

Ben-Free Thought by Ben Huot

**Ben-Free Thought**  
4th Generation Philosophy Writings  
By Ben Huot  
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August 2, 2022

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# Background

## The Breakdown

Trust is a two way street  
It is hard to earn  
And easy to lose

Trust means giving someone  
The benefit of the doubt

Trust means giving someone  
A reasonable amount of privacy

Trust means believing the other  
Has your interests at heart

Trust means not assuming the worst  
Without proof and reasonable suspicion

Trust means allowing the other  
The means to leave the situation

Trust means you believe  
That the other will not lie to you

Trust means the other will be there for you  
When things get difficult

Trust means you have a relationship

Trust is difficult to impossible  
When you break your promises  
When you abandon your principles

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When they are inconvenient

When you exhibit no trust of the other  
Even when they know you a long time

Trust means not adding additional restrictions  
Without re-negotiation

Trust means not changing contracts  
After being agreed upon

Trust means laws do not change retroactively  
Trust means regulations are made in plain language

Trust means laws are not targeted  
Just to certain groups

Trust means you believe in the integrity  
Of both the media and justice system

If you cannot agree on anything else  
Except you do not trust each other  
Your society has lost trust in the system

It is dangerous to base a country  
On nothing more than good intentions  
Because it is hard too win the love of the people  
But easy to make them fear you

Or make a believable deal with the people  
Via an implied social contract

Having no trust means having no predictability

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A world without trust has begun  
With the trading of personally identifiable information  
Gathered without consent or reasonable compensation  
And sold to the highest bidder

With the one world government  
Willing to do anything to further its agenda  
Even things it cannot admit to its citizens  
For fear of a breakdown of the homeland

With the open admission that  
The individual matters less than the group

With the continued choices that prove you believe  
In doing good things for bad reasons  
And bad things for good reasons

With the technology being cheap and readily available  
That allows people to commit all manners of crime easily

With the general acceptance among criminals  
That framing others for your crimes is the first step in committing  
them

When there is little difference between the means and goals of  
Criminals, your government, rival governments, and business

When the only thing separating the good countries from the bad  
Is the good ones are more effective due to better training, more  
money, and a longer history of operation

This is how society unravels

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When the country cannot agree on what is moral or not  
And what direction to go  
And then has a crisis where there is no clear enemy  
To blame the problem on

No trust means no freedom of speech  
No trust means the government is afraid  
No trust means no one is safe

And fear is the result  
Which is the true universal language

## Against Debate and Argument

Anger and hostility  
Proving your own way right  
Do we speak for God?  
Do we know His voice better?

My skin turns red  
And I feel hot inside  
Why won't the others  
Think like I do?

If I have all the correct ideas  
And can prove them better  
Does that make me right?  
And does that make a difference?

If following the Bible is so important  
And it truly is  
Where does God ever feel the need  
To explain Himself to unbelievers?

To embrace logic and not science  
Seems very odd indeed  
But greater oddity is in  
Mixing business logic with religion

The art of persuasion  
Is not effective  
If you are trying to prove your point  
How do you expect the other to respond?

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The wisdom of God  
Is foolishness to the wise

Why would you expect  
The wisdom of the world  
Would help bring people to Christ?

Christianity is not an issue to be debated  
Or is an intellectual discussion or decision  
Christ is a person not just an idea

Living as a Christian  
Is more about doing or rather not doing  
Rather than winning a debate

The Christian ethics most exemplified by Christ  
Are humility and compassion  
Not knowledge and power

We need to be very careful  
About mixing God's words with our own

The greatest Biblical scholars of the time  
Could not accept Christ as their Lord  
And many of Christ's followers  
We're uneducated but later wrote Scripture

We will not be saved by knowledge  
Does our current world situation not prove this?  
No one can convince anyone of anything  
The information has reached a saturation point

Few people write about new ideas

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Even as many more books are written  
Few people read much any more  
But webpages continue to get  
Filled with writing

Democratizing knowledge does not  
Make people happier or wealthier  
Teaching others more  
Does not increase their potential

For those who would shun the world  
To preserve our supposed purity  
Why do we embrace the doctrines of the world?  
Why do we fight using the same methods?

If the battles are spiritual  
Why do we engage each other  
With carnal weapons?

If we do not want to accept  
The ways of the world  
With open arms and uncritical acceptance  
We have to spend time listening to unbelievers  
And spend less time lecturing them

You cannot effectively deal with  
What you are unwilling to take the time  
To understand and learn from

If you want to keep away from stumbling  
You have to open your eyes  
Much as you may want to shield your face  
From injury or disfigurement

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Open eyes will save you from suffering

It is like going to another country  
Without first learning the language  
Or launching into a new career  
Without any additional training

Yes the wise can be foolish  
And even teachers often have agendas  
But without questioning what you have learned  
You effectively buy into and follow  
What you have been told

You cannot study religion purely by fact alone  
And then get to the point of having faith  
Faith by its very nature requires you  
To not fully understand

If we want to please or understand God  
We need to approach the study of Him  
Though faith first

It is as important to have times of reflection  
And times of interaction with unbelievers  
As it is to memorize Scripture

Christianity is still the most revolutionary concept  
But not in the way most people hear about it  
And that is when they hear it directly from us

Why do you think Christ did not convert  
The entire Roman and Persian Empires  
When He was on earth

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But rather focused mostly on 12 people?

Why did Christ not argue against  
Those who beat and killed Him  
Even when given a chance for rebuttal?

Much of what God wants us to do  
Is to refrain from doing certain things  
And He wants us to change ourselves  
We are less responsible for others

If politics was so important to Christianity  
Why did Jesus never get involved  
And why did the early Church never get involved?

If we have a duty to engage in politics  
Because our country claims we have the opportunity  
Why doesn't the church engage in the academic world  
Or make itself more a part of the online world?

There is wisdom in merely waiting on the Lord  
Unbelievers need Christians among them

You do not win over dedicated followers  
When you minimize the long term commitments  
Or try to win them over by telling them they are wrong

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# My Philosophy Studies

## My Life and Philosophy

Philosophy to most people sounds boring and useless. Philosophy has been an important part of my life because it has forced me to think through things better, gave me something more to write about, and explained how I already thought. I think philosophy has helped counter my paranoia by studying it for many years.

I first discovered philosophy in the writings of Tolkien I was reading that his son Christopher published after his death. Tolkien got interested in philosophy at the end of his life and so some of his later less well known essays and writings were on philosophical aspects of Middle Earth.

My second encounter with philosophy was when I was in the military which has its own kind of paradox in how it works. The military has many paradoxes one of which is that the Army is both very formal and very informal at the same time. Another is the hurry up and wait metaphor and that combat is 80% boredom and 20% terror.

When I went to college I first studied business administration as I had wanted to find a useful degree that I could make money with. I found that very bring and difficult too. I did well in economics and very poorly in accounting and then my math ability fell apart. I eventually switched to journalism because I was always better at writing and at the time that seemed practical too. This was just before I was diagnosed with Schizophrenia.

During this time I studied Chinese Literature, Existentialism, and some feminism classes including one that treated Simone de

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Beauvoir as a philosopher. The first class I took as a business breadth requirement, the second because I needed to make up credits and the third because I was registering late and I was told Beauvoir was married to Foucault. Foucault was actually gay but also a leading French intellectual of a later era. Someone played a joke on me.

The Chinese Literature class introduced me to Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism across Chinese history. It was a year long course covering from the very origins of Chinese writing to the May 4th movement and the Avant Garde era. Literature was my favorite course in high school apart from a single class called Humanities.

I quickly realized that I understood Confucianism well because my mothers family like my grandmother and uncles from her side of the family really followed these ideas to the letter. Part of this was that my grandfather grew up in mainland China near Nanking as the son of an American missionary. Confucianism is about manner and social hierarchies. It also promoted education and reform in government.

Taoism was the first philosophy I really took to as not only was it downright humorous but also because I could relate. I left the military early but had not yet realized that I was mentally ill. My discharge says Schizoid Personality Disorder on it and I was under the impression the reason I left was because of an eye condition and that was just a formality. I believed that I had failed in that I did not serve my full tour.

Taoism is the yang as Confucianism is the yin. They are related by paradox. Taoism is everything Confucianism is not. It is easiest to understand Taoism if you read about Confucianism first. Some of

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the best texts to read about Confucianism are not the ones written by Confucius or Lao Tze but Chuang Tzu and Hsun Tzu.

Whereas Confucianism was about government and business and the outward appearance, Taoism was about poetry and drinking wine. The closest thing we have in contemporary American society to Taoism is the hippy or the green party. The Taoists never thought of changing government. They focused more on dropping out of society and avoiding the government.

Most Taoists were actually scholars who did not become officials because they failed their government service exam. It was a face saving way of dealing with being rejected but also educated. But it was also much more. It was so respected by the Chinese government that they even tried to make it a state philosophy but it just didn't work that well for that.

My next philosophy course which I took to make up credits was on Existentialism where we read short pieces from everyone from Camus and Sartre to Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. We also read Dostoevsky and Schopenhauer. I wrote my final essay concluding that the lack of individual thinking in society means we are no more than quantum particles.

I really identified with Kierkegaard because by now especially after both military training and after learning about Taoism I was obsessed with humility. I also thought a lot of Camus as he seemed to see life as enjoyable and later his absurdist philosophy has made more and more sense as the world gets crazier and more destructive.

I later took a course after registering late and this was the only course available in philosophy, which I realized I might have

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some ability at this time, other than Nietzsche which I would definitely liked better, looking back on it. Beauvoir is very thorough in her writing and very ambitious. She covers everything you can think of about feminism in just the introduction of the Second Sex, which is one of many long books she wrote. Just before I had my psychotic episode I literally ripped some of her books in 2 and burned some in the fireplace. I felt great joy in doing so.

Beauvoir was one of the lovers of Sartre and much of her work was based on his philosophy which was really two entirely different philosophies. His great philosophical work in academia was Being and Nothingness which another student in the class who had taken a class in his work described it as a poor restatement of Hegel.

This was very inaccessible to the average person but Sartre also wrote many short stories that were much easier to understand and one famous one was called No Exit which is summarized by "Hell is other people". He also wrote Existentialism is a Humanism which is a good simple defense of Existentialism explaining how it works well for both atheists and Christians alike.

I went on to study philosophy and religion for about 10 years trying to find a different way to be Christian and express this through Asian philosophy. I was inspired by someone I met at a church while serving in the Army in Hawaii who told me he was trying to create a Christian kind of martial arts.

I also was very dissatisfied with the leading ideas in the Church at that time as I saw they were very ineffective in reaching people

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in my home town. I also think they were were too reactive and had no vision for the future.

I also detected a lot of arrogance there too although I am not sure where I got that from. I actually liked my church a lot that I grew up in. I was officially registered as a Quaker on my Army dog tags, which was written as Protestant Other at the time. Some of their major ideas are what have inspired me to take a more indirect and academic approach to evangelism and apologetics.

Towards the end of this decade of study of philosophy I discovered that Christianity actually was centered in modern day Iraq and Syria, as the major population of Christians, up until the year 1000 AD. These were called the Syriac Churches whose members were an ethnic, religious, and linguistic group as different as the Arabs are from the Jews.

They were the descendant of the ancient Assyrians, they spoke and wrote in Aramaic, the same language Jesus Christ spoke, and they were some of the earliest Christians. The reason why there is so little information we have on the ancient Middle East is that they destroyed most of their own history and literature as they believed it was contrary to their new faith, Christianity.

They also are forgotten in modern times as they were persecuted for centuries because they supported the Mongols when they took over the Middle East. They were victims of a massacre of multiple Christian groups during the time between the 2 world wars where 2/3's of their population were destroyed.

They are the ones who preserved the ancient Greek ideas and passed them to a few Muslim intellectuals. These ideas were then taken up by Latin Christian medieval philosophers and along

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with the Byzantine contribution of critical Greek-Latin dictionaries this helped bring in the European Renaissance.

The Church of the East (centered near modern Baghdad) also tried to bring the Gospel to India and would have brought it successfully to China, except that China was trying to bring back Confucianism (Neo-Confucianism at that time). The Chinese Emperor decided to outlaw all foreign belief systems including Christianity and Buddhism. This evangelical effort was started because it was against the law to evangelize in Late Antique and Medieval Persia both under the Zoroastrian and later Islamic dynasties.

I spent the last 10-15 years explaining these things I learned and I have made 3 different attempts at explaining it and I think it turned out best in the third attempt. This is what you see on the website today. While I started in July of 1998, I am still working on it today. I started my 3rd attempt in about 2017.

## Defense of Taoism

Finding Similarities not Synchronism

My Defense

I have united the major philosophical schools of Christian Existentialism and Philosophical Taoism although I still am a born again Bible believing Christian. This is a defense of my philosophy, my studies, and writing for several decades. I do not care what you think but I think it worthwhile to explain as it brings up some important problems in the church which come up naturally in a serious defense of my position.

I believed that it is hard to say that Christianity is the best religion if you have not read, understand, respect, and learned from other belief systems. So I studied and wrote about major world belief systems for several decades. I believe this has made me a better Christian as my faith is stronger and I am not easily swayed by hearing about challenges to my faith.

I never practiced any religion other than Christianity and I never considered giving up my faith or converting to another religion. I think Philosophical Taoism is a closer fit for Christianity than the Enlightenment or ancient Greek thinkers like Aristotle and Plato.

My unique perspective can be described as being Taoist philosophically but I never changed my theological or philosophical views. It just describes how my mind and personality naturally understand the world in technical terms.

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I have found similar ethics to Christianity in Philosophical Taoism. Furthermore many ideas that I previously believed like paradoxical interpretations of Scripture where I believe in both sides of most major splits in the Church can be explained better through Taoist concepts.

It makes Christians seem willfully ignorant, intellectually lazy, and open to all sorts of bad doctrine to not study philosophy. This is an American and somewhat European thing, not historically a Christian thing. Christians studied other cultures and other belief systems for evangelical and cultural reasons for centuries.

Furthermore it is almost impossible to study Asian history without studying religion and philosophy as the exact same writings often are classics in many different academic disciplines. I first studied Taoism in a college level Chinese Literature class.

### Technical Details

Philosophical Taoism is not about a road to heaven and is not meant to be a religion. It is a revival of an earlier method of ruling China, a system of ethics based on humility and compassion, and takes the philosophy of the I Ching minus the religious aspects.

It is considered acceptable to take the parts you like of an Indian or Chinese Philosophy or Religion but not other parts you don't like. This concept forms the basis of well know and respected belief systems like Zen Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism, Sikhism, Tibetan Buddhism, and many aspects of Hinduism after the Vedas.

As a side note, which really confuses the issue, is that there is a form of Taoism called Religious or Esoteric Taoism which is the

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traditional Chinese folk religion. This is basically a form of animism but adding many other elements as well. Philosophical Taoism is based on the I Ching minus the religion but Religious Taoism adds back in a religious element.

It pays to really understand your subject and I do not recommend every Christian read about Asian philosophy and religion as there are other forms of animism that are mixed into the practices. The vast majority of traditional Chinese philosophy and literature deal almost solely with Philosophical Taoism.

Religious Taoism is a much later development in Chinese history in about the European Dark Ages. Most of the texts are still only in Chinese and I have not read any of them or any other form of animism. Philosophical Taoism started as we now know it at the time of Aristotle and when Buddhism started in India.

### Examples of Cultural Confusion

One of the things that limited the Gospel in China was that the Catholic Pope said at the time of the Ming Dynasty that the Christians in China could not take part in Confucian rituals. Again, they assume the word ritual means religious when it has not been religious for thousands of years even at the time of the European Renaissance. Even at the time of Confucius the rituals mean the same in Europe as manners and had no religious meaning for at least hundreds of years prior. The emperor understood the difference between animism and humanism very well and could not accept that kind of ridiculous confusion of the pope between totally different things.

Recently the Eastern Orthodox Church banned Yoga because they mixed up the Yoga which is a path to Enlightenment with

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western gymnastics and stretching exercises. Yet churches have no trouble having kids hunt for easter eggs or put up Christmas trees which were used solely for pagan rituals until much more recently.

### Historical Church Synchronism

Early Christians in the Roman Empire synchronized Christianity with Greek Philosophy where we get doctrines like the confusing explanation of the trinity, scholasticism (where people understand the Bible through reason first and faith second), and the Protestant Reformation which led to a deterioration in the authority of the church and the Bible culminating in the Enlightenment and later Nationalism and Colonialism.

Whereas Taoism does not define who God is Plato argues for Gnosticism which is based on the idea that the devil created the world, Jesus being God but not Man, and that we are saved by secret knowledge. The Gnostic Scriptures are literally later additions to the Bible that contradict the Old and New Testament canons. Augustine was a Manichean which is a form of Gnosticism before he converted to Christianity.

### What to Remember

It pays to really understand your subject and I do not recommend every Christian read about Asian philosophy and religion as there are other forms of animism that are mixed into the practices. Things are more complicated than you can explain in a soundbite. Most Christians soon realize Christianity is very complex, subtle, and vaste. Different people even Bible believing Christians have vastly different ideas about the Bible even in important doctrines.

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So the other major world religions do not need to be totally avoided or totally embraced but just like a medical doctor or a scientist is especially careful with certain things, so a theologian or philosopher needs to be as well. What you hear in the popular media and popular culture is at best poorly reasoned and ultra simplified. Most serious news outlets now cost more money than most people feel they are willing to pay. Professional writers and serious journalists need to eat too and most people cannot afford to do all that in their spare time.

The introduction of Eastern philosophy occurred mostly during and because of the major wars we fought there in World War 2 and the Cold War. Most Americans are only interested in other nations in as much as we fought them in a war. The media and Hollywood mixed things up considerably in their effort to mass market it and use it as a method of spreading their own ideology.

### Bottom Line

Once someone comes up with an interesting cultural idea the first response of Hollywood and the media is to make money on it by making it mainstream. Look no further than the media's representation of the Church and Christians. Most Americans have traditionally had a very poor understanding or appreciation of anything outside business and now math and science.

Think of it this way. The marketer's questions are this: How can this belief system make money as it is or how do we need to change it to make money? Does Yoga as a path to enlightenment make us money or can exercise make us money by being themed as Hindu?

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Think of it another way. What is easier to do and more exciting - exercising or being a moral person? You also need to make things different enough but not too different to sell them. Exercise with a twist of Asia sound just similar enough and just different enough to market well amongst Americans.

The reason the media and Hollywood hate Christianity so much as it works against their business and ideological interests. The values of Christianity and the insistence on sticking to doctrine are very corrosive to the idea of getting people to buy things to make their lives easier. Christianity is not new and it is not easy. This is a marketing nightmare.

## My Philosophy and My Faith

You may have heard that many Christians believe that they should make a clear distinction between what they say and what the Bible says. I definitely support this objective as well. The difference is my method and my understanding of reality.

I very much believe that no person can truly be objective and only God can do so. I believe it important for us to admit that we as Christians are weak and flawed and we don't speak for God. The difference between what is written and the Bible specifically as translated vs. what I say is that the one is actual thoughts of God while mine is a mixture of both my understanding of God's thoughts intertwined with my experiences, culture, preferences, hopes, fears, and the like.

I see things from my point of view even though the only thing I believe in is God and His thoughts as presented in the Bible. So if you want to know the exact thoughts of God read the Bible, follow your conscience and seek God with all your heart. If you are honestly trying, you will find Him. I don't think God's desires for us are mysterious or hard to understand.

Our culture is very far from seeing things from God's point of view, but if you try to see things from His point of view, I believe you can despite whatever limitations you have. I believe that a cultural and philosophical perspective on the Bible is a must to truly incorporate God's ideas into your life.

We have to admit we are emotional and spiritual as much as we are physical and rational beings. God wants us to love Him with all our hearts, minds, and souls. In order to do so, we need to

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bring God's thoughts into our culture and decide what things clearly contradict the Bible and discard them but embrace the rest. Every culture that has received the Gospel has had to make such decisions.

Currently the dominant culture in America and the world is changing as our cultural center in Hollywood is making a fundamentally different reality than it has previously. This will be the dominant culture in the world until Christians decide to engage the world and this country in production of culturally relevant creative works. We have to have a culture of our own as Christians in America and if we refuse to lead in this area we will be left with cheap ripoffs of everything which we just label with the word Christian.

So what I have done differently than other Christians is that I have told Christianity from my point of view and tried to find a more relevant philosophy to pair it with than what has been used previously in America. This is my own point of view and does not necessarily represent other people's views or even the Bible as it is. I do not claim to offer anything more to the Gospel than any other Christian, but I do claim to offer a different philosophy.

So this pairing together of my philosophy with Christianity is meant to replace the old dominant cultural assumptions in Christian America today. I do not intend to say anything different theologically speaking than you have heard from other Christians. But when it comes to cultural issues like politics, ethics, science, psychology, economics, art, history, and almost every subject other than theology, I have an entirely different perspective.

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Technically speaking this involves a fundamental change in philosophical perspective. My thinking naturally aligns quite closely to philosophical Taoism and Christian Existentialism. I know this makes me quite at odds with most American Christians as they think anything that is not culturally European is new age and communist.

All I can say is the world is bigger than the American Russian Cold War and fighting for keeping that mindset is not good for anyone other than a increasingly narrow section of the rural white population in America. It is the number one reason why so many young people feel the Church is irrelevant or even dangerous today. Ignorance does not look good on anyone including Christians.

So I realize that I will convince very few Christians but I feel no need to do so as they already have the Bible and the Holy Spirit to guide them. I am interested more in working with non-Christians as they are less inclined to write me off before they hear what it is I have to say. I am interested in evangelism and some of them are interested in a different point of view from a Christian.

Some Christians believe there is one true worldview that is from the Bible and they know it and everyone else is wrong. I believe there is one true worldview that is from the Bible but I believe that no one knows it and everyone is wrong about it. I think that as far as people writing books about the Bible or interpreting Scripture I am not any farther off than they are.

If everyone else will truly stick to the Bible and stop writing and preaching things other than just reading from Scripture and destroy all their theology books, I will stop writing as well. Until then, even though I know I cannot perfectly communicate or even

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understand every thought of God in the Bible I will continue to do my best to present it accurately to the world. And in doing so I will tell it from the only point of view I can understand which is my own. Whether that sounds heathen to other Christians is not my responsibility and I am ok with that.

The big difference between me and most Christian writers is that I have studied widely in both eastern and western philosophy, major world religions, and Asian and European history and so I believe I have a more nuanced and expanded view of both history and human thought. This has lead me to different conclusions. I also have had unusual experiences like serving as an enlisted soldier in the US Army for a little over a year and later being mentally ill for 25 years now.

I was a Christian before, during, and afterwards. Before people thought I was creative and many now think I am a heretic. Maybe some people think creativity means heresy or maybe they just don't know what they are talking about. I try not to talk about things I don't know about so I guess I learned something from the experience.

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# Science and Business

## Balanced Study

If you only study math and science, how do you decide what ethics to have? How do you answer the question of why or should we? If you change your views based on the latest scientific data, how often should you change it? How do you measure whether the same ideas will be considered foolish in another generation?

There are a lot of assumptions to everyone's views and this is not just true of scientists. But people who base their entire world view on science often reject the human and supernatural aspects of thinking. These entail things like physical responses, emotions and spiritual truths.

Emotions are just as valuable, dependable, and relevant as facts, depending on the topic. Spiritual truths are the only objective ideas, because they come from who God is. God is the only one who can truly be objective. There are also the primal physical responses in situations where you need to run or fight. These faster thinking methods can be useful in other topics and other situations.

Computers have taken over the world now and so everyone wants to reduce everything to math as that is how a computer thinks. Many equally important areas of study like the arts and world belief systems cannot be reduced to math and logic. This makes a society that only values science only be able to progress in limited ways.

Many people use their brains but in very different ways than just math or science that provide essential services to society.

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Maintenance is its own area of speciality and is at least as important and complex as engineering. Much of that is based on experience and mechanical knowledge.

Military science makes use of the brain as well but people function as an ant colony where the officers are the brains and the enlisted are the hands and feet. Psychology is an important area that cannot fully be understood through science. Those who do not value it are going to have a hard time dealing with other people. Effective leadership of every kind involves understanding ethical truths and appreciating the emotional needs of those being led.

To be people, as distinguished from non-sentient things, we need to branch out beyond just logic to answer important questions that a civilization is built on. We are experts in implementations of things in ways that are as economically easy as possible. But this leads much to chance and corruption.

Instead of us constantly fighting wars that lead to other wars, maybe we should consider not pursuing aggressive foreign policy. If we need to do bad things to maintain an empire, maybe the technology is not worth the cost. The understanding of cultures we come into conflict with requires we start to value spiritual and emotional thinking.

The truth is our leaders don't want to expand our minds or to challenge the direction the country is going in. The reason why things are hard to change in politics is that someone else wants things the way they are. You are not just introducing something new and rarely is it truly new but you are taking apart what someone else has built to build your own project.

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We are all like the military in that the arts are irrelevant and our leaders not not want our ideas. The only ideas they want are better ways of doing what they want to do. We think we have a free society, but that is only possible when we challenge the reasons why people do things and consider not doing them if they are not worth the cost.

We are literally being distracted by bright and shiny new things so that phones have become the opiate of the masses. We are so focused on building our own brands that we forget that we have souls. We are reduced to an image rather than a fully 3 dimensional person. We are only shells of people that look like people but fail to think at all.

Many people in technology think the reason why so many people cannot get along is that they are unwilling to change their views as fast as the technology changes. But this is not wise to do so. There are good reasons why a person should hold onto views they learned in childhood, life experiences, and through spiritual traditions.

If we change our ideas so rapidly, we do not have time to test the validity of these ideas through experimentation. You can think of your life as a science project where you have limited time and limited resources to work with. What do you prioritize and what do you ignore?

Sometimes there are so many ideas that change so often that they are not worth considering. And if you change your beliefs according to them, you end up constantly changing your whole direction in life. You then fail to learn from your own life experiences.

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Furthermore you are limiting yourself to the influence of the few people who have time to do this kind of research. You're just shifting your faith from principles to people. If you study a curriculum that changes every ten years then you should question the validity of their assumptions.

Societies that have stood the test of time all had a common belief system that their society was based on. It is true that not everyone believed the same but it is also true almost everyone did believe in the supernatural. In fact a lot of the science fiction we watch in movies that often times inspire people to make advances in science is very similar to the supernatural.

Many people now not only accept science and math as the way forward, but at the same time, do not understand it well enough to follow it like it was designed to work. Most people trust science in the way religious people trust God. And they do not have any better justification for doing so.

We have to accept the fact that not everyone want to be or even should be a scientist. Life is about balance and so should a stable society be balanced as well. When we decide to put so much money into our toys, we end up underfunding religion and the arts. This leaves us with little culture to build a society on.

Even after several hundreds years, our country still has little quality culture and most of that is entirely created by businesses to sell things. Most major world powers have their own literature, philosophy, and artwork that is based on more than I like this color. We cannot appreciate other cultures that are fundamentally different than ours because we are unwilling to explore other ways of doing things.

## Mixing Things Up

Scientists cannot distance themselves from what bad people do in the name of science anymore than Christians can distance themselves from what bad people do in the name of religion. Both scientists and Christians cannot control what other people do as a result of what they teach.

Christians and scientists both teach non-professionals about their system of thinking. But many people that practice said systems often do not accept all aspects of the teachings.

For centuries Christians have fought hard to keep their theology pure and static. This has had a great cost in fragmenting the faith into multiple institutions and under many different leaders. Scientists today seem to have a similar problem.

Most scientists claim science is not magic or a religion and yet this is how most people relate with science. You could argue that this is based on misinformation or flat out ignorance but so could Christians make the same argument about why people do evil in the name of religion.

Christ lived as a perfect example of how a Christian should live, but most Christians do not do so. But the Bible does not argue with this assessment either. Christianity is based on the idea that you cannot earn your faith by being good enough and that salvation comes from what God did. Furthermore it is not based on what we do save our choosing to believe.

So although the world expects Christians to live up to their ideals, Christianity very clearly and honestly says this will never

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happen. This may be a hard to understand concept for non-believers, but this is not contradictory and is consistent.

Christians often see science as necessary and reasonable but take issue when science moves into disciplines formerly thought of as best explained by theological arguments. When scientists try to explain the nature of reality and its beginning and end, many Christians would say that it is unfair that scientists can study these areas but if Christians take scientific ideas from Scripture that this is socially unacceptable.

I personally take issue when scientists say they are right about something that contradicts the Scripture and say then that to be rational we must accept the scientific explanation and stop believing in our faith. Many might think it easier to get Christians to stop believing because faith makes the study of science more complex and controversial, in some areas. But most Christians do not think science and Christianity contradict each other.

I flat out say that science is not always compatible with Christianity but then I will believe my Creator over a human expert. One of the evidence based and practical reasons for believing in faith over science is because faith has been the same since the beginning of creation. Science, on the other hand, has not reached a permanent decision on anything and never will. I also see my Creator as having more relevant knowledge, experience, and morality than any scientist.

Some of the changes recently in science challenge the whole basis of what it means to be a rational study of nature. Science cannot currently explain and prove why physics works totally differently at different scales. Even things like the existence of dark matter

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and dark energy are so vague that they are non answers. String theory is not testable by natural methods.

Also the complexities of the math involved to understand some of these theories really limit how a average person could ever have the time to master math enough to appreciate how they are not magic. Some of the ways in which scientists try to teach physics in general or explain theories like quantum mechanics without math make them seem more like science fiction or fantasy. The push to go back to the Moon or go to Mars fails to calculate in the economic factors necessary for this to work or be useful in any tangible or practical way.

It sometimes seems that some scientists are so concerned with separating science from faith that this hinders the progress of scientific discovery. Also the treatment of scientists with different views is very hostile considering many times their new theories prove to be correct and are then adopted by mainstream science. Black holes are one example.

During the life of Einstein, he had to argue against the idea of ether, which is very irrational and sounds very spiritual. Currently science is trying to cope with the obviously effective principles of Qi that comes from Chinese philosophy and medicine and that makes the nature of science even less clear. And many scientists have non-Christian religious views as well which makes it harder for them to be objective.

I think the world does not like change and Christianity challenges the status quo of the richest parts of the world today. America does not see a need for Christianity for its ideological narrative of being the good guy in the world today.

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It is interesting that both conservatives and liberals both think America should be intimately involved in the world and this will make the world better. Both seem to want to use technology and law to force people to change their beliefs to what they want. Both also seem to want to change the moral system of the other group and none of them want to follow the morals the other group values.

Traditionally the conservatives in America were the dominant group because they held to a consistent message but today liberals have risen because they have been able to form a consistent coalition and consistent message of their own. It is interesting that the biggest issues in both conservative and liberal groups are so explosive because they make the other group look immoral in the way they look at life and the issues.

Religion and science are often coopted by both sides to push their agenda. Science is often used to put down people who disagree with them because they can say there is only one answer and their answer is the right one which cannot be argued with. Unfortunately religion in America is often used the same way. This is not to say there is anything wrong with either religion or science but that, although they are not exactly parallel conceptually, they are used and abused in similar ways.

One of the big similarities that most of society agrees on is they want justice or punishment on individuals they think are disruptive to society because they do not conform to their particular morality. Both liberals and conservatives have values as do scientists and Christians. It is possible to have a different moral philosophy or different moral priorities.

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Most conservatives will agree that the environment or racial justice is important but likely will not prioritize it to the same level as many liberals would. Similarly many liberals still believe in having a justice system and a national defense but they may prioritize these issues differently.

Similarly with Christians and scientists priorities are really what separates the two disciplines of theology and science. Science is focused on the material world and Christianity on the spiritual especially the afterlife. Most Christians do care about the material world, but do not prioritize it over the afterlife. Many scientists do have religious beliefs but their professional focus is on the physical needs of people.

## What it Takes

When will we be happy?  
We already have instant access  
To almost every pleasure  
Anything reducible to information

We even require little energy or space  
To house these magic boxes  
Music, games, shopping, travel, and communication  
Do you feel happier than you were  
10 or 20 years ago?

I think this century will be  
When we learn of the hard limits  
Of what humans can do that they want to  
What the limits of technology and social institutions are  
Is advanced technology compatible with advanced institutions?

We are on the verge of  
Finding out if it is possible  
To live the lives of those  
Who are characters in science fiction universes

For someone who watches a lot of science fiction  
I, even with very low expectations,  
Still find many of these worlds extremely depressing

Nature on earth is usually mostly destroyed  
Although it seems insects survive or even possibly thrive  
People tend to be more violent than previously  
And most people become very poor

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In utopian societies they usually are not technologically advanced  
Or have some way to control technology  
Or else they fail to be utopian

There is usually a prominent spiritual component in both  
Religion never dies as does any other idea  
It is just positive or negative in how it is used

There is always a place for God in His world  
Because it makes no sense without Him  
Rationally, emotionally, or physically  
People will only be happy  
When they have peace with God

We are not our own  
And were never designed to live fully autonomously  
We were always designed to live in concert with God  
The only other option turns out to be a slave to our desires

Following our desires without self control  
Ultimately leads to premature death  
There is only one way to fully resolve this  
There is only one satisfying path to God  
That starts with admitting we are the sources of our problems

Definitely there is great evil in this world  
And some powerful people make things  
Much worse than they have to be

But we always have evil even in revolutions or failed states  
Because we are all evil  
Every last one of us

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Until we realize this  
We are going to keep chasing  
One addiction after another  
If we are lucky  
We will only eat or work ourselves to death

Some people just try to avoid God  
They don't want to even think about Him  
This coping method is sad  
Because you still have all the suffering of life  
Which comes from being human  
Without the peace from the Holy Spirit

Our human society is based on fear  
And as we look back it always has  
It also depends on a reason for its leaders  
To be the ones in power  
These 2 things are key to national stability

We currently have the first but not the second  
This is a much more painful way to live  
Because no one trusts anyone  
People end up believing whatever they want to  
Without any basis in reality or thinking critically

It boggles the mind  
How the people that released this technology  
Had no idea how it would turn out

The only thing that seem plausible  
Is that we over extended ourselves  
And our leaders are planning to unwind society

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They want it to happen slowly so that they stay in power

American exceptionalism is becoming less and less plausible  
As we continue to find out information  
On what it takes to run the world  
Basically there is a reason why other countries are so cruel  
Things are harder to control in other countries

Our ideology has made us free because we internalize it  
So that we cannot even think of challenging it  
Without giving up our most basic beliefs

America is synonymous with what is good and right to us  
This is disregarding the reality from everyone's point of view  
From outside our homeland  
Unfortunately God is caught in the middle  
People on both sides claim religion to justify what they do

What we all should feel the need for is  
Salvation from our own evil  
We can be made good in the sight of God by faith in Him  
This gives us the justification to be at peace with Him  
And God then gives us the Holy Spirit as proof and later eternity  
in paradise

So our leaders should feel free to plead their case before God  
And convince Him of their needs  
If their needs are spiritual or otherwise legitimate  
Then God will grant it unless He has a better plan  
For the longevity of their souls

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# World Crisis

## Sin is Evil

### Personal Sin

Personal sins are sins between you and God and sometimes one or a few other people. These include sexual immorality, worship of a false god, and stealing and lying. Like in many other religions, evil starts in the mind or heart and overflows into speech and finally gives birth to evil actions. Catching it in your thoughts before it gets further down the road is much more effective.

There are several aspects that make sin wrong. The first one because it was revealed to us that it is wrong and God is a deity of order and so there must be some rules. Being perfect means He cannot accept being part of any wrongdoing or let them happen without consequences.

God designed us to be a certain way physically, mentally, and spiritually and so sinning also goes against what we were created for and how we were meant to work on many levels. God forbids us from doing something wrong because it hurts us by breaking the way we were designed to work.

Most of these rules are the same across governments and major world religions because they destroy families and societies when people engage in them. If people are dishonest and no one trusts anyone then because of theft and deceit the inability to engage in legal contracts unravels a society. Why own property or develop anything of value if you have a very low likelihood that you can keep it?

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God doesn't allow the worship of false gods because they are not moral or good in any sense or have good plans for us. Read mythology if you do not accept this idea. Furthermore only God has the right to accept worship because He alone created us. Lastly, God admits He is jealous and does not want us to cheat on Him the same way people cheat on their spouses.

Sin is said to when fully formed result in physical and spiritual death. The same sin committed over and over again is similar in concept to what modern psychology calls addiction. Sin does not satisfy us so that we continue to do greater or different sins. The only thing that will satisfy us is God in our lives.

There are strong similarities in sins with the Bible comparing sexual sins to worshipping false gods. The underlying sin is deception and rebellion against God. God offered us a literal paradise and cleverly made it so we could have free choice and still not sin, but we destroyed this possibility by not following that one rule. Any of us would have made the same mistake.

God gave us the ability to resist sin but at the same time no one has ever lived their entire life without sinning. It is important to note that, although no one has or will ever live without any sin other than God Himself, everybody could keep from sinning if they chose to not rebel against God even at any cost.

Whenever we sin, we choose to sin and are always given a way to keep from sinning. We are always the responsible and guilty party. God has no connection with evil and does not tempt us to do evil ever for any reason.

Only Jesus lived without sinning and since He was and is God that was enough of a sacrifice for God the Father to reconcile

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within Himself two of the primary aspect of who He is - merciful and perfectly just. Sin always costs and without Christ's sacrifice applied to our sins we suffer for the evil we have done in the underworld or hell.

God made His plan available to anyone so they could easily escape this fate. Hell was not designed for people originally and heaven is big enough for all people of all times. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were never what was going to save anyone. Although they showed remorse this way, as animals were worth a lot of money then, they would never be great enough sacrifice to redeem any one person, let alone the whole human race.

God was always interested in people's genuine life changes where they first did evil and then made a complete break of it and then felt guilty and asked for forgiveness much more than He wanted people to sacrifice animals. God does not like people who are unwilling to fully commit to Him. He would prefer people not be Christian in name only if their heart is not in it. This seems much like how when you get married often times the spouse doesn't want to accept being your second choice or backup plan.

### Group Sin

Group sins are committed on a vast scale by a whole major group of people like a community, a company, or a government. These include mass murder, destruction of the environment or financial crimes. There have been many evil things that have happened throughout history and they have mostly corresponding individual sins.

Throughout prophecy God constantly calls out those leaders who do not take care of widows and orphans. Furthermore Jesus

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clarifies, extends, and simplified this down to do what you want others to do to you. Loving and having peace with the people of the world is part of having peace with God and yourself.

We are to help those rejected by society but even to the point of our doing without and even for those who are our enemies. Jesus even makes a direct connection to Himself when He says when you helped those in need, you are helping Him as well.

Again Jesus continues to focus on the heart instead of the action. He talks about how it is better for those to give out of poverty than out of wealth. He also says that Mary's gift of crying at Jesus feet was more necessary than Martha's taking care of His needs for food and lodging.

Jesus Himself might be considered homeless in today's society as He had no regular job or place to live. Several times when they were to pay a tax, Jesus told them to follow it but He made it clear that the more important thing was to follow what God said for us to do. Jesus did not become a political or military leader even though many begged for Him to do so.

Jesus chose other people to start the first churches. Jesus combined the ideas of taking care of people's physical needs and their need for forgiveness of sins (the second was more important though.) He also was very peaceful in all His miracles. He even healed the person who one of the disciples injures when Jesus is betrayed.

Jesus healed people and forgave them. His kingdom was to be based not on merit, opportunity, or status. The point was that ranks have no bearing in Heaven nor do they in the Church. There is to be no separation or distinction between anyone in the

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church. Even leaders are chosen by their spiritual maturity and not their outside rank or status. Christ was for radical equality too.

God's focus was on those suffering and suffered a very painful and humiliating death for even those who committed some of the most severe crimes. The two people on either side of Jesus also dying on crosses at the time admitted their guilt and Jesus innocence. Christ told them they would be with Him in heaven the next day.

This does not mean the rich and powerful cannot be saved but like all people's salvation only as a miracle can any of us conquer our pride and rebellion against God with divine intervention. The thing is that being rich, powerful, or famous does not give you any special place in Christianity. It gives you more distractions and makes thinking like God and making time for God harder. We should not spend our lives accumulating wealth even if it is to give to the Church.

The real obstacle to salvation is our unwillingness to follow rules and humble ourselves before God. We need not conquer monetary, physical, or virtual empires. We need to surrender our hearts to God. Society will only change once we truly embrace what God has planned for us. But this can be only accomplished one person at a time.

## One Thing

One thing we can do  
In light of the suffering  
That we must endure  
And have little control over

Is to reduce the pain  
Of others and ourselves  
We may have to suffer for God  
But we must try not to suffer for other reasons

Christians need not suffer  
For other ideologies  
For their own foolishness  
If they can learn to be wise

But Christians can also  
Make it their mission  
To reduce the suffering  
That others have to endure

Animals are a heavy weight  
Upon my heart, mind, and soul  
We need to think of ways  
To treat everyone with more kindness

There is no excuse  
For animals having to suffer  
We are rightfully responsible  
And Biblical commanded  
To fight for their welfare

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We need to consider the needs of others  
In everything we do  
In the things we buy  
And in all the decisions we make  
In every aspect of our lives

When we think of revolutionary  
We often think of civil disobedience  
But there are more effective  
And less dangerous ways  
To spread kindness  
Throughout our homes and communities

Consider spending money to financially support an animal  
To take better care of the animals you already have  
Be careful how much you commit to animals in the future  
And think of how animals may be affected by your purchases

Sometimes you may have to choose  
To spend more money for soap  
Or spend more time praying for animal welfare  
Sometimes it is more important  
What we refrain from doing than what we do

Often animals are ignored in the Church  
Because it has been well known  
That pagans support animal rights  
But this is an opportunity for dialogue  
Certainly God cares about who He created

We think of the needs of the unborn  
Throughout much of the Church today

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Why not consider the feelings of a fully formed creature  
You might not find someone to vote for  
Who is an advocate of both the unborn and animal rights

But you can see the connection  
Between 2 creatures God created  
Who both feel pain and are worthy  
Of special consideration  
Because neither can defend themselves  
They also do not take part in human conflicts  
Although they are often used in those

Throughout prophecy God constantly talks  
And repeats throughout Scripture  
That Christians are to take care of the widows and orphans

How about animals who have no one to take care of them  
Animals who are too injured to take care of themselves  
Or who have lost their homes or loved ones  
Due to human expansion

If we are to grow spiritually  
We need to take kindness seriously  
We cannot just abandon the homeless because of fraud  
Certainly we do not abandon the military or veterans  
And there is much more fraud there

We cannot just pick our favorite charity  
And then leave others to suffer  
Who are less convenient to support  
Or have less voices calling for their better treatment

Consider those we have lost as prisoners of war

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As those who live in captivity  
Through no fault of their own  
Many animals suffer greatly  
Because we feel the need to  
Test things harmful on them

Who are we to decide who is worthy of our respect  
Or who we owe common decency  
We treat terrorists better  
Even the worst ones

We need to start raising our children  
And educating everyone else too  
About the importance of kindness  
And understand how much of our society is based on cruelty

It is not just animals that suffer  
The unborn suffer as does our military  
And much of the Christians in the world  
Suffer because of our lifestyle

We must re-evaluate how important  
Modern plumbing and electricity are  
At the cost of so much injustice required to support it  
And the kind of evils it perpetuates

This same world that is based on suffering  
Hurts people, animals, and the environment on all levels  
Think of this when you take out the trash  
That people and animals have to live in it

Not just here but on the other side of the world  
And the exact same trash

## A Theme of History

### The Problem

Throughout history, there is a re-occurring cross-cultural theme where those who have are robbed of their wealth on a large scale by those who have little to nothing. The question to me is not whether it is ethical, as I have no control over it, but how does one adequately defend the things they have created or acquired? In this case, most of us in America are in the same boat.

Oftentimes this takes the form of what they then called barbarians coming in and destroying the rich farmlands and then retreating back into mountainous, deserted, waterways, or forested areas quickly. For historical examples, you have the Goths, Vikings, Mongols, and pirates. For modern examples, we have school shootings, malicious hacking, and terrorism.

Often times a small group of people can dominate a society and take its wealth, because they have nothing to defend. Defense is always more difficult, because you have to defend everything and the attacker only has to attack the targets they select before hand. Sometimes some of the big advantages of the attacker is speed. Many times it is hard to locate the group at any one time, and, if you do there is little to take from them.

Today our society is set up to recreate this same dynamic, by having such a wealth gap in our world civilization. In addition, we keep on allowing our tools for war to spread into the hands of people, who do not care for who we are. Furthermore, in our efforts to control all of society further motivate outsiders to strike back harder and more often.

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One of the things inspiring these attacks are that we portray ourselves as better than everyone else morally. Then we later find out that so much of our economic success is caused by the exploitation of others and their wealth. It is hard to say one thing and do another and not have people hear what you are doing more loudly.

Many people cannot prove in a court of law what is happening, because so much of it is classified. But we do know these things are happening and we feel morally compelled to do something about it. I do not believe that the ends justify the means, but both the attacker and defender in this case do.

Most people are not aware of it, but we have had a full scale world war going on for at least 10 years. Every major country and world power is participating. Right now it is a fairly cold war, without people killing each other directly, but that will likely come too in the near future. Some of the biggest casualties are local schools, local governments, and hospitals in rural and inner city locations, in the United States and around the world.

The attack looks like the following concept. The predators pick off the weakest in the herd and the herd doesn't realize one was taken until they stop running. This can go on indefinitely, but it will eventually reach the scale, where everyone will realize that this is a problem. Then we will be in a very deep mess.

### How they could solve this

Any easy way to stop it is to outlaw hacking internationally as a war crime. More importantly, make a public treaty between all these nations that we all, including us, stop hacking each other.

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Follow this up with a notice that any digital attack will be met with a conventional or nuclear attack.

Basically we are in the process of destabilizing the world, by allowing spy technologies and techniques become both an integral part of the culture and economy of our own country and let it spread to other countries. It is like the proliferation of nuclear weapons that we have taken so seriously and have prevented much of the literal fallout we could have had.

Today our entire economy is based on gathering the information of common people without their consent or ability to refuse from both a technical and practical standpoint.

In such an economy, covert actions of any type are very ineffective, because you cannot hide things very well, when anyone can report something. Basically, the only way you can keep things secret, for any length of time, is to not put them online or in digital form (but this is changing rapidly as well). So effectively, not only do we have no privacy, but neither do the classified elements of our national infrastructure.

Therefore there is no net gain, in further conducting electronic surveillance or doing any covert actions. We can and should learn about the rest of the world and repurpose our clandestine forces to do similar work as we think of the State Department doing. We, as a nation, in one of our government agencies, need to learn other world languages and read local news in the native language. Open source revolutionized the software industry and it could do so as well in the classified agencies. In this case, the information source is open rather than the software or the end analysis.

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So we need not worry about compromising national security, in ceasing to antagonize other nations and proliferate classified tools, by being as China calls us - a nation of hackers.

### What we can do

So obviously people in the position to change this have already chosen to ignore this idea and continue on full speed in a reckless manner. I have a hard time believing they hadn't thought of the same idea well before I am writing about it today. But for individuals, what can we do? Do fight this and don't just give up, because the information will be used against you and the wealthy don't care yet.

Rely as little as possible on technology and specifically on where things get more automated and easier for us but more complicated for the computer. These types of technology are notoriously completely reliant on outside infrastructure and expertise to work perfectly every time or else you lose something important.

Keep the complexity down and learn everything you can about things, especially the history of computing. Understand basic things like the number of errors in code is always more for products with more users, but that is because more of them have been reported. Use as simple a method as you can for important things like security tools and backups (in terms of complicated for the computer to do, not you).

Be aware of what is going on in the computing world and have some security common sense. Realize that the news only reports on divisive things and most hackers are seeking things that make people look bad. There is nowhere to hide anything and doing so

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will make you look more like an attractive target. Once something becomes common enough it is no longer reported on, even though it is likely still very important to be aware of.

Understand basic things about business trends, like that businesses are optimized for what is cheapest in the short time and no other considerations are made. Once someone has sold you something, they have no interest in you. Be wary of things that are too cheap or too easy.

There is always a cost to everything. Businesses don't like working with you anymore than you like working with them. People are annoying and hard to work with and this won't change in a positive way anytime soon.

Don't trust encryption, because we are all dependent on prime numbers being random for almost all encryption. If and when this is found to have a pattern, we get significantly more processing power, or your hardware and software age, nothing can be effectively protected that way. This is also true even when smart people make great security products with few errors and a good design and keep it up to date.

The big takeaway from this is to learn about our world today and our world today is run on machines. We need to learn as much as possible about important computer developments and keep up to date on them as the situation evolves rapidly. But also read about computer history, because you will need to understand basic concepts and, as we all know, history repeats itself.

Today your valuables may be safer in your own house than being accessible digitally. This is something to consider to understand the gravity of digital security. What makes something easy for

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you makes it easier for the hacker as well. Most developing security technologies help the attacker as much as the defender.

## The Amish Solution

So why is the military so negative? War is not supposed to be fun. This is because war is a general way of describing what amounts to destroying things and hurting people. This is why it does not take a lot of intellectual ability. And when we fight in it we have to make decisions between bad choices and worse choices.

This means war should be the last thing we do only when we are eminently being invaded and have no choice. Of course it might be a worse world if the US pulled out overseas and it would likely require is to revert back to an earlier technology level like the Amish. Since it is almost impossible to invade America successfully, we need to focus on fixing our country first.

We need to do boring things like increase our education, make infrastructure improvements, and build a more resilient world system in which we can function as much as possible without it. We need to make our internet US only and discontinue the major intelligence agencies covert and eavesdropping / hacking operations. We need to learn other languages, religions, and histories of other countries and other time periods to understand why so many people in a large region of the world's population hate us so much.

We also need to figure out how to communicate to the rest of the world that we are not as rich and immoral as Hollywood portrays us. We need to stop trying to get Africa and the Middle East to join the modern world. We need to stop buying oil from them so we can stop having to pay off their leaders and stop helping the Saudis spread radical Islam throughout the world.

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We need to set up our country to fall as gracefully as possible if we cannot get alternate energies efficient enough to replace oil entirely. If we do get a big boost of energy we still need to conserve it and reduce our consumption or else our needs will grow with our energy supply. If we cannot get this under control, this would mean we would have the same problem 20-50 years later.

We need to train everyone to be farmers and start planting self pollinating heirloom seeds and defending bees. We need to start running trains again for the majority of our shipping. We need business schools to change their curriculum to focus their students on being resilient rather than efficient at all costs. For primary education, the only thing kids really need to know how to do is to find a revenue source as they may not get jobs in the future.

Our country is now entirely dependent on not just mass food production and oil but also the Internet. We need to create a duplicate fall back solution when it fails. Due to poor security, poor infrastructure, and lack of technical knowledge we have a major crisis waiting to happen. We need to stop hacking into other countries and build a self sufficient national internet.

We need to start saving government money now because the economic costs of global warming are what is going to break us as a country and civilization more than anything else. It is not just about cute animals that evidently no one cares about. It is about extreme weather and more violent natural disasters. Sea level rises, rivers drying up, forest fires, droughts, desertification, hurricanes, floods, famine, disease, and pestilence are just a few of the disaster that will increase drastically.

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The three major expenditures in the federal government are interest on the deficit, department of defense, and medicare / medicaid / social security. Maybe we just need to say no subsidies for anyone rich, poor, or for war. If that is not palatable then at least cut defense and social services equally.

Ultimately we need to think of what to do that is best for the next thousand generations living after us. This is also now a global world economy which will remain so until we are willing to give up our current lifestyle and live more like they do in third world countries.

Ultimately we will likely change as little as possible and our energy use will continue to spiral out of control and huge wars will wage over water and more violent weather. The world system will be bankrupted to such an extent that the entire system collapses and we will live off the rubble until we completely hit the stone age.

So we as individuals need to get it into our heads that no one is going to save us. We need to do the best to save ourselves. Keep extras on hand, keep up on what is happening especially in our own communities, get to know other people where we live, keep good security in our electronics, and educate ourselves on how to survive and learn useful skills that work without computers.

Ultimately it is most important to adjust psychologically to the reality that society will likely collapse at any time. Make the most of the time we have and do not give up easily. Not everything will get bad if things go sideways globally. Religion will be stronger than ever, many of the major health problems of Americans will disappear overnight, we will likely fight fewer or

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at least less destructive wars, nature will likely rebound quickly, we will have less crime, and people will likely be happier.

Technology, wealth, and toys do not make your life happier. Religion brings peace and happiness because it is almost impossible to have peace in yourself and with the world if you do not have peace with God. Without all the distractions and fast pace of contemporary digital life, we will have time for God. We will also see the need for God and not be so spiritually blinded by our digital screens.

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# Role of the Church

## Different Ethics

To be fully transparent to Non-Christians, we have a different idea of what right and wrong means than they do both specifically and in theory. We also have different ways of dealing with offenses.

First of all, almost every Christian I have ever met believes we should follow the law unless it directly contradicts Scripture. The other circumstance that allows for violation of human laws is if our ability to worship God as directed in Scripture is disallowed. This means unless we personally are called to break a direct commandment of God that is clearly explained in Scripture we are to follow all laws. This is true no matter how much we disagree with them.

Christ said that in His summary of the Law that we are supposed to love each other as God loves us and to love others as ourselves. There is a fundamental difference between how God sees things and people see things. Love is one of them.

Love today in our culture is often associated with power over others and desire for material things. People in our society love those who can return the favor. Just as we give money expecting something in return, so we do with our love of each other. One of the really essential concepts of love in the Bible is the one of unconditional love.

Everyone loves other people that they like - this does not require sacrifice or effort. It requires someone to change the way they think in order to love those who cannot return the love. In this way of thinking we do not exchange one thing for another, as we

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do when we buy things. We give away and in return get nothing or even negativity.

The world thinks that humility and sacrifice are signs of weakness. This has always been true to a degree but our society has been especially influenced by Hollywood. This is because Hollywood likes to take the easy route to being creative. Instead of making more interesting or meaningful storylines, characters, or themes; they use sex and violence to add cheap filler.

Just like in a recipe you can make it with high quality ingredients or you can substitute it with more fat and sugar or fillers. Even though people like it ok, you spend less money. The thing is you don't really need the fillers or sugar or fat, but it requires more time and skill to cook without it. We do this a lot in life.

Look at the Internet, for example - 90% of it is junk. Do we really need to look through the millions of hits we get when we search for something or do we really need those hundreds of comments on every social media video? We no longer trust other people's reviews or who is calling us on the phone because it is so filled with fraud and low quality stuff.

So what is the motivation for someone to be a higher quality person? We need to be motivated by something other than money. One of the best ways to become a higher quality person is to surround yourself with higher quality people. We see higher quality people when they do not think they are anonymous, meaning we meet them outside the Internet.

We need to form relationships with people in real life, so that we can start acting more civil with each other. Another thing is that we are defined by our consumption of creative efforts not our

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production of creative things. There is a more lasting benefit in creating something rather than just absorbing it.

We need to return to dealing with people directly and creating things for others, in order to lift us out of this society level depression and social anxiety. We can get along, but we first need to take a step outside first. In anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorders, the worst thing you can do is stay inside. We need to expand our comfort zone or else we will continue to spiral downwards.

This is one of the big reasons why Christians are so intent on keeping the Church together and not just watch sermons online. Even televangelists will often tell you to find a local church. Being Christian is not about how effective you are in converting other people or how much you can get for God. Worship of God is spending time with God.

The Christian God truly is a person. This is who we call Jesus Christ. For all the problems it has caused in our society, being an individual is not a bad thing. The problem becomes when people focus on this aspect of themselves as an end in and of itself. We are created, judged, and loved by God individually. The expression of this love though is to not be just about accumulating things, even if done for God.

We sacrifice for others because we want to change the way we think, so that we can change who we are. It is an outward expression of our love of our Creator. Obviously God could do a better job of everything the Church does or Christians do, but God wants to involve us because He values us. As Christians, we have a history of creating big problem for ourselves. Instead of following God, we think we have better ideas.

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God wants us to be His hands and feet, not the leadership. This does not mean we should lack community. It means that the decisions at the top need to be God driven rather than people driven.

God has showed us this by allowing the church to splinter. Churches can build themselves up as high as they can, but their cathedrals will weather away over time. Christian denominations are a blessing because they force us to work with people we do not fully agree with and on equal terms. This situation forces us to let God do the real coordination of His work in this world. Even though we are very organized as institutions, we are forced to act as a network, with only God as our real leader.

But just like the homeless have a different story for every person, what keeps us from God is different for every person. The Church needs to spend less time trying to recruit huge numbers of people. Instead we need to focus on one person at a time and form relationships instead of large gatherings. Perhaps we will eventually be forced into working in even smaller groups and maybe this will actually make us even more effective.

The real thing that keeps people wary of the Church is our insistence on forgiving others who have done wrong to us. We live in a society that has become more violent and cruel over time. And our response has been to bring down the hammer and increase the penalties for immorality and crimes, both within and without the Church.

But this is not the way of Christ. Regardless of how our society decides to deal with crime, Christ has chosen to forgive and pay

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the penalty Himself, for our eternity. We as Christians need to take this idea more seriously.

No one is saying we shouldn't punish criminals but maybe we should focus on rehabilitation rather than just making the penalties more painful. We as Christians cannot see crime as an us vs. them thing. We are all in the same boat, spiritually. This is what makes Christianity Christian.

## Neither Product Nor Service

Christianity was not designed to be a business and should never be one. Unfortunately many see strong similarities between the way businesses sell things and the way Christians evangelize. Some of the big elements of this include the rush to get non-believers to believe and the free aspect.

Both of which are good but in the context of contemporary America, many are very suspicious of things that they are told they must do immediately and things that are offered for free. There are many companies that use similar strategies in trying to market their products and / or services.

Many Christians feel the need to adapt to our mainstream culture and fight the label of being irrational. I don't think Christianity needs to fight for being rational as the Scriptures alone show the complexity and the importance of faith in Christ. Certainly there have been and always will be deep thinkers who are Christian in their faith.

But this struggle to make Christianity feel normal to people is hard to reconcile with Scripture. Most of the world will always reject Christ and this is throughout all of Scripture. We are told we are not going to be liked by the world as we are not even of this world anymore.

The world in its wisdom rejected God. That is a big part of why Christ died for our sins in the first place. God wanted to show us that even the weakness of God is greater than the might of men.

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Certainly Christians should never abandon education (although they have in many ways) but they should never feel the need to fit in. Christianity is never going to be popular or respected and if it is then it is not very effective or faithful to Scripture. People in power realize that in the lives of Christians faith competes with the ideology of the government.

If people really follow God they are constantly going to be critical of the moral compromise at the basis of the concept of politics. They are not going to keep buying more and more stuff.

Christians are going to speak out when they feel the government and industry are trying to take the place of God in their lives. So many of the most dishonest business models are based on the idea that they are giving you something for free and you need to accept it right away. This is a big red flag for critical thinkers.

How do you think they could pay for the high salaries of many employees, expensive facilities and equipment, and stay in business long if they have no revenue source? So if the revenue source does not come from those who are getting the product or service this doesn't add up. This is unless something else is going on that is not being advertised.

The other thing is that if they feel a need to hurry you in making a decision it makes the critical thinker wonder why would they need you to decide so quickly. If they are selling a legitimate product and they have enough customers to stay in business than this would be hard to believe. This is also a big red flag.

Today many businesses do not find a business model until they have a certain number of customers. Then they are either bought out by another company or their management decides they need

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to fundamentally change the nature of the product in order for them to make money.

The default way of making money is a combination two things. The product is offered for free or at cost and the company expects a very small percentage of people to pay for essentially meaningless trinkets. The company may also be very aggressive in upselling them and limit the products so they aren't useful without paying huge amounts of money.

On top of this almost every company, government, and organization is selling and / or buying personal information and this is often their biggest revenue source. It isn't that we are trying to hide anything, but it makes us suspicious when people want to know about things that have no value for legitimate uses.

For all the costs associated with collecting and using the data I have a hard time believing it is actually very useful for advertising things to us. I can see on the other hand it being very useful to criminals, oppressive governments, businesses running scams, and individual hackers.

It is hard to build trust on deception and that is what the Church is up against today. Our entire society is running like a bunch of rogue intelligence agents running organized crime and the government watching and taking notes. In the context of the Church it makes sense that they want people to not take too long so they can be saved before they die. It is also reasonable to offer things for free because God does not need money. But people's experiences with the world bring with them some emotional and financial trauma.

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Today being normal is not good because normal means creepy. When your entire economy and political system are directly profiting from what would be considered crime if it wasn't involving computers, businesses and governments have lost all credibility in the eyes of most their citizens. The Church should want to be different than society, especially today. Not morally compromising today is considered revolutionary.

So although the Church shouldn't be different for the sake of it, people now want something different. The Church is different and should want to be seen as so. So continue the fight but share with the world that Christians are dealing with issues too. One of the big things keeping non-believers from the Church is that they think they are not good enough yet to be Christians.

Christianity is a completely different concept than the world is used to. People need to have time to wrap their minds around this. And those who really want to serve God and are serious about it realize it that there is more to pleasing God than a 5 minute prayer. And I believe God will give us the time necessary to plead our case before they die.

The Church today is the alternative to the Internet ideologically, practically, and socially. This is the best situation to be in because this is where the future of society will be going. Many people see the future as more computers, but this level of technology will naturally unravel society. If people of the future continue to advance technology, there will be no functioning society.

## Tolerance and Christian Faith

Many Christians in America see Christianity as opposed to toleration. Actually, modern toleration comes from something written by John Locke called a Letter Considering Toleration and he gave a very Biblical argument for toleration. John Locke was trying to persuade Christians to tolerate those of different Christian denominations because trying to convert someone by force is not effective. This is because in Christianity someone must truly believe and follow Christ of their own free will in order to be saved.

This idea of allowing someone to choose something, even if you disagree with them is a sign of maturity and is generally respected in what many call a free country. If you do not have toleration of religion, then how do you have free religion? And if people are verbally fighting each other over religion this is both ineffective in spreading the Gospel and conversion is not achieved. To win an argument does not convince people to believe you and give up their beliefs. This whole approach of debating religion just gets people angry.

God saying you should do something means something, but a person saying you should do something that you do not know and respect accomplishes nothing. It boils down to an American obsession with transferring the ideas of selling things to the concept of conversion. Let me get to the point - God will give people the time necessary to decide on where they will spend eternity. If people do not like the people in the Church, they may very well choose to spend eternity somewhere else.

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This rushing around to get everyone's money or everyone's attention to do everything in mass is a very negative concept. People that change their views quickly and easily are very likely to never commit to any one idea. Christ and Paul writing about His ideas talked over and over again about not being lukewarm.

We want people to make a very major change in their life and commit to it for their entire life. We need to give them some time and space. Think of it like a marriage - what kind of counselor would recommend people get married who have not spent time together?

This is deeper problem with the Church in America. Preparing people for debate by training them to argue both sides of the argument just makes legal fees higher and does nothing to help find the truth. Trying to transfer ways of working in the world to spiritual things does not bring success in winning souls for Christ.

God is not limited by anything other than what He chooses to limit Himself by. This almost always directly correlates to human will. Unfortunately God also allows us to rule ourselves as we are unwilling to let Him rule us.

We have to let this all be led by God and opportunities He provides or blocks. We need not use statistics or raise lots of money. God already knows and has all that.

Even with that knowledge and that power it is ineffective because it doesn't convince people to love someone. And the more you use the same thing for both God and money, it ties together the ideas of God and money. You can't fool all the people all the time when you are so obvious about it.

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If you use business idea, you will end up with a business. If you try to make money, you will end up a business. If you advertise, you turn into a business. The means determine the ends.

People are tired of ads because they are everywhere and they are very subtle. People can now spot an ad a mile away because they are so prevalent. People are now saturated with knowledge. Providing arguments no longer convinces anyone of anything (and likely never did), because they can see people are tricking them. They no longer trust groups of anything.

The Church in America can and will grow but Americans are now going through another existential crisis and this is the one with who we are as a country. I think most will agree now we are just an accidental blip in world history due to a war between England and France both ended up losing. It shows how effective being somewhere gets you the rights to live there.

Most people in America have not taken sides in most conflicts and have instead tried to go the frontier to start over again. One of the reasons I think drugs took off when they did because people couldn't escape the conflict so they decided to just drop out of society. And this criticizing of others morality is just toxic because we have different ideas of what it moral but we also are both flat out obviously wrong on so many areas.

People are tired of the arguments, the wars, the memberships, the politics, and the money. Stop associating God with these things and let God be the God people want. It is telling so many people respect Jesus Christ but not the Church. Sure they don't understand or believe everything about Him correctly, but the Church does not either.

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If you want to change someone's mind, be willing to change your mind as well. If you want people to act genuine, then it is a good idea to treat them as individuals. The Church of the future will be won one person at time.

This is a lesson about numbers. Have we not learned that God can multiply people easily? In Africa very few people who were exposed to the Gospel converted but they in turn converted millions and the Church is probably strongest in Africa now. Just in my lifetime communism has been throughly defeated and we have moved on to several other conflicts in the meantime. Nothing every changes until it does and then something major happens.

For people who claim to have so much faith, why is going to prayer the last option that so many in the Church employ? It is hard to accept because I do think the Church has great faith even in America. It is like the disciples of Jesus that cannot connect the dots. The world will always be perplexing and constant threat if we can't learn how it works.

America has made the world one system and one empire effectively. We have won and made the world in our image. If you don't like the way the world is going, look in the mirror.

We are still feeling the fallout of World War 2 and what we did to win it. We copied NAZI technology, ideas, and culture so that we would never again have to use people instead of technology to win wars. Winning one war always sets us up for another. When will we ever learn?

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# Church Strategy

## Future of Church Strategy

The future of Church strategy should be the same as that of the Apostle Paul. We should adopt no strategy but to go where we find an opportunity as individuals. We need to realize that our human ability to target the best approach fails in comparison to God's knowledge of everything and His ability to do everything better than us.

One of the most devastating things to set the course over Christian history was the acceptance that we can interpret truths from Scripture primarily through reason and then augment this with faith when necessary. Jesus choose as the leaders of the church average men with conflicting political ideas and with volatile emotions. Even the writing of Scripture was never reserved exclusively for those entirely loyal and fully educated.

Sometimes I think that the entirety of Western Civilization is contrary to Scripture, but it wasn't always this way even in the West. The general ideas of individuality, freedom and equality are from Scripture, but different in specifics. These basic concepts have always been true and may actually be a stumbling block or cause a misconception of Christianity in the rest of the world.

We are individuals because God treats us individually in terms of our salvation. We are equal because all have sinned and are far from God's moral perfection. We are free because of God's sacrifice if we accept it. We have freedom, individuality, and equality within the Church and within relation to and because of what God has done. Christ should be the center of everything, not people.

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There are aspects of Gods relationship with us that make sense from an Eastern Civilization point of view. God wants us to be part of His family, live in peace, practice humility, and create a legacy for Him. Just as many in the the rest of the world need to learn from the West in terms of understanding Christ so also the rest of the world needs to learn from the East.

God wants us to be at peace with each other but to do so we must be at peace with Him and within ourselves. God wants us to be servant-leaders as Christ is in our communities and in our ministries. He wants to call us back home and become reconciled with Him so we can be part of His family again. God also wants us to take make use of the abilities He gives us and do good works as an evidence that we are saved.

There are aspects of Gods relationship with us that make sense from a Middle (East) Civilization point of view. God wants us to take Him seriously about the severity of sin, understand the significance of the spiritual world but not get involved by ourselves, commit to Him eternally, and identify with Him as our Lord and Savior.

Christ does not always talk about peace and joy. Christ had to suffer in hell Himself to save us. Christ was not happy about those selling in His place of worship. Christ disrupted the established religious groups of the time. He was rejected by His own people. He says when we take His message into the world we will get the same responses He did.

I am sure there are many other aspects of God that can be learned from different cultural areas of the world, but I do not feel I know enough to comment outside Eurasia. The concept I am sure follows through though.

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In ancient times, people who thought they were wise rejected God. God has chosen leaders who had a giant flaw that made them unfit for leadership. They were often from poor backgrounds or in the case of the rich and educated Paul started out as an enemy of the Church and Moses had problems with public speaking. God wants us to do things only He could make happen so that we see the reality of who He is.

We don't need more money and God certainly doesn't. We don't need to be smarter or less divided as God knows everything and can be everywhere at once. What we need is a willingness to make sacrifices to follow through with what we know God is asking of us personally.

God will give us any ability that we need. If we pray for spiritual things, God will always give them to us as it says in James or like when Solomon asked for wisdom.

We need to continue to be the feet and hands of God but not the brains. We did not design this theology or create this movement. We have chosen to follow God, not people and our ministry efforts should reflect that.

One of the biggest things that sets Christianity apart from Science is that we are not the ones leading the people. We can no longer accept a partial truth or share God with guesswork and tests. If we limit ourselves to being led by people, we are selling ourselves and God short.

Let us stop allowing Christianity to follow the lead of the world or try to synchronize it with the latest intellectual fads and human

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created beliefs. The way forward is to look back in history and see where things have been going and see patterns.

The societies most focused on Science historically ended up with more suffering than ever before. Societies committed to Science have also traditionally been the most hostile and effective at holding back the Gospel. Maybe this is because we give Science a free pass as being inevitable or unchallengeable.

Christians are afraid of the supernatural with good reason. It is not an area that should interest Christians too much. They definitely should only seek out connections to God Himself. And then only through Scriptural commanded means like prayer, fasting, reading the Bible, communion, speaking in tongues and the like.

The other side is we have no need to be afraid of spiritual things either. The best way to fight is to get rid of sin in our own lives and make public declarations of what side we are on. We need to continue to convince others that there is no other explanation for why we do what we do than that we are Christians.

The key reason for spiritual awareness is that pagan communities have been the easiest to convert historically. This is because they understand the reality and power of the spiritual world. The hardest obstacle today to bring people to Christ is convincing them that spiritual things are real. We have been given an opportunity in this area by both feminism and science fiction becoming mainstream.

One of the great opportunities for American Christians is they need not go anywhere to evangelize, as the biggest area needed to be evangelized is in our own country. There are several generations who have almost no knowledge of Christianity at all

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and might be very open to the idea. This evangelical field is wide open.

## How To Be Effective

What is an effective way to bring God's kingdom to earth from a biblical point of view? God has all the resources and power He needs and only relies on us to the extent that He chooses to. The only limits on God are the limits He places on Himself.

God is big on free will and human choice in general. This is because He wants some of us to choose to serve Him rather than all serve Him because we have no sentience. Furthermore we find out throughout the Bible and likewise with Jesus on earth that God's kingdom is very different from the governments of this world. Christians are members of both worlds.

God not only values freedom but justice as well. God is perfectly good. To reconcile justice together with our bad behavior enabled by allowing us free choice God has made this possible because of His mercy and suffering for us. If we ran the world, every one who did something we consider bad would be punished severely for every infraction.

Instead of being pragmatic or “realistic” about how humans turned out, God decided to sacrifice Himself so we would not have to bear the full consequences of our actions or inactions. God is not willing to leave us to our own evil. He has made a way for everyone without regard to anything people find important.

What God wants of us is to be part of Him in heaven by having us turn away from our evil and accept His forgiveness, learn more about Him though mixing His ideas in our heads via the Bible, and treat Him and His creation with respect. Basically Christianity is about a person (who is also God) and it is a

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devotional religion. This means that Christianity is more like the Bhakti movement in Hinduism or the Sufiists in Islam than Science or most of modern Western Philosophy. This means in many ways the lifestyle of a monk is closest to what God would want our lives to be like.

We can do everything under the sun that is good, but the most vital things are turning from evil and drawing near to God. The biggest obstacle to this is the technology of the modern world. The big challenge seems not in knowing how to live but getting pulled in more than one direction. And witnessing today is a very delicate matter because so many people associate Jesus with hell.

We have made a bad situation for ourselves in fighting internal fights at any cost we ended up showing the world an ugly side of us. Most people in America today associate the words Christian, Evangelical, Fundamental, Republican, and Conservative as the same thing. This is not just an oversimplification. Most people who are Christian in America today are conservative Republicans. We are known to others by many things but mostly in our opposition to abortion and accepting gay people as psychologically normal and fit for church leadership.

I am not for dodging anything in the Bible, but do we want to be known as the above if we had only a short time with someone? Maybe we need to change our focus onto something that is more essential to the faith and less needlessly offensive to the non-believers in this country. If we truly do have a limited time left as some believe and we all have little time because none of us live really long in the grand scheme of even human history, we need to prioritize.

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I think that maybe it would be good for the Church to actually tone down the intensity of the political involvement and the amount of media exposure they have. Do not get pulled into debates and do not sponsor candidates from any organization that uses one of the words I described above.

Instead, put our time and money in fighting the cultural battles in Europe, where most the ideas start. To be accepted within this circle we need to have good knowledge of the humanities which means studying world religions, world history, world philosophy, world literature and world arts.

The future of the Church is going to be in Africa and Europe is becoming a backwater economically. The reason why we forfeit these cultural wars is because we have so little presence in the academic world. Whenever we seem to get a foothold, we get so aggressive that we never build large scale networks in these institutions. This is more an American thing and a modern thing than a Christian thing.

America currently has essentially no philosophical schools that it created on its own, it has no interest in learning other languages on a large scale, and art has basically no place in the life of most Americans. We then let Hollywood and science fill the void. And we end up with what makes the most money with the least amount spent which means it is loaded with violence and sex.

So maybe we should think more about how monks live as an example than how politicians, sports figures, or celebrities live as examples of a life of faith and devotion. We could also learn more about our beliefs by picking up a non-fiction book rather than watching a Hollywood movie or play an online game.

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He has shown you, O man, what is good. What does Yahweh require of you, but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8 WEB

# Long Term Church History

## Early Church Organization

Many people think that the Catholic Church was the earliest Church but according to historical record that would be either the Coptic or Syriac Church. There were originally supposed to be different churches, according to the major cities arranged geographically. Rome was the least important at first and only chosen because it was the western imperial capitol. The other major centers were in Antioch because it was an important commercial center, Alexandria because it was an important educational center and Constantinople because it was the more important eastern capitol of the Roman Empire (with Jerusalem being a merely symbolic one).

The Church of the East was centered near modern day Baghdad as it was the capitol of the Persian Empire. Because of rivalry between the Persian and Roman Empires, tolerance for Christianity in Iran would only exist if they made a clean break with the Church in the Roman Empire. They had to make up a heresy to do so and that is why they are not represented in some of the early church councils. Recently the Catholic Pope apologized to these Oriental Orthodox churches and admitted that they were doctrinally correct and the differences came from different explanations for the same doctrine (the Trinity) in different languages.

The Middle East was the center of most of Christianity, until the time of the Crusades. This was the halfway point in the history of Christianity. Doctrine was supposed to be determined by counsels, with a representatives from each of the regional

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churches. The Protestants did not exist, until about the time of the Renaissance - the 3/4 point of Church history. Similar to today, politics and religion were inseparable in a practical and public sense. A lot of things were changing at the time and the Church was too powerful and became corrupt about the time of the Crusades.

### Overview of Reformation

The Protestant Reformation was only part of a much longer struggle to reform the Church that started at the time of the Franciscan order (started by Saint Francis). There were struggles within the Protestant church up until about the 1990s to continue to further define what the church should be and what relationship the leaders and members were to have with each other and God. Along the way, there were major battles with Islam, Catholicism, and other Protestants that were sometimes full wars and sometimes mostly institutional, spiritual, or political conflicts.

There is a recurring theme within the Protestant Churches about trying to be just like the Church at the time of the New Testament. It is hard to get much information on this time period in Church history outside of the Bible because of the intense persecution. What we do know from the Letters to the Churches from Paul and the other Apostles is that most of the same problems we have today in the Church were also problems at that time as well.

The issues the Protestants brought up look like issues relevant for their time and place in geography and history. It made the Church powerful enough to survive against the major Islamic empires of the Early Modern World and later Modern Atheism which came out of the European Enlightenment. It is very

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important to stick to the fundamentals and at the same time adopt as many cultural elements that are consistent with the Gospel message.

The Reformation was successful, unlike other similar reform movements because there was a long standing feud between the Holy Roman Empire and the Pope. The pope was called the anti Christ as early as 1200 AD centuries before being described that way by Reformation leaders. France at the time was fighting for its very existence and the real power in Europe was with the Habsburgs not the Pope.

### Reformation Politics

The Habsburgs controlled at one time all of both the Spanish and Portuguese Empires at their height, as well as what is now Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Belgium. The French made three major decisions to deal with this. They funded the Protestant movement in the Holy Roman Empire, they made an alliance with the Ottoman Empire, and they made most of the Protestants in France leave, many of which ended up in British and Dutch colonies.

One of the reasons why the English and Dutch both did so well is that they united for over a hundred years. The Dutch managed to pull the Portuguese into the biggest religious war ever so that they took some of the best parts of the Portuguese colonies including South Africa and the Indonesia (the spice islands). The Dutch and English avoided many wars in Europe and controlled their finances better. If these things and many more very lucky things hadn't happened at just the right times there is no way the British would ever have become a world power.

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Money and wars are very related as most the money in governments has traditionally been spent on wars. At the same time that France allied with the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman Empire was invading Europe from the other side. A coalition of mostly Catholic armies from the Habsburgs Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth held them back over hundreds of years. Ivan the Terrible and Vlad the Impaler were very helpful as well. At two different times, the Ottoman Empire laid siege to Vienna, which was the eastern capitol of the Habsburg Empire. The next logical country to invade would be France.

There were many major wars between the Protestants and Catholics until the 19th century when Napoleon destroyed the Catholic Church by looting all its money from Europe to finance his campaign to destroy Spain and Portugal and create modern Germany and Italy. At the end of the Napoleon Wars, the Austrian Habsburgs convinced the British that a cease fire between European countries would be best for everyone in Europe. The peace broke as World War 1 started.

Since then some missionaries mostly from the United States and the United Kingdom spread the Gospel to several former slaves and then they brought the Gospel to millions in Africa. Today, the center of the future church is in Africa and Asia. There are now missionaries going back to Europe to reintroduce the Gospel to the some of the same countries that brought the Gospel to them. Ironically, the little left of the Church in Europe is mostly Catholic. Also the biggest Churches in Africa are not Evangelical or Pentecostal but independent of major Western denominations as well as a large number being Catholic or Anglican.

### Reformation Doctrine

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Doctrinally the major differences between most Protestant and most Catholics historically has been related to the fact that the Catholic Church had inherited a lot of cultural things from the Roman Empire that were no longer relevant to Northern Europe. The Roman Empire was notorious for never compromising, it was very elitist, and was very patriotic. Translating the Bible to the emerging languages of the what would be the dominant World Powers for the next several hundreds years helped make these countries independent of each other.

Getting rid of the previous bureaucracy allowed them to further distance themselves from other rival powers and win friends with the local population and inspire patriotism to get more conscripts to fight in their wars. By making the faith an inward and personal one they were no longer bound by what someone in Rome told them to do. They could continue to then make changes indefinitely, without having to be bound by previous decisions by starting new churches.

So what is a good Christian to do about this? Learn your culture well and understand the Bible well. Combine them in appropriate ways. Traditions are good but they should not become more important than the Bible.

You can only go so far with doctrines developed by different churches. Pray frequently, get involved in the Church, study the Bible, spread the Gospel, help people in need and define your faith through action. Let God be your Lord and let Him make you into a better person.

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# Heaven

## End of the Womb

What if this is not all there is? What if this is just a waiting room for our real lives? Many often think of death as the end but what if it is just the beginning? Maybe this world is just like being in the womb or in a bad dream. Will this world still be real to us, once we die to this world? If we want to experience Heaven on earth, we must give up this world already.

Many think of death as an ending even if it is never ending; even many Christians do. Heaven is more than a place to rest. It is meant to be a life without suffering and without ending. It is a return to the Garden of Eden, but it exists beyond anything we can imagine.

If you think of time as placing limits on what you can do, imagine there being no limits even on what you can imagine and then being able to create without having to know how to do it. But we will all be working together in pursuit of God's objectives. There will be entire universes for each of us where we can travel farther than our imaginations can go and still be right with our fellow believers and our God.

Completely breaking down the hostile wall between people and God breaks down more than just suffering. It breaks down all possibility of evil. Eternal life is the greatest creative effort for God and offers the most limitless expression for us to make out of it.

If you compare everything you know to a seed in the garden described in a sentence and then you wake up to see it for the first time fully blooming with thousands of its friends with no

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imperfections at all, this is something like Heaven. The beauty is not so much in the possibilities but in the impossibility of doing evil.

It always requires much more to create than to destroy things. This is likely why it takes so long to build a civilization from scratch but it can often be removed from memory in a very short amount of time and with much less effort.

Our understanding of Heaven and the afterlife on earth is like a child who doesn't yet know how to speak trying to understand what it is like on the other side of the galaxy in a thousand years. We cannot even understand how far away the moon is from us and yet we think we can describe Heaven with words.

The Kingdom of Heaven describes both everlasting life in paradise and the Church. What does this say about what is important in Heaven? We think of the jewels on the streets of Heaven or its physical size and are in awe, but true joy and connection with our Creator is infinitely greater.

The same God who created the universe is creating a future for all of us to live with Him without suffering or boredom. This is after knowing full well that we are in the process of destroying His creation and His plan for us out of our pride and foolishness. We are like prisoners coming out of a lockdown into greater safety and freedom than we give to those who sacrificed everything for us get.

The gift of Heaven is that we no more need to worry about anything. The limitations we experience on earth are not relevant anymore. There are no rules because God rules directly over us. There is no need for any army because there is no evil anymore.

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God finally makes it impossible for us to hurt each other as we no longer seek more of anything. What is there to steal when the whole thing is made of gold, everything you want is there for you, and there is no market or scarcity of anything good?

Many seem to fear running out of things to do as if we are merely there to do crafts or play card games. Think of how amazing it is how God created people out of absolutely nothing. Not dark matter, not black holes, not empty space, no other realities or universes, singularities or superstrings, absolutely nothing and not even an empty vacuum. When you compare a person to a rock that doesn't give you anywhere near enough to understand what making a soul out of nothing even means.

So if we are to exist in Heaven in bodies that never deteriorate and we still have all our memories and personal spiritual identities preserved, this sounds like the best of being in a dream, being a child, and being retired with perfect health, immense wealth and technology. But again even things like having perfect health would pale in comparison to not having to suffer and being royalty alongside our Creator.

How can you possibly discount or be frightened of eternity with God? Just because we cannot fully describe it doesn't mean there is anything disappointing about it. Certainly if all we get is a seat next to Christ and nothing to do but look at Him, certainly this is better than anything we could possibly come up with. When and if you are truly happy and content and never suffer, does it matter if you have everything or not?

So just like a birthday party or a meeting with your best friend any preparations necessary are not burdens or responsibilities but fun activities to do in anticipation. We need to stop thinking of

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doing things for God because we think we owe Him something. We certainly do, but God has given us this gift freely and so we need to focus on gathering the rest of the guests.

We could ponder forever as to why God wanted to save us, but for whatever reason He did. Yes we are unworthy and yet He stands at our door with a gift for us even though we destroyed His house beforehand partying without Him. Let's focus on the next step of preparing for His homecoming by creating the kind of party He would want.

He wants everyone at the party and time with Him is better than any gift we could make. To get ready for the party we need to create a space for Him in our hearts, our churches, and our society. We have to pray that He will return. And we have to make peace with Him and everyone else. He is not coming back to destroy our enemies as they are invited as well.

We need to give up and get over the idea of being right and being rewarded for being faithful. God sees no rank amongst people because all people need a miracle to come to faith in Christ. We all have been promised great futures that none of us have sufficiently earned and never will. Our inheritance is not about possessions or even possibilities but about being children of our Creator.

Christ defeated sin permanently but we will not experience this fully until after we physically die. We do evil because we do choose to but our motivation is different once we choose to follow God and so we will not need to fight evil in God's Heaven. We will no longer be tested and our side has been chosen. This is why there will be no suffering in Heaven.

## A Better Reality

Better than a drug, like the happiest moment of your childhood, Heaven makes your life on earth look like living in a computer by comparison. The Bible uses similar words for both the afterlife and space. I think this might be a reference to both the size and magnitude of reality that Heaven is all about.

The Kingdom of God is about true equality and true freedom. Think of Heaven as a utopia better than people's greatest dreams for America in terms of the best and most universal American ideals. There will be true peace in Heaven just as Jesus is described as the Prince of Peace. This means we will experience peace, on all levels: peace with God, peace with each other, and inner peace.

Everything on earth has records and so does Heaven. All who are saved are written in a book called the Book of Life. We think of records as punishments, obligations, and bureaucracy. Heaven is very much not like that. The kind of records necessary are minimal because God already know everything, evil we be impossible, and God is accepted by all as the supreme authority.

Imagine how well things would work on Earth if we had complete peace on all levels and had a supreme authority we could trust to be fair. Even better would be if there were a system where we could have kindness and mercy along with justice and equality. This can be possible only through Christ and His death and resurrection. That is truly revolutionary by itself.

Christ says that once He left and returned to Heaven He would prepare a place for us in Heaven. After He returns to earth He

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will make a new Heaven and a new earth. Imagine Earth before the flood where people lived hundreds of years or more and there was so much more abundance than even in America when the Europeans first stepped on soil in the Americas. Then also imagine Earth before the fall and how we could grow things easily and never have to work hard to produce food or anything. Even nakedness had no shame in it or any weird meanings that it does today.

Imagine sex which we are so obsessed with today was actually designed by God, but that there is no sex in Heaven. Imagine having things so much more enjoyable than sex to do so that people don't even miss it. Men especially spend much of their lives trying to find either spouses or relationships with a big focus on sex. Imagine if people had no sex drive and no desire for it. This alone would help heal us tremendously.

In the Earth today, we see the power evil as being real and it is hard to find God in our society. God speaks softly and the devil shouts. We are so busy doing what we are told today that we have no time or energy to have rest and have a relationship with God.

Imagine if you didn't need to maintain your image to keep a good paying job. Not keeping an online presence alone would lower most peoples' stress levels tremendously. Think of how more relaxed many retired people are who have secure incomes. That would be all of us in Heaven.

Christ was a servant as well. Imagine if you have ever had the experience of everyone just getting together and getting the work done so you can move on and do something fun. Have you ever had a manager or employer who would work along with the

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employees to do whatever was necessary to get the job done? Have you ever had a leader in your life who would do whatever was necessary for you and everyone under their leadership to be successful? This is the kind of leader Christ is.

Christ is always described, as we will see Him in Heaven, as human even down to the scars on His hands and feet from His crucifixion and likely He will likely look the age He was when He died, 33. We are also told we will have bodies that will never age, wear down, or stop working for any reason. We will have perfect health and never will need to worry about anything medical going wrong.

Not only will there be peace in our lives in our daily life but there will be no hostilities, wars, disagreements, or even awkward situations to deal with. The lions are said to live with the lambs like they did during the flood. Imagine animals where one is a prey and one is a predator being friends. This also means there will be animals in Heaven and they will be happy on a level that even the best pampered pets on earth are not.

God is also our Creator and He first wanted us to share in creating with Him. Adam was charged with naming the animals and people were given the responsibility of taking care of His creation and making sure animals were well taken care of and had good lives. Obviously we fouled this up so bad that we have a hard time relating with this, but in Heaven we will be able to follow through with this again.

Christ also talks about us having responsibilities in Heaven as well. We are given in the parables examples of how in some ways earth is training us for Heaven. We are told that God wants us to use the gifts He gave us to make the situation better on earth and

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tell people about the Gospel. The Apostle Peter was told by Christ that He would be a fisher of men and we are told that the harvest of souls is great but the workers are few.

It is hard to imagine what Heaven will be like but if you look closely through what scripture talks about Heaven and compare that to our experiences on Earth, this should at least encourage you and give you something to look forward to.

Of course there is also a Hell too that is just as real. We don't know much about it but the best analogy on earth is a place of burning trash. But you will not accidentally screw up and end up here without many experiences and people leading you away from it. God designed hell for demons, not people. Remember Christ talked about how no Christian with genuine faith will be taken away from God by foolishness or attack by evil.

The world has suffering and pain because we screwed up. God never designed for us to live as we do now. We have changed everything fundamentally so that things don't work well for anyone. But God has seen this coming as He knows everything and so made a plan that we can not screw up no matter how much we try.

The apostles definitely screwed up majorly in numerous ways when the situation was the most pivotal. God can and will use any of us. Christ even brought a man back from literal death to serve God (Lazarus). Christ said that God can raise stones to be the sons of Abraham and that if no one worships God, the stones will cry out in praise of Him who created them.

So do not worry about Hell or losing your faith. God will do everything to get you to Heaven save He wants you to choose to

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be with Him of your own free will. This is because human choice and free will are very important to God.