Science, medicine, the arts and literature; much creative thought and progress has been thwarted and sacrificed in the name of Church, Creed and Dogma. The struggle of Copernicus, using a sun centered solar system to explain the measured recorded motions of the planets; Galileo, observing through his telescope, earth-like features on the Moon and also a different set of solid moons orbiting around a physical 3 dimensional Jupiter; observational findings that would seem to overthrow church teachings; was seen as heretical.

During times of the Inquisition, ideas and discoveries contrary to an Earth-Christ-Church centered universe were dangerous. Such "godless dealings with the Devil" were done at risk to your own eternal salvation. In Medieval thinking, the church felt compelled to "save you" by forcing renunciation of heresy- even by death at the stake!

The Pope was overlord and representative of God's will on Earth. As such, church sovereign rule was fundamentally unquestioned. Under such dictatorship, openly supporting the advancement of science, learning, medicine, astronomy, the arts, music, etc: outside of church deemed correct "right way" thinking , was a perilous venture.

Even in this century, the debate between literal Bible enthusiasts and the Theory of Evolution is still hotly debated. To this day, much of the United States populace does not believe in Evolution. These modern day Christians think the Biblical Genesis account of "God created" is "it" and only "it". No room is left for continuing growth, wider understanding or deeper appreciation of the observable world around us. Adherents are seemingly stuck in a morass of fear of somehow "being led astray".

To those who take part in this long standing quarrel, I would advise, 'Surely the Doings of the Almighty Infinite Reality, housed in the Mansions of Eternity beyond realms of space and time, is, in turn, infinitely beyond the minds of men to grasp". Given this basic premise, may not "Creation" in the Hands of God imply actions in realms of timelessness?

If this is so, then it stands to reason that Creation, involving realms of timelessness itself, cannot be considered in the same light as something humans fashion within their own limited temporal existence. In realms without beginning or end the whole concept of a singular point of a creative event ceases to have meaning. All happenings seen as having "beginnings" and "ends" by mere mortals are but manifestations of temporality.

Thus, from a religious perspective, as heard from many disciplines and teaching from around the world, it is taught that what we perceive through our five physical senses, and also discover through applied science, is only a fleeting phantasm of a far deeper Reality Infinite Beyond! In addition, the human spirit seems to crave wonder and relationship with that which is directly unobservable.

The human species is not satisfied by simply meeting biological demands of food, shelter, water comfort and propagation. We are creatures of art, worship, thought, discernment, science and discovery. We can postulate, theorize and come to degrees of understanding. We write great literature and compose symphonies. We find comfort, solace and deepest joy in faith, in dealing with the Divine and each other. We share a sense of beauty, justice and compassion.

Yet, this "limited cause-and-effect reality, brought to our senses as observed phenomena, indeed represents the enkindling cradle of our earthly biological existence. We live in a world where survival by interaction with physical properties and identities is essential. We are composed of the common elements as fused in the stars. We are of matter and the all-surrounding universe within and without us.

Physically we were given, by the time proven process of evolution, a discerning intellect enabling us to probe and delve deep into mysteries previously hidden. This biological habitat, and the role we play in it, is of supreme importance. We need to rejoice in and wisely use these resources and discoveries, not condemn or abuse them.

After all is said, I must ask: By what authoritative standard then do we impose specific singular "God's way is exclusively our way" proselytizing? Why does mankind seem to gravitate towards this "I am right", "you are wrong" syndrome? Why are such divisive hate driven atrocities committed? Vocabulary usage containing such words as "heresy", "heathen", "infidel", "apostate", "lost," saved" and "damned" give ample testimony of what is inflicted, from the understandings of men, upon ourselves. What agenda governs our lives causing clear reason, open scientific inquiry and observation to be shunned by so many for generations?

Perhaps we all need to come to terms with a new way of thinking! We are all part and parcel of a universe created by a single God.

Can science and religion agree? Is it possible both views can be used as guidelines leading us down a path where spiritual and material, finite and infinite, are seen as twin beacons illuminating the Path to discernment and wisdom? Might we learn to resolve issues based on common enlightened vision rather than emphasizing disagreement?

Does humanity, because of having an evolutionary kinship with apelike hominids, negate his innate spirituality and love of God, beauty, fairness and justice? Can we know and be so sure of and judge the hidden potential in all created things? What is the impact of "a myriad realms of being", of infinite spiritual realities beyond comprehension, upon modern scientific thought?

**Part thirteen:  
Philosophy of Theology in a Social Ideology:**

Perhaps, it is timely and wise to take a different tack; not with the idea of arguing pro or con, but rather seeing how delving into mysteries and concepts provided by both science and religion, as presented in their respective operational methodologies regarding valid approaches to discovery, can lead one to further understanding beyond what these strictly applied disciplines in themselves have to offer.

Remember, in realms of the infinite, "beginning" and "end", as we know it, has no meaning. Mysteries of Predestined destiny and Divine Directive Will lie forever beyond the minds of men to grasp. What Descends and Fashions, from the Mystic Mansions of Eternity, will forever remain hidden; even as the archetypal Design of BEING is brought forth; as Divine Operation; that" most Manifest of the Manifest; yet, the most Hidden of the Hidden; is fulfilled.

As an aside: religious constructs of random occurrence and predestined Design ideologies are left to philosophers, students and theologians to discuss. Although the discussion may be used as tools to exercise, hone and sharpen intellectual prowess, there can never be a final outcome to these debates. Any attempts along these lines can only end in mere words as they begin in mere words.

Social bias resulting from generations of programmed trained ingrained thought perception provides a compelling powerful pervasive influence on how we view life. Concepts involving what is "proper", "ugly," "beautiful", "attractive", "repulsive", "desirable" or not; good or evil, loved or hated; imparts a profound influence upon our total worldview perception.

Cultural diet habits are a prime example. There is little more intimate to our lifestyle than the food we eat. Australian Aborigines regard grubs dug from tree roots as a food delicacy. These witchetty grubs are traditionally eaten live and raw. The same dogs we revere as pets are traditionally eaten in Asia. Fresh blood gushing forth from a sacrificed cow is partaken by certain tribes, particularly the Maasai in East Africa, in hopes they will receive strength and wellbeing.

Would those, reared by Western tastes and customs, even think, or be capable, of enjoying these activities? Yet, those attending Christian churches, regularly symbolically drink the blood of their savior figure in ritualistic atonement for sins. They are washed clean by the sacrificial blood of Jesus! Are you upset by the forgoing passage? Good. That is the point. Indeed, the mind is a powerful thing!

As for the argument " I don't believe we descended from apes", or, "I am no monkey!" I would respond, 'By what reasoning, assumption or ethical judgment do you make that statement'?

**Discernment and Balance:**

Many believe it is evident a new energy is energizing our world. Many world religions do speak of a promised time of God's "Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven". These faiths, in their own way, declare a transformation in the minds of mankind; where all will reside in loving unity embraced within the spirit of the Lord. A New Millennium will come, as well as their returning Savior.

However you personally relate to these thoughts, perhaps one way to look at the twin pillars of science and religion, as guiding signposts for the advancement of all, is to think of a combustion engine automobile. Science and engineering would make possible the car and the tools to drive it while religion would plot and pilot the trip, setting the course and destination for the journey.

It is so critical to seek discernment. The seeker after Truth must at all times be fully aware of the limiting fallibilities of the tools at hand. Logic, reason, sense perceptions, cognition; even matters of faith and emotionally sustaining spiritual awareness; Are these life experiences valid doorways leading to what is sought, or vain imaginings based on what you wished or believe from the recesses of your own mind? The self is a very subtle, yet very omnipresent influence.

A passage from the Baha'i Writings reads, " O Lord, make me a hollow reed from which the pith of self hath been blown, that I may become a clear channel through which Thy love may flow to others."

In a world where we imprison ourselves within a bondage sentenced by creed, racism, nationalism, and political self-centered fervor; in a world where we have categorized "others" as "alien", "strange" or "spiritually lost"; deceptively revealed as such only through the cold steel bars of our own imagined fears, perceptions and misconceptions; where mutual mistrust, hatred, riches and power rule the hearts of men: Let us break the shackles we have forged between ourselves and rise above what men have produced among themselves. Let us take off our habitually donned narrow-focused restrictive blinders, broaden our perspective, then soar upon wings of discovery from which to behold the magnificent vistas of Universal Cosmic Majesty spread before us.

***It is Balance in science, religion, philosophy...Balance... and moderation in all things.***

**Part Fourteen:  
Evolution: of Directionless Change through Time, or  
Creation: of Directed Intelligent Design:  
Are there alternatives to this either/or Way of thinking?**

Might science and reason, religion and faith be seen as twin guideposts serving the advancement of knowledge, discernment, wisdom and spiritual understanding?

"Evolution and natural Order could simply be a part of an ongoing Creative Process wherein possibly, even Directed by some ever hidden inscrutable predestined Design

factor, pre-existent probability possibilities are continually rendered by energized motion into actual outcomes and happenings."

Note: This subject of evolution vs. creation, leading to so much controversy and contention, appears to be symptomatic of a much larger deeper malady afflicting the wellbeing of mankind as a whole. Unless we can, somehow, get away from the mode of, "self righteous exclusive favored-by-god inerrant text-truth rigid literal dogmatic-based-assumption thinking," the enlightened state of worldwide universal amity through spiritual unity, a heaven on earth, can never be realized. The divisive sectarianism of nationalism, racism, religious intolerance and dogmatic judgment will remain, becoming ever more virulent, as media and the internet catapult us daily into increasingly intimate awareness of global tensions, conflicts, fanaticisms and varied socially deemed "correct" pathways towards the Divine. As worldwide communication advances, we must spiritually grow; learning to utilize and apply our new God given knowledge in a lovingly responsible productive yet humble sustainable way, conducive to ever advancing and uniting all people everywhere.

### **Immovable Unquestioned Certainty v. Tentative Questioning Reevaluation:**

Evolution, and how this theory of science stacks up against the Holy Bible, has remained a central point of contention among many. Lectures, seminars, writings and blogs abound as believers seek to resolve modern thought with teachings held as authoritative for ages. A 2009 Gallup Poll, (see P 15) shows well less than half the US general population believes in Evolution, with only 55% having a basic understanding of, the Theory.

Religion, as a whole, seems to encourage unquestioning unwavering certainty through a personal subjective faith. Obedience and belief provides Joy, comfort, solace and foundation in our lives. Many find a deep abiding personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. Seekers invite Divinity into their heart and, if it is valid in the eyes of God, they are indeed transformed and "born again".

The Scientific Method of discovery depends on open, doubting, questioning, ever searching objective critical experiment. This includes observation, discovery, sharing, hypothesizing and theorizing. Science based reasoning fosters growth and fuels an ever advancing shared knowledge base. Observed phenomena is recorded, hypothesis are published and theories are gradually formulated. Products testifying to the validity of applying scientific reason abound in the technological modern lifestyle surrounding us.

Evolution is also a long term tested hypothesized formulated theory. It proposes all forms of life have evolved and changed over vast stretches of time as seen and verified in the fossil record. This concept is also directly observable in microcosm through Darwin's Finches and present day domestic bred strains of livestock.

### **Man or Monkey?**

Much anti-evolution argument seems to revolve around whether humanity is animal or a spiritual being, a "man or a monkey". Evolution, as seen by many Christians, is often brought up as an either/or proposition. Either God created the heavens and the earth and man, as he is today, or the cosmos is more of a godless chaos where a blind directionless trial and error governs an existence so full of beauty, bestowal and seeming significance! From a faith based spiritually centered viewpoint, Evolution must be categorically presumed wrong if it implies we are nothing more than an animal.

Texts of sacred books, long held as revealing Divine Truth, proclaim "the reality of humanity is fundamentally different than that of the animal". We are extolled as a being of more worth than simply that of an over-intelligent hominid ape. We are blessed with a light of being, endless in its fruits, divine in its nature and reality.

Teachings found in the great Masters and Founders of world faiths have given us awareness of this divine reality within ourselves. It is our destiny and calling to rise unto the fullness of being, as ordained by a Supreme Reality above the mortal minds of men to grasp, and seek the pearls of wisdom hidden deep within the ocean of enlightened knowledge and salvation.

Conversely, the working methods of science, observation, postulates and theory are devoted to questions, experiments and findings which can be verified, tested and retested in a controlled environment. Nothing is ever deemed as inerrant absolute truth. Any scientific discovery or explanation is subject to continual updating or modification. A theory may be found in error at any time. In fact, much scientific testing is deliberately designed to retest and expose possible flaws in current thinking and interpretation. In this way, knowledge and understanding is allowed to move forward.

Archeological findings, contextual observation and the ever expanding fossil record is continually bringing to light additional solid evidence showing transitional forms of life. Fossils substantiating links between "fish to amphibians" (see *Tiktaalik* below), a possible, but debated, "dinosaurs to birds" relationship and "upright walking hominids to mankind" all changing through time (also see below); clearly reveals a formative gradually unfolding proliferating tree of life. Also, new techniques used through understanding and application of micro and molecular biology, DNA and epigenetics, continually and consistently support the Theory of Evolution in increasingly greater detail.

A real prize in supporting a science based theory is a finding or observation originally predicted by theorists and later discovered and verified. Such a prize was found when archeologists set out to find a fossil that would show up as a transitional form between fish and amphibians. 375 million old rocks in the Canadian Arctic were excavated. After several fruitless attempts, fossils showing signs of both fish and amphibian-like properties have been discovered. This was a test for Evolution Theory and it passed.

\* "*Tiktaalik* is a [genus](#) of extinct lobe-finned "fish from the late [Devonian](#) period, with many features akin to those of four-legged animals). It is an example of fish developing

adaptations to the oxygen-poor shallow-water habitats of its time. Well-preserved fossils were found in 2004 on [Ellesmere Island](#) in [Nunavut, Canada](#) ." \*(See Wikipedia)

In addition, corroboration Darwin could have never dreamed of, has recently been made evident. Understanding and manipulation of epigenetic-based molecular life physiology has given us insight on how seeming drastic changes in species morphology can take place. Experiments involving manipulation of "on" and "off" switches, through which chicken embryos can be made to grow rudimentary teeth, is one example of the ground breaking research being done in this new field of study.

### **Creation v. Evolution Demands Philosophical Revolution:**

One of the hallmarks that makes science stand out is openness to reevaluation and, if necessary, modifying theories to embrace new observations and findings. Within minutes, one can find copious amounts of internet material dealing with the evolutionary relationship between birds and dinosaurs. Are birds directly descended from dinosaurs or is there a parallel evolution going on?. Was there a divergence between the two main groups; if so, when? Is it accurate to call birds "living dinosaurs"?

The popularized notion that humans are actually descended from apes or monkeys is shown, by fossil evidence on the evolutionary timescale, not to be true. We are not descended from modern apes, but rather, apes and human ancestral hominids diverged and went their separate ways as far back as 8 to 10 million years ago or even longer. Small brained upright walking hominid fossils up to 6 million years old have been found, The famous "Lucy", is thought to possibly be a human ancestor. This highly successful Australopithecine group, clearly showing both apelike (small-brained) and humanoid (upright postured pelvis) features, emerged roughly about 3.9 million years ago and lasted close to a million years themselves before becoming extinct 3 million years BC. Again, a wealth of information is readily available for the asking.

Note: Much can be found in libraries and the internet supporting controversial "studies" and "evidence" used as "proof" either for or against what is widely believed to be complete and accurate information on a given subject. Often, in the case of arguments against Evolution, a single finding will be represented, or misrepresented as reason to completely overthrow overwhelming accumulated substantial corroborative evidence.

Another claim states, 'what has been reported to the public is incomplete; that we are at the mercy of people who select, edit or fabricate only what they want the public to be aware of that will justify their own ends'. This "world conspiracy" type thinking seems to really signify desperation on the part of the writers to get their views across. One finding, such as a humanoid fossil billions of years old, or, dinosaur and human footprints found together, or a machine-like propeller drive in a bacterium; these single unrelated isolated claims cannot compare to libraries of corroborated well documented interdisciplinary findings and research which, independently and consistently, support Evolution.

I myself, can find no real need to argue the either/or validity of Creation or Evolution. The challenge is to attempt thinking beyond the human paradigm; beyond anthropomorphizing Creation of life, Earth and the universe, done in the same way as we would build a house or paint a picture. Of course, Creation of God is fundamentally different than what humans can accomplish. We only fashion and manipulate what has already been created. It is impossible to bring something into existence from nothingness.

look at it another way, Evolution and natural Order could simply be a part of an ongoing Creative Process wherein possibly, even Directed by some ever hidden inscrutable predestined Design factor, pre-existent probability possibilities are continually rendered by energized motion into actual outcomes and happenings.

### **Part Fifteen:**

#### **The argument of Evolution v. Biblical Creation in the United States is fueled by these statistics**

**On Darwin's Birthday, Only 4 in 10 Believe in Evolution:** See Wikipedia online: **February 11, 2009**

**Belief drops to 24% among frequent church attendees:** Gallup Pole results: by Frank Newport <http://www.gallup.com/poll/114544/darwin-birthday-believe-evolution.aspx>

PRINCETON, NJ -- On the eve of the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth, a new Gallup Poll shows that only 39% of Americans say they "believe in the theory of evolution," while a quarter say they do not believe in the theory, and another 36% don't have an opinion either way. These attitudes are strongly related to education and, to an even greater degree, religiosity.

There is a strong relationship between education and belief in Darwin's theory, as might be expected, ranging from 21% of those with high-school educations or less to 74% of those with postgraduate degrees.

Before respondents in the current poll were asked about their belief in evolution, they were tested to see whether they could correctly associate evolution with Darwin. The results show that 55% of Americans can correctly name evolution (or another term closely associated with evolution, such as natural selection) when asked with which theory they associate Darwin. Correct identification zooms from only 31% among those with no more than a high school education all the way to 86% among those with postgraduate educations. Americans who seldom or never attend church are slightly, but not overwhelmingly, more likely to correctly identify Darwin with this theory than are those who attend more often.

More from Wikipedia: According to recent surveys, 83 percent of Americans claim to belong to a religious denomination, 40 percent claim to attend services nearly every week or more, and 58 percent claim to pray at least weekly.<sup>[1]</sup> A majority of Americans report

that religion plays a "very important" role in their lives, a proportion unusual among [developed nations](#).

The majority of Americans (76%) identify themselves as [Christians](#), mostly within [Protestant](#) and [Catholic](#) denominations, accounting for 51% and 25% of the population respectively.<sup>[4]</sup> Non-Christian religions (including [Buddhism](#), [Hinduism](#), [Islam](#), and [Judaism](#)), collectively make up about 3.9% to 5.5% of the adult population.<sup>[4][5][6]</sup> Another 15% of the adult population identifies as having no religious belief or no religious affiliation. According to the American Religious Identification Survey, religious belief varies considerably across the country: 59% of Americans living in Western states (the "[Unchurched Belt](#)") report a belief in God, yet in the South (the "[Bible Belt](#)") the figure is as high as 86%.<sup>[4][7]</sup>

Obviously, the above deeply contributes too and influences much of how United States society views evolution and even science itself. Look below and see how little nearly half the general population of the United States seems to be aware, or even care, about learning, discovery or science based thinking. What do these statistics say about the overall health of our society and our role in the world theatre?

**Implications:** As Darwin is being lauded as one of the most important scientists in history on the 200th anniversary of his birth (on Feb. 12, 1809), it is perhaps dismaying to scientists who study and respect his work to see that well less than half of Americans today say they believe in the theory of evolution, and that just 55% can associate the man with his theory.

Naturally, some of this is because of educational differences. Americans who have lower levels of formal education are significantly less likely than others to be able to identify Darwin with his theory, and to have an opinion on it either way. Still, the evidence is clear that even to this day, Americans' religious beliefs are a significant predictor of their attitudes toward Darwin's theory. Those who attend church most often are the least likely to believe in evolution, and most likely to say they do not believe in it.

### **Scientific method:**

The scientific method refers to a body of [techniques](#) for investigating [phenomena](#), acquiring new [knowledge](#), or correcting and integrating previous knowledge. To be termed scientific, a method of inquiry must be based on gathering [empirical](#) and [measurable](#) evidence subject to specific principles of reasoning. The [Oxford English Dictionary](#) says that scientific method is: "a method of procedure consisting in systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses."

Scientific researchers propose hypotheses as explanations of phenomena, and design [experimental](#) studies to test these hypotheses via predictions which can be derived from them. These steps must be repeatable, to guard against mistake or confusion in any particular experimenter. [Theories](#) that encompass wider domains of inquiry may bind

many independently derived hypotheses together in a coherent, supportive structure. Theories, in turn, may help form new hypotheses or place groups of hypotheses into context.

Scientific inquiry is generally intended to be as [objective](#) as possible, to reduce biased interpretations of results. Another basic expectation is to document, [archive](#) and [share](#) all data and [methodology](#) so they are available for careful scrutiny by other scientists, giving them the opportunity to verify results by attempting to [reproduce](#) them. This practice, called *full disclosure*, also allows statistical measures of the [reliability](#) of these data to be established.