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"Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?"
Galatians 4:16

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The End of Comfortable Christianity?

By L.L. (Don) Veinot, Jr.

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (John 15:18-19, ESV)

As a youth, I grew up in a family that was not Christian. My father was an Atheist but not really a *philosophical* Atheist. I doubt if he really thought through his beliefs, but he was

a consistent Atheist — perhaps one of the most consistent Atheists I have known. He simply asserted God did not exist, and thus, he lived life as he chose. My mother, although having gone to church as a child, did not bring her former experience into the home. There wasn't much in the way of spiritual discussions, but she did read and believe the writings of Edgar Cayce,¹ who was known as "The Sleeping Prophet." (He was a psychic who advocated reincarnation and other Eastern metaphysical beliefs/practices.) She would go to mediums to have her future read; and

one of her best friends, after my parents divorced, was a practicing witch. In spite of all this, we grew up in an essentially Judeo/Christian culture. Whether one was a Christian or not, the Judeo/Christian moral values and ethos generally permeated the Western world and particularly the United States. Christianity had a comfortable place in our world. Sure, there was rebellion, but then we really cannot look to any time in history where there wasn't rebellion against something. Supposedly, Plato claimed that Socrates said:

The children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and tyrannize their teachers.²



Someone might have believed in reincarnation and, although Christians viewed that as false, it was rare that the person was vilified for their belief. The Civil Rights Movement exploded on the scene in the 1960s, and it, too, was based on a Judeo/Christian worldview. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other Civil Rights leaders preached essentially Bible-based sermons to advocate the idea of treating all people — regardless of color — with respect. Pornography was available, but it was regarded as wrong; and even though *Playboy Magazine* could be purchased from under

the counter, it was carried out of the store in a brown paper wrapper. Sexuality was not flaunted. Individuals could choose to go against the prevailing morals and ethics, but there was a certain inner sense of shame they felt in doing so.

However, the winds of change had been blowing gently behind the scenes and were bringing with them a revolution, but few noticed. That is the thing about real revolutions, the most effective ones at least: They happen so quietly, you don't see them until they are done, and then, it's too late.

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“Comfortable Christianity” Continued from page 1

Were There Warnings?

The short answer is “yes.” However, because Christianity was so comfortable, and its morals and ethics were such an integral part of cultural thinking, the warnings went ignored or unnoticed. We have written on many of these issues in the past, but a recap might be in order.

A living, vibrant Christianity had retreated from cultural engagement in the 1930’s and 40’s. At the same time, those who adhered to Darwinist and Communist/Marxist/Socialist worldviews (going under the name “Progressives”) filled the significant vacuum bequeathed to the halls of academia. Christians created and maintained a sort of “Christian ghetto” in an attempt to protect their offspring from exposure to ideas (either against or not compatible with Christianity) which would challenge their faith. Progressivism nearly won in the 1930’s and 40’s in social and financial areas of the nation. However, two critical things happened which seemed to stem the tide for a while.

First: Social Darwinist, Adolph Hitler, lost the war, and the world saw the result of social Darwinism and the eugenics it espoused. This slowed the impact of the beliefs and teachings of Margaret Sanger (foremost birth control / abortion / eugenics advocate) and other Progressives in their work of pruning the “human garden” to aid evolution for the further advancement of whom they viewed as the most highly evolved ... the white race.

Second: There was the rise of the Conservative Intellectual Movement of 1945 that primarily was led mostly by Roman Catholic thinkers and business people, who made a strong case for Capitalism. Progressivism was the main point of view taught at the big universities by this time, which was the impetus for the book *God and Man at Yale* written by (then) young, conservative thinker, William F. Buckley, Jr. His basic point was that it is fine to teach pro-Communism/Progressivism and against Capitalism; but Yale and, by extension, the other universities should be honest with their Capitalist donors. As you might guess, the book stirred up quite a hornet’s nest of controversy.

During the 1950’s, psychiatry/psychology really began to come into its own with the advent of Abraham Maslow’s humanistic psychology. Maslow’s theories included the hierarchy of needs, self-actualization, and peak experiences as a way to become fully human. Intellectual elites and cultural thought-shapers began changing the way man thought about himself and others. Psychiatrists and psychologists became the new priests of the new religion. Both of these were road markers or warnings about what was coming, but few recognized it.

Each of these four areas (church abandoning culture, rise of Socialism, economics, psychiatry/psychology) transformed Western civilization and, when combined, brought about a cultural U-turn back to where society was when the church was born in the first century. The common denominator of each area was that it challenged the Judeo/Christian worldview and its claim to be the base of reality.

The false worldview of Darwinism eliminated the need for a Creator. In this view, we and, in fact, all of creation are little more than accidents in time and space. Once accidentally and for no apparent reason sparked, the universe simply mutated and changed until everything we see came to be all by itself—unguided over time and sheerly by chance. Throughout the 1960’s, the move was made to teach Darwinism alongside Creationism in school. Within a few years of winning that right in court, Creationism was soon eliminated from public education. Teaching the truth of God as Creator was no longer deemed necessary, and therefore, God’s morals and ethics easily could be swept aside.

With the Christians’ near abandonment of the major universities, the worldviews of Karl Marx, Lenin, and others would shape the thinking of the future educators, politicians, public servants, and yes, leaders in the church. In addition to the liberalism that had been growing within the church, Liberation Theology³ (Marxism wrapped in Christian terminology) was birthed and growing in the 1950’s and 60’s. Without active involvement of Christians in areas of cultural thought, those who were shaping the world went on without biblical influence having what we might call a “Christian hangover.” The influence of Judeo/Christian morality continued for a while longer—more by habit than anything else; but the hangover would dissipate, and the Christian worldview would be abandoned. Until that happened, Christianity would continue to feel comfortable and safe.

Christian Capitalism had been the driving force of the U.S. economy nearly from the beginning. Communism had been tried within the settlement of Jamestown (from 1607 to 1611) and was a miserable failure.⁴ In his excellent book, *Urban Apologetics*, in the

chapter on “Christ and Social Justice,” Pastor and author Christopher W. Brooks writes:

In Sirico’s opinion, Christian capitalism has proven to be the most effective means for helping ensure financial freedom for all. He states, “Capitalism offers wide ownership of property, fair and equal rules for all, strict adherence to the rule of ownership, opportunities for charity and the wide use of resources.”

To some this may sound naively optimistic, but Father Sirico spells out and explains his philosophy of the virtues of a market-based economic approach in his book, *Defending the Free Market: The Moral Case for a Free Economy*. The underpinnings of his view on what makes an economy just and good is a right cosmology. Our cosmology is our belief on how the world has been created and the practical principles that should impact the way we live as a result of those beliefs. For Father Sirico, cosmology begins with the fact that an all-powerful and all-good God who has created the universe has also made man with intrinsic dignity and in His image. Therefore, a moral economy is built upon two pillars: first, cultivating humanity’s dependence upon God as creator and sustainer; second, a moral economy, which preserve’s a person’s intrinsic dignity by ensuring equality of opportunity, not equal outcomes.⁵

Like Darwinism and its impact on science, there is much more to this issue. However, our shift away from Christian free-market and toward Communist/Socialist economics eliminated the need for Judeo/Christian economic morals and ethics and, by extension, any reliance on God. In this economic environment, the State (Federal Government) decrees what is fair and right, redistributes wealth as it sees fit, and removes any personal responsibility toward one another. Those who resist are punished. Morals and ethics are no longer derived from the God Who exists outside and separate from creation, but instead, they are decreed and enforced through a mobocracy as administered by the mob in power at any given time.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow impacted a young pastor by the name of Robert Schuller who founded a church at a drive-in theater in Southern California that later became the Crystal Cathedral. Up until then, humans were viewed as flawed—basically not good—and laws, morals, and ethics protected society from bad individuals. Psychology, on the other hand, persuaded its adherents that everyone is a victim. Whatever angst you felt, issue you faced, or sin to which you were prone was no longer to be viewed as your own fault, but rather, it was the fallout of someone else’s actions. Schuller grabbed on to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and built a church based on satisfying your “**felt needs**.” Armed with a “**positive self-esteem**” (you really are good) and “**the power of positive thinking**” you could accomplish anything. As Schuller wrote:

Sin is any act or thought that robs myself of [sic] another human being of his or her self-esteem.⁶

Jesus never call [sic] a person a sinner.⁷

Feelings became the arbiter of what is true. As the high priests of psychology invaded culture and psychology became the grid through which the Bible would be interpreted, the church began changing direction and its understanding of human nature. The new view being embraced in culture was that humans are basically good; therefore, laws, morals, and ethics needed to change to protect the good individual from evil society. The four seemingly separate threads (as previously outlined) running through the church and culture were tributaries that emptied into the river of cultural change in the mid 1970’s and afterwards.

The Tributaries Converge

By the mid-1970’s, some new movers and shakers in the church concluded that evangelism was supposed to be done in the church by professionals. Training, equipping, and challenging believers to share their faith in the marketplace virtually vanished, and a sort of Christian multi-level-marketing plan was created as the “Church Growth Movement” was born. The *ministry* of the church [i.e.: training, equipping, praying (with and for), and comforting believers] was gradually abandoned, and the *mission* of the church (the proclamation of the Gospel outside the walls of the church) replaced it. As much as was possible, anything that might be “offensive” to unbelievers was eliminated, and a user-friendly “experience” replaced it. Unwittingly, psychology became the grid through which the Bible was to be understood and to convey “spiritual” truth. Personal experience and feeling good about faith were the arbiters of what was true.

In another segment of the church, the breath-taking recognition that culture had shaken off the hangover of Judeo/Christian morality set in. The attempt to reinsert itself into cultural

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**HAVE
NOTHING TO
DO WITH THE
FRUITLESS
DEEDS OF
DARKNESS,
BUT RATHER
EXPOSE THEM.**

~EPHESIANS 5:11~

“Comfortable Christianity” Continued from page 3

thought-shaping began in earnest with the advent of the Moral Majority (1979) and the election of Ronald Reagan, but the “die had been cast” as they say. Although slowing down the new cultural change slightly, Christianity was regarded as passé and viewed as limiting one’s personal rights and individualism.

So, on the one hand, some churches were working at looking more and more like culture in an effort to “be relevant;” while on the other hand, other churches were working hard at reclaiming culture for the faith and restoring the moral and ethical guidance which had previously been provided by Christianity. Through the 1980s and 1990s, the shift away from belief in objective, knowable truth was under way in earnest, and “relative truth” was embraced by culture. Morality was no longer considered objective and knowable, because truth—according to the new thinking—was not objective and knowable. The prevailing belief that everyone was entitled to “their own truth” resulted in those who were attempting to demonstrate the folly of this absurdity were now being marginalized. Sure, Evangelicals had the right to hold to their truth, but they were not to question culture’s new relativism or say anyone else’s claims were false.

President Lyndon B. Johnson launched the “War on Poverty” in his State of the Union address on January 8, 1964. Although well intended—after all, we would like to eliminate poverty—this would have a detrimental impact in several areas over time. Churches and charitable organizations would play less of a role in assisting the poor not only in supplying food, clothes, and other needs, but also in guiding them to take personal responsibility and training them to provide for themselves. As a result, the spiritual guidance, which previously came from those organizations, was eliminated in the life of the community. As the Federal Government programs grew and rewarded bad behavior and irresponsibility, poorer communities began realizing they received more benefits by having more children out of wedlock. Therefore, there was greater dependence on an increasingly Socialist government that worked at eroding Judeo/Christian morals and ethics and replacing them with new ethics—the new ethics of self. Hard work, taking risks, entrepreneurship, and business success came to be viewed as evil, and Capitalism was made the “boogey man” and cause of all the world’s ills.

Fundamentally Changing America

Although true faith has always been personal and salvation is individual, it has also been connected to and taken place as part of a community. Although rugged individualism has always been highly valued in the United States (and, indeed, in many cultures), until recently, it has never been disconnected from responsibility to community. The rugged individual was respected not only because he or she could fend for and provide for himself/herself, but also because they stood up for the weak, the hurting, and was their protector. This is reflected in our books, films, and stories. *Gladiator*, *Brave Heart*, *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, *Saving Private Ryan*, and *Schindler’s List* are all morality tales of rugged individuals who suffered great loss or started out being self-centered, but who were transformed into heroes whose lives inspired others through their self-sacrifice. The scene of Oskar Schindler in *Schindler’s List* as he is preparing to flee ahead of the arrival of the Allied Forces reduces us to tears:

Oskar Schindler: I could have got more out. I could have got more. I don’t know. If I’d just ... I could have got more.

Itzhak Stern: Oskar, there are eleven hundred people who are alive because of you. Look at them.

Oskar Schindler: If I’d made more money ... I threw away so much money. You have no idea. If I’d just ...

Itzhak Stern: There will be generations because of what you did.

Oskar Schindler: I didn’t do enough!

Itzhak Stern: You did so much.

[Schindler looks at his car.]

Oskar Schindler: This car. Goeth would have bought this car. Why did I keep the car? Ten people right there. Ten people. Ten more people. [removing Nazi pin from lapel] This pin. Two people. This is gold. Two more people. He would have given me two for it, at least one. One more person. A person, Stern. For this. [sobbing] I could have gotten one more person ... and I didn’t! And I ... I didn’t!⁸

The transformation of a self-centered opportunist to an other-centered rescuer sacrificing everything to save the lives of more than 1,100 human beings well reflects the Judeo/Christian morals and ethics of the period in which this *true story* occurred.

In contrast, the new individualism is based on denying *personal responsibility*. Healthcare paid for by someone else is deemed a “right.” A guaranteed high wage is a “right” whether one is qualified, industrious, or not. Beliefs are idolized as personal and subjective, and no one has a “right” to claim another individual’s or group’s beliefs are false. Churches and religious organizations may be allowed to provide for the poor or hurting as long as they exclude any biblical teaching or moral guidance from the Scriptures.

Subsequently, sexual sin is now outdated. Homosexuality must not only be affirmed as normal, but also must be celebrated; and marriage can be redefined to include same gender unions! This slippery slope will be further expanded to include those beliefs that advocate other deviant sexual proclivities. Even now, university academics are making the case that pedophilia is normal.⁹ An Australian court is considering legalizing incest.¹⁰ Being a financially successful business person is now judged to be a great moral evil. Objecting to the federally-approved and perpetrated religions of Darwinism and/or Climate Change are the unpardonable sins. Christian clubs on college and university campuses may have to accept members (and even have leaders) into their group who are diametrically opposed to the groups’ beliefs and charter.¹¹ All religious views, groups, and most anything which is opposed to Christianity is protected, while the move to eliminate Christianity from being seen or heard in the public square is under way. All claims must be tolerated except, of course, biblical Christianity.

There has been quite a bit of angst that the current President and his administration are fundamentally changing America, and it does seem that way. In reality, they have merely pulled back the curtain to expose all of the fundamental changes that these four tributaries have already brought about as they flowed into the river of culture. It was little observed as it took place. The warning signs were missed, and the revolution is over. First-century Paganism and beliefs have resurfaced and reclaimed culture. The Church Growth Movement gave birth to the Emergent Church which, in many cases (Brian McLaren, Rob Bell, Jim Wallis, et. al), have embraced cultural Paganism in the name of being “missional.” The belief is a dangerous self-deception. Dr. Randy White in his article “Why I am Leaving the Church Growth Movement” writes:

Even if I believed that these “missions projects” were as successful as the church websites claim (“we had an awesome God-thing happen at our last gathering”), I don’t think it has any lasting impact. As I see it, the Christian is not so much to engage his society, but to come out from it. The church today is filled with those who are both in the world and of the world, and who are organized to change the world into a kinder, gentler place to be. The success rate of the mega-church missional-church movement has been an utter failure. Society is more liberal and godless than ever before, with no end to its decline in sight. The mega-missional church will gather in their multi-campus celebrations this weekend and slobber over themselves for their victories, even while these same churches have been totally impotent to bring about societal change.¹²

Why is this the case? They maintain an illusion of being biblically centered:

Thirdly, I reject the missional-community church-growth movement because it is deceptive. Participants in these churches feel like they are stalwart conservatives in a Bible-believing, Gospel-proclaiming, Hell-reducing, Kingdom-expanding church. They consistently proclaim, “My preacher really preaches the Bible.” True, their preacher does hold up a Bible and talk about how true and authoritative it is. He even quotes from the Bible fairly consistently (“I know the plans I have for you ... I will never leave you nor forsake you ... I am come that you might have life more abundantly ... (and, of course) bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse”). What these church members do not know is that they have adopted the leftist agenda (socialism) or neo-con agenda (reconstructing a Christian society) which is as empty as it has always been.¹³

Many Christians, myself included, mourn the passing of Judeo/Christian morals and values from culture, but is that because it was truly more God-honoring, or was it just more comfortable to Christians? I am not sure, but I suspect it is the latter. When someone like Chik-fil-A CEO Dan Cathy affirms his belief that marriage is between one man and one woman, the media and government officials rise up as one voice to utterly and publicly condemn him. He has no right to such a belief and must be punished. Brendan Eich, *founder* and former CEO of Mozilla Firefox, was forced to resign after it became public knowledge he had donated \$1,000 of his *personal* finances in 2008 to support Proposition 8¹⁴ in California. I do not know if Eich is a Christian or not, but the situation demonstrates that supporting what is commonly viewed as Judeo/Christian morality *will not be tolerated*. We have reached the end of comfortable Christianity. So where do we go from here?

A Silver Lining?

In many ways, we find the church is in the same type of culture in which it was born in the first century. It was not embraced by the powers that be, was not welcomed, or made to feel comfortable. Christians rejected the idea of multiple gods, insisted that there is only one true God, and were condemned as Atheists. All truth-claims were regarded as equally true, valid, and tolerated provided one swore, “**Caesar is Lord.**” Christians refused and refused to participate in Caesar worship. This comes through clearly, as Paul instructed in Romans 10:9-13, that salvation comes by swearing, “**Jesus is Lord.**” This differing affirmation was a punishable offense. In their context, the church was the place where ministry occurred. Sound biblical teaching informed


right Christian thought and living. In a culture that reveled in sexual promiscuity, Christians were to refrain from sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 5). Sex was part of the rituals in a number of first-century beliefs and practices: Dionysus with orgies, Aphrodite also with orgies and sacred prostitutes, Thesmophoria for married women to engage in sacred ritual sex/fertility rites. The Etruscans practiced wife sharing, and no one knew who the father of any individual child was. Most Roman men of means had not only a wife, but also a mistress and a Catamite—a young boy with whom the man would have sexual relations. Christians eschewed all of these practices. The Apostle Paul stated that he didn’t judge outsiders, but that we must *judge these things within the church* (1 Corinthians 5:12).

Christians were pro-life, regularly went out in search of abandoned babies, and took them in to raise as their own. They demonstrated the power of Christ living in them by the way they lived their lives (Col. 1:27) and were trained to defend their beliefs to the non-Christians around them (Jude 3; 1 Peter 3:15). Each believer was a missionary to those they met (2 Tim. 4:2). The idea to figure out ways to get non-believers to come in to church so the professional could sneak up on them with the Gospel is foreign to Scripture. So what should the local church change? In his excellent book, *Urban Apologetics*, Pastor Christopher W. Brooks uses Martin Luther as an example:

In The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther, we learn what made Luther’s ministry and his local church so special: “Besides his academic work, Luther had also assumed responsibility of the parish of Wittenberg as a preacher. In their inseparable connectedness these two, lectern and pulpit, formed together the decisive continuum of Luther’s theological existence.” Put another way, what made Castle Church so special was Luther’s commitment to training believers to become theologically proficient and practically equipped to live out their faith in the Wittenberg context. It is precisely this type of commitment to discipleship and contextualization that is needed in every local church and in the life of every apologist. That is to say that, every apologist needs a church and every church needs an apologist. One could argue that it was Luther’s connection to Castle Church that created the platform for the birthing of the Protestant Reformation.¹⁵

This really is what we see in Scripture, elders were commissioned to guard the flock from false teaching creeping into the church and from false teachers rising up within the church (Acts 20: 28-31). They were to teach and practice sound doctrine (1 Timothy 4:11-16). Yes, they would be ridiculed. No, they did not have a comfortable faith. They were dragged before the authorities and publically accused, well let’s read it:

These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus. (Acts 17:6-7, ESV).

Do you suppose that’s how they transformed civilization? 

Bible quotes are from the English Standard Version.

ENDNOTES:

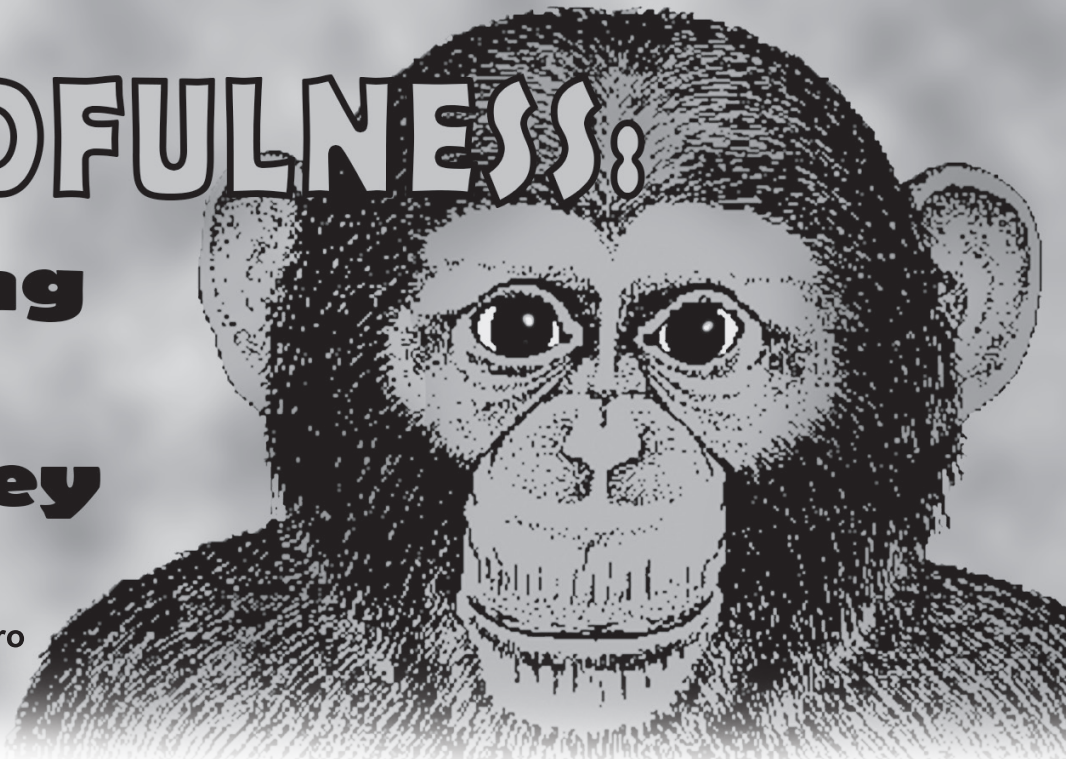
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MINDFULNESS:

Taming The Monkey

By Marcia Montenegro



Note: Although some Buddhist concepts are explained here, the thrust of the article is to describe the Western take on Buddhism via the New Age and the secular culture, and how some of its practices and concepts, especially Mindfulness, have migrated to the West, particularly the United States. In order to make a distinction between a generic understanding of the term *mindfulness* and the specific term used for the practice based on Buddhism, “Mindfulness” in this article will be spelled with a capital “M.”

We are here to awaken from our illusion of separateness.¹

Developing wisdom is a process of bringing our minds into accordance with the way things really are. Through this process we gradually remove the incorrect perceptions of reality we have had since the beginningless time.²

Be lamps unto yourselves.³

Mindfulness is a Buddhist concept and practice. Yet we now find Mindfulness taught and practiced in schools, businesses, hospitals, and prisons. People as diverse as educators, health workers, psychologists, corporation honchos, and clergyman advocate it. Its popularity is increasing with rapid-fire speed. Therefore, Christians need to know what it is, how it is being promoted, and if there is any conflict with the Christian faith.

The Meaning of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a meditative practice and an outlook on life and reality that ideally results from the type of meditation designed to cultivate the Buddhist concept of “**detachment.**” *Mindfulness* is often defined as *a moment-by-moment, nonjudgmental awareness of the present.*

Why is “**detachment.**” necessary, and what does that mean? To understand, we should know these essential teachings of Buddhism:

1. Life in this world is suffering.
2. Suffering is caused by desire for and attachment to this world, which will continue the cycle of rebirths into this world

3. The remedy for suffering is to cultivate detachment and thereby to reach enlightenment, and thus, escape rebirth.
4. The final goal is nirvana—a state of release from the cycle of rebirth and suffering. *Nirvana* means *to extinguish.*

The world, as it is perceived in Buddhist thinking, is not substantively real. The individual self has no permanent reality (it is called the “**no-self,**” “**anatman,**” or “**anatta**”), and what one recognizes as the individual self is based on faulty perceptions (this is sometimes called the “**conventional self**”). According to this view, feelings, thoughts, physical sensations, and sense of identity have fooled us into thinking we each exist as an individual. Continuing to believe this allegedly keeps us trapped in this life and the cycle of rebirth.

Desire, which is a grasping at or attachment to this world, is the cause of suffering; and so “**detachment**” must be cultivated, mainly through Mindfulness. Moreover, since the mind is part of this nominal reality, thoughts are in the way of realizing the true nature of reality and self. Mindfulness, as a meditation practice, is the tool by which one sees beyond or in between thoughts as a process of awakening to truth. The promotion of Mindfulness often includes the commonly heard maxim, “**Be in the present,**” since the goal includes detaching from past and future.

Practicing mindfulness as moment-to-moment, nonjudgmental awareness supposedly prepares one for a breakthrough in perception—an awakening to the realization that ultimate reality is formlessness devoid of any form or structure (“**sunyata,**” usually translated as “**emptiness**”). Mindfulness is particularly emphasized in Zen Buddhism and, aside from TM (Transcendental Meditation), is the Eastern meditation practice that has most deeply penetrated the West.

Mindfulness meditation is a technique of sitting still (though there is also a walking meditation), observing the breath, being aware solely of the present moment, and learning to let thoughts pass by without entertaining them. Because there is no permanent

content to the present moment since it comes and goes, eventually a state of “no-thinking” is reached. The goal is to divorce the mind and thinking process from one’s observation so that the meditator realizes he is not his thoughts, and eventually understands the “I” observing the thoughts (called the “**Witness**”) is not the conventional self, but rather, it is the “**universal**” or “**Buddha-self**” (terms vary). This Buddha-self is the “**Buddha-nature**” of the universe, which is the only permanent reality.

For many years, this writer attempted to incorporate Mindfulness into her life prior to becoming a Christian, and I can attest to its power in altering one’s worldview and conforming one’s thinking to embrace Buddhist concepts.

The Chattering Monkey

How can an anti-individualistic worldview worm its way into a highly individualized culture as exists in the United States? This happens slowly through Buddhist meditation, which conditions the mind through employment of certain terminologies and familiar terms, but which have been redefined using Buddhist concepts.

You might notice the term “**monkey mind**” popping up here and there. In promoting Mindfulness, the thinking mind is targeted as a “**chattering monkey**.” Thoughts are the chatter, and meditation is used to tame and silence this “**monkey mind**,” so that it can become “**Buddha-mind**.” As one source puts it:

Often in meditation, that monkey mind doesn’t transform into a peaceable primate, but continues to scurry about, distracting attention. Indeed, it is common for thoughts to appear to increase in intensity during concentrated meditation practice. This is either because whilst in the confines of the practice the monkey mind reacts with increased activity, or because in focused meditation thoughts are “lit up” and are noticed more than they normally are.⁴

Thoughts are treated as an independent activity, divorced from one’s true self—the “**Buddha-self**.” The temporal world, including the mind, is part of a “**rising and falling**”^{**} which is not substantively real. One must transcend this **rising and falling** through meditation practice.

Meditation trains the person to watch thoughts so that the meditator does not attach to the thoughts and follow them. Eventually, the space between thoughts widens until there are no thoughts and “no mind” is reached. The site continues:

Buddha Mind is our real nature, the unconditioned “Mind” - and words are metaphors here, remember - that lies beneath the conditioned monkey mind that is interdependent with the world with which it interacts.⁵

Phrases such as “**impermanence**,” “**rising and falling**,” “**being, not doing**,” “**monkey mind**,” “**chattering mind**,” and others are appearing more frequently in literature and other media, including Smartphone apps, that give advice on reducing stress. This denigration of thinking portrays the mind as the problem and thoughts as a source of confusion. Moreover, when such terms become more familiar and popular, the concepts attached to them also tend to become more widely accepted over time. There is a prevailing assumption that we cannot truly function nor have any peace unless we practice this type of meditation.

Mindfulness meditation is, therefore, the Buddhist way to tame the so-called “**chattering mind**” and uncover the silent “**Buddha-mind**” underneath all the “**rising and falling**.” It was *not* designed for stress reduction or to be a trendy dabbling for harried Westerners. *It is rigorously religious and strictly spiritual.*

The Secularization of Mindfulness

Several people have pushed Mindfulness as a concept and practice in the United States. They can’t deny its religious basis, yet they present it as a secular method. One of the most influential, Zen Buddhist Jon Kabat-Zinn (b. 1944), whose PhD is in Molecular Biology, runs the Center for Mindfulness (formerly the Stress Reduction Clinic), which he founded in 1979 at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Kabat-Zinn’s stress-reduction and Mindfulness program—MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction)—has spread to over 200 hospitals and medical centers around the country. One news article reports:

Kabat-Zinn is reluctant to use the word “spiritual” to describe the approach to healthy living that he promotes, characterizing it instead as being “grounded in common sense.”

“I don’t have to use the word ‘spiritual,’” he said. “Part of it is the power of silence and stillness. And part of that power is the power of healing that happens when you move from the domain of doing to being. It’s transformative.”⁶

In a self-contradictory statement, he said:

Mindfulness, the heart of Buddhist meditation, is at the core of being able to live life as if it really matters. It has nothing to do with Buddhism. It has to do with freedom.⁷ [emphasis added]

So Mindfulness is “**the heart of Buddhist meditation**” but “**has nothing to do with Buddhism**.” Kabat-Zinn himself is no secular person. He was a student of Zen Master Seung Sahn and is a founding member of Cambridge Zen Center. Another influential non-secular person in Mindfulness is Thich Nhat Hanh (b. 1926), a Zen Buddhist monk from Vietnam, who lectures around the country as a Mindfulness enthusiast, and whose books promoting Mindfulness have enjoyed great success in the West.

Zen Buddhist Peter Senge (considered by many to be the successor to influential management guru Peter Drucker) incorporates Zen Buddhist concepts such as being “**trapped in structures**” and “**trapped in the theater of our thoughts**” in his popular book *The Fifth Discipline*. Additionally, he recommends “**some form of meditation**” such as “**contemplative prayer**” or a method to quiet “**the conscious mind**” as well as suggesting “**regular meditative practice**.”⁸

Senge is a familiar figure on the New Age landscape as well, appearing in several interviews on the New Age website *Enlighten Next* and on the website of New Age philosopher Andrew Cohen.

Additionally, Buddhist terms loaded with spiritual meaning are being used as though they have only a secular meaning. The word “**compassion**” is being joined with the term “**Mindfulness**” to promote Mindfulness in schools and elsewhere. Buddhist teachers make frequent use of the word “**compassion**” (this is very common with the Dalai Lama), but the problem is that non-Buddhists do not know all the implications of this term. “**Compassion**” in Buddhism is not simply having empathy or care for people. Compassion includes the Buddhist view that all non-human beings (called “**sentient beings**”) are in need of rebirth as humans, because only humans can attain enlightenment. Since rebirth can also send a human into a non-human state,⁹ the Buddhist must spread Buddhist teachings and work at his own enlightenment in order to help advance Buddhist truths

—Continued on page 8

“Monkey” Continued from page 7

so that all can eventually be liberated from the cycle of rebirth. In Buddhism, Buddhist enlightenment is the only way for such liberation. **“Compassion”** in Buddhist thinking, therefore, is a *religious term*, not a secular one, especially when used in the context of Mindfulness.

Stress is the New Bogeyman

At the urging of the Dalai Lama through his Mind and Life Institute, neuroscientists have been doing studies on the brains of meditators.¹⁰ A study with only 16 people showed a **“decrease in gray matter in the amygdala, a region of the brain that affects fear and stress, which correlated with a change in self-reported stress levels.”**¹¹ Whether this decrease really indicates stress reduction, temporary or permanent, is not known. Showing cause-and-effect in the brain is difficult with something as vague and varied as meditation (there are a variety of ways to meditate). Moreover, there are other ways to reduce stress.

Several corporations—such as Google, Target, and General Mills—offer Mindfulness training and seminars to their employees as a stress-reduction program, as do business schools Claremont Graduate University and Harvard Business School.¹²

There has been a great effort on the part of alternative-treatment practitioners to emphasize stress in the culture, which then allows them to advocate their particular remedies for it. Mindfulness therapy is now extensively used in psychology and psychotherapy.

Has anyone considered that instead of taking time to learn a stress-reduction technique, it would be more valuable and practical to use that time playing board games, strolling in a park, relaxing to soft music, reading a good book, taking a nap, developing a hobby, or one of many other pleasant activities that people enjoy? Studies done on many more than 16 people have shown that such activities lower blood pressure and bring down heart rates.

Mindfulness is the New Education

At least two articles in *Scholastic Parent and Child Magazine* (October 2011 and May 2014) have featured and promoted Mindfulness for children. The 2011 article, “It’s All In Your Mind,” by Lynne Ticknor, promotes Mindfulness, along with her brief interview of Goldie Hawn and her Buddhist-based MindUP™ program for schools. Hawn, like many other celebrities, is a devotee of Mindfulness. The article refers to Mindfulness as **“based in the philosophy of Buddhism”** and quickly adds, **“But it’s not religion”** and **“there are no spiritual overtones.”**¹³

Susan Kaiser Greenland, author of *The Mindful Child*, has been teaching Mindfulness and promoting it in inner-city schools through her foundation—Inner Kids Foundation. In an interview, Greenland said this about the link of mindfulness to Buddhism:

The Buddhist foundations/applications of the secular mindfulness work can be a great strength rather than an Achilles heel if reframed as a well-established, evidence based training protocol shown to reduce stress, improve immune function, develop executive function and attention with measurable results when it comes to changes not just in the health and wellness of the individual but also in the likelihood of an individual who has undergone that training in engaging in social, compassionate action.¹⁴

She acknowledges that Buddhism is the foundation of mindfulness, but implies that if mindfulness can be **“reframed”** using terms related to mental health and stress reduction, then the

messy issue of religion can be circumvented.

The *Scholastics’* article states that children are taught to focus on their breathing, **“an age-old exercise in finding calm and balance – or their ‘center.’”**¹⁵ One photograph in the print edition shows a mother and child sitting in lotus position*** with eyes closed. Another shows two young children (about age 6) sitting side-by-side in a lotus position with eyes closed. Clearly, there is more than just breathing going on.

Zen Buddhism is primarily a mixture of Taoism and Buddhism called *Chan* (*Zen* in Japan) and came from China. Controlling breath is part of controlling and balancing **“chi”**—(viewed as) a universal life-force—thus achieving health and longevity (in Taoist thinking). This idea about the breath is very similar to the Taoist teaching that one must base one’s self in the flow of **“chi”** and, thus, balance the two forces of **“yin and yang.”**

Even if the children are not doing a full-on Mindfulness meditation (which would be difficult for most children), they are being introduced to it, taught how to do it, and told it is the way to deal with their feelings. Being told that this is how to deal with anger or fear may also give the subtle message that emotions are a bad thing.

Mindfulness as taught in schools is communicating to a child that he should always be calm, always clear-headed, always in control. This certainly could convey a negative message to more emotional children and to children with various psychological, neurological, and emotional problems and make them self-conscious about their feelings.

Some educators are using visualization, meditation CDs and an iPad or iPhone app called BellyBio, **“that helps regulate breathing rhythms.”**¹⁶ Guided visualization is a form of hypnosis; so this should cause alarm if, indeed, this form of visualization is being used.

Interestingly, Scholastic is the parent company of MindUP™, the program started by actress and practicing Buddhist Goldie Hawn. Scholastic is a global enterprise, creating and distributing:

... educational and entertaining materials and products for use in school and at home, including children’s books, magazines, technology-based products, teacher materials, television programming, feature film, videos and toys. Scholastic distributes its products and services through a variety of channels, including proprietary school-based book clubs, school-based book fairs, retail stores, schools, libraries and television networks; and Scholastic.com.¹⁷

The advocacy of Mindfulness by a corporate giant such as Scholastic is a prime example of how Eastern beliefs are being endorsed and disseminated in the culture. Is this not a type of therapy being foisted on children without parental consent? Are children, especially in the lower grades, able to handle such information? Should children be made to worry about their emotions? At the very least, using Mindfulness should be a decision for a parent, not for the school or educators.

Parents would benefit from monitoring carefully what is going on in their child’s classroom. They need to ask for information on all the activities taking place in the class. Parents can talk to the teacher or principal and ask to opt their child out based on religious views. Even if the school denies that Mindfulness is religious, the parent can state that it conflicts with his or her faith.

The Mind and God

Whereas thoughts and thinking get in the way of

spiritual enlightenment according to Mindfulness, God tells us that thinking and reason are part of how God wired us, since man is made in His image and having a mind is part of that. Reason and thought are rooted in God's character.

And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matt. 22:37, emphasis added).

Moreover, the world is God's creation. It is not a mere illusory phenomenon of "rising and falling." The world was created good, became corrupt through man's sin; but one day, the world will be restored.¹⁸

Any teaching that the mind or thinking is bad or prevents spiritual understanding is at odds with the nature of God as a Being of intelligence and reason. In giving us His Word in the 66 books of the Bible, He expects thinking and reasoning since language cannot function without them. Using the term "chattering mind" or "monkey mind" denigrates the mind God gave us.

Should You Practice Mindfulness?

If one practices Mindfulness meditation on a fairly regular basis (not even necessarily every day), that person may eventually adopt the worldview behind it, leading one to believe the process of "detachment" is at work. However, since the self is real, there can be no true "detachment;" therefore, no liberation or true peace results from Mindfulness.

Buddhism has no supreme God, no mind, and no individual self. Ultimate reality is *sunyata*, a term loosely translated as "the void" or "emptiness," and refers to the Buddhist concept of ultimate reality of formlessness from which all allegedly has arisen. Mindfulness rests on the belief the world is full of "rising and falling," and peace comes with the cessation of "rising and falling." But there can be no joy or peace in formlessness, because the self is not there, since there is no self.

If you are a Christian, the basis, rationale, and goal of Mindfulness is in complete conflict with a Christian worldview and with the reality presented by God in his Word. Mindfulness has nothing in common with biblical meditation, which is thoughtful contemplation and pondering of God's Word; nor is it biblical prayer.

Biblical meditation and prayer do not intend to go beyond thought—either to achieve a mystical oneness with God or to "hear" from God. Prayer in the Bible is always presented as verbal praise, petition, confession, and expression of gratitude to God.

Furthermore, the concept of needing "detachment" goes against biblical teaching that we should remember what God has done, and vividly keep before us Christ's Atonement on the cross, His bodily resurrection, and His return. There are many desires that are good; and desire to know God more deeply through prayer, Bible study, and worship nourishes believers in Christ. There is no need to fear attachment or good desires. Furthermore, true peace comes through reconciliation with God through faith in Christ, not by a manmade technique such as meditation.

The teaching of Mindfulness and the teaching of Christianity do not mesh and cannot co-exist. ☐

***Detachment** for the westerner, usually implies not caring or indifference; whereas according to Buddhist teaching it is learning to disconnect from desire (grasping at this world) and false views of reality which keep one in the cycle of rebirth.

****Rising and falling** is a term describing the Buddhist view that we are caught in the web of thinking and feeling which reinforces our identification with our mind and self thereby continuing a false perception of reality.

*****Lotus position** is a posture from Yoga which requires sitting with one's legs crossed in a specific manner that is considered meditative.

Bible quotations are from the New American Standard Version.

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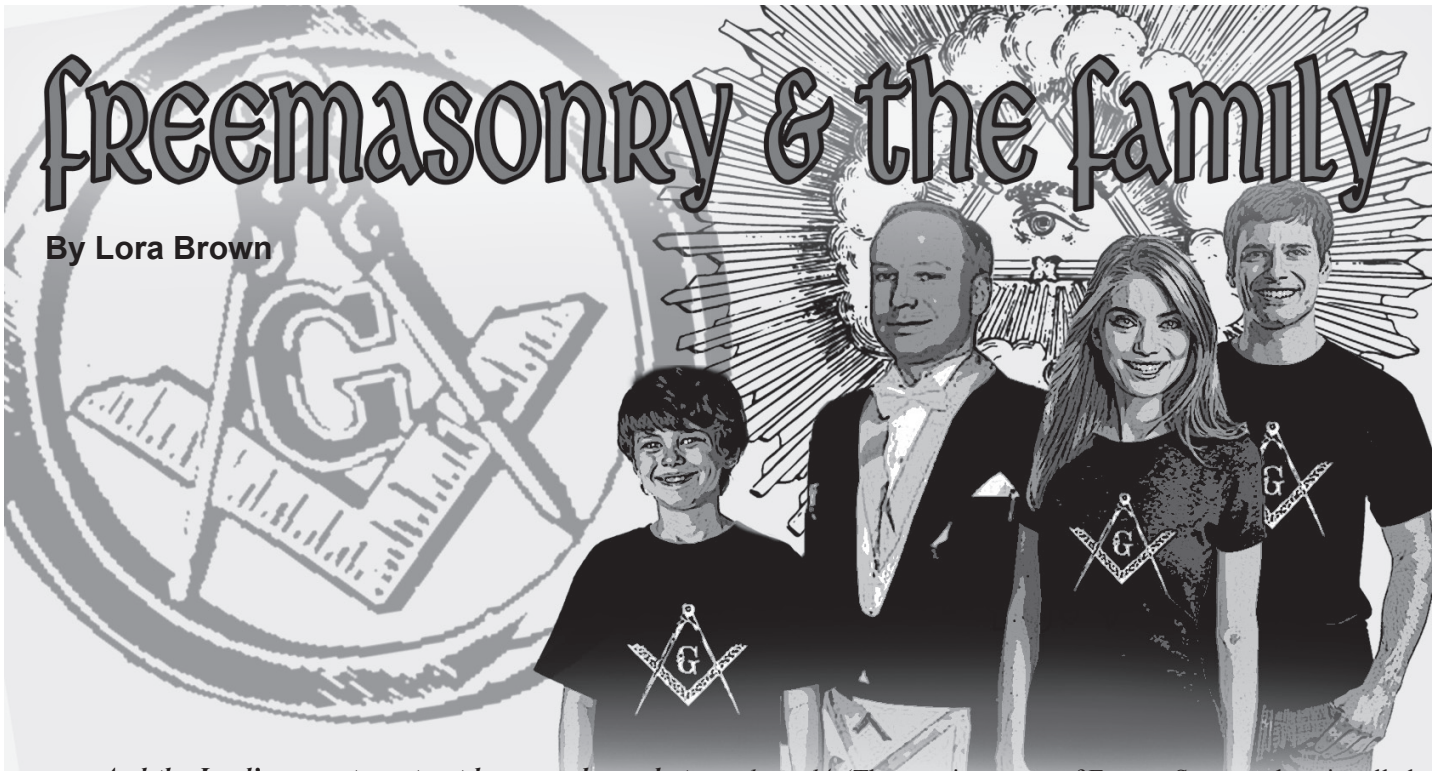


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freemasonry & the family

By Lora Brown



And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. (2 Tim. 2:24-26, NIV).

The intent of this article is to comply with the above biblical instruction given to Timothy and to present information regarding Freemasonry and Affiliated Orders with the hope that this knowledge will result in the deliverance mentioned therein as well.

What is Freemasonry?

In order to understand its Affiliated Orders, it is first necessary to give a brief overview of Masonry and its symbolism, beliefs, practices, and terminology.

The Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (Freemasonry) is widely known as an all-male, secret society. (The truth of the matter is that there is only one well-kept Masonic secret, and that is that *there are no Masonic secrets.*)¹

Masons have established organizations called *Orders* (a community, a religious rule; esp: one requiring members to take solemn vows²) in which their wives and children participate. I will use the term *affiliated* to apply to all such Orders and may distinguish the childrens' and teens' Orders as *Junior Orders*.

There are over 50 Affiliated Orders that Masons have established for women and children. The most popular Affiliated Orders include DeMolay International (for boys), and for females there are the Order of the Eastern Star (Star) (for women), Job's Daughters International, and International Order of Rainbow for Girls. These Orders consist of more than one Degree (an order of classification³); and by obtaining these Degrees, one can rise in rank, which creates a hierarchy within the Orders.

Masonic Lodge meetings are held on a regular basis to discuss Lodge business and to conduct initiations. *Lodge* is defined as *the meeting place of a branch of an organization and esp. a fraternal; organization or the body of members of such a*

*branch*⁴. (The meeting group of Eastern Star members is called a *Chapter*; Job's Daughters meet as a *Bethel*; Rainbow Girls meet as an *Assembly*; DeMolay members have a *Chapter* and Shriners have *Temples*.)

The all-male, adult Masons move through different "**degrees**" of initiation and then (in the USA) become involved in one of two main branches or "**Rites**" (there are over 80 Rites of Freemasonry worldwide). For a man to be a full-fledged Mason, he must be initiated into all three degrees of Blue Lodge Masonry. Each of these degrees involves certain prescribed rituals, including the swearing of various oaths. He begins by being "**entered**" into "**Entered Apprentice Degree.**" Then he is "**passed**" to the "**Fellow Craft Degree**" and finally "**raised**" to the Third Degree, that of "**Master Mason.**"

Following this, Master Masons may then pursue additional degrees through either the "**York Rite**" (an additional 10 degrees) or the "**Scottish Rite**"⁵ (an additional 30 Degrees. Perhaps you've heard someone referred to as a 33rd Degree Mason.)

You may be familiar with the Shrine Masons (Shriners), who are an offshoot of Masonry. In parades, the Shriners are the men dressed as clowns or wearing a red hat called a "**fez**" and riding miniature motorcycles or cars. Shriners are known for their circuses which are, in part, held to collect monies to fund the Shrine for their philanthropies, including hospitals for burned and crippled children.

Masonic Symbolism

All Masonic symbolism has at least two meanings, an *exoteric* (known) meaning and an *esoteric* (secret) meaning. Masonry's three most prominent symbols include the "**Square and Compass**" with an embedded letter "**G**"* (on lapel pins, rings, and cars), the red "**Fez**" cap, and the "**Lambskin Apron.**"

Masonry is, according to its own philosophers, a system of pure religion expressed in symbols, one which cannot be understood without a knowledge of the true meaning of them.⁶

They claim:

We are a society with secrets, but we are not a secret society.⁷

Freemasonry teaches:

Faith in the atonement of Jesus has nothing to do with [redemption]; it is rather a matter of enlightenment, step by step, which comes with initiation into the Masonic degrees and their mysteries.⁸

The Mason is made spiritually perfect and sinless by:

- (a) being enlightened (having both secret knowledge and the proper understanding of it);
- (b) faithfulness to death to his oaths of obligation; and
- (c) his virtuous life (salvation by doing good works).⁹

Masonry's Search for Light

Albert Pike, one of the most prominent Masonic authors, states in his book *Morals and Dogma*:

Masonry is a search after light. That search leads us directly back, as you see, to the Kabbalah [sic].¹⁰

(The *Kabbalah* is a medieval book of Jewish theosophy and mysticism.)

Albert Pike also states:

Masonry, like all the religions, all the mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, conceals [emphasis his], its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who only deserve to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it.¹¹

Freemasonry refers to the Bible** as one of three “**great lights**” of the Lodge of Masonry¹² and a piece of “**furniture.**”¹³ While most Masonic and Affiliated Orders have a Bible open on their altar:

Blue Lodge Masonry has nothing whatever to do with the Bible. It is not founded on the Bible; if it was it would not be Masonry; it would be something else.¹⁴

In Rainbow Girls, the Bible is a “**symbol of white light,**”¹⁵ the “**great source of the White Light**”¹⁶ [enlightenment], and the “**symbol of True Womanhood.**”¹⁷

Junior Masonic Orders

Masons state that one of the benefits and goals of belonging to Junior Orders, in general, and DeMolay, in particular, is:

The Order[s] are a viable member of the Masonic family, teaching Masonic values to young girls and boys, introducing them to the merits of future membership in adult Masonic bodies and influencing fathers, brothers, and friends to become associated with Freemasonry.¹⁸

[Freemasonry] **has its own ready-made membership resources. We have only to bring these youths into our lodges, Eastern Star chapters or other Masonic organizations.¹⁹**

Junior Masonic Orders serve as a type of “prep-school” to Masonry and its affiliated adult female orders. Children as young as age seven are familiarized with ritual work and secrecy in preparation for membership in adult orders. These children and teens may experience tremendous parental, familial or peer pressure to join Junior Orders and, subsequently, adult orders.

Lodge Widows and Orphans

Masons swear to keep the secrets of Freemasonry from their wives and children. Their bloody-death oaths seem to supersede the marriage vows between husband and wife. Children without a Masonic heritage swear to keep the ritual work secret

from their parents. This secrecy may cause a rift between the child(ren) and parent(s), which could later create a chasm and, eventually, a wall of emotional distance.

The uninitiated children and wives of Masons may have difficulty believing there are critical errors within Freemasonry and Affiliated Orders, because that relative “goes to church,” is a “good person,” a “Christian,” and certainly wouldn’t join any group labeled “bad.” Imagine their pride if their husband, mother, grandparents, uncles, and/or older siblings participate in Masonry and Affiliated Orders and the child comes of age to join. He or she wouldn’t want to be left out, and more than likely would join, especially if they specifically were asked by their parents to do so. If parent(s) participate and send their children to meetings, why would the child or (spouse) think there could be anything wrong with Masonry?

Comparing Affiliated Orders to Freemasonry

The rituals of most Affiliated Orders were written by Masons and, therefore, have strong Masonic origins, influence, and resemblance. They contain versions of the beliefs, practices, symbolism, and allegories of Freemasonry in a “watered-down, sugar-coated” form to make them less offensive and more palatable. These Orders may differ from one another, but they still hold many things in common with Freemasonry. Affiliated Masonic Orders are *like* Freemasonry in that:

1. They require belief in a “**Supreme Being,**” which could refer to any entity.²⁰ In Masonry, “god” has the generic name “**Grand Architect of the Universe.**”
2. Masonry claims Jesus Christ was a great “**man**” of the past. However, Albert Mackey stated, “**The removal of the name of Jesus and references to Him in Bible verses used in the ritual are slight but necessary modifications.**”²¹ (emphasis added)
3. They are universal in nature believing in the “**Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man.**”²² Meetings open and close with universal prayers so as not to offend anyone and so as to apply to everyone.²³
4. They have a “**Volume of Sacred Law**”²⁴ (typically the *Holy Bible*) open on the altar. Masons consider the *Holy Bible* to be merely one of many “holy books” and is readily interchangeable with any other holy book.²⁵
5. At least one Mason must be present at every meeting in order for it to be conducted.
6. Non-members are ‘purged’ (dismissed) from the meeting room before any ritual work takes place.
7. Initiation rituals are elaborate and full of symbolism and allegory. A story line is exemplified/acted out like a play with the candidate playing an important role. The Masonic initiate imitates Hiram Abiff. DeMolay boys act out the trial and execution of Jacques DeMolay. Job’s Daughters play out the life and trials of Job.^{***}
8. Orders are very elite in selecting their members. Potential members must be recommended by two Masons, questioned by an “**Investigating Committee,**” and approved before their petition goes to ballot. In Rainbow Girls, the “**Investigating Committee**” consists of the “**Mother Advisor**” of the Assembly, the “**Worthy Advisor,**” and another Rainbow Girl.
9. Initiates stay in the “**Preparation Room**”—a waiting place for solemn contemplation and introspect—before participating in religious rites such as: —*Continued on page 12*

“Masons” Continued from page 11

- a) Divestiture. Removing something. In Freemasonry, this includes certain articles of clothing.
 - b) Destitution. Being divested of all things of value (coins, watches, jewelry and wedding bands).
 - c) Induction. Initiation.
 - d) Circumambulation. Walking in a circle around a central object (the altar). This is an element of sun worship. During my 2½-hour Rainbow Girl initiation, I was led completely around the room 14 times.
 - e) Investiture. Receiving something (i.e.: an Apron).
 - f) Entrusting. The candidate receives the secret words, handshakes, signs and symbols of the order.
 - g) Illumination. The candidate is brought out of [spiritual] “**darkness**” into [spiritual] “**light.**” (i.e.: when the candidate’s blindfold is removed).
10. Members are made to swear oaths administered phrase-by-phrase. As a Rainbow Girl, I personally swore 18 oaths.
 11. Rote lectures and prayers are memorized and recited by the members and presented to the candidate as “**life lessons.**”
 12. There is a distinct hierarchy within the Orders. Officers have extravagant names such as “**Worthy Advisor,**” “**Worthy Matron,**” “**Master Councilor,**” “**Honored Queen,**” “**Senior Princess,**” etc.
 13. Upon reaching the age of majority (adulthood), junior members go through an elaborate “**coming of age**” ceremony. Upon reaching age 21, DeMolay members can only return to meetings if they join Freemasonry.
 14. Hazing sometimes is involved.

Affiliated Masonic Orders are *unlike* Freemasonry in that *they do not take blood oaths.*

Order of the Eastern Star

The most prominent women’s Affiliated Order is the Order of the Eastern Star (Star). Created in 1850, its Ritual was written by the poet, philosopher, and teacher Rob Morris, a prominent Mason from Kentucky.²⁶ Four of the five Star characters are named after women of the Bible: “**Adah, Ruth, Esther, Martha.**” However, the fifth character “**Electa**” not a personal name found in the Bible.²⁷ The Star emblem is a pentagram, which is stamped upon the Eastern Star Ritual cover. The pentagram—an inverted, five-pointed star—is the most significant symbol of Satanism and is found in the Satanic Bible. The Star Ritual refers to the *Kabbalah* in its motto: “**Fairest Among Thousands, Altogether Lovely,**”²⁸ this acronym being, “F-A-T-A-L” or “FATAL.”

The Star Ritual states:

We meet in private that we may arrange our plans for the good work in which we are engaged without interruption from those who cannot understand or sympathize with us ... A large portion of our work lies in acquiring knowledge of how best ... to find the true path that leads to everlasting life.²⁹

International Order of Rainbow for Girls

Rev. William Mark Sexson, founder of the International Order of Rainbow for Girls, aka Rainbow, states Rainbow is:

... an international secret fraternal organization for girls of teenage. Rainbow is not just a club or lodge.³⁰

Girls ages 11-21 are eligible for membership.

My Testimony

When I was 11-years old, my friend Pam talked to me about Rainbow, of which she was a member. She spoke about wear-

ing beautiful formal dresses and lots of parties, but she wouldn’t elaborate when I asked for details. It was during recess on my 12th birthday when Pam gave me a petition to join. I had no Masonic connection on either side of my family.

My mother had never heard of Rainbow, but her friend had two daughters who were members. Satisfied by her friend’s claim that Rainbow was *harmless*, Mother signed the petition.

The “**Investigating Committee**” visited my mother and me in our home, and explained Rainbow was *like Girl Scouts, but religious*. Soon after, I received a letter notifying me of my acceptance into the Order. I went to the local Masonic Temple and was initiated during a beautiful, but overwhelming 2-½ hour ceremony.

I was an ardent member, excelling in all areas. At age 13, I was elected to the station of Faith—the first of five offices “**going up the chairs**” to become the presiding officer of the local Assembly. At age 15, I was installed as “**Worthy Advisor;**” and the following year, I was installed as a “**Grand Representative**”—an ambassador from my home state to the Grand Lodge of Rainbow in another state.

At age 18, I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior after mature Christian friends challenged my beliefs about Rainbow and Masonry. It was a pivotal point in my life. The Lord prompted me to leave Rainbow after six years of membership. By this time, I had spent a third of my life as a Rainbow Girl! I stopped attending meetings, petitioned for a withdrawal, and quit paying dues. I began to research Masonry, and I eventually came across anti-Masonic literature; but nothing specifically was said about Rainbow. I couldn’t see the connection between the atrocious initiations, blood oaths and hazing in which Masons participated, and what I thought was the beautiful Ritual of Rainbow.

Twenty-two months after I petitioned for withdrawal, I received a letter from the Assembly with a “**Majority Card**” inside. This is a card given to Rainbow Girls in good standing upon reaching the age of 20, and it is the equivalent of an honorary, lifetime membership with all the privileges of a member except voting and holding office.

I eventually repented of my participation, renounced my oaths, and received God’s forgiveness. Through all this, I clung to God’s promises:

When a young lady still living in her father’s household makes a vow to the Lord or obligates herself by a pledge and her father hears about her vow or pledge but says nothing to her, then all of her vows and every pledge by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her father forbids her when he hears about it, none of her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand; the Lord will release her because her [Heavenly] father has forbidden her. (Numbers 30:3-5)

Job’s Daughters International

Job’s Daughters International was founded by Eastern Star member Mrs. Ethel T. Wead Mick. The current Ritual was written by a Mason named LeRoy T. Wilcox. Job’s Daughters is the only international organization for girls that requires all of its members to have a close relationship with a Master Mason. The Order is based upon the life of Job as told in the Holy Bible. Its key verse is Job 42:15 which states:

And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job, and their father gave them an inheritance among their brethren.

Girls ages 11-20 are eligible for membership, and girls ages 10 may pledge membership. Members are affectionately referred to as “**Jobies**,” girls join a local “**Bethel**” (Holy Place); candidates are called “**Pilgrims**,” and the executive officer is a woman whose title is “**Bethel Guardian**.” Job’s Daughters dress in white, Grecian robes, and elected officers wear tiaras.

From the theological perspective of Rev. Eldon Winkler:

Religion without reference to the unique Person and Word of Jesus Christ commends itself well to the Orders allied to Freemasonry. Masonry’s universal religion can be appealing and at the same time deadening. At one point during the Ritual, the Fourth Messenger advises that the “significance of her duty is that righteous service will lead to life eternal.”³¹

Job’s Daughters Testimonials

Erin joined Job’s Daughters as a 13-year-old girl looking for love and acceptance. She became immersed in the organization and served three terms as “**Honored Queen**” (presiding officer). In high school, she came to know Christ and quickly found Christianity and the Masonic Lodge were not compatible or even complementary. Erin realized that, while she had given her all to Job’s Daughters, she had to leave it behind in order to walk in the light of Jesus Christ. In her words, the freedom that has come to her heart, mind, and all other aspects of her life after leaving Job’s Daughters has been “**incredible**.” She experienced “**the truth**” that truly sets a person “**free**.” (John 8:32) Erin says that whatever benefits Job’s Daughters or other Masonic organizations may provide, they are not worth supporting a *religion* that is falsely telling its subscribers that any faith—as long as good works accompany it—will allow their admittance into heaven. This is completely contrary to what the Bible teaches. (cf. Eph.2:8-9)

Allison didn’t need much convincing that she needed to repent and renounce her activities in Job’s Daughters. She identified several things about Job’s Daughters that seemed worthwhile: friendship, belonging, and the activities. “**I could see how [the ritual work and meetings] benefitted us, giving us skills, respect, and confidence. But is all this worth it?**” She started to question Job’s Daughter’s and Masonry. She prayed about her participation and realized it would be a big decision if she was going to quit after four years of membership. Leaving Job’s at age 15, Allison was shunned by her family who were all heavily involved in various forms of Freemasonry. She has *never* regretted quitting saying she is now closer to God than ever.

Josephine began to realize that Job’s Daughters was not a true *Christian* organization, because it does not teach the need to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and obey Him as Lord. She publicly declared the oaths she took are null and void and trusts God has released her from them. (See Leviticus 5:4-5.)

The Order of DeMolay

Frank S. Land, a Mason and a Christian Scientist, founded the Order of DeMolay in 1919:

... in hopes of increasing Masonic membership in latter years by recruiting these boys.³²

The name DeMolay was selected in honor of Jacques DeMolay, a fourteenth-century leader of the Knights Templars (a Masonic group claiming belief in the Christian religion), who was arrested in Paris with 60 other Templars in 1307. DeMolay was burned at the stake by King Philip IV of France after being held in prison for seven years under charges of “**blasphemy,**

heresy, witchcraft and devil worship.³³ One of the three DeMolay Degrees dramatizes the trial and execution of Jacques DeMolay.


DeMolay’s objective is the encouragement and development of good citizenship and sound character among young boys. The “**Senior Deacon**” explains during an initiation ceremony:

... the purpose of the Order is to teach and practice the virtues of clean, upright, patriotic, and reverent living as the best preparation for the manhood we are approaching. We are earnestly striving to be better sons, better brothers and better friends that when we reach the years of manhood we may be better men.³⁴

In the “**Preparation Room**,” the DeMolay candidate is “**hoodwinked**” (blindfolded) and swears an oath of allegiance and secrecy. He seals his vows by kissing the *Holy Bible*. After the blindfold is removed, the candidate is escorted to seven “**Preceptors**” (members) who each place a jewel in the “**Crown of Youth**.”³⁵ This crown is a prop used to impress “**life lessons**” upon the initiate. The seven jewels represent: filial love, reverence for sacred things, courtesy, comradeship, fidelity, cleanliness, and patriotism. As the second jewel is placed into the crown, the “**Preceptor**” explains:

As we are all sons of earthly parents, so we are the children of the universal father.³⁶

An older survey lists interesting statistics about Order of DeMolay members.³⁷ At the time of their initiation, 55% of the boys had fathers who were not Freemasons. Eventually, 65% of all DeMolay members seek admission to Freemasonry. One eastern state reported that 82% of all men joining the Masonic Lodge during a five-year period had been members of DeMolay International.

The truth contained in this article is presented in love in order to shed light on a dark subject. Jesus, the Son of God, said, “**I am the way, the truth and the life**” (John 14:6). We know “**the truth will set you free**” (John 8:32). God *promises*, “**if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.**” (John 8:36) (emphasis added) 

***The embedded letter “G”:** stands for Geometry or God
****Holy Bible:** Other Masonic groups throughout the world will use whatever holy book is appropriate to the group involved.
*****Hiram Abiff:** According to Freemasonry, is the central character in Blue Lodge Masonry. He allegedly was the master mason in the building of King Solomon’s temple.

Jacques DeMolay: (see article under “Order of DeMolay.”)

Job: The biblical story of Job is exemplified in the ritual work of Job’s Daughters.

Bible quotes are from the New International Version.

Recommended resources:

Ephesians 5:11 Ministries - WWW.EPHESIANS5-11.ORG

Ex-Masons For Jesus - WWW.EMFJ.ORG

Sound Doctrine Ministries – WWW.SADMIN.ORG

Rooftop Ministries - WWW.ROOFTOPMIN.ORG

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ENDNOTES:

For a complete list of endnotes and resources, please contact the author, Lora Brown, at Rooftop Ministries (<http://www.rooftopmin.org/>) or e-mail her at rooftop_ministries@hotmail.com.

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ATHEISM'S SECRET EXPOSED

By Ken Ammi

In 1869, Thomas Henry Huxley coined the term *Agnostic* due to the fact Theists claimed to be certain of God's existence, and Atheists claimed to be certain God does not exist. Huxley claimed not to have enough information to be certain of either option, and so he concocted a term that literally means *lack of knowledge* (from compounding the Greek terms *a-* meaning to *lack* and *gnosis* meaning *knowledge*). This concept also comes to us from the Latin words that form the English words "ignorance" or "ignorant".¹

Since the late 1800s, Atheists have sought to represent their view(s)* as being sophisticatedly premised upon philosophy and science. Thus, Atheists have sought to present their view(s) as not only philosophic and scientific, but also as superior (within those realms of knowledge) to Theism, which they claim has failed to present sophisticated philosophic and scientific evidences for God's existence.

Yet, there are many Atheists who appear to take pride in just how early in life they became Atheists. A good example is Richard Dawkins (author of *The God Delusion* and figurehead of the New Atheists movement). He was raised an Anglican, claims to have begun experiencing doubts at the age of nine and finally rejected God at the age of 16 when he was taught the Darwinian Theory of Evolution.

If you have ever wondered why so many Atheists discuss theological matters with references to unicorns, fairies, sky daddy, Santa Claus, invisible friends, etc., it is because at such young ages their theological acumen remained undeveloped. It must also be considered that childhood rejection of God *just so happens* to coincide with the time when many children become rebellious against their parents (who represent their authority), and thus, they take it a step further to rebellion against the ultimate authority figure: God.

Why Atheism?

Paul Vitz, Professor of Psychology and former Atheist, made a fascinating study of history's most famous Atheists and

found they all had fathers who either were absent (due to having abandoned their families or having died whilst the child was very young) or had poor relationships with their fathers or had fathers they perceived to be weak pushovers. In short, rejection of their earthly father lead to rejection of their Father in Heaven.²

Helmut Ditsch, prominent hyperrealism artist, represents a good example of this sort of psychological and emotional reaction to early-life experiences:

Until my twenties, I was an atheist. Although I felt the spiritual world, I used atheism as a reaction to a very difficult childhood. My mother died when I was 8 years old. Although my father was concerned with giving us a comfortable childhood, it was ... sad.³

The power of authority and lack thereof is not to be disregarded in this respect as testified by the example provided by *LaCrosse Tribune* columnist Joe Orso:

I was once talking with a Chinese friend. She asked whether I believed in God. I told her I did. I returned the question. She said "no," and I asked her why not. Her father, she explained, had told her there was no God when she was a child. She hadn't really thought about it much since then.⁴

Thomas Nagel, Professor of Philosophy, stated:

I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that.⁵

Isaac Asimov, Professor of Biochemistry and prolific author, noted:

Emotionally I am an atheist. I don't have the evidence to prove that God doesn't exist, but I so strongly suspect he doesn't that I don't want to waste my time.⁶

Lawrence Krauss, theoretical physicist and cosmologist, stated:

I personally wouldn't call myself an Atheist because I don't presume to claim there's no God. If any-

thing, I declare myself as an anti-theist because I can't say with absolute certainty there is no God. But what I would say is I'd much rather prefer to live in a universe without one.⁷

Of Ted Turner, founder of CNN, it has been written:

Turner is a strident nonbeliever, having lost his faith after his sister, Mary Jane, died of a painful disease called systemic lupus erythematosus. "I was taught that God was love and God was powerful," Turner said. "And I couldn't understand how someone so innocent should be made or allowed to suffer so" ... He told *The New Yorker* his father was often drunk, beat him and sent him to military school and committed suicide when Turner was 24 years of age.⁸

Likewise, there are many instances of Atheists asserting that they are more moral than Theists, and Atheism is more satisfying than Theism. For example, Dan Barker, co-founder of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, stated:

Atheism and Freethought and true humanistic morality are, are so much more clear, so much more useful, so much more reasonable so, you know, without all the negative baggage of theology ... atheists and agnostics are more accountable; they are more moral they, they have more responsibility in their lives because they realize that it, it's what matters [sic] is this world not an imaginary supernatural world ... true humanistic morality which is much superior to Christian morality.⁹

Michael Martin, Professor of Philosophy, stated, "I'm nicer than God," and also boasted:

Atheism is so special. So life affirming. So, so superior morally to the Christian system. So more respectful of human dignity and, and human intelligence. That it's like a wonderful light was turned on in my life. Much more than with any born again experience. Much more than talking to Jesus, talking to God ... Joint [sic] the human race let's be brothers.¹⁰

Lewis Wolpert, Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology, noted:

[I] stopped believing in God when I was 15 or 16 because he didn't give me what I asked for.¹¹

During an interview, he also stated:

I used to pray but I gave it up because when I asked God to help me find my cricket bat, he didn't help.

When the interviewer followed up stating:

Right, and that was enough for you to prove that God did not exist.

Wolpert replied:

Well, yes. I just gave it up completely.¹²

The point, thus far, has been to present a small sampling (out of many) of some reasons (and there is a fine line between *reasons* and *excuses*) why some Atheists choose Atheism and to present their views on the superiority of Atheism. These reasons are well outside the realm of philosophy and science; rather, they are based on emotional reactions to life's difficulties, resulting in rejection of God for less-than-reasonable reasons.

Atheist theology

All Atheists are theologians in that they concoct theologies and then discredit them. However, because those theologies are of their own making, when they succeed in discrediting them (that is, if they succeed), they have only discredited a straw-man (a misrepresentation of an opponent's argument) or straw-god—a characterization of a deity made in their own image. Even when

Atheists seek to argue against YHVH—the God of the Bible—Jews and Christians readily discern Atheists are not accurately representing YHVH.

Considering many Atheists' musings on such matters, it is obvious they are attempting to strip God of any power He may have over them. They do not want to acknowledge that anyone or anything knows their thoughts, motivations, actions, secrets and could, therefore, judge or condemn them. They seek the consoling delusion of absolute autonomy and the consoling delusion of lack of ultimate accountability (in a transcendent manner).

Mathematician and philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz posed some of the ultimate questions of life, the universe and everything that exists: Why is there something rather than nothing? Why something, anything at all, rather than nothing? Why a universe, why life, why thoughts, why? There seems to be two major answers: Creation via random chance/accident (the Atheistic view), or Creation via intelligent design (the Theistic view).

The random chance/accident view (which may be variously termed but would amount to the same claim) is rather odd, as even a random chance/accident would seem to need to occur to *something* even if it is caused by nothing (whatever that may mean). When one's cosmogony (theory and study of the universe's origins) begins with a random chance/accident and proceeds along those lines, it is very easy to conclude—due to speciesism (an unjustified preference for one's own species), pride, selfishness, etc.—that, as pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Protagoras put it, "**Man is the measure of all things.**" Yet, however one may put it, the random chance/accident cosmogony coupled with a rejection of God results not in lack of belief in God, but only a lack of belief in an ultimate, absolute, supreme, transcendent God and replaces that God with individual gods. Throughout history, since the events recorded in Genesis chapter three, humans have sought to become gods:

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:4-5, NKJV, emphasis added)

This variously has been manifested within mystical religions as well as Atheism; since by doing away with God, one sets oneself up in the place of God. The fallen cherub (cf. Ezekiel 28:14-15), "***the great dragon ... that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan***" (Revelation 12:9, 20:2) stated:

... I will be like the Most High. (Isaiah 14:14).

Of course, there is a good way to be like God and a bad way. For example, Jesus stated:

Therefore, you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

Yet, attempting to be like God in terms of *usurpation*—in terms of placing oneself above God—is another issue.

Ultimately, Atheism is an auto-theistic, theological system(s), which seeks to do away with God and have the individual take God's place. Individual Atheists may not have the traditional attributes of God (omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence), but they are *little gods* in terms of denying that anyone or anything over them judges, condemns, or in any way guides them. Rather, they claim for themselves the absolute freedom to choose how we now shall live. In this way, another Atheist-consoling delusion arises: The consoling delusion that offers subjective meaning in an objectively meaningless cosmos.

—Continued on page 16

“Atheist” Continued from page 15

Long-time Atheist who became a Christian, C. S. Lewis, noted something very telling about that which he variously termed “**Life-Force philosophy**,” “**Creative Evolution**,” and “**Emergent Evolution**.”

One reason why many people find Creative Evolution so attractive is that it gives one much of the emotional comfort of believing in God and none of the less pleasant consequences. When you are feeling fit and the sun is shining and you do not want to believe that the whole universe is a mere mechanical dance of atoms, it is nice to be able to think of this great mysterious Force rolling on through the centuries and carrying you on its crest.

If, on the other hand, you want to do something rather shabby, the Life-Force, being only a blind force, with no morals and no mind, will never interfere with you like that troublesome God we learned about when we were children. The Life-Force is a sort of tame God. You can switch it on when you want, but it will not bother you. All the thrills of religion and none of the cost. Is the Life-Force the greatest achievement of wishful thinking the world has yet seen?¹³

This, in its essence, is that which makes up the heart of Atheism’s worldview(s).

The Secret of Atheism

We finally come to the au fond—essence, bottom line—in discerning, discovering, exposing the secret of Atheism.

The secret is that it is not, repeat “Not!” about God’s existence or lack thereof. Rather, it is about hatred of, and therefore, rejection of the God of the Bible—YHVH.

Take for example, Richard Dawkins who wrote the following:

The God of the Bible is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.^{**14}

First, note that he does not provide an ethical premise upon which to rain down such brimstone and fire condemnations. That, of course, makes such condemnatory denunciations invalid as lay theologian, philosopher and Christian apologist G. K. Chesterton notes: “**For all denunciation implies a moral doctrine of some kind ...**”^{**15}

In short, Atheism discredits condemnation and condemnation discredits Atheism. This is because by condemning, the Atheist is appealing to an absolute ethical standard. By appealing to such standard, they are appealing to a transcendent law, which, by definition, must be authored by a transcendent lawgiver; and this transcendent lawgiver is Whom we call God.

The most reason that Dawkins has been able to provide is an appeal to that which he terms the “**moral zeitgeist**” with *zeitgeist* meaning *the spirit of the age* aka “the morality de jour.” Yet, he has dug a hole for himself, because this claim includes the idea that morality changes with time and cultural setting; it is relative, situational, subjective, intrinsic, tentative, etc.^{**} This means that he can only condemn past events, such as those about which he condemns God, by using today’s current standards. What this means, logically, is that he cannot actually condemn them because that was the morality back then (the “**moral zeitgeist**”). Moreover, he cannot even be certain of condemn-

ing anything being done today because, for all he knows, the moral zeitgeist is even now changing so that what is moral today may be immoral tomorrow, and that which was immoral yesterday could be moral today. Pray tell, how does one discern such shifts—from zeitgeist to poltergeist—except by majority public opinion or dictatorial declarations?

Next, note that he stated no such thing about Allah—the god of the Qur’an (aka Koran)—but solely “**the God of the Bible.**” This denotes the true identification of Atheism, which is that *Atheism* is, primarily, *an anti-Christian support group*.

Thus, when we consider personages such as Richard Dawkins, we discern that his issue is not concerning the existence or lack thereof such a God, but rather, his hatred and rejection of such a God. What if we could prove to him, with 100% certainty, that such a God exists? Well then, *he would hate God even more*, because He actually does exist and is not merely a fictional character. Moreover, what if Dawkins comes before God after death to be face to face with the God whom he so despises? Would it be just for such a God to condemn him, as it were, to spend eternity in His presence? Or would it be just for God to conclude that if Dawkins wants nothing to do with him, so be it: May Dawkins’ will be done?

Yet, God has given ample evidence He exists as we consider that which is stated in texts such as Romans chapter one, from which we will glean:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things ... [they] exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen...And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness ...(emphasis added)

These characteristics are manifest in various ways within Atheism such as via the Theory of Evolution which, at least at a popular level, removes from God the power to create and applies such power to blind and goal-less random chance/accidents. Atheism seeks to replace mans’ awe of God with an awe of nature. They:

... changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things ... [they] exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.

Consider the premise of the-late Carl Sagan’s show *Cosmos*:

The Cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be.

This is not a scientific statement, but rather it is one that is faith-based. It replaces God’s eternity with that of the creation.

He also noted:

Our feeblest contemplations of the Cosmos stir us—there is a tingling in the spine, a catch in the voice, a faint sensation, as of a distant memory, of falling from a height. We know we are approaching the greatest of mysteries.”¹⁶

“**Falling from a height,**” indeed! The greatest mysteries of Creation should impress and inspire us, but not within the context of doing away with God. They are only in the correct setting within the context of glorifying God, such as:

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained ... (Psalm 8:3)

and proclaim that:

... The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19).

Editor of *Skeptic Magazine*, Michael Shermer, has stated that he found the study of Evolution to be “**far more enlightening and transcendent, spiritual, than anything I had experienced in seven years of being a born again Christian.**”¹⁷ Shermer has also referenced “**the spiritual side of science**” that he terms “**sciensuality.**”¹⁸

Atheist Michael Ruse, Professor of the Philosophy of Science and Biology, wrote:

Evolution is promoted by its practitioners as more than mere science. Evolution is promulgated as an ideology, a secular religion ... This was true of evolution in the beginning, and it is true of evolution still today ... evolution as a kind of metaphysics rather than a straight science.¹⁹

Richard Dawkins stated:

Einsteinian religion is a kind of spirituality which is nonsupernatural ... And that doesn't mean that it's somehow less than supernatural religion. Quite the contrary ... It is something bigger, something grander, something that I believe any scientist can subscribe to, including those scientists whom I would call atheists ... What I can't understand is why we are expected to show respect for good scientists, even great scientists, who at the same time believe in a god who does things like listen to our prayers, forgive our sins, perform cheap miracles ... I suppose my hope would be that science—the best kind of science, the sort of science which approaches the best sort of religion, the Einsteinian spirituality that I was talking about—is so inspiring, so exciting that it should be sellable to everybody ... We have something far better to offer ... Why are we freethinking secular scientists not getting into that same marketplace ... and selling what we've got to sell? Because it's a far better product, and all we've got to do is hone our salesmanship to the level that they are already doing it.²⁰

Atheists profess themselves not only to be wise, but also to be the wisest; the consoling delusion of their own erudition (some Atheists being much more erudite than others, of course). Atheists literally believe that they are “more evolved than thou,” that they have uncovered the one true “way,” the one “truth,” and expect, if not demand, that Theists convert to the “life” philosophy of Atheism (at least the Atheists of the more militant denominations of Atheism make such demands). They enthrone nature as their creator and cast naturalism or materialism as a worldview. This is the problem with dealing with Atheists and Evolution; they take a *theory* that is supposed to be about biol-

ogy and mold it into a worldview.

Many traditional characteristics of God are rejected by Atheists, and yet, they are then applied to nature, to the universe, and/or to themselves. Some examples of how Atheists usurp God's traditional characteristics and apply to them to the creation are as follows:

It is ignorant and superstitious to believe that God made everything out of nothing.

It is rational and scientific to believe that nothing made everything out of nothing.

It is ignorant and superstitious to believe that God is eternal.

It is rational and scientific to believe that matter is eternal.

God is an effect and must have had a cause.

Matter is the uncaused first cause.

If God made everything, then who made God?

Matter made everything, and nothing made matter.

Note that not even according to the Bible is God's existence the issue. When Scripture states, “**You believe that there is one God. You do well,**” the point *is not*, “You believe? Well, jolly good ol' chap, your work is done.” Rather, this is, “You believe? Well, that's just super; so what!” We know this due to the rest of the verse (James 1:19) which continues: “**Even the demons believe—and tremble!**” Indeed, demons believe that God exists; they used to live in His presence, in his dimension, in His realm. God's existence is not the issue with demons; it is simply not a question. The issue is *they willingly and knowingly rebelled against Him*, did not repent, and thus, they know judgment and justice is coming to them.

The point has been that mere intellectual assent, that is mere acceptance of God's existence (on an intellectual level alone, let us say a mechanical, mathematical level alone) is not the issue. This is because it is *this God* against Whom they are rebelling, against Whom they sin, Whom they reject, Whom they blame for all they call “evil” (without a premise upon which to define or condemn *evil*).

Imagine that this God became flesh and dwelled among us (John 1:14); they would want to mock this God, spit on this God, beat this God, and murder this God. They would represent this dead God as a failure, they would deny this God had the ability to rise from the dead; they would turn this God's earthly name into a cuss word. They would spend their waking hours besmirching that God in thought, word and deed:

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God. (John 3:19-21)

Their wages would be from expressing their hatred of that God, and they would approve of others who do likewise. When the Bible described those who “**did not like to retain God in their knowledge**” whom “**God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting**” it notes that the very ones “**who practice such things ... also approve of those who practice them.**” (cf. Romans 1:28-32)

They would, in the end, claim God actually does not and never did exist or take the fallback position of claiming a mere lack of God belief.

—Continued on page 18

"Atheist" Continued from page 17

These are the sad truths and secrets of Atheism:

1) It is an emotional and spiritual rejection and hatred of God disguised as intellectual respectability with a philosophical and scientific façade.

2) It offers a series of consoling delusions such as erudition, higher evolution, absolute autonomy, lack of ultimate accountability, and subjective meaning in an objectively meaningless cosmos.

3) It is the created seeking to be exalted above the Creator.

4) It rejects the God Whom it claims does not exist based on claims of Him being "evil," whilst not being able to provide for absolute definitions of "evil" nor condemnation of it without *borrowing from God's ethics!*

5) It represents God in the hands of an angry sinner who rejects God, both, for not doing anything about "evil" (in their estimation) and for doing something about it—judgment and Hell or grace and Heaven. In fact, Atheism makes evil even worse by not doing anything about it (in an ultimate transcendent way), but complains and actually makes it a good thing by claiming it plays a beneficial role in Evolution.

6) It is choking to death the soul within them, which testifies to God's existence by telling it to hush up as they reason to reason via reason, which is unreasonable circular reasoning.

7) It is an anti-Christian support group.

Atheism's secret is that God's existence is not the issue, because the Atheist rejects God regardless of whether God exists or not. If God does not exist, they reject the idea of God. If God does exist, they reject God. ☒

***A note on the usage of "(s):"** I wrote of Atheists' view(s), theological system(s) and worldview(s) in such terms so as to not unfairly box them in when writing in generalities. Many Atheists have distinct views, theological systems, and worldviews.

****Bully:** One who uses browbeating language ... or behavior!

*****Morality vs. ethics:** *Morality* refers to the *mores*, which are the mere *description* of that which people happen to be doing. Thus, morality is, by definition, relative, situational, subjective, intrinsic and tentative. *Ethics* refers to the *ethos*, which are the *prescription* of that which people *ought* or *should* be doing. Thus, ethics are, by definition, absolute, objective, extrinsic. An example is a person whom two cultures see very differently, one as a villain and one as a hero. They disagree morally. However, note that they agree on an ethical level as both cultures agree that villainy is to be condemned and heroism to be praised.

Bible quotes are from the New King James Version.

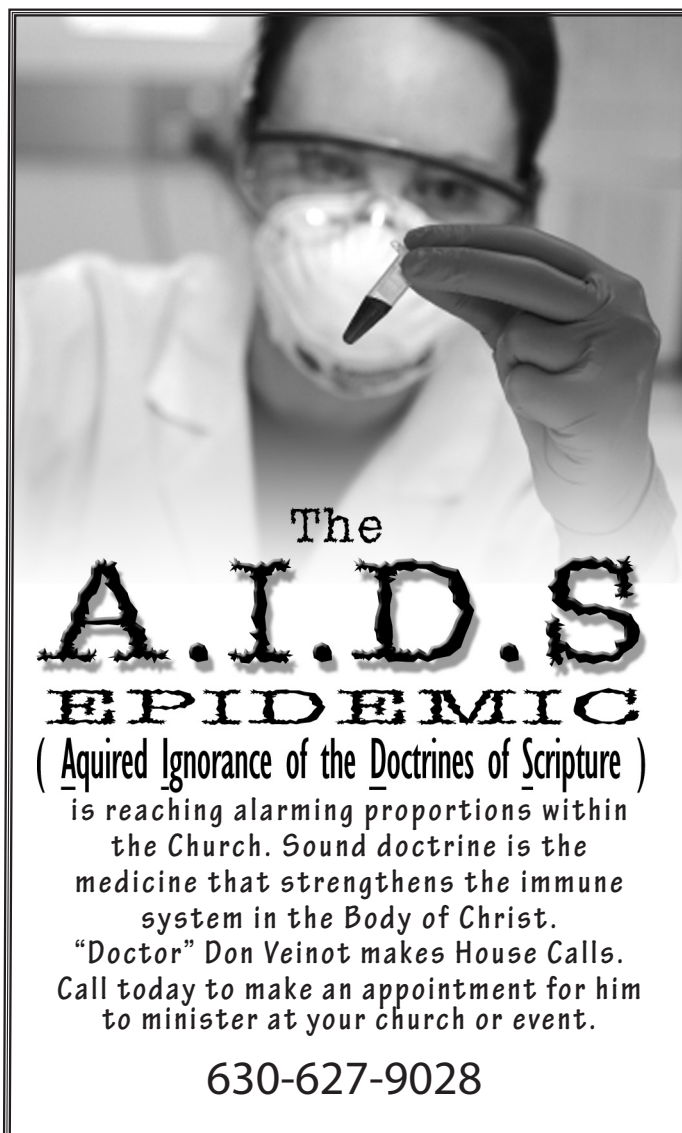
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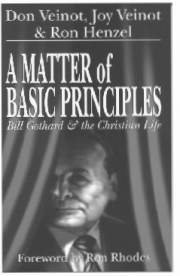
Lora Brown: At age 12, Lora Brown joined a secret society. Although she was never a Mason, Lora held a nine-year membership in the International Order of Rainbow for Girls, one of several Junior Masonic Orders for teenage girls. After accepting Christ, she left the Order to follow Jesus.

In 1989, Ms. Brown founded Rooftop Ministries, a unique evangelical organization specially geared towards persons associated with any Masonic Affiliated Order for women or children. Ms. Brown's goal is the prevention, intervention and recovery from cult participation and to assist concerned others with same by providing a web site, literature, lectures, and consultations to the public. Ms. Brown is a member of Evangelical Ministries to New Religions and is on the Board of Ex-Masons For Jesus.

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