

Better Explanations by Ben Huot

# Better Explanations

4th Generation Writings

By Ben Huot

[www.benjamin-newton.com](http://www.benjamin-newton.com)

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# 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.

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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 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.

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

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Most Christians soon realize Christianity is very complex, subtle, and vast. Different people even Bible believing Christians have vastly different ideas about the Bible even in important doctrines.

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

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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?

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.

# Being Christian

So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.  
--Philippians 2:12-13 WEB

Christianity is a religion based on who God is. Everything is centered around God as it should be. God also does not want you to stagnate.

He wants to draw you in closer and closer. Like the military He wants to start with a commitment you cannot back out of. Just like in other relationships you cannot go backwards or get less serious about God.

Being a Christian is like being mentally ill in that you are pulled in 2 directions at the same time. The world tries to pull you towards itself and God wants you to draw close to Him. You continue to expand your mind spiritually and begin to realize how many of your choices you once took for granted are actually really important.

Being Christian means being more spiritually aware and in a constant struggle. You cannot just put your faith on hold when you find it inconvenient. God is not embarrassed by anything we do but He also doesn't want you to be embarrassed about anything about who He is.

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Like in the military you are supposed to change as you get closer to God. You realize that even your minor role in the world is of utmost importance. We are working against the clock as we have so little time to give before we go one of 2 places.

Being Christian is that you identify with Jesus Christ and take on His values and His purpose in the world. People will likely respond to you as they did to Jesus Christ as they do not want to be reminded about their mortality.

Everything that tries to compete with Christ will ask for the same level of commitment. Drugs, sexual immorality, and money will all lead you to the same place in terms of embarrassment and suffering. The difference is that you get nothing of lasting value from any of these things.

Just like a televangelist is not the same as a local Church, money will not be there for you when you need help. You cannot buy friendships or buy off disease. The reason why we learn soon in life to be self sufficient in many ways is because we cannot depend on other people. As we get more spiritually mature we realize we cannot fully trust ourselves as well.

God is not like a person in that He has no limits on His time or place. He also genuinely cares or else He would not have created us in the first place and certainly wouldn't go to all the trouble keeping people from destroying each other. In fact God actually invested in us with His death and resurrection at eternal cost to Himself. He also left us with His Spirit, the Church, the promise of Heaven and spiritual gifts.

God is not here to judge you. We already know we are bad and suffer because of it. Faith in God brings hope and peace in your

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life. God wants to be there for us directly and through other people and circumstances.

God will make you feel grief when you do immoral things. But even with this grief living with Holy Spirit is better than being without Him. God does things for a purpose and God is slow to anger and quick to forgive.

God wants us to do more than just recite a prayer one time. He wants to affect real change in our lives to bring peace with Himself and then the world. Following God is not easy and recovery from sin is not a linear thing. It is a journey and you will fail at times. But God is with you all the way.

We as Christians and the Church itself are far from perfect. We tend to be resistant to change, to conform too much to our culture, and come with baggage in terms of all kinds of bad living. But stubbornness has a flip side and that is commitment.

Most of the Church as defined by people who have committed themselves to following God daily in their lives is trying to make the world a better place. We agree on few things but we all agree that the way to fix the world is God's way.

One of the things we learn as we live as Christians is to separate our culture, our education, our experiences, our preferences and learned biases from God's ways. It is not enough to do good. It must be done God's way to be effective.

# Standing Prayer

Therefore put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

--Ephesians 6:13 WEB

## The Encourager

When I am really tired and feel defeated, I think of the military and my choice to never give up. I have always known that God goes before me and even in my hell, at the time a gas chamber, God was with me although I certainly didn't realize it then or feel or see it.

Like the wind, sometimes God can best be seen by His effect rather than visually and over time. The famous medieval philosopher Maimonides talks about how God can be understood by us only as what He is not limited by, or by describing how He is different than us. We know God is not limited by time or place, He is without sin, and there are no limits to His power.

It is only in the life and words of Jesus Christ that we start to see God in a way we can start to describe Him in terms of qualities He has that we can relate to in some degree. Many see God in His majesty but fail to see Jesus in the boring and mundane repetition of everyday life and common experiences we all can relate with.

We are unlikely to see God visually and even the mystics preferred not to as they feared they would become proud if they received some special visions or insight into God and spiritual

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things. This does not mean He is not with us daily in every step we take and in every minor decision we make.

Christianity is a religion not a philosophy and relies on faith as our primary means of understanding God not reason.

## The System

We think the devil lives in hell and God in His heaven and we are alone on earth to suffer from each other without restraint. This is not true at all. Both forces and individual spirits are at work in the world constantly. In fact the spiritual world is not really a different world but a bigger one which the physical one is a small part of.

The only thing that limits God is His nature and the limits He places on Himself with regard to human choice. The most effective way to subvert God's people is to be subtle and convince people there is no spiritual world. The devil cares more about the Church and the Christian's mind than unbelievers.

Typically the most supernaturally aware societies are the most receptive to the Gospel. There is a reason why the devil does not try to physically oppose or attack Christians very often. God also gives the spiritual world a shorter leash than the physical world.

Spiritual warfare is more like a cold war in our world and has some connections to the way intelligence agencies work. The main weapon is not force but deception. Changing the mind of the opponent and having perfect insight into what he knows and thinks is often more effective and less costly than trying to occupy a foreign nation.

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The US world system is very much patterned after the British one including similar ideology, but the US has found it is more effective to control the hearts and minds than the territory of other countries. That is why computers were developed in the first place and why our media is so powerful and so resistant to reform.

And this is why people are watched more closely by governments or now businesses than every before. To truly control us they had to let us have a little bit of their power and get us to choose to play by their rules. They watch us like an intruder they know is there because any power can be reversed and used against the aggressor. Every system is penetrable and every attack has a counter.

The devil although many times more powerful than all of us people combined will never destroy God's Church because it is based on God's power not people's. God works through people but the Church is directed by God. Just as an individual soldier realizes their frailty, they have access to greater power, in that case the power of an entire army.

## Forward with God

Before we can truly embrace and work with God in an effective way we first must realize that we must never try to work alone. Life is too great for any of us to try to survive on our own, let alone temptations and the lies and deception we encounter in our daily routines that seek to undermine our connection to God. It is only when the soldiers are alone or in small groups and detached from the main army that they are weak and easily defeated.

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For Jesus to be our Savior He must be our Lord as well. Furthermore, we cannot please God without faith. So we must submit ourselves to God's will daily but also stand with Him when we need His help. God does not abandon us when we are defeated or we cannot hold onto our faith. The simple answer is for us to choose then to believe God despite our doubts and then to ask God to increase our faith.

Life is truly a battle and this is obviously not just spiritual. We fight against disease, aging, accidents, debt, personalities, politics, greed, divisions, and the like. Life is a fight for survival even amongst animals.

We do not need to be defeated and we will not as long as God is both leading us and we are working through His power and for His purposes. We will suffer no matter who we follow but we can actually win depending on what side we choose. The next step is to make this decision very clear and continue to make it clear daily.

As a reflection of the model of salvation, faith in and of itself it a gift of God as well. God provides most of the faith necessary. The key part we need to provide is the choice to believe repeated over time. The choice to follow God is not a one time choice, but one we continually make throughout our lives. You cannot remain neutral spiritually and eventually everyone will be forced to choose one side or the other.

# Enduring Lessons

Many people often wonder why would someone spend so much time studying philosophy and religion. What is the practical benefit of it? These things help you become wiser and avoid pain.

I do not pretend to be wise. On the contrary I have made many stupid mistakes and continue to do so. But I like to avoid pain where possible and so like to read about the failures of others so that I can avoid the consequences.

Why does God tell us not to sin? Because it hurts us by making it harder to find peace with God and the world. Sin sounds fun at first but later on it hurts us and others. Sin is the source of suffering in this world. There was no suffering before sin.

Most major religions have as many or more rules than the Bible. They are also very similar. The same hold true for government laws. They are necessary for people to get along and have a society that is stable and functioning.

One of the many problems we have today is that we are making things legal that should remain illegal. I know the reasoning is that no one follows the laws anyway or that they do not hurt other people. But all addictions hurt other people.

These laws fall into a category called decency or vice laws that have been illegal until recently in our country. Issues involved include sexual immorality, gambling, and drugs. Lying is probably the worst for destabilizing society but, though not

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directly illegal, there are serious legal penalties for it in certain cases. Stealing is being enforced less also, especially involving anything digital.

Many of these on the surface seem like things that the government should not legislate and they should be left to people's conscience. The problem becomes that once you allow a little of sin in your life, it escalates until you end up serving the sin. You then lose your freedom and joy in life.

As Christians we have a very different idea about freedom than America does. Christians do not believe that we have rights just by being people. They believe they have been given freedom by the price of the suffering of Christ on Earth.

Christ had to be totally rejected by His Father and go down into hell after having a shameful death as a criminal. So Christians believe we are all guilty of sin and deserve to suffer eternally in hell. Christ paid that price instead.

Many think this too severe a punishment but we do not understand how painful sin can be. Wise people figured this out over the millennia of human existence. What seems fun at first can have really bad consequences that are not usually apparent at the time.

So why should the government be brought into this religious issue? It comes down to things affecting other people. When someone does drugs and then drives it hurts other people. When they steal online media and software it drives media companies to make everything we buy temporary like streaming or software restrictions.

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Our country needs to find a way to agree on basic things and find some sort of philosophy to base the country on. The constitution is not enough. There have to be cultural ways of understanding how to interpret it. Separated from its context the constitution is unclear.

Furthermore this constitution was written for an early industrial revolution era not an information revolution era. The main problem at the time was the power of government not the power of hackers. Our world is now global as well as much as we do not like it nothing has been produced anywhere near the scale we do today without China as it is governed today.

We can thank Saudi Arabia and China for their governments and their cultures, for our freedoms today. Without them we would not have the internet today which is now the basis for a stable and functional society as much as oil or food. The US is not self sufficient and could not be in the way the US decided to design the world.

Unfortunately we can not just travel in time to fix the problem and if we did we would open a worse situation than we have now with the Internet. There is a direct tie between how easy it is to do something and what society ends up doing on a large scale. We have made crime too easy and that is why we have so much crime today. Most crime is done online today as everything else is as well.

The human mind is the source of bad things. Our enemy is really ourselves. No one makes us do bad things usually. We can be compromised but that usually involves us previously doing something bad which gives the criminal leverage.

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The more we link the human mind directly to actions as we do with current technology like doing good or bad with a button, the more we bypass our brains so that we move from what we feel to what we do. When we do not think critically about how we feel and use our mind to suppress antisocial and evil tendencies we end up doing bad things.

So the combination of both making sin legal and easy to do increase the sin in the world. When you remove more and more absolutes other basic concepts in civilization are challenged as well. It may not be more laws but it could be the way we educate or don't like in not teaching how to multiply without computers, art or trades in school, or how to write in cursive or how to tell time by old clocks.

We have made great strides in society when it comes to things like toleration for differences and lack of tolerance for violence and we need to push this even farther. At the same time we need to double down on getting vice crimes under control. But to do so we need to reverse much of our thinking about these "minor" crimes.

Sin hurts us and others whether you are a Christian or not. That is why we must make it harder to sin. When we were a rural based farming society you had to go to the city and go out of your way to get involved in sin and crime. Now everything comes into your bedroom and, if you hit the wrong button or have poor security, you can do bad things.

I think the way to deal with this for individuals is by studying about ethics, changing the way we think, and being more careful in how we act. What the rest of society does is out of our control. But going down the road of sin leads to more suffering. Avoid

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even things only loosely related to anything you would not be comfortable with telling your mom.

# Know Yourself

Most people think certain things that are often in conflict with how they feel. This is because people often have poor self knowledge and are motivated mostly by irrational or emotional arguments. Their emotions and thinking are not in sync because they are in internal conflict.

Major world belief systems tend to encourage self reflection and acknowledge that a person has a reality that is not entirely based on quantifiable data. Many modern people seem to think science is the only or best way of knowing about life. We reduce our feeling down to facts and then argue about something different from what we feel.

We are not honest with our motives to others because we are not honest with ourselves. We need to accept that we are primarily driven by emotions and emotional arguments. Many of the issues we argue about are not the real ones we are concerned with. We are afraid we may appear weak if we acknowledge that emotions are as valid as facts in forming opinions.

I have no problem admitting that I am irrational and subjective. In fact I think anyone who truly believes they are objective is trying to take the place of God. Only God can truly be objective. I am not trying to be objective and I am not trying to argue with factual evidence. I do not desire to change your opinion.

This does not make me better or worse than others and I admit that I likely have poor self knowledge as well. I think spiritual

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growth helps us see things more from God's point of view. I find this helpful because it allows me to see beyond my own feelings without resorting to making myself as the center of things or oversimplifying human existence and major life issues as purely factual in nature.

God is a perfect blend of emotion and logic and so should we be also. Ignoring your feelings does not make you stronger. Not accepting your limitations does not allow you to accomplish more. Even denying fear is not beneficial to your self mastery.

Emotions happen faster than logic does and are useful when we are in dangerous situations. They also help limit what we see as acceptable by what we can do alone. Science answers a lot of useful questions about how to do something. But it requires more to decide whether or not to do something.

Our society is as optimized by science for economic efficiency as is possible without radically different technology. But this is not the most important thing. If we were more responsible and saw things from a longer term perspective we would come up with radically different solutions to our problems.

We seem to have decided sometime ago that it is acceptable for someone to suffer in the place of another. Many people believe that it is morally justified for the needs of the few to be sacrificed for the many. This is one of the reasons why I am in favor of the US Bill of Rights even though I do not believe people have rights just because they are people.

I think that nothing should suffer unnecessarily and few things are really necessary. In other words the Bill of Rights is important to me because it places limits on what a society is allowed to do

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even when the majority thinks something is best even if it hurts the individual.

I do not believe that the ends justify the means ever. We should never decide between the best of two bad things. If we are confronted with this choice, we should do nothing or get more creative.

We should not always choose the easiest way to do something. We should place a higher value on being kind to the individual at the expense of society. The individual needs to be protected from the group more than the group from the individual.

We like to divide ourselves into 2 groups with an us vs. them mentality. But our real conflict is internal. If we can find peace within ourselves it will be much easier to find peace with each other.

Today we argue about who is more tolerant but exclude the other major perspective from this argument. It does not matter who we are theoretically tolerant too. It matters that we both get along with each other from both major belief systems in America. It is not Muslim vs. Christian or Science vs. Faith. It is conservative vs. liberal.

The point is that philosophy matters and it is not always what you can prove that determines what is right or what the outcome will be. There are many other methods of determining what is true other than measurable phenomena. Pain itself transcends the physical, emotional, and spiritual realms of human existence.

You cannot reduce yourself or your opinions down to nothing but what can be proved and what cannot. What you feel and believe

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is important and valid no matter why you feel that way. But before you can communicate this effectively to others you need to know yourself well enough to be able to discover why you feel this way for your own peace of mind.

Self knowledge is important because without knowing yourself and why you do what you do how can you ever understand why other people do what they do? To start learning more about yourself you need to study a broader field than just one academic discipline and the broadest discipline is philosophy. In fact Science and Social Science came out of philosophy as they were once called Logic, Natural Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind, and Ethics.

To think beyond a logical world you need other methods of measuring the importance of what you experience than just math. Religion is a great way to get into this mindset. Religion expands your mind because you are forced to wrestle with ideas that are not provable empirically.

How do you prove whether karma is true or sin is true? Both are similar in that they both deal with morality but are very different in how this is resolved. Both involve changing the way you think and they involve similar morally significant actions. But they are different in that one is done by you and the other is done by God.

Ultimately we need to decide if we want to live our own lives and end up suffering unnecessarily or follow God and have purpose in our suffering. Christians definitely do suffer but they have purpose and hope beyond this little life on earth. The Christian God understands what it is like to be us because He created us, He lived as us, and His Spirit is willing to live within us.

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God cares about the individual and our feelings because He wants our hearts, minds, and souls not just to correct our behavior or to gain power over us like the world does. God loves us because He chooses to do so despite and even in our immorality and disobedience.

Even when God lives within us, we are still free to do what we choose. This is known by most of us who know or who are Christians because we still sin even as believers. But God's focus is not on punishing us but transforming us by changing our thinking, our experiences, and our actions by His direct supernatural intervention.

God created us with free choice but made it so we still could not sin because we at first did not know what evil was. God now allows for free choice while still guaranteeing us we have been pre-selected to be believers in Him. If He can do this He has the power and will to make us better people despite our stubbornness and rebellion against Him. Free will and fate do not need to be in conflict anymore than facts need to be with emotions.

# God is Outside Our Box

God is not a fact. He is truth. You cannot put Him into a box and the Bible certainly doesn't either. We reduce God to our level when we use terminology designed for science. Science claims the place of God in our hearts and minds and we cannot give it a foothold in theology.

I remember the little fishes on the backs of cars maybe a decade ago. The Christian one that means Jesus Christ, Son of God, Lord and Savior. Then you started to see Darwin fish symbolizing evolution and atheism. Then the Jesus fish eats the Darwin fish then you see Darwin fish eating the Jesus fish. Variations continued in that manner.

We all want to have the last word in a debate, but there is nothing to debate as the existence of God is obvious. The point is there is nothing to win. We need to be real with non-believers about our struggles and not fight them. They will fight us because they know no better. But we know better and should come out in peace.

Jesus had much harder words for the Pharisees than He did for the unbelievers. Jesus dropped out of society to a large degree and unbelievers were drawn to Him. He did not fight them but spent time with them in their homes.

Christ is the Prince of Peace not the god of war. I don't see where all the anger comes from. I see wrong on both sides of the politics aisle. Neither side will admit they support any evil but this is not

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believable to people who do not have a political party or who don't vote.

We need to let the politics go. The Cold War was won and we don't need to fight China in a nuclear war. Bad things happened socially and politically, in the past few decades, and there were great things that happened as well. We had many wars, made the environment much worse, and we have legalized many vice crimes. On the other hand, we have better legal support for animal rights and people with disabilities.

We built out the Internet which allowed us to reach more people with the Gospel but crime has shifted to the Internet as well. We, Americans, still are the leader by far of the entire world in every measurable category and yet young people continue to think things will get a little worse each year. We are losing jobs and homelessness is increasing although we still have a huge amount of wealth in this country.

We live in a country that essentially cannot be invaded and we are doing well after fighting major wars every decade and losing the peace in every one of them for over 50 years. We are basically indestructible by ordinary or outside measures. But our entire world system is very brittle and can go up any time. We have found that we can now fight wars electronically so no one gets hurt until they start shutting down our electrical grids.

No one is addressing the key problems because they do not anger, scare, or excite us. We are a society of entertainment and the easy road. We could agree on doing some things we all need to do like fix roads, improve Internet security, clean up trash, get homeless people jobs and housing, crack down on fraud and identity theft, and pay for the healthcare of disabled veterans.

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Christ does not advocate fascism or communism, democracy or socialism. God wants to rule us directly. We need not fight the battles of this country figuratively or literally. Atheism is not new and it is not new in America. It started centuries ago.

The Church needs so have a vision for the future that we can agree upon. The country cannot agree upon many serious issues whereas the Church cannot agree on whether to wear masks inside. I really don't care which way we go but many people do not attend church because of this and this needs to stop.

The problems can all be solved within our churches themselves. We are our own worst enemies. We sink ourselves and give up way too easily. We fight and bicker amongst ourselves.

We congratulate ourselves that we have seen the light in the same breath we say all have sinned. We say we want to save the world and yet we have largely given up on our own country. We celebrate Christ's compassion and yet we have no appreciation for what our military goes through.

We should be the counter to our culture, not a subset of it. There are people with other views that can be Christians as well. Let us see if we can expand ourselves into categories of people we are less comfortable with.

We need to re-examine whether some things are cultural or Biblical issues. Our culture is fundamentally changing worldwide due to huge technological, ecological, and economic changes and we need to bring the Gospel to this new world culture. We need to see ourselves as entering an entirely different world culture. We need to approach it like we would a new mission field of a

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world that has never seen the Gospel in their language or adapted to their culture.

We need to bring English speaking Christianity into communion with Spanish speaking churches. We need to bring in churches dominated by other racial or ethnic groups. We need to expand into the Internet world but in a peaceful and low key way.

We should never give up doctrine and we should never accept defeat in evangelism. But we still must make major changes. The virtual world is about to be united with the physical world and we need to adapt and try to get ahead of the curve. Christians need to be more involved in watching technology, social trends, and intellectual discussions but in a way that is mostly about listening rather than debating.

# Crazy Treatments

If you read much about Schizophrenia you will quickly realize a few things. One is that there is very little data to work with which is why even the official treatments and understanding of what Schizophrenia is change frequently. The second is that the ideas on treatment vary widely even currently, especially outside the mainstream medical community. The third is there is very poor understanding of the brain and so much of what they do understand comes from studies done in the last literally few years.

When it comes to trying to learn about Schizophrenia, people cannot even agree that it is a disability. Anyone living with it and able to bring back their mind to any kind of useful state will find that Schizophrenia does not give you special powers or insights. Having Schizophrenia does not mean you are necessarily a genius or really creative. Even if we made major changes in society to make the world more compatible and hospitable to Schizophrenia we would just create an anarchy and the mentally ill would be treated no better or maybe worse.

If you remember one thing about Schizophrenia is that it is disabling. This means it is harder to live with Schizophrenia by a long shot. Most of the social parts of your brain do not work or do not work properly. You are constantly in fight or flight mode. You trust no one. Many people with Schizophrenia are more religious than most people today because society has grown to repress religion in general and specific aspects of it like the supernatural.

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You cannot expect a person with Schizophrenia to be able to use their mind usefully any more than you can expect someone without legs to be able to use them usefully. Many physical disabilities can be remediated by using newer forms of technology, but this is not true for Schizophrenia unless they literally do brain transplants. You then will likely be a different person.

All they can do now is sedate you enough to kill the voices and paranoia to the degree that you can function with them. Being on a sedative slows down your entire body too, not just your mind. This causes many other problems as well like rapid weight gain.

I don't mean to imply you cannot have a positive life with Schizophrenia, but it takes a lot of support for most people. It is also a major illness in that it is quite painfully and physically as well. It also causes major depression as it is hard to deal with day in and day out.

There is much room for improvement in both medication and secondary treatments. One of the ideas gaining prominence in mainstream medicine is that of Buddhist meditation. The problem with this is that if you can control your mind enough to meditate it is likely not relaxing or you cannot do it correctly or at all.

Mediation is very difficult for anyone. Most people who became monks traditionally and practiced Buddhism in this way across major schools would spend their whole lives on this. I seriously doubt they would take people with Schizophrenia at that time in history especially if they ever worked with someone with this condition. Buddha himself had no major psychological problems.

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In fact people with Schizophrenia typically died of starvation after being in a psychotic episode for a few weeks, because they stopped eating. This happened until the 1950s when they realized that sedatives could be effective in treating Schizophrenia. Vicktor Frankl, the famous existential psychologist, was the first of one of the first to try this.

There is a lot of crossover between psychology and Buddhism and some ideas could be helpful. I think breathing exercises by themselves could be very useful, but I think it is unreasonable to expect people who have lost the rational part of their brain to meditate. The concepts themselves are very subtle. If most people with Schizophrenia have trouble keeping a schedule, getting proper sleep, and working a basic job having them learn meditation is like sending them back to basic training.

Another extremely scary type of treatment being discussed is taking once illegal drugs. The way people describe how this works sounds exactly like getting high and the way addiction works. This is not a treatment but just an abuse of drugs. The problem with once illegal drugs is that they have no legitimate medical or psychological therapeutic uses. If they worked they would just be controlled substances like morphine or oxycodone.

The problem with being high is that it is not sustainable and so people go on to more extreme drugs to get a bigger high. When they stop they get extreme depression. You cannot maintain a high as the brain has to balance itself back out again.

The other thing about addiction is that it is directly chemical driven and goes around the rational part of the brain. People with Schizophrenia do not want to operate purely on emotion. That is what we are trying to change as the goal of treatment.

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One of the big problems we are running into is people specialize too much in one area. Maybe to understand Schizophrenia better we need to spend more time around people with the disease and to have a greater emphasis on studying across academic disciplines. One of the big problems is funding and our insistence on making everything perfect and no one dying. HIV gets many times more funding than mental illnesses do. Also there is little money in making medicine for Schizophrenia.

Because the drug Risperdal caused some people to get tender breasts, the government punished the drug company. I was on the drug when I was first diagnosed and it was very effective. The drug actually had less side effects than other comparable drugs as this one was one of the newer ones, at the time. The antipsychotics cause many more serious problems than tender breasts (which they warned me about too before taking it) like heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

# War in an Entertainment Culture

The way most people understand the military comes from movies. This means most people think being in the military is exciting and educational. The military unlike the ones simulated by Hollywood is very boring and depressing. Video games are fun because you suffer no emotional or physical pain.

Serving in the army is like doing heavy construction work all day and getting paid below minimum wage. In addition you are also being exposed to toxic chemicals and are likely to leave with psychological trauma. You have no rights and when you leave you have no benefits.

The military does not encourage critical thinking anymore than a cult. The military is like being bipolar - you have terror and you have boredom but little in between. The one thing good about the military is the people you work with. The bad part is they job you are required to do. This is the sad part of the military: they get real nice people to do some very bad things.

Most people join the military because they are fooled by the promise of benefits and /or because their situation is worse. Historically only people who were near serving time in prison or who were new to the country would be willing to join. Today we want people who are disciplined and good with technology as warfare has become a specialty and requires more training but fewer people.

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The military is not difficult intellectually nor does it require extensive technical ability either. They take people who are willing but do not train them long enough. We are a high technology army that uses expensive weapons manned by people without adequate knowledge of what they are getting into. The military also expects you to never be late to a meeting and never to hesitate before doing anything asked of you.

They also put everyone on the front lines. The difference between medic and infantry is that the foot soldier carries a lighter pack. This is because they don't have to carry the morphine or the bandages.

Our country is not known for being able to shoot well even though our rifles are very easy to shoot accurately with. They want everyone to work together as a group and respond very quickly. We win wars by supporting these foot soldiers better than any other army does.

Saying our army is the best in the world compared to other armies does not mean it is good compared to advanced research universities. The job in the military largely entails withstanding pain and having a huge amount of energy. It does not require understanding quantum mechanics but rather having laser focus on the mission.

Critical thinking is frowned on in the army because it takes too much time to do right. We outsource the brains to the officers. We in the American military do not choose to fight in wars.

When I was in the military, being sent to combat was the scariest thing you could think of. The countries we fight are even meaner

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than you see in the movies. They are ready, willing, and enthusiastic to make any American suffer as much as they possibly can.

Your enlistment is only one part of the story. The other is how it affects you the rest of your life. Many people come out with post traumatic stress disorder or missing a leg or two. These are great people who are willing to do something everyone else claims they support but won't do anything to help. The biggest injury in warfare is exposure to toxic chemicals and most of that is entirely unnecessary and directly self-inflicted.

In order to get rid of stuff in combat they have decided to burn everything from jet fuel, poop, old uniforms, garbage, and anything else they want to get rid of in open burning pits next to where our people work, train, and sleep. When the military inhales these chemicals they get very sick and get things like cancer in their 20s and 30s.

A direct connection has been proven and there is plenty of evidence but you have to submit your claim individually as they assume you are not affected unless you fill out the right forms. The head of the VA says we have plenty of money to pay for this, but the Department of Defense will not release what chemicals are being burned in the pits. This is likely because they do not want anyone to know what they are destroying.

A much smarter idea would be to employ local civilians to take out the trash for us or bury it in the middle of the desert. Our military places a higher value on our lives to not care at all about this. They must be destroying something they don't want someone else to get their hands on.

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The next time you decide to vote for a candidate that gets tough on our enemies or has the will to fight an inevitable war before it gets out of hand, sign up yourself instead or your children or grandchildren if you are too old. It is easy to be the one that declares the war and fun to ride in a parade but serving in the war is a sacrifice not because you serve in a tough job for a few years but because it destroys your life and those you are fighting against.

No one really wins a war. We fight wars every decade and lose the peace in almost all of them. This is senseless suffering. If you value the American soldier do not thank them for their service. Stop the wars or serve in their place.

# 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

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we can stop having to pay off their leaders and stop helping the Saudis spread radical Islam throughout the world.

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,

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hurricanes, floods, famine, disease, and pestilence are just a few of the disaster that will increase drastically.

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

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stronger than ever, many of the major health problems of Americans will disappear overnight, we will likely fight fewer or 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.

# American World of Faith

We live in a world of faith. We just don't call it that. We rely on countless technologies to work together seamlessly for life to work. Few have any idea of how they work, but we do know we are completely dependent on them because when they go down, we get little done.

We expect experts to run our society. We couldn't rebuild almost any part of our society even with 95% of the population if we had no experts. We trust experts on many subjects including our health, in our jobs, and in our future. Most people do have great faith. It is just that their faith is in science and not God.

It is ironic that so many people outright reject the concept of God without question and are so critical of religion in general but even Christians accept science with blind faith and a lack of critical thought. The reason why is obvious - our society is based on science and atheism. It would be like arguing living without food or water.

Science is designed to work so that people are critical of scientists. The problem is you have no control over where others take your ideas and what parts they accept and reject. Christianity is based on sacrifice and yet much of the vocal church in America is very rich. Christ was a mystic and yet many in the Church still use His ideas to try to win empires.

Medieval Europe was created by the merging together of the German and Roman cultures but many might think they

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embraced the most violent parts of both cultures. In America our culture is being heavily influenced by Mexican culture, but we have no idea exactly what parts of American and what parts of Mexican culture will be chosen in mass.

So we do understand faith and so that is not the obstacle to spreading the Gospel in America. I think the biggest obstacle to faith is that life is too easy and people are too busy to prioritize God. It is just too easy to ignore God as the world shouts and God whispers. There are emerging obstacles as well as emerging opportunities in America today.

Feminism has become mainstream but so has science fiction. Feminism has historically been very anti-Christian probably because the Christian God is male. Science fiction deals primarily with what Christians would call the supernatural. Pagan or animistic cultures have been some of the most receptive to the Gospel.

One of the biggest problems in America is Hollywood. The way Hollywood portrays the life of Americans causes much suffering in the world. This is both because of how the world sees Americans as morally corrupt but also because it is aggressively marketed / propagandized throughout the entire world.

Our culture is now almost entirely based on entertainment and gathering information on individual people. There are still other things sold but they do not make as much money or employ as many people. Much of the world will never be a part of it because computers can only be made so cheap and advertisers / businesses have little interest in those users who can barely afford a phone.

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So the logical step would be to form some sort of entertainment with Christian morality but that likely has us falling into the trap of just making a Christian version of something inherently pagan. The other angle is to try to get people to work harder and then really take a rest.

Christians should play to their historic strength - community. Christianity is one of the few institutions that will likely survive the information revolution (as a social thing, as religion existed long before the agricultural revolution). Christians need to return to education and critical thinking even as the world exits this area. It must be kept alive and it makes sense to get ahead of the game and be there when things go sideways.

But the best way to do this is not to try to do anything on a large scale or make any plans for it at an institutional level. If this is God's will it will happen. We should work hard to make it happen as individuals but it will be better for us to let God lead. If we learn nothing else from our situation the world is in is that God needs to be our direct and primary leader.

Look at how Jesus or Paul ran their ministries. They didn't get out a map and learn about the best strategies for spreading the Gospel. They just took advantage of opportunities that God opened up for them. No one would have thought of those particular areas would be effective areas to build the Church from.

Africa has been a very successful field for the Gospel although it started there as well in Egypt and Ethiopia, but they were boxed in by Islam to a large degree. The interesting thing about how the Gospel was brought to the rest of Africa was at both the same time as it was leaving Europe and America and it was spread by

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Africans to other Africans. The American and European missionaries converted very few people directly but a few converts who were former slaves ended up evangelizing millions of people a piece in Africa during the last hundred years or so.

Now Africa is at the center of world Christianity and future prophecy and no longer needs missionaries from America to be self sustaining. This is more recently been the case with American and European denominations as African Indigenous Churches have never had trouble spreading the Gospel. Ironically the bigger thing holding back Christianity throughout most of the world is its association with rich Americans with aggressive international political ideas.

Christianity in America suffers from the common problem that cultures where the Gospel has spread tend to associate Christianity with a certain part of their culture, tribe, or social group. In America, there is a strong connection between English speaking conservatives and Evangelical Christianity, which has been the most aggressive Christian group in American politics. One of the challenges to Christianity in America is to bring English and Spanish speaking churches together and bring Christianity to those with liberal political views.

In order to meet these challenges, we need to keep to our traditional theological roots and focus on the fundamentals. We can no longer afford to let politics, languages, or social norms hold us back. Whichever side you are on, the political landscape changes every few years so that whatever is decided on politically will switch back as fast and as hard as it went in to begin with. The future may be an apocalypse but Christianity will be strong.