

# Complete Introductions

## Collection 2

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# 1 First Things

## 1.1 For More Information

For more books and information, visit me on the web at <http://benjamin-newton.com/> Feel free to send me e-mail regarding the books and website at <mailto:ben@benjamin-newton.com> I even enjoy constructive criticism

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## 2 Background Articles

### 2.1 Contemporary Social Issues

#### 2.1.1 Information Revolution

One of the major events of this century, that almost everyone is ignoring is that we are undergoing a major technology revolution. This will be on the scale of the agricultural revolution, bigger than the industrial revolution. Before the agricultural revolution, we lived as hunters and gathers and had no written language or permanent settlements.

After the agricultural revolution, we had: the first written history, what we now consider basic math, the first laws or government of any kind, cities, large scale food production, public projects like roads and irrigation, accounting, the first schools of any kind, major world religions, armies and large scale warfare, and jobs other than hunter or gatherer. All this and more is now going to be transformed, or even made irrelevant.

The people, that were aware of this development, made some real bad decisions, based on some ridiculous assumptions. One of the big reasons why we gave up on being a manufacturing power was that the highest tech goods are usually sold for the highest price. This means, if we get all the computer related jobs, we will be much richer, than a nation that has to settle for manufacturing. This part makes sense.

What does not make sense is the assumption, that we will both always add new jobs, for obsoleted jobs and that computers usually add jobs, rather than reduce them. It is simple logic. In industrial revolution style thinking, you reduce costs, as much as you can. The biggest cost is labor, so most technology is used to replace people, in order to reduce costs the most.

Computers don't increase jobs; they reduce them. People often think that, for every job lost, a new one will be replaced, and that the economy will always need everyone employed, in order to function. The problem now is that we don't need everyone employed to run the economy. And we need less and less people all the time. What do the people, who are replaced, do now? Do they just roam the streets, or live on welfare, for the rest of their lives?

What happens now? We really have no idea what will happen next, except that the social aspects of computers and the internet will transform us more than the technology itself. There will be leaders from different organizations or networks, who will begin to take control, from traditional sources, in very aspect of life. People will continue to be the same as they always were morally, emotionally, and intellectually.

You can be sure opportunists will continue to work, to improve their self interests, and ideologues will push their ideologies, at any cost. The big addictions and social problems we have will just find different venues. We won't be better people and the rich will likely get richer and the poor will get much poorer. Leaders will continue to be addicted to power and businessmen will continue to lust for more money.

The big thing you can be sure of is that the major social institutions of the 19th and 20th century will be irrelevant or unrecognizable. Someone, from my generation, going into the future, a hundred years, would find the world, as baffling, as someone, from these stone age would, with computers and the internet. The changes of the 19h and 20th centuries will be minor, in comparison. Another things to be certain of is that we will continue to use up

all our energy, no matter how much we get. Our need for more energy is similar to a gambler's need for more money.

Corporations and software will be much more important, than they are now. The company you buy your computer from is already more important, than the people you vote for. And as long as we have computers, criminals and the government will continue to steal and leak information and their will be an exponential increase in the creativity, sophistication, severity and the variety of attacks. Within a few decades, everyone's and every groups identity and secrets will be compromised and exposed.

Some people have still not yet realized, that the US government has implemented a police state, like the Gestapo, KGB, and STAZi, but in a more high tech fashion. Within a couple generations, we will have a leader like Hitler, but he or she will be seem really reasonable to us and will solve a lot of problems, using common sense, and will cut through all the "red tape".

Just be sure you are not Muslim; you do not look like, have a name spelled like, or speak any language anyone would mistake for being from anywhere in South Asia or Africa; you are not an activist of any kind; you say nothing bad about the government; you are for the latest war; you never become important or powerful; you never find an effective way to limit the power of the government; you never try any way to avoid its surveillance; and you never violate any one of thousands of unknown laws.

If you avoid all those things, you will avoid being one of the first round of gas chamber victims. You will not be able to get rid of the police state, because they will just operate it overseas, if it is outlawed. Many people suffered terribly during World War II, the Cold War, and the War on Terrorism, for no good reason.

And we will get involved in more wars: we will attack Iraq a few more times (because some people's political beliefs entirely revolve around invading that

country) and likely Russia (which could go nuclear and would be easily avoidable). The government will start offering a million dollars, for each person who signs up, to be mercenary (contractor), as the military, intelligence, and police will be completely outsourced and corporate, if they are not already.

We will give up on even pretending we are even going to balance the budget and increase military spending exponentially. Terrorism will be done on a greater and greater scale and none of our counter measures will even keep the attacks from getting bigger and more sophisticated. The banks will continue to need to get bailed out every decade, or our world economy will collapse and we will be back in the stone age.

Elected officials will only learn enough about computers, to leak all the sensitive information about themselves, the government, and everyone else's information they have access to. The government will continue to be so slow that people will not even bother with suing someone or filing charges. They will just steal all your personal information sell it, and lock you out of all your communications. Making people mad will be much easier and more painful. The best way to cope, as always, will be to be useless to those in power and not stand out enough, to be a target, of anyone.

The future is in doing what Apple has done, for the last couple decades: sell premium products, to people, who are not cheap, and ignore the others. The thing for educators to do, to prepare the next generation for work, is to simply pound into the kids brains that you need to be proactive and find ways to make money, in case you never do find a job. As soon as they can read and write, they need to focus on finding revenue streams.

The fundamental and only question that kids of the next generation need to answer is: what good or service can I offer that someone else will pay me money for? Nothing else really matters. And for values, the only thing you need to teach your children is to simply be kind to themselves, others, and to their resources. The other thing you can do, to improve the next generations

life, is to teach your kids to do without what others think is necessary. Do you really need a car and a smartphone? Do you really need cable TV and espresso every day?

## 2.1.2 Everything is Free

The source of our problems today all comes from too much of a good thing. We live like emperors and we are destroying our world because we cannot get rid of all the waste. We have access to all information ever recorded, but we learn as little as possible. The truth sounds depressing if you buy into what our culture values.

America and the world will continue to get poorer, jobs will continue to disappear, and the weather will get really bad. We will not get a better situation in the future, because we have already created the perfect situation we can live in while we believe what we believe now.

We don't need a solution and more problems will not help either. We need a new philosophy. There is going to be no more growth. Everyone has already bought everything they need and everything they would like to buy. Capitalism is at an end because there are no more things to sell.

We need less people to run our system there ever before. There will not be a need for more programmers as more and more can be done with fewer and fewer people, and few people are disciplined enough or companies generous enough to allow them the time and resources to make good software. Microsoft has set up a system where everyone will use their products until they end of history, but they are slowly going out of business.

The information revolution will transform things so much that society will be run completely different. Things will be almost free, but few people will have jobs. Our governments will become more and more irrelevant and the leaders

will be computer companies. But they will make very little money although they will have huge marketshare and numbers of users.

There will be 10 or 100 times as many computers as there are people. And security will get much worse. We will soon have no need for passwords or any security, because there will be no secrets and no way to secure anything. Everything is already compromised and we cannot release fixes as fast as vulnerabilities are found. Everything that makes money online or with computers will be basically a scam, or already is.

There will be no separation between the Internet and physical reality. Nothing created virtually will have any value, because there will be no way to protect it. We won't be able to become independent of computers, without going back to the stone age. This is the day for religion. Any positive contributions to society will be in the form of faith and divine intervention.

Instead of worrying about whether the terrorists blow someone else up, maybe we should learn how to make outhouses. Instead of protecting our country, lets consider whether it is relevant any longer. The good part is that we have a clear choice to make and we are almost ready to make it. We are almost at rock bottom, so we know we cannot wait any longer.

We need God. We do not need more stuff. God does not need us. God intervenes all the time and will continue to do so, but we are now blind to anything spiritual. We need to stop and pray and wait on God. We need to accept that while life without God is possible, it is not fun.

### 2.1.3 The Future is War 2016

It is surprising that America is so filled with anger and fear, when life is better for more people then ever before, throughout most of the world. I think some people really do want war. the Middle East is so similar to America. I guess I

was right about the apocalypse coming. We are being set up for a big war on all levels.

The best thing to do would be to split up half the world who know enough history to know that while fundamentally flawed, the system we have today provides much more happiness to so many more people. People fixate on Hitler, but he is not that different from Genghis Khan, the Russian Tzars, or the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire.

Both sides are convinced that our form of government which is theoretically a democracy but is really a hybrid of corporations, unelected officials, and computer databases will be fixed, if only they just vote one way. If you believe in conspiracy theories, as much of America and the Middle East do, there is no way to disprove anything. You just pick your side first and then justify it however you want to.

Everybody want simple extreme solutions that they think will fix deeper systemic corruption. I guess people who have not studied history, served in the military, or don't know much about computers fail to see the connections between these groups although surely troubling is actually better than many other viable solution.

It is great to be a leader with values, but that is almost impossible. The only people who want to be elected politicians are people who are addicted to power and will do anything in order to achieve more and more of it, much like the kind of people who run corporations. It is great to strive for perfection and for morality, but it is foolish to think that switching leaders will change the way people think, which is what drives the whole machine.

To really change the system would be to change the way people think. We need to see things on a much greater scale of time and spirit. Whether or not we win and get our way, our future lies less in what we do and more in what we do not do. It is true that society is not headed in a good direction long term. The

problem is that the solutions people think are all top down and will probably make things worse.

The real scary thing is that people who seem intelligent with good judgement end up wanting to fight wars against each other. There seems to be no middle ground, which means there are no solutions to this division. People think that fixing politics means that you don't compromise, but this, if taken too far, nothing gets done.

When the French Revolution happened people thought of different causes, which all may be partially correct, but the fundamental problem is that there was a huge drop in bread production. Our system is very brittle logistically. If trucks do not arrive, for even a day, people go hungry in mass. Once they don't get three days of meals, our modern political system will fundamentally change.

If we have a revolution, who do you think will be powerful and how will they govern? After Katrina, people started showing up around town with guns and started ordering people around. Were they part of the police, emergency teams, the military, criminals, opportunists? The answer is it doesn't matter. Everything has a price and you rarely get what you want.

It is true that religiously inclined people will get more power if things fall apart. The thing is that usually this doesn't mean the groups that are acceptable to most people who have a choice in who they join. Think now of the kind of groups who would stockpile things, who have large quantities of guns and bullets who would be able to run things without government intervention.

You probably do not know any of these people and you likely will not ever want to meet them. Even the ones part of our government that aren't obviously corrupt at least believe the ends justify the means. This is what scares me: when people in power start to not trust their local population and they will do anything to accomplish their goals. Even good people can do terrible things, in

these situations. Many people believe in different values when there is a convenient, identifiable enemy and they are scared.

So if we could magically end our dependence on oil or destroy our governments illegal databases that would be good change, but the kinds of change people are advocating in large numbers don't deal with things like this. We spend a lot of time deciding who the president is, who has little power over any one person and little time deciding who guards the bases and making sure the sewage system works. At this point we cannot even agree that we need to fix roads and bridges that may break down at any moment.

Any election won't get people to stop hating each other. At this rate, the anger will just keep mounting and neither side will compromise, even to keep the trucks delivering food. I don't know if we will have a civil war because of this, but this does not end well. And neither side is solving that problem, but, as they say, nature has a way of fixing these problems. A huge die-off sounds bad, but it will be better for everyone who is born after we die.

I guess we have different ideas of what is obviously problematic and will never agree. Just think of what will replace what you are tearing down. It is hard to get excited about the least of evils or the status quo which although great historically is slowly getting worse. But a boring life and even corruption beats anarchy. Good people will definitely be the most persecuted during an anarchy situation.

Torture seems to solve all your problems, until you are on the other side of the table. Empathy and kindness may seem impossible to bring to our society, but things can always get much worse. At this point, just expect everything to go to hell, because we are determined to make it that way. If anything turns out good as a result of this situation, be very grateful. Sometimes the cure is worse than the disease.

It is true that God is in total control, but He does let us have a lot of freedom,

to determine our future. Things will work out in the end, but the suffering can be real bad along the way. Remember, God allowed Hitler, Stalin, and Mao. God already won the war spiritually, but it is our responsibility to at the very least be kind to each other. Otherwise many people will suffer greatly that don't need to. This we are responsible for, as individuals, in our own lives.

I see little point in politics, but the anger and fear result in a lack of kindness and empathy and that should be unacceptable. What kind of world do we want to live? Do we have something to look forward to for our children other than life after death? We have been saved from hell after death, but we still can experience unlimited suffering in hell on earth. Why hurry to make it that way? This is not the America I fought for in the military.

## 2.1.4 The Internet and Hope

For all those who feel the power of evil in the world and are constantly hearing negative news and fear nothing will ever change, there is hope, if we look in unexpected places. Things are changing much faster and on a much greater scale than we realize. We are adding 5 billion new users to the Internet in the next few years. The Internet is growing ten times the size it was when Windows dominated computers. Microsoft won the PC wars and, at that time, who would have guessed that Apple would now have more users than Microsoft does.

Even the devices from the highest quality manufacturers of computers, Apple sells a computing device much more powerful than we had 20 years ago at 1/4 the price. You can now get a basic computer for research for \$5 (the Raspberry Pi). When I was new to computers, I got a small device that could contain the entire bible on it and now we think we are poor to only have 16 GB of space on the cheapest models (which can easily hold over a thousand books, and many times more if they were actually optimized fully).

We used to have to put disks into our computers, look through manuals hundreds of pages long, or buy expensive software to transfer things back and forth between devices, just 10 years ago. Now we point and click and we can move things from 5 or 6 different types of devices instantly. I can now make an entire website with only 2 programs that only cost maybe \$50 at the most, combined. I used to have to pay \$150 from small businesses for graphics programs to make websites. I would have 10 or more applications I needed to make a good website, and many people paid several thousand dollars for the mainstream brands.

When I bought books before about 2011, I live and lived then in a relatively moderately sized town with multiple colleges, even a major university, and our book stores were well stocked by people who were well educated in world history and religions, but now I can get books about a 100 year period of time during the Middle Ages with 500 pages or more for less than \$40. When I was in college and the military, I could get 10 songs for about \$20 and now we can get access to millions of songs for free, legally.

If you really value freedom of speech and people being able to hold the government in check, look to the future of the Internet. We now have one common world language and even in repressive governments like in the Middle East and China feel a need to allow this relatively open exchange of ideas with citizens from almost every culture, linguistic group, and country on the earth.

We see many bad uses of the Internet daily like people addicted to information in its various forms, from mobile games to porn to social networking. But we do not see that you can now take college courses for free or have instant access to millions of books and a completely free and always updated encyclopedia. People can now start businesses utilizing only free services. A middle class American kid or maybe someone else in the world now actually has the ability to create something with the resources only emperors had a couple hundred years before.

Think about how you would explain the Internet to someone during World War II. Would they believe that it was made by people only 70 years later? Think about how the modern world has been created by basically two technologies: electricity and oil. What if we exploited some others. We talk about how we are making less money in the past and how poor people in America are getting poorer, but compare what tools a homeless person has access to today, what to the average person in Europe had a couple hundred years ago.

The industrial revolution made life very miserable for the average person, but now most manufacturing is automated and most people live and work in air conditioned offices and can get to the office without having to walk at all. Most of us can read and write, which was not possible a couple hundred years ago. We have so much money that we pay to exercise somewhere and don't even show up. Try to explain that to someone even 50 years ago. We get instant news from anywhere in the world or information on any topic and it costs basically nothing. There is no excuse anymore to not be educated.

There is only one real problem holding back the Internet: security. If we can solve this one problem we will see even greater positive changes in the next 10 years, as a result of the Internet alone.

## 2.1.5 Unity and Purpose

Life has always been difficult, but today most are without hope. Without hope for the future, people begin to question everything and believe nothing. Philosophers call this period post-modernism, which means that we have moved past the situation of modernism, but not the mentality. Hope comes from faith that the future will be better.

In the modern world, we had unity and hope, but it was a false one and we created monster nations and started the process that lead to our present situation. Basically, we used everything up so fast that it didn't have time to

grow back. It is discouraging for things to get a little worse each year. This is something that is difficult to accept let alone inspiring.

One half of our country is afraid we will recreate the problems of modernism if we find unity, while the other half totally rejects any basis for unity of purpose. We both need faith: one half needs to find faith, while the other half needs to start living it. Both sides need to learn to be kind and accept that we will always be different, while still holding fast to our own chosen ideas.

We need to find things in common, to work towards, but still respect that we can have a difference of opinions. We don't need to all think the same, but we do need to find some commonalities to build on. We both claim to be morally superior to others, so lets find some aspects of morality we have in common.

What we need to start with is kindness and honesty. If we can't do that, then maybe we need to part ways. Both conservative and liberal paths by themselves scare me. Maybe we can actually learn from each other. All of us need God, to find a productive and positive purpose. An easy way to find unity is to find a way to divide us and create a relatively weak "other" that becomes the focus of our problems.

Without morality, we are basically slime in a thin skin. We are so concerned with beauty and strength, that we fail to realize, that we can improve ourselves and our world, without material progress. The physical world has its limits and we have reached them. There are no more "moons" to go to or Hitlers to fight. There is no obvious course for us. We are at a time of great change and there are many equally good paths available.

We now have the rare opportunity to start fresh. Our society needs a culture and we can make our own or create one from other cultures. This means art, literature, philosophy, music, etc, but we need to make this understandable to the illiterate. What is really sad about our non-culture is that is all based on making money.

When great artists and writers in the past created their art or writing, it wasn't all done just to make money. People also spent great amounts of wealth on creating things for God or the gods like cathedrals and temples. Just like any person who is experiencing depression and lack of direction in their personal lives, is often first recommended to volunteer to help others.

Volunteering seems weak and ineffective to those thinking in the mindset of our current culture. Bigger is not better. Kinder is better. We have defeated the evil without and we need to take on the bigger challenge of defeating the evil within. Our society has destroyed all our external threats, so we now need to destroy our own selfishness. One way to do this is to create external threats, but this would then allow us to not truly rid ourselves of the evil in our hearts.

We need to see the spiritual world not as a parallel world to ours, but the bigger primary reality we are all living in. We need to prioritize morality over wealth and power. We will not succeed, as a nation, if we are not kind as individuals. If we persecute the minority, create external threats, or persecute the majority, we may seem to ourselves to be united, but not treating others well is a weakness, not a strength.

The even more serious threat to our country and especially the Internet is that although we have access to more information than ever before, we have less confidence in its accuracy than ever before. No one wants to study to learn the truth. We are more concerned with finding support for our beliefs. No one cares what the truth is: they just want to convince themselves and others that their current beliefs are the truth.

No one believes anyone, anymore. We can't even be sure who a person is, but at the same time the government knows everything about everyone. Computer security would not be necessary, if we were all honest. In reality, we can't get everyone to agree on this.

That is why we need to concentrate on acting through the spiritual world, by praying God's will be done. This will create any changes necessary, to fix the world that nothing else would be able to change. And as we understand spiritual things through faith, we will never see proof of this and someone famous will claim responsibility for it.

Simply said, we need God; He does not need us. This means God directly, not someone claiming to represent Him or His interests. In other words, no person or other spirit.

## 2.2 My Place in Society

### 2.2.1 Website Network Introduction

Exactly the same but completely different. Slightly worse, but many times better.

For those things we know are true, but we thought were impossible to put into words. Always be kind and work hard. Learn as much as possible and be creative in solving problems. Over all, in making important and morally significant decisions, think long term. The best you can do in life is follow your conscience.

#### On Certainty in Life

I am sure about everything everyone else doesn't understand, but I am confused about everything everyone else is certain of. Everything you have seen and heard is wrong. What we were taught was true in school is irrelevant. The things we think are really important are very unimportant and the things that we think aren't very important are the most important of all.

#### About Me

I am a former soldier (army) and have been living independently with Schizophrenia for over 15 years. I live in Eugene, Oregon (United States) I have spent much of this time writing a number of books on various non-fiction topics based on my experiences, what I have read, and the insights I have had over the last (almost) 20 years.

I have also designed these Benjamin-Newton websites from scratch, with all my own code and graphics and updated them daily for that entire time, as well. I code directly to CSS in a text editor and avoid anything that slows the site down or causes unnecessary security problems.

### Want to Think Critically?

I am a Christian cynic and pessimist in that I believe in everything in the Bible, but nothing else except Murphy's Law (anything that can go wrong will). I consider this positive, because when anything goes well in any aspect of my working with other people doing their jobs, I am pleasantly surprised.

Explore my website and learn to think critically about everything (history, religion, psychology, ethics, design, technology, and disaster survival). Be sure to be critical of everything you read, including my ideas.

### Beyond Reason and Facts

When making decisions, expand your worldview and use your heart and soul, as well as your intellect. Think critically, but do not limit yourself to just the rational and the empirical. Use all the other methods of discovery, that come from the major world belief systems.

Decide what is true based on: your conscience (as determined by your faith, scripture, tradition, prophecy, paradox, intuition, history, and feelings) what you have experienced (in your relationship with God by worship, ritual, prayer, mystical experience, visions, and divine healing), and the practice of your faith (in the way you express your loyalty and respect for God by a code of conduct/

ethics, fasting, living a life of poverty, taking vows of silence and/or chastity). This will lead you to ask tougher questions and make more difficult decisions, with your now bigger understanding of reality, but it will also bring greater peace and purpose to your life.

### Philosophy Inspired Solutions to World Problems

Some people work too hard and need to rest, while others are lazy and need to work harder. How do you determine which problem is yours? It is usually the opposite of what you think. Ask people who know you well, and be prepared for a surprise response.

The following are examples, of the kinds of practical things you can do, to reduce suffering in the world, in things you have control over.

### Economically Based

Make Ethical Decisions in the Products We Buy

Find Creative Way to Reduce Our Expenses

Get Supplies and Training to Survive Disasters

Promote Internet Usage to Empower Individuals

Give Away Free Content to Support Alternate Opinions

### Socially Based

Network to Expand Our Circles of Influence

Form Relationships with Our Neighbors

Encourage Others

Stay Positive and Increase Our Positive Influences

Avoid Mainstream Assumptions

Spiritually Based

Pray for God's Will to Be Done

Improve a Specific Animal's Life

Increase Our Understanding of the World

Raise Our Kids to Be Good Citizens

Take Time to Relax

Philosophical Influences

Biblical

Apostle Paul

Apostle John

Prophet Jeremiah

Prophet Nehemiah

Prophet Elijah

King Solomon

King David

Chinese

Chung Tzu

Hsun Tzu

## Complete Introductions Collection 2

Bodhidharma

Dogen

Han Shan

Li Po

Tu Fu

Other Asian and African

Al-Ghazzali

Hafiz

Kabir

Kebrä Nəgəst

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Existential

Kierkegaard

Camus

Viktor Frankl

Tolstoy

Dostoevsky

Nietzsche

Renaissance and Enlightenment

Meister Eckhart

Erasmus

Montaigne

Berkeley

Locke

Spinoza

General Introduction

Confused about the world today? Want a simple, direct, and clear explanation? Read my books. My writing is like poetry meets encyclopedia. You will find nothing like this online or in print. All of this writing is available at no cost. I have a steady income and a lot of time, as well as an unusual perspective. This website network and these books are my way of trying to make the world a better place.

There are a lot of other (non-fiction) things I write about, as well, like what it is like to have Schizophrenia, secrets to my website design, and a completely different political and religious point of view. My point of view is partially based on my experience enlisted in the military and later living with Schizophrenia for over 15 years. It is also heavily influenced by my decades long (and continuing) study of world religions and world history (after ancient history and before modern times).

I follow my theories with practical advice and do what I recommend others do. You can make the world a better place. Just remember to think for yourself (this is what studying philosophy should teach you). Learn from my writings and experience, but come to your own conclusions. I am likely wrong on a lot of things, as are even the greatest thinkers, throughout history. I write what I

believe, but you need to make your own choices, based on your own experience and your own understanding of yourself and the world.

I teach the exact opposite of the medieval philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. Instead of understanding God, to the limits of reason and then using faith, to reach beyond that, I believe that faith is the primary means with which we should understand God and the use of reason, to explain the Bible and God, is a secondary and subordinate pursuit. It is dangerous, to base your faith on reason, because someone could then change your mind, just because they are better at arguing.

One of the things people often assume is that arguments are all based on reason, and to understand how I explain things, it is important to understand that I am not trying to be rational. I do not believe that you will change your views, even if I was able to form a superior reasonable argument for it. The basis for my faith is not rational either. If you think pursuing truth without using reason is nonsense, then you probably won't agree with what I have to say. Yes, I actually believe that and yes I do see some humor in that as well.

### Why am I so Critical of the Church and Christians?

You cannot change other people's minds, but you can change your own mind. We can defend our theology and dismiss unbelievers as being intellectually lazy and/or in rebellion against God, and likely be entirely correct. The thing is if we choose to do anything necessary, to bring about faith in Christ, we can re-examine our cultural interpretations of Scripture and its application to our lives and society.

Not only can we make Christianity more appealing, to those who are seeking God, but at the same time need not compromise any core theology, related to salvation, in order to do so. If we change the way we approach politics and society, without changing our core beliefs, is this not a success in evangelism?

Society is now going through a major technology revolution that is as profound and far reaching as the agricultural revolution was. Every institution and industry has, is now, or will be transformed into a different form, if it even survives. The Church will survive and thrive, but it would help grow the Church, if we can find things that we can change, while still holding to our Biblical faith.

The Bible is definitely not wrong and our theology has been preserved, at great cost in the major divisions of the church, but people can and are often wrong. There are also many ways to implement theology and express our faith and when we have such major cultural and technological changes, it is appropriate to adjust things like liturgy and political stances.

What we have today works for many people and we will have to fight very hard, for maybe only a small increase in numbers, but isn't the salvation of any one person worth changing how we think about non-critical aspects of theology and the Bible?

The many things that seem so odd to modern day people about the society in the Bible are almost all culturally adapted expressions of the same theology that we hold today. Being culturally relevant was important enough for God to build the entire Old Testament around the ancient Middle Eastern ways of thinking and social conventions, so it must still be equally important today.

### Website Description

Faith is not about understanding; it's about a choice. You will never fully understand God, because He is infinite. We are not asked to fully understand God to believe. The decision to believe by definition has to be in absence of fully understanding.

If you try to fully understand God before you choose to believe, not only will you never make that decision, but you will also never provide complete "proof"

for your belief. But we make most decisions without full knowledge explaining everything about the situation or topic. It is perfectly natural to not understand and that is what faith is about.

### About the Special Cross on Top

This cross comes from the ancient Iranian and Iraqi (Persian Empire) based Church of the East started in Late Antiquity. This church might have had members that were from the lost 10 tribes of Israel. The church was actually based out of Seleucia on the Tigris, which is between ancient Babylon and medieval/modern Baghdad, and was the capitol of the Persian Empire, at that time.

The church sent missionaries and established small churches, near Jewish communities, in ancient India and China, because they were not legally allowed to evangelize (they also had other legal restrictions like a large tax and they would automatically lose any legal argument) within the Persian Empire, once the country was taken over by the Arabs.

These people were the linguistic, ethnic, and religious group descended from the ancient Assyrians - the dominant culture of the ancient Middle East. They, along with most people in Middle East, converted to Christianity about 500 years before the Arabs came out of what is now known as Saudi Arabia. The Western Assyrians out of Antioch and the Coptic Christians of Egypt were so persecuted by what is now called the Eastern Orthodox Church out of Constantinople (now Istanbul) which was then controlled by the Byzantine Empire, that they helped the Arabs take over the Middle East.

Rome was never meant to be the center of the Church. There were 5 original equal churches that were set up throughout major cities in the Roman Empire and one added for the Persian Empire, later. Major issues throughout the entire church were meant to be settled by conferences consisting of all the churches. The first centers for the Churches were: Alexandria, Egypt, for the

Coptic and all African churches; Antioch, Turkey, for the Middle East west of Iraq, for what is now called the Syrian Orthodox Church; Constantinople (modern Istanbul), for what is now the Balkans (South Eastern Europe), for what was later called the Eastern Orthodox Church; Rome, Italy for Western Europe, that was later called the Roman Catholic Church; and Jerusalem was a symbolic church center.

The canon of the church was decided at one conference, but the books of the bible we currently have were already in use and are very similar, across all these ancient churches, even the ones not in at that conference, like the Persian Church. The Gnostic "gospels" were written a few centuries later on and are not consistent, with either the Old or New Testament, and were an attempt, to make Christianity pagan, after it was already established. The Church of the East purposely promoted a supposed heresy, in order to make a clean break, with the churches of the Roman Empire, because of intense persecution, once the Roman Empire legalized Christianity.

It is very significant for this church, that Alexander the Great took over Persia, at the time he did. This was because it was a tradition within the Middle East (at that time) to not allow anyone to convert to any religion other than the national one, which in Persia, at the time, was Zoroastrianism. But because the Empire, that succeeded Alexander the Great's empire in Persia, was a foreign Greek dynasty, the government did not interfere with religion, within their Empire. This allowed people within the Persian Empire, to legally convert to Christianity, in Iraq and Iran, until the Arab invasion of the Persian Empire.

Not much has been told about this, because 2/3s of the Assyrian people, who survived intense persecution, for hundreds of years, were massacred, between World War 1 and World War 2. The remains of the Church of the East, the Syrian Orthodox Church, and Coptic Orthodox Church are now officially part of the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church eastern churches, but retain their own liturgies.

## 2.2.2 Big Picture is a Self Portrait

### Background

What do mental illness, the military, apologetics, Asian history, common sense, traditional morality, tech people sociology, design techniques and code, and disaster survival have in common? My writing combines ancient philosophy, medieval history, and contemporary technology for a timeless new view of the world.

“If voting made any difference they wouldn't let us do it.” — Mark Twain. But there is another solution no one yet has tried. People cannot see it, so they don't think it exists, but there is a real solution, nonetheless. If the government is not big enough to protect us from businesses or the same people who run the government as those who run businesses, look for a greater power.

This is what happens when you see the world from an Asian, spiritual, and historical point of view, and try to explain the world, with ideas predating 1800. What happened between 300 and 1800 AD is the key to understanding the way the world really works. My writing and website will show you how to affect real change with no power, position, or money and while not risking your health or safety, following all laws, and not drawing any attention to yourself.

We have the best world money can buy, yet we are in worse shape than ever before, and it is proved that almost all of this mess is directly caused by people. Maybe we should try faith in Christ (not the Church or Christian leaders), for once. The one creator God is certainly not corrupt and would always know the perfect solutions.

One of the major reasons why my writing appears so similar and yet so different from other Christians is that my study and writing is based primarily on philosophy, not theology. There is a subtle, but significantly different way

of approaching and solving problems in philosophy, then there is in theology.

It is a fundamentally different approach, because we are not using God to support our aims, we are asking God to do His will. We need God. He doesn't need us. We are not the solution: we are the problem. God is the solution.

We do not know what is best; God does. We are the enemy; God is our salvation. He is not responsible for our suffering; we are. He does not want to punish us. He wants to liberate us from ourselves and our bad choices. He does not desire control over us; He already controls everything.

### The Self Portrait

My approach in making the world better is spiritual. In changing the world, we might seek to find something bigger than government or business or something else human led, even the Church. If we decide to "use" God, we might decide we want to pray to leverage God, but I seek for God to leverage me.

The way to successfully fight the battle, to improve the world, is to not engage in fighting it. When we want to find a way to do something, we develop goals and a plan, whereas in this situation, the real solution to our problems is to not find our own solutions or our own plans, but submit ourselves to God's plan and His direction.

We can heal the world and never solve the underlying problems, but Christ does something greater than heal: He forgives sin. The battle is being lost, because we attempt to fight it by our means. Instead, let's ask God to use us and solve the problems for us.

This battle is personal, because the enemy is not external: we are the enemy. We will never find a solution, because we are the source of the problems. If we want to successfully solve our own personal problems and make our lives better, we need to learn from God. We need to let God change the way we think and our priorities, so, in this way, we affect the greater world.

The greatest change we can make is the only one we can really affect. We cannot change anyone else's mine, but we can change ours. So, in praying for God's will to happen, we focus not on the world, but in our own lives.

The hard part of this is choosing God's will, rather than our own, but how can you argue with God being in control? He made us and He is better (more generous, suffered for us, more merciful) than anything we could hope He would be. He certainly has gone to bat for us and made it dead simple, to live forever, without suffering, after we die. And all the bad things about the world can be easily traced to our running things our own way.

### The Big Picture

The important thing about Christianity is to realize that God and the church in your neighborhood are not the same thing. The Church and theology are fallible and can be abusive and ineffective. God and the Bible are not. Your loyalty should be to and your direction should come from God and the Bible, not your Christian friends or leaders. Do not place any human institution, in place of God or the Bible.

The point of Christianity is not to understand God or to develop good theology. Christianity is about the worship of and obedience to God. The primary way we understand God is through faith, not reason. God is entirely rational, but He is infinite, so that we cannot understand God rationally. Faith will always involve mystery, because of our human limitations.

The basis for our relationship with God is not one of equals. God gave us so much, but asks so little from us. He sacrificed everything for us and all we do is accept His solution. Our only legitimate response is one of humility and wonder of how great God is. The least we can do is be loyal to Him, by obeying His rules for living. And the only reason why He made these rules was for us.

Sin is not our enemy, because it hurts God; sin is our enemy, because it hurts

us. God does not want to control us: He wants to liberate us. That is why we must pray for His intervention, as He will do more, but only if we truly want Him to. Although the world is fundamentally spiritual, God has chosen to let people determine their own fate.

You can try your own way and suffer and only realize the reason why God made the rules He did at your deathbed, or you can learn from reading and other's advice. As I am trying to avoid unnecessary pain as much as possible, I try to learn from books, rather than experience. Learning from experience is more painful than I am willing to accept.

Some people experience more pain and have harder lives than others and it is not fair. The source of our suffering and that of nature is the result of immoral choices by people, but evil people do not always suffer for their actions and good people often suffer, as the result of immoral actions committed by others.

This does not mean that it is God's responsibility to fix this, as He is not the cause. This issue should trouble us enough to motivate us to reduce the unnecessary suffering of others, like animals and the environment. It should also give us something to look forward to, as believers in the Christian God will never suffer again, after they die.

## 2.2.3 Better Place

Most follower of various belief systems, who want to make the world a better place, can't agree on almost anything. But we don't need to. If you follow your heart and your convictions and truly believe that you are serving God in what you are doing, what more can God or anyone else ask of you. All we can do is our best. And all we can believe is what makes sense to us and follow our consciences. And you do not ever need to decide for sure what you believe, until you are on your death bed.

All true believers believe in something greater than themselves and often more than one thing. It is often thought that the way to convert someone, to our position, is to engage in a gentle and respectful argument, but this often ends quite differently, than we think it should. When is the last time someone talked to you about religion or politics and do you remember a time when you changed your opinion, solely due to their argument? Most people change their views because of one or both of these things: life experiences and repetition.

You can never have the power to change someone mind that doesn't want them to, but you can choose to change your remind and the way you treat others. From a religious or ethical point of view, is it more important to be kind and patient than to be powerful and wealthy? An argument can be used to persuade someone to do something like a commercial when it is repeated multiple times, but another use of an argument is to support what someone already believes (this is used in advertising, as well.

As you know I am very jaded and cynical about most things. One of the things that upsets me is the mixing together of purposes: business plus charity, religion plus politics, and non-profit or business plus government. I believe that you cannot do 2 opposite things at the same time. Business is there to make money, non-profits are their to help others, and governments should do different things, depending upon your politics.

Another thing that bothers me is when someone claims to be objective. Most of the times I run into some writer who makes a big deal out of being objective, generally they are the least objective of all. I think it is a mistake to try to please everyone all the time and it is not bad to have an opinion, even a wrong opinion.

I think when we say something should be a certain way, we should not feel ashamed of our opinions. We might change our opinions over a period of time and we may find others who share our opinions, but most things in life do not have just one right answer and having the correct answer does not always

solve our problems.

People worship God in many ways, even within one religion. Worship can be one of ritual/sacrament, education and scholarship, leadership and management, or one of service to others, or many other things. The Hindu paths of yoga are different for people of different personalities and stages in life. Christians have a very specific set of spiritual gifts that the Christian God gives his followers miraculously and can be very different from genetic or learned abilities.

But the point of worship in religion is both of intention and of focus. The focus is on God and the intention is our love of God. Worship is the key component of religion and doctrine is there to help guide us to beliefs more fitting of scripture/tradition and of conscience. Doctrine is essential but it can distract us from the main things of religion and many divisions according to doctrine make sense and are worthwhile but they all have a cost in unity and in reputation.

I have talked about how the ends do not justify the means. It is great that you have good intention in what you want to do to change the world, but from the object of your intension likely is more concerned about how you do something than what you mean to do. One of the things that emphasizes how we are physical beings better than anything else is pain and/or fear. Fear and pain distract me from my worship and trust of God and my hope for deliverance from anything that might hurt me in the future.

I still do not know how to answer the situation that keeps on coming up between religions and between sects within those religions. The situation is that different people often growing up in different circumstances and with different experiences come to different conclusions about religion while they all believe that there is one path to God. I think we must realize both that being right does not solve our problems or anyone else's, I also think that it is ok and still faithful to God to change our minds or allow a certain degree of disagreement, within a particular tradition.

God is all powerful and perfectly good but still merciful and forgiving. His intent is to spend time with us and intervene within our lives, to make us better people. We were never designed to live without God. We cannot even breathe without God. And God obviously is not afraid to let things be complicated and deal with things that give us uncertainty and puzzle our intellects.

How do we know if we go to Heaven? I know what I believe. Other people will disagree with me, but I do not feel a need to justify or explain it to someone else's satisfaction. I think there are some things that are very clear about God and religion and most other things are clear as mud. What are the obvious things. I think they are obvious enough that you will find the answer if you are honest and truly seek God and are willing to believe Him, not me.

Lets work together to make the world a better place and let God sort out the details and determine what to change and what not to, according to His will, not ours. There are as many ways to serve God as there are, were, or will be people in existence. God is in the details.

### 2.2.4 Why I Explain and Argue My Ideas

When I was training in the Army, I had written some poems to someone who was still in my former high school, who I still felt something for. Some of the other members of my platoon read them and some of them were married. One of the married soldiers asked me if he could give one of my poems to his wife, because he was not as skilled at writing, and the poem was able to say what he could not. I ended up writing him a poem, just for his wife, but it probably wasn't as good, as I was not inspired, in the same way.

Many people now identify with music and some even memorize the words of the songs they listen to. You can easily get the words to music, in songbooks, in music stores and now online, with a simple search. I think part of why music is

so important, to especially my generation and the next, is part of our becoming a post literate society. Most people feel things, that they cannot put into words, or even explain, in a crude conversation. This is the role of a certain kind of writer, like a poet.

I put into words and give reasons supporting my beliefs, not to convince others, but to put things into words, that many other people feel, but are not yet written about or hard to find. Many people today are good at arguing and many people think that if someone else "proves" them wrong then their ideas are not welcome. I want people to know that you can and should believe things that you cannot prove, because these are the most important things in life: the things that are truly timeless.

I also want people to learn to think critically and not just accept everything they are told. Even the greatest thinkers have given extremely bad advice, at times. Yes, you should learn from others, but you need to learn to separate what you should learn from what you should avoid. You cannot reduce life down to a slogan, formula, or system.

And school, church, and social groups do not explain everything. There is a difference between what is right and wrong and what you are told in church. There are things that are true or not, despite you learning differently in school. Your family and friends do not always know what is best for you. Even experts in their fields often don't even have a good foundation, in the subject their degree is in.

Philosophy is about re-examining fundamental things, that our society just wants us to accept, without any evaluation or questioning. If you are going to just live like everyone else, you are going to be: overweight, out of shape, divorced, have an STD, in debt, out of control kids (who make the same mistakes you did), never finish your education, continue to depend on others for your income, and have such an empty life that you never want to be alone.

There are many different ways to approach life, some are about right and wrong, but most of them are greatly improved by self knowledge. There are two types of people in this world: those who put people into 2 groups and those that don't. Everyone is an individual, whether they like it or not and we are all individually accountable for our own actions, despite our past experiences. We are also the only ones who can make the decisions necessary, to make our lives as happy, as possible.

The first step towards this end is to start thinking. Question what others tell you. Try different ways of doing things. I do not have a car or a smart phone and so I can afford a computer, a website, and books (as well as not be cheap, withy small amounts of money). What things in your life do you spend time or money on, that do not improve your life and distract you from increasing your self knowledge and bettering yourself spiritually, economically, and socially? What non-essential things can you give up, to focus on more important things?

What scares most people about thinking for themselves means that they are forced to change the way they do things and they can no longer blame others, for what they don't like about their lives. Change can be good, as long as it is well thought out and planned, and it solves your real underlying problems, without creating worse ones. In life, you cannot do everything. Find out what you are good at and what resources you have. Try to make the most of them and improve the world, as best you can.

The reason why I do what I do is, that, although I could do other, more conventional things, but what I do, no one else would do, if I didn't do it. I have so little power and control, that I want to make the little I have go as far, as possible. I use creativity in most aspects of my life decisions and have made my life much better, than if I just did what everyone else does. I also have refused to accept the limitations others thought were inevitable and that they that I could not overcome.

## 2.2.5 What You Should Learn from Me

Most people who write about religion and/or politics are looking to convince others of their point of view, and those that say they are objective are pushing their ideas on others even more forcefully. What I aim for is for my readers to not adopt my ideas, but simply convince them of the value of critical thinking. All my work is based on philosophy and philosophy is different from every other area of study, in that it assumes nothing and requires you to think, not just accept the ideas presented.

The first reason why I do not want others to simply follow my words is that throughout history many people claimed to follow different thinkers and often did something very bad, and the ideas these actions were based on were then attributed to that thinker, even though they never wrote any such thing. Another reason why I ask people to come up with their own ideas is because I know that I am only human and cannot be objective, because that is what the Bible says. I also find everyone following the same ideas very boring and enjoy a diversity of cultural and intellectual points of view.

What I do write is what I believe and I do believe in a few absolutes, coming from the Bible, but I want people to know that just because the Bible is true and my opinion is based on that, that doesn't mean what I say is absolute truth. God can be objective, but people cannot. Somewhere between the Bible and the preacher or theologian (including me) the message gets mixed up and people should believe what they understand the Bible says, no matter what any person or church believes.

Never put your faith in a person or organization. They will always disappoint. Put your faith in God and the Bible. God will never fail you.

I want people to be able to find God and follow Him, to the extent that they understand (not necessarily intellectual understanding) about God. I do believe

that there is one way, to know you will go to heaven, but I also know that many people throughout history never heard the gospel and, since God is fair and merciful, I do not believe he would make people responsible, for accepting truth, that they have never heard, in a way that they can understand.

I do think Christianity is both the best faith and also the only true faith, but just accepting that intellectually, because you're convinced of some argument is a poor and unsustainable way to accept the truth of God's word. When someone becomes saved, it is God who brought the person to Himself and although we (believers) may play a part in explaining things about God, people don't generally make life decisions based solely on an argument, nor should they. You also have to be honest with where you are and go through certain life experiences and experiences with people and God, before you can really obtain the kind of faith, that is necessary to know for sure, that you will go to heaven.

As far as people being inspired by my writings, who have different religious views, feel free to take what you can and think critically. This is the first step to salvation. Whatever faith you choose, all of them are convinced, that the modern world economy is evil and corrupt and is contrary, to almost any religious teaching. Reading my work could be depressing, to people with a materialist view of reality and so I would advise them, to be aware of this, before they read very deeply, into my writings.

I do not believe that you can follow a simple set of steps or memorize some formula and that will be enough to help you live a good and happy life. Most of life is a mystery, including God and the Bible. There are a couple absolutes, that we can understand, but much of what goes on in the world is very irrational and ridiculous (how people treat each other and animals).

Our teaching system is designed for indoctrination and everywhere you look, people are looking for followers. I do not want followers. Don't be lazy: find your own path.

# 3 Mission Articles

## 3.1 Ending Suffering

### 3.1.1 Mission Approach Overview

Most problems we encounter, in the world, these days are solved by highly intelligent people, in elite teams. But the most difficult problems have to be solved by you, as an individual, often times without any outside help. The most difficult problems do not have answers: the solution is to manage the problems and not let them control you. These are the problems I deal with, on this website and in my own life. These are also the kind of problems our current world has to deal with, as well. Nothing less than divine intervention will save us; for the biggest problems, we need to enlist the grace of God.

I have spent a decade and a half studying the major world religions and world history, to try to find a way to explain who I am in a way that is both accurate and understandable to the lay person. The technical terms would be my unique philosophy combining Philosophical Taoism and Christian Existentialism, in order to find a way to understand the Bible better within its Asian and mystical traditions. I found along the way that Christianity first caught on in what is now occupied by Islamic fundamentalists, from North Africa and East Africa to Iran and Central Asia and has surprisingly close connections to Islam, in almost all of its practices and worldview.

I am now able to explain who I am in a few simple words. First of all I am very religious, I am very literal, I have Schizophrenia, and I have extremely bad luck. To deal with these challenges, I have leveraged my creativity, my attention to detail, and my inability to give up on anything, to live a happy life. I took many risks, when I joined the military, and came out of that miraculously well. I now

choose to live a very carefully thought out life and take as few risks as possible.

In my designs and my writing, I aim to be as clear, concise, and direct as possible, while still being polite. Do not assume that because I use simple words, to explain the ideas, that I talk about, that my writing is easy to understand. This site is based on philosophy, so there is little challenge in the vocabulary, but it requires you to think, to understand.

Our society tries very hard, to get us to not think, so it is not easy for most people. If you want to have purpose and meaning, in your life, it will require a tremendous amount of time, effort, and discipline. There are no shortcuts, to peace and happiness. You may not be able to change the world, but you can change the way you think and the decisions you make. You may be in a very bad situation, but no matter where you are, you can always improve your situation, by making good choices.

One of the things that makes my ideas unusual is how I put together the simple ideas that our establishment perpetuates to divide us and find a more convincing complex situation. I have never been interested in fiction, as I believe, from reading and experience, that reality is much stranger and more interesting than the overly simplistic ideas one person can think up.

For example, I am very patriotic and I am not very convinced of the public perception of the Islamic world, but, at the same time, I cannot accept that a religion would be as dominant and successful for these many centuries without having wisdom and balance in it. I think that the big movements in extremist ideas in Islam today remind me of the people that anger me, when I go to church (although Christians in America today rarely go out and commit genocide, no matter how extreme or delusional their ideology is).

Just around Columbus and after the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the three most powerful empires and advanced societies in the world were all Islamic

countries. And these extremist ideas in Islam, although I don't think are fundamental to Islam, but have been there for many centuries before Europeans or Americans dominated the world. The real downfall of Asia and the ascent of Western Europe is economics - the Industrial Revolution introduced manufactured goods which people paid more for than commodities (raw materials). And that is all based on cheap coal and gas.

Although I believe the modern world economy is in free fall, I cannot see any other political power providing a better place to live than America. Everyone will either sink or fall together while the Islamic world, India, China, and Russia will be hit so hard by global warming that they will descend into a much worse situation than we will be in.

I see the same unemployment problems in America spread to China and India. What people don't seem to realize businesses are naturally going to cut as many jobs as possible, because salaries are their biggest expenses. The sad reality is this Information Revolution has created a society, that does not need the entire work force to operate. The bigger problem is what we are going to do with all the extra people and increased energy desired, with less energy and space available.

The scariest threat to America is the increasing power of private businesses and their ability to take down the entire world economy because of their obsessive compulsive gambling addictions. Everybody now is afraid of the NSA, although they seem to not connect the dots to the Patriot act. Facebook and Google have more information than the NAZIs, STASi, or KGB ever had and both face few laws constraining what they do with it and people gladly giving up this information of their own free will.

This situation will only get worse, until we ask God to intervene. People now seem to think we are entitled to modern conveniences and that our lives are better because of our modern plumbing, SUVs, electricity, and Internet. Also, discoveries do not just happen when you need them to happen and there are

certain physical laws of the universe that we cannot just transcend, meaning we struck gold with oil and squandered it and there likely be nothing that can replace it. America has only been around for 200 years. North America will certainly be there in the future, but without the world economy the concept of America may be irrelevant.

But wouldn't a life free from our addictions and the ability to be closer to one another be worth the downfall of the one world economy. We have no control over the future. But one thing is certain: the world will be entirely different at the end of my life than it will be at the end of my parents life. There will be greater changes in the 21st century than there were in most of recorded history. We are definitely at a great crossroads and no one knows where it will take us, except God.

## 3.1.2 Problem of Suffering

Many people think about the problem of suffering as a problem for religions, that profess there is an all powerful, perfectly good ruler of all His creation. Many people overly simplify this situation and think because God can get rid of suffering and doesn't that He is being cruel by not doing so. That is caused by a poorly thought out chain of causality and responsibility.

Just because one person has more money than someone else or is smarter or stronger they are not entirely responsible for fixing the weaker person's problems, if they did not directly cause the other person's problem. All suffering comes from our mistakes, that God has given us the ability and the strength to not do and warned us of this and we refused to follow these rules. God then also intervenes constantly, in order to bail us out, of all sorts of self-inflicted suffering we find ourselves in.

I am certainly not at peace about myself or others suffering and I very much would like God to always intervene, to prevent any suffering, but God owes me

and everyone else nothing, as He did not cause any of the problems. It also seems very unfair that entirely good victims like animals that are weaker suffer do to the bad choices of stronger people's bad behavior. Additionally, God offers us the freedom to choose to live forever, without suffering, just by humbling ourselves before God and admitting our mistakes, which even kings and emperors have done willingly.

So suffering is a problem, but it is ours, not God's. The problem of suffering will never fully be resolved. Many of the major world belief systems deal with nothing but the problem of suffering. I do not blame God for suffering because it is our immorality (sin) that causes all suffering. The attitudes we have and how we treat others are the causes the all suffering in the world.

But I do not trust God or feel as close as many other Christians are. People say that God gets you through suffering and that He gives you peace, but that is of little comfort to me. I just don't want to suffer the pain. God constantly intervenes supernaturally, to bail us out of the consequences, of stupid decisions and protects us from powerful evil forces, but that does not make the pain we do suffer any less painful.

I appreciate that I will never suffer after I die, but even 5 minutes can be an eternity, as I learned in the military. As far as having God help you through suffering, from my experience, you make it through, whether you want to or not and the human body can suffer unbelievable amounts of pain and still survive.

So how is it helpful to have the strength to get through? You will suffer whether you like it or not and it will pass eventually. This is of little comfort. There is no promise that you will not suffer beyond description, for the rest of your life. There is no limit to the amount of pain you can suffer.

Just because you felt you have gotten your share of suffering, there is no less chance you will not suffer in every other way a person can suffer. Just because

you are mentally ill does not mean you cannot have physical disabilities, as well. And many that suffer the most are very kind and do not cause others suffering but are just innocent victims like animals.

Good people suffer terribly and for no reason and evil people often don't suffer at all and for no reason. The Bible is the only belief system, that I have studied, that gives sufficient explanation, to how the world works, but that is of little comfort, when you are suffering. This may all seem irrational, but it is how I feel about it.

Faith is not easy, but not believing in God will not make the pain hurt any less. I believe everything the Bible says, but the Bible doesn't give a solution to how to not suffer in this life or even put some sort of limit on how much you will suffer or how long you will suffer. I do know that karma does not explain this well, I certainly do not have the strength to control my mind through meditation, and modern medicine can only provide so much relief.

It is ironic, that when you are suffering from severe depression, the psychiatric response is to lock you up, which makes you more depressed. Doctors never prioritize highly people who are in severe pain and so, if the problem you have is not life threatening, they just ignore you. But depression can be very painful, even physically, and though although you may not be suicidal, you still suffer greatly.

There are not any fast acting anti-depressants, so do not go to the hospital, if you think you are in crisis, because all they will do is lock you up. Get on an anti-depressant, as fast as possible. Do not attempt street drugs, because, while they may provide temporary relief, they will cause even deeper depression afterwards.

That means you are on your own and you need to rely on yourself and your creativity and determination to find a way to suffer as little as possible. The biggest thing to avoid is military service. The happiest day of my life was when

I left the military. I would even go so far as to say happiness is not being in the military. There is no place more depressing than an army base, except maybe prison.

Helping others suffer less is a major goal in my life, which does provide some comfort. If I cannot experience happiness, maybe someone else can and maybe I can help with that. Sometimes there are no solutions to a problem and the best you can do is manage the situation and minimize the symptoms. The only thing you can be sure about suffering is your response to it.

### 3.1.3 The Ends Never Justify the Means

I have enjoyed watching a TV show called Burn Notice. In the fictitious situation in which a government intelligence contractor gets blacklisted, because of corruption in the intelligence agencies. One of the things his character says, on the show, that sticks with me is: If you are to work for the CIA, you will have to accept that they will do bad things for good reasons and good things for bad reasons.

We often think of ethics in terms of objectives. We think it is wrong to do something, because of our bad intentions. What really matters is not why you do something so much as what you do. You cannot start out doing something evil and expect something good to come out of it. People have the rights to believe anything they want to, no matter how crazy or ridiculous it is, but it is only when they attempt to hurt someone that they are breaking the law.

The sad thing, that happened recently, in the US is that people are afraid of death so much they will do anything to prolong it. People go through huge amounts of pain and their entire life savings just to live a year or two more. This is why Americans pay much more than the rest of the world for only I

sightly better health care. Americans are so afraid of the very low chance that they will be hurt or killed from a terrorist attack, that we just threw away our entire constitution and reason for our nation's existence.

Many people have suffered greatly, to protect our system of government, which was purposely designed to limit any one person's ability to do anything they wanted. We just ended up implementing our own secret police, like the Gestapo, STASI, or KGB, just using computers instead of people informants. We have a higher chance of being killed by a toddler than we do of a terrorist attack. Generations of Americans have sacrificed greatly in many wars, some of them worldwide, to keep our system of government, so that we would never have to live in a country run by secret police.

Hitler was evil not because of his intentions, but because of how he treated people, in order to reach his objectives. Despite what you hear from academics, there is nothing wrong with Nationalism. Nationalism means promoting things, that are good for your country. Every government should be run this way. But when you try to destroy an entire race to do so, this is evil. Ironically, Hitler was actually elected into power, even though people knew he was going to be a dictator, because they had a stagnant economy and politicians could never agree on anything.

Many pro-NAZIs have tried to blame Poland for the Holocaust, but the only reason why the death camps were all in that country was that was where most of the Jewish people in Europe lived. Poland was a very powerful, progressive, wealthy, and tolerant country for centuries up until the 19th century. It was the best place to live in Europe, until the last couple centuries.

The reason why the French and English treated Jewish people better, during World War II, was that they kicked them out of their country, back in the Middle Ages. The English were the first to deport everyone practicing Judaism. When Jewish people escaped Germany, during World War II to America, we wouldn't let them in and sent them back to Germany.

Americans did not know about the Holocaust until after the war, but American leaders did know, during the war. The Catholic church was running an intelligence operation against Hitler, so they are falsely blamed for promoting anti-Semitism, during World War II. And the British were the first to create concentration camps.

This is the way our justice system works, too. If you destroy property or hurt someone, in the process of promoting something positive, like government reform, you still go to prison. If you kill someone for a good reason, the living loved ones are not going to find your apology sufficient compensation, for their loss. If you destroy something, even by accident, you are responsible for replacing it or compensating the affected person's loss monetarily.

Some things are just wrong, no matter what the reason. While it is inevitable that people eventually die and in a relatively short period of time, for all of us, there is no excuse for torturing people. When someone sacrifices themselves for this country, especially if they prevent a whole war, we should be willing to go to war, to protect them and make sure they get home safely. If we need to be able to deny any involvement, if agents are caught, we need to not do that mission, in the first place.

People who are permanently disabled, because of injury sustained, while serving in the military, need to be well taken care of by the government, no matter what the cost. People serving in the military need to be paid a livable wage and priority for military expenditures should go first to inexpensive boring equipment, that really protects people on the battlefield. When we can have the best education system in the world, by buying one less aircraft, we need to focus on where the money can go the farthest.

### 3.1.4 Living Christianity

God will not guarantee you will be free from suffering in this life. First of all He

didn't cause it. Second of all, He never promised us we would not suffer. Third, He constantly intervenes to help save us from our stupid decisions. Fourth, he has guaranteed we will never suffer again after we die, if we would only choose to believe in Him.

It is a complex and scary world. What then is the solution to suffering? Use common sense, be important enough (but not too important), learn as much as you can, and communicate that to others, all to prevent avoidable suffering. This is difficult to accept, but we need to be the vehicle, for the prevention of our own and the planet's suffering.

Some of the best ways to suffer, as little as possible are: trust people to only do what they think is in their best interest, do not stand in the way of wealthy and powerful people, do not stand out or be famous, avoid getting addicted to anything, expect things to not work and for things to fall apart. Be happily surprised, when things do work out.

Our civilization may collapse, at any time, just as we may die at any time. We have peaked a while back and making money and dealing with the government will get worse and worse. Nothing will remain secret, things will cost almost nothing, but few people will have a job at all, we will have a huge die off of animals, huge sea level rise, much more extreme weather, insects and disease will be out of control, corporations will rule in place of government (as they are even now basically the same thing), and our country will become a third world country (and other countries will do much worse).

Do not look for hope, in the world of money and science. We have created the ultimate society, that human minds can create. This is what is killing us: we all live like kings did in the past. The world cannot provide a life like a king, for billions of people, but we will try. Things cannot grow forever.

The earth is finite and getting to other planets is many times more difficult, than the average person believes. Even with many times more severe climate

change and environmental damage, it would be much cheaper and easier to fix the Earth, then to get to another planet, which (even if Earth like), would likely be many times worse than a worst case scenario Earth.

You cannot change the way the world works, but you can change the way your mind thinks. You can make where you are the way things should be. Find a small place or small group of people with whom you can make the best it can. Focus on your family, your friends, and your neighbors and keep on improving the kind of person you are to them.

Pray for God's will to be done, rather than your own. Be creative in finding things you can help fix or improve, that is within your direct power. Be happy about even minor victories. Don't expect to see the results of your prayers - faith means believing when you cannot see. Don't expect politics, charities, business or government to help you solve your problems.

Get a basic understanding of the spiritual world and orient your thinking from material things to spiritual things. Believe that the spiritual world is more important, than the physical world. We think that having more money or people makes more difference, but intention and choices are the most powerful of all. God is really in control and the government and businesses really are not. The enemy to your happiness is you, not your rivals.

Just one person praying can and will literally change the world by God's direct intervention. God wants to and does intervene all the time, but we are unwilling to believe that, because we want to be in control. But God will only intervene, when we ask Him to, as He wants us to have the freedom to be able to control our own world.

Forget everything you see and hear. This is not real. What you feel and what you believe are many times more real. Positive things are happening now and will in the future. You will never hear about them on the news. The next generations are very interested in spiritual things and do not have any negative

preconceptions or believe any sort of heretical theology. They are clean slates and are prime for huge changes.

There are more Christians in the world now, then ever before. Christianity is not dependent on America or Europe, in any way. Missionaries are now being sent from Africa to Europe. What you see now in America and Europe is not typical of the rest of the world or the rest of history.

America only makes up 5% of the world's population. Christians out number Muslims 2 to 1 in the world and are in the fastest growing countries on earth. Even China has a huge number of Christians, out in the open, despite living under complete dictatorship and an anti-religion government.

Most Christians in the world are poor and are being persecuted by rich Muslims in parts of the world our media rarely reports on. There are still Christians in the Middle East who are still there from New Testament times and they are not Arabs or Jewish. America and Europe are evolving into third world nation status, but the rest of the world is getting worse than that. Europe may be overrun by Islam, but America is not at risk of that, by any stretch of the imagination. Despite what you hear in the media, Mexico is merging its culture with America; we are not becoming Muslim.

Just understand that big changes does not mean anything you will be directly aware of and does not mean you will be able to witness huge changes in numbers of people or money or politics. The things that really matter are that you try your best and refuse to give up. You cannot let what you cannot do be a measure of what you should do. The world will turn more and more against God, but that does not mean that God is intervening less.

We are conditioned to believe, that only what we see is real and if we do not have factual evidence, that we can measure that something isn't happening. Do not give up that easily. You either believe in Christ or you do not. You have to choose to believe in God and you have to choose to believe His methods work.

No powerful person is ever going to give God credit for anything. So, yes we can live happy lives as the world burns. But there will also be good surprises coming too.

Defy your greatest adversary - your own mind. Choose to be happy, as you choose to follow God. Find the good things in life and cherish every little victory. And choose to believe that God will answer prayers and His will will be done. Worse case scenario, we will only live a little longer and we know there will be no suffering after we die, if we choose to take God's offer of grace.

## 3.2 Advice

### 3.2.1 Who Should I Follow and What Should I Do?

The point of my writing, other than supporting those who already feel the same as idea, like people with similar experiences might, I encourage people to think critically. I see this as the chief aim, of at least my studies of philosophy. Critical thinking might sound like a buzz word, but all it means, as I use it, is to not just believe everything anyone else tells you. If you hear from a friend, a website, a TV show, a sermon, or whatever I encourage you to not just take what is said at face value.

We are all worried about financial scams and risky financial investments, but there are also things to avoid in terms of belief systems and individual beliefs. For one thing, I think it is perfectly reasonable and almost always necessary to not accept every single belief of any belief system. God is infallible, but people aren't. God knows everything about your situation, but people don't. Whenever you read something that isn't scripture, it is an interpretation of the source of your faith.

Even in Christianity, other than salvation and general rules, there are a wide range of different ways to understand, believe, and live your life for God. Most importantly, you need to find a way to serve God and be happy at the same time. It is worth doing almost anything to get to that point. Dying for God is great, but living for Him is greater. Christianity is supposed to be a lighter burden, than living for ourselves and money, so do not give up joy in service of your God.

Ultimately, I think most people can agree that ethics is about doing what is best for everyone, including you, in the long term. People sin (or do immoral things) because they are fun, but the consequences later on are not fun. The consequences cause most of the pain we experience in life.

Many people like to drink alcohol in excess, but the next day feel lousy. People have sex with different people without protection and then find they have a disease that they may or not be able to get rid of. People get a huge bunch of things on credit and then have to pay for it (literally) for years on end. You eat the wrong foods or not enough of the right ones and you have worse health later on in life.

Many people believe that the Bible is about sacrifice, but it is really about following God's rules (obedience). God's rules are designed to make us happier in the long run. Following God is rational because you suffer less, by following Him, than by not following Him.

I am all for minimizing pain in life, and it is hard to see in the Bible but the Bible subtly does answer this question: accept God's free gift of salvation, follow God's rules, learn how to live wisely, let God make you a better person, choose to grow and treat others better, and become an example for other believers.

For some reason God lets us have a huge amount of freedom, to run our societies how we want to and many people suffer because of this. God constantly intervenes to help, but why does He allow this freedom, in the first

place? I think this can be understood better with the analogy of sin or breaking God's rules, as similar conceptually, to overcoming addictions.

In addiction counseling, people debate over whether or not addiction is a disease that you need others to intervene and cure you of and the other side that says you are addicted because you choose to be and until you find it within yourself to say no, your life will only get worse. This is another paradox: both are true. While God gives us the strength to say no to what hurts us in the long run, we must continually choose and not give up on the path to recovery.

The important thing to remember, that will guide you, as to when you should follow what others say and when you should not is first your conscience, second your common sense, and third reflection, reading, and talking to others you respect. Ultimately, what makes you happy in the long term is usually the right things to do. The concept of delayed gratification is hard to accept, for many of us, but having discipline, even in a fragile and weary state, can be one of the critical things that brings you up.

Although God does not want us to suffer continually in life, we should work to help reduce the suffering of others. This should lift us up emotionally and help us get perspective beyond our circumstances. Hard work and making good choices is a healthy way to live and the biggest way to reduce your pain, that you have control over. Be creative and enjoy life, but do not forget to be responsible and wise: you do not have to choose between the t

### 3.2.2 Risk and Change

People almost always do what is in their own best interests, unless they hold to a certain ideology. For someone who believes in an ideology, that ideology is the most important motivating factor for them. I'm an ideologue too, but of a very different kind.

People who do what is in their best interests are often called opportunists. Is an independent thinker an ideologist, opportunist, or something else entirely? Can both motivations coexist and not contradict each other, in one person? Is it really necessary to suffer, for our convictions? Is there a better or, at least different way?

Fundamentally, we are all created and designed, to be individuals, whether we like it or not. We certainly will be judged that way. Eventually, everyone is forced to make many decisions and face the consequences.

I realized, soon, that it would be very difficult, for me to have joy in life, if I couldn't get it, from attempting, to improve the world, because it is always a bad day to have Schizophrenia.

It quickly gets more complicated than that. And there are other major factors, as well. For one thing, most decisions are at least partly altruistic and partly self serving. Risk and addiction complicate things further.

Some decisions have more risk, to yourself or to others, than other decisions. There are also some decisions, that are just plain bad decisions, all the way around: mistakes or misjudgments. Addiction happens, when you do something over and over again, even though you really do not want to, and the long term consequences are not good, for yourself or others. Thinking long term is almost always good, for everyone.

Sin and addiction are very closely related. In Romans, the Apostle Paul says that he does what he does not want to do. This is the definition of both sin and addiction.

You often hear about the Saint Francis quote, that a person prays that they are able to accept the things they cannot change and to change the things they can. The essential third part is to ask God, for the grace, to know the difference.

Existentialism is very Christian, in its very nature, because it is the study of what makes people people and not inanimate objects. Christ came to earth, to show us how we should live, as human beings. We define who we are, by the choices we make.

If you want to change your behavior and your thinking, or want to think or act different, from those around you, you need to first change what you read and seek out different life experiences. Then you make these changes to your mind real, by making different choices. This makes you a different person.

To change your mind, it would be wise, to ask and let God help you. This is one of the few choices, that everyone has absolute control over. This also takes time and the making of many decisions, along the way.

People today think, that to solve their problems, they need to change others and the world. To really change the world, you need to change yourself. The only thing you really control is your own thoughts and actions. And the hardest and most critical thing, to change, is your own mind. It is always easier, to solve other people problems, than to solve your own (and less useful).

This is something never tried before, except by a few people. In this way, even one person makes a huge difference, but you will only see this through faith. And the really good part is that this can be done, at little to no risk, to your own health or safety.

Who we are is determined by the decisions and actions we take, in response to our situation. People are often in very unfortunate situations, that they have little control over, but wherever you are, you can always improve your situation, by making better choices.

Let's do something greater than changing the world; let's change our own minds and live better lives, so that we become better people. The rest will follow, but you will never see the connection to the results, and someone else

will take credit for it.

Just remember, this is not an all or nothing situation. Use your brain a little and you can both take good care of yourself and your family and still change the world, for the better.

## 3.2.3 Realistic Expectations

Many people look at the ideas of contemporary socially conservative Christians and are shocked, that their views seem so extreme and oppressive, from a socially liberal point of view. The original ideas of Calvinism have often been criticized, even within the Christian community, as being unkind and uncompromising. Calvin emphasized some things, that before then and even today, people don't want to hear about, which come directly from what Jesus said and did.

Our popular conception of Jesus is that he was all about compassion and humility, which is very true, but there is more to a balanced life and the teachings of Jesus than that. It is more difficult to ignore this in the writings of the Apostle Paul, in the letters to the early churches, which are now part of the New Testament. God is not just compassionate and forgiving. He has an absolute and unchanging moral standard for us.

God is first and foremost all powerful and perfectly God. He was the only One, Who created us directly, in a model that reflects His spirit and His mind. He had established certain guidelines, for us to follow, which we rejected and all suffering comes, as a result of this. This is exactly what sin is: we know in our hearts what is right and wrong, but we deliberately rejects this, for momentary pleasure. We create our own prisons and suffer, from our own actions.

God did not give us a code of conduct, because of some arbitrary exercise of His

will. God hates sin, because it hurts us, not Him. God does not need us, but the reverse is not true: we need God. God does not want to punish or control us. He wants to free us, from suffering and return to being part of His family. The reason why Christ came to earth and lived as fully human, while still being fully God, was not just to heal people, or even show us how to live well.

God, as Jesus Christ, took upon Himself the terrible consequences of our sins and created a very trivial way, for us to be restored, to His family and not suffer for eternity, because of our actions. He made a sacrifice of Himself, to reconcile within Himself the absolute standard, of His purity of morality, which is His identity, and at same time be, merciful and accept us, even though we have rebelled against Him, for no good reason. He suffered, in our place.

Much of Christian theology and, especially the description of God, in the Bible, introduces us to paradox after paradox. How can God be perfectly good and not compromise, but still forgive us and be merciful to us, when we deliberately choose evil and reject Him? This is the biggest reason why Christ came to earth: to die on the cross for our sins. Because we could never be good enough and earn his forgiveness, He suffered our punishment, after being perfectly good and suffering, while He lived, as we do, with all our limitations.

So modern man sees the world, as the emergence of man and his ability to dominate and control nature, as the highest good, but we know better than that. What has humanity decided to do, with the power they acquired, through learning how to control and gaining power over the created world? If we are so wise, why do we continue to destroy the earth, more each year, even as we recognize the need to cut back and let the earth rest and start to clean up our poisoning of the earth?

We look for solutions to the destruction of all other life on earth and we fail to realize that we will never find a solution, that we can create, because we are the problem. Our energy problems will not be solved, by creating more energy, and we will not bring peace on the earth, by legislation or through

humanitarian aid. We are not at a crisis, because we cannot meet our needs. Our fundamental problem can only be solved by our Creator, the Christian God, because our problem is with our own lack of self control.

It has been clear what we needed to do, to fix the world's problems: to share our resources with each other and the other species on earth. The reason why we cannot make this happen is that we are addicted to energy. Sin is basically the same as addiction.

While we very much have the ability to change, we choose not to. Just like in an addiction, we must accept the paradox, that we both don't have the power within ourselves to cut back and, at the same, we are fully responsible. We both need to make better choices, while also accepting that we will ultimately fail, without direct divine intervention.

Being an addict is both about free choice and about humility. Just because we have outside help and we don't have the strength to change, the only way we will change is to find it within ourselves, to care enough and overcome our selfishness and then actually make better choices. The changes are completely dependent on our willingness to change.

No matter what God does, if we do not make the effort and overcome our weakness, nothing will change. We are both fully responsible for our poor choices, but also will not find it within ourselves alone to change. We both need to have the power but also the will to change.

So how does this relate to Calvinism? Calvin realized that accepting, that we are undeserving of forgiveness, we are fully responsible for our all actions, and that we fully deserve, to be punished for it. God offers unconditional acceptance and mercy, and, in response, we only have to accept responsibility, for our actions, feel sorry for what we did, and choose to not do it again (although we will continue to fail).

For His grace, God requires us unconditional surrender, to His control, over our lives. This is not a one time decision, but a long term journey, where we need to continue, to submit our wills to God. Salvation is free and God gets full credit and we get none. At the same time, we must give up everything, for this to work.

Thinking you deserve a good life is not going to get you anywhere. Accepting that no one owes you anything is the first step to happiness. You are always fully responsible, for all your actions and, while God forgives you fully and unconditionally, in this life you will often suffer the consequences of both your bad choices and the bad choices of others.

Heaven is pure bliss, but life on earth is not fair. Do you really want to be judged fairly for your choices in life? Then you must choose God, instead of yourself, every day, for the rest of your life. Your greatest enemy is yourself and you will never conquer your pride and selfishness, without divine intervention.

All of us are equally bad and are in the same boat. Salvation is free, but it will cost you everything (your pride and the credit for your own salvation).

### 3.2.4 Bucket List

Many people have goals for themselves in life and so make a list of what they want to do before they die. Many people are under the impression that they must do something special to save the world and must be able to show numerical success. We think solutions for improving life come from academics and raising money. Everyone feels they need to start their own charity and that they are individually responsible for solving the world's problems.

I think we could accomplish more real change and work on something we can really change and that is ourselves. It is great to have goals, but I find it more

satisfying and many times more difficult to work on self improvement. I look at self improvement not as trying to be a perfect person, as this ends in sure and quick defeat, but to simply genuinely try to treat others better. We need to change our attitudes and our worldview, not our job or the charities we give to.

It is not a list of goals, but a changing, in our way of thinking, that will make us truly better. We need to pray regularly and ask and let God slowly change the way we think, so that we no longer desire to be mean to others, even when we feel bad. One of the loftiest goals is to become more kind to others and this is really something we not only all can do but must decide is a basic requirement for being a moral person.

There are many very different views of life talked about in each of the major world religions and many are contrary to each other, but the basic ethical rules are very similar. Throughout most of society and history, the basic laws are mostly in agreement. What we learn in life through experience and reflection is that we all do really know what is wrong, even if we try to justify our evil actions.

People spend a long time thinking of what is right and wrong and why, but the simplest answer is the best one, in this case. This is especially true in Christianity, where many people want to rationally understand everything in the Bible, before they follow God's commands. You will never fully understand the Bible or really anything in life.

In the military, most people would agree life is hard, but at the same time we all are aware that it is not hard intellectually. Living a good life is also hard, but not of the kind of challenge, that society and school teaches us to deal with. I remember, in basic training, that one of the most complicated combat survival task was setting up a claymore mine. One of the drill sergeants said that it was on the intellectual level of a 4th grader.

In the military, attitude is everything. Even in the more advanced areas of the military, the primary goals are not to complete the mission. You need to follow every tiny rule, immediately without question, and work as hard as you can. I remember when I messed something up in basic training and apologized to the drill sergeant. He said don't apologize - just don't do it again.

The military has no time for distractions and you should not be distracted from what is most important in life - self improvement and treating others kindly. When I was in the military, we trained alongside both men and women in the same platoons and this was the period of the military's "don't ask don't tell" policy. What was the military attitude? We need women and minorities in the military because we cannot win wars without them.

There was a criteria of an equal number of black, white, and "other" amongst sergeants in the army at that point and officers that didn't have the right mix could get in a lot of trouble. One private told the drill sergeant that he was gay and the drill sergeant told him he didn't care and just go back to work and stop bugging him about it.

The army works top down and so when congress ever passes a law, that affects the military, even the general must immediately follow them, to the letter. When they pass a law, allowing women to work, in direct combat or people being openly gay in the military, that will happen immediately, whether or not anyone in command wants it to - it will not be optional. We were talking about race in the military and the drill sergeant said we all bleed red and we are all pink on the inside.

You should obey the Bible just like God is your drill sergeant. Nothing in the Bible is optional. Do not think about how to justify what you do; simply act on what you know is right. Like Judge Judy says on the TV court show, you do not have to think to tell the truth.

Raising kids or owning pets is a similar difficult challenge, although not

intellectually, for the most part. Good parents and good animal owners don't necessarily need to be academics - that is not what determines being good at raising kids or taking care of animals. Improving your own life is even more difficult and even more personal in its challenges.

Being a good person cannot be put off. It must be acted on now. To know what to do ethically, all we need to do is follow our conscience. We need to do what we know is right. Even having an addiction or disability does not absolve us from doing what is right. But being a good person is not a binary thing and, although it is always difficult, it is not beyond any of our capabilities.

## 3.2.5 Morality and Individuality

Our society has gone to extremes and has actually managed to promote the negative sides of individual expression and mob mentality. The average person today is both selfish and has no backbone. People want to be unique so that they can get a following.

The Bible does promote individuality, but in the opposite way. We are individually responsible for the choices we make and need to stand against the world. We are also supposed to not be proud and self-centered.

Just like every personality trait has equally good and bad possible outcomes, so self control is the key to leveraging both individuality and unity at the same time, and incorporating the best of both traits in our lives. We need not be selfish to express our individuality and need not sacrifice our conscience just to follow the group.

The key to know when to use one or the other is the same with any decision: our conscience. It is good to work together for a common cause, just as long as you continue to critically think about the moral implications of the results of your efforts. The Bible wants us to stand out not just to get attention, but

wants us to stand out in that we stand up for the weak and do what we know is right, even when we face overwhelming opposition.

Individuality need not always be applied in rare or extreme situations and God definitely wants us to express how we honestly feel. There is a whole book of the Bible focused on romance, many of the commands of the Old Testament are celebrations with lots of nice food, and God shows a huge amount of creativity in entering His own creation as a person while still remaining God. God was the first to come up with the idea of the anti-hero and God used people to speak through in the writing Scripture, which is also a creative literary work of art.

Modern psychological concepts comes from the Bible. The Apostle Paul was the first existentialist. The Apostle Paul also was the first to write that women and men are completely equal. The Psalms can be very helpful for those dealing with depression and encourage people to be critical of God, while still being respectful. Apostle Paul talks about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as an early example of personality types, which also eludes to the difference between a public and private self.

In fact, God created the best inventions ever: animals and plants. God created the very creative and bizarre world of quantum mechanics and general relativity and made them work together, even though they work in extremely different ways. He also talks about time travel and other dimensions in Scripture. God created DNA and made such a diversity of creatures, that we have a very hard time classifying them. God predicted the catastrophes caused by global warming/climate change and correctly identified people as the cause.

So God is very creative and wants us to be so as well. Instead of using innovation to make money, we should be doing so to help people in need. Just expressing yourself in art and writing can be a moral act as well. Much of the history of art throughout the world is a celebration of religious and philosophical writings and concepts. Through symbolism, art can be as accurate as writing. Just encouraging people to take time off from work to

think and encourage them can be helpful and altruistic as well.

The only real bad thing about creativity is when we use it to draw attention to ourselves alone, without any other benefit to society. One of few things that Chairman Mao talked about, that we should follow, was making art and literature accessible to the common person. Popular music and art need not be selfish and can actually bring moral ideas to the average person, in ways they can relate with. Just like being rich, being famous is not necessarily bad, as long as you don't compromise yourself to do so, and it is not your primary aim.

Nationalism and religious unity are great, as long as they don't use the persecution of others, to unify the group. People who are not part of the group technically can actually be very useful and the mixing of groups can bring out better parts of cultures. The modern world was only possible as an outgrowth of a mixing of Germanic and Roman cultures throughout the medieval period in Europe.

A similar mixing of culture is happening between American corporate culture and Mexican popular culture. The Christians in the Muslim caliphate in medieval times were useful in government because they were considered outside the political scene and so were neutral. Christians in medieval Europe were illiterate and so Jewish people became leaders and scholars, because they learned to read and write, to keep their religious traditions.

## 3.3 Creative

### 3.3.1 Opposite World

Welcome to Opposite World. One of the reasons why we have so many problems and that they are difficult to solve is that, from a science and technology and atheistic perspective, we have actually solved everything that

this worldview sees as problems. Throughout most of history people have struggled for more. We always wanted more food, more time off, more recognition, more rights, more power, more money, more resources, more freedom, and more of every physical thing. This only makes sense because we were lacking in all these areas.

The world you see today is the world after all these "problems" were solved. This is the reason science and technology cannot solve major world problems: it already has. We live in a world where science and technology have won. You could argue this has nothing to do with Science per say, but this is how most people see Science and life.

The problems we have today are hard to understand because they do not sound like problems. How can we have too much of a good thing? How can we possibly eat too much, have too much access to information, spend too much time playing games, be in too much contact with each other, have too much music, have too many things, have too much advanced technology, and the like?

What we need to solve our problems today is basically to undo the last 500 years. We need to rethink what we really want. In many ways, our world actually has few problems. We have few problems in life due to a lack of material wealth. What we do lack is spiritual maturity and spiritual wealth. There are going to be problems no matter what decisions we make, as we live in an imperfect world. We already live in the best world that people can create, without God.

What is not usually thought about, when we think about the world today is that we have never had this situation before and that, even today, most of the world does not live in any situation remotely like this. We are talking about America, Europe, South Korea, and Japan and very small parts of most of the rest of the world. So there are actually two opposite problems today: some of us are dying from too much food, whereas most of the world is still dying, from not having enough food.

In America and the rest of the first world, we consume too much and the rest of the world has too many kids. Science can easily explain the problem, but we do not understand Science in the way we need to to solve our problems. Scientists tend to have a hard time accepting that people do not usually make decisions based on reason.

The first world consists mostly of what I refer to as the "opposite" person, because they have the opposite problems most of the world and most people throughout history have had. In the first world, there is also another kind of person I refer to as the "opposite opposite" person, people who are sometimes referred to as "highly sensitive people". These "opposite opposite" people have the opposite problem from "opposite" people. Opposite people have life too easy and need to work harder, whereas "opposite opposite" people work too hard and need to take things easier.

This seems intuitive enough, but most first world people's problem is exactly opposite of what they think: "opposite" people think they work too hard, but actually don't work hard enough; whereas "opposite opposite" people think they don't work hard enough, but actually work too hard. The way to confirm this is to ask people, who know you well, and expect to be surprised, by their answer. Many people sit somewhere on this spectrum, so don't expect a simple to diagnose problem.

If we want to solve our first world problems, "opposite" people need less of everything. We need to work harder and play less. Instead of taking the easy route and learning as little as possible we need to start working as hard as we possibly can and learning as much as we can. For "opposite opposite" people, take a break and enjoy some of your life, or you might die, from being a workaholic.

Everybody needs balance in their lives and our world is struggling with different problems, but they are all about a lack of balance and a lack of an accurate perspective, of who we really are. Know yourself and you will know

your problem and you can then find and then work on the solution.

## 3.3.2 Zen and Major Problems

When we confront major problems, in society today, we look to one time/action solutions often called "silver bullets". We approach problems, from statistical and intellectual points of view. We ignore things, that cannot be reduced to measurable phenomena and numbers. The key to improving the world starts with improving ourselves. When you deal with deep institutional problems and hedonistic and politically correct attitudes, you need to first understand, that the causes are fundamentally spiritual ones.

These kind of problems are not ones, where you can find a definite solution, so that you can go on, to the next problem. When you are dealing with spiritual and emotional things, you need to accept that there will never be a final resolution. These kinds of problems are dealt with and controlled, rather than fixed. Solving these kind of problems is like going on a journey and the destination is just a stop along the way.

In philosophy we call this "Tao" or "Zen" - the unidentifiable substance that makes things real and brings healing to our emotional self. The focus is on discipline and ethics. Solving our own problems must start with commitment and direction and ends up, with a deeper moral understanding and practice. Just like Zen cannot be pinned down and analyzed, so do many emotional problems - oftentimes you feel a certain way, for no rational reason.

One of the reasons why so many self improvement systems, like diets, fail is because we fail to accept, that the solution is a process, that never ends. When you are hurting, you just want relief and it is hard to accept, that you must continue, to work hard, even when you feel you cannot exert anymore effort. It takes hard work, to heal the heart, and you have got to find some way of pushing yourself, beyond what you think you can do. Although people are not

anywhere near, as smart, or talented, than we often think we are, we can endure much more, than we think we can.

Tao means path and that is the way Zen works. Zen also means originality, creativity, and beauty. There is no formula and it is not a tangible or measurable object. Zen is fundamentally a feeling and can be understood, through experience, rather than teaching. Zen comes from practice and the practice itself, when done correctly, is the solution. When you push yourself past what you think you can do, whether in sports, the arts, forgiveness, or fighting addiction, this is Zen.

Most animals understand Zen better than people do. When you see animals angry, at each other and fighting, and then, later that day, you see them curled up together, fully relaxed sleeping soundly, this is Zen. When an animal knows when you are in pain and comes over, to give you company, this is Zen. When you feel you have communicated, with an animal, even though they don't understand our human languages, this is Zen.

Instead of trying to find a secret formula, realize, instead, that major problems are still there, because they are big, otherwise you would have solved them by now. Life's major problems require major effort, over a long period of time, and there are no shortcuts. You will continue, to deal with the same issues, for the rest of your life. Be willing to make mistakes and forgive yourself and you will be well along the way. The missing ingredient is your decision, to do what is necessary.

Zen is more than anything the Grace of God, the Holy Spirit. God will never give up on you, so never give up on yourself. Don't worry about your failure, as everyone has equally failed. Instead of rushing, to the finish, work on small manageable chunks. Just like exercising, a little bit done consistently is better than a lot done rarely. Remember, you cannot ever be permanently defeated, because God will always send sufficient grace.

## 3.3.3 My Mission Overview: Moving Forward poem

We are in the midst of an epic battle, and on an epic journey  
We are blind to what is before us and yet we see beyond the horizon  
We have wandered far from the path we know we must take  
We are not afraid of what is before us, but rather what is within us  
We have given the Holy Spirit access, to our hearts, but not our minds  
Sometimes the answers do not come, in words, but are more like a feeling  
Sometimes you fail to understand, yet you know what you must do  
Sometimes it does not matter what has happened before  
But is always matter what you do next  
When you are totally lost, then only can you find yourself  
Only when you totally give up, can you see God  
Some people think the solution lies in secrets and in numbers  
I believe that what we must do we already know  
The path is not hard, because we lack understanding  
It is difficult, because we lack self-control and discipline  
Many would rather live like kings and give up friends  
I would rather work forever, with no hope, than do nothing

The solutions are so very obvious  
But we have no will, to commit to them  
I want my country to be the best it can be  
But no one wants our help  
If you destroy a person's income source  
And demolish their house and electrical grid  
Merely sparing the persons life  
Is not enough to base a friendship on  
The same thing happens again and again  
We have the same situation we had ten thousand years before  
Our environmental problems directly reflect the state of our soul  
We will not solve our problems, by finding ancient knowledge  
Or by putting machines, into our hearts and minds  
As we take each step, the road changes  
We can always tell where it goes  
Even when it seems to disappear  
There is always hope within our hearts  
Even as our soul abandons the future  
It has been said ten thousand times

But we can barely remember it  
It has been said in ten thousand voices  
Yet we cannot make out the words  
The answer is choice  
And it is very much within our control  
There is a direct connection  
Between the state of our mind and of our world  
There is always a way to deal with the situation  
This is not an obstacle, that you will pass  
It is more like a pack you need to carry  
It has always been possible, for you to carry less  
The burden is your very own making  
We are often hard on ourselves  
In what we think we should do  
But the battle is not in the world, but in your mind  
The way forward does not need to be so hard  
We are never alone and He can carry more than a mule  
Why we fight the battle alone  
We will never be able to give a useful answer

## Complete Introductions Collection 2

That way forward is more about not doing things, rather than what we do

There are no silver bullets

Our freedom is dependent on our attitude

We need to fight our thoughts and not worry about others actions

The solutions are no hidden anywhere

And the steps forward are plain as day

We must continue to deal with this every day

But it can be a happy road

And it need not make us so weary

Sometimes we know not why we cry

Or we desire to stop trying

It is not for us, to know the future

Or be able to grasp the mind of God

All things happen, for a reason

But suffering is not easily explained

Life often treats us the same: monster and mother

We fight this daily

In our struggles we find

That all evil comes from immorality

We often suffer from the wrongs others have committed

It is ok to cry and be angry with God

Sometimes you even give up totally

But God will never leave you

And once you die, there will be no more pain

## 4 God Articles

### 4.1 Sin is an Addiction

#### 4.1.1 What is Sin?

When talking with a Christian, the first concept non-Christians encounter, that they don't understand, is sin. Sin simply means doing something evil or morally wrong. Surprisingly, most major belief systems have a similar set of offenses, they consider morally wrong. Examples of sin, included: committing adultery, stealing (or pirating), lying, not obeying parents, and murder. Some of these are also illegal, while others are not.

Many more people have heard of karma, which is an Indian (from India) concept, in origin, which appears, in all forms of Indian belief systems. Karma and sin are both about right and wrong, but karma comes out of a lack of knowledge, and the cause of sin is an act of the will (a choice), while karma is remedied by discipline, and sin can be remedied God's grace and our repentance.

When non-Christians claim they respect Jesus Christ, they find instances of Christ showing love and non-condemnation, but they refuse to acknowledge

that Christ is the perfectly good and completely just Ruler of the multi-verse, as well. God has a set of moral standards, by virtue of being perfectly good. We have chosen, to do evil, by breaking God's laws and hence brought suffering into our world, families, and spiritual selves.

In order to resolve this evil, God sent Himself, as Jesus Christ, to suffer the penalty, for our sins. This penalty is physical and spiritual death and Christ defeated this by His living a perfectly good life, dying painfully on the cross, descending to hell, and defeating the devil. Afterwards, Jesus Christ came back to earth and, after showing all His followers proof of His resurrection, eventually ascended to Heaven.

So, while God is perfectly loving, there is much more to Him, and He was so serious about sin, that He dealt with it by suffering Himself, on our behalf. We hear a lot about the devil, but the real battle is within our own souls. The devil is here, to make things worse, but he has no power, compared to God. The devil cannot force you to do anything you do not want to do and cannot harass born-again Christians.

The way to guarantee, that you will go to the Christian heaven, is to ask God for forgiveness, of your sins and believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, after He died, on the cross, for our sins. Then you commit your life, to following God, rather than your desires. This is just the first step, in the journey. You will find the rest of the instructions, in the Bible.

Being a Christian has its ups and downs, as any life does and Christians do suffer and die. The difference is that we have an appreciation, of the spiritual world and peace and hope, that things really will work out in the end. Christ intervenes, at times, when we really need Him.

Much of our Christian lives involves doing routine work and doing what is needed to stay healthy, but our focus is on helping others and improving our lives, as we gradually give God control more and more of our lives. But we have

a quiet assurance, that our lives mean something and that no matter what we have to live through, after we die, we will live forever in paradise, and are guaranteed to live forever without pain.

The hardest part, for non-believers, to accept about Christianity is that they need to give control of their lives to God. That is why the world will never understand or accept us or our way of life. They think they are in control and we are the drones, but we know better. You either can be a slave, to your own desires, or you can conquer them, but you need help.

We have already tried things our way and look at the way the world turned out. We even know now that all those "Angry God" judgements God has laid on us for our sins were entirely caused directly by our own gluttony and selfishness, also known as, environmental disasters and global warming/climate change. Isn't it time we give God a turn.

Following God is not like following orders, from a Sergeant, in the military. God rarely speaks to us, in a vision and gives us detailed instructions, on some special mission. God is less interested in what you do for a living, then who you are as a person. God wants you to not only to live a better life but a happier one too. God desires His followers, to think critically, before following what they think God says and compare it, to what God has done in the Bible.

Following God is also not the same as following a particular church or member of the clergy. People make mistakes and bad choices - Christians as well. Even well meaning Christians can cause a lot of damage, because they have a poor understanding of Scripture and who God is.

There is a large minority of Christians - often older respected members of the Church - who will make you feel like you have to choose between living a happy life and being a Christian. This is the opposite of what God has in mind. Christianity is there to restore your free will and improve your life and how you see it. Anything that contradicts that is not of God.

## 4.1.2 It's an Addiction

Our world is seriously broken. We can all understand, with just a little knowledge of history, even over a very short time and have knowledge of human behavior, over a short period of time, but the real problem, that is destroying our world, and the real solution, to permanently solving these problems. The time line is exponential, but the start is insignificant, in the grand scheme of things. When you learn about history and live long enough, you realize that nothing really changes. Personal psychology is the same, anytime in history. The only real thing, that is changing now, is human power, to change the world and this is growing exponentially.

Our problem is, although we can make good choices, what really happens is that we make bad choices. Many people think that God is irrelevant, to our world and that the spiritual world has no power over us. Even good, faithful Christians don't really live lives of faith (in America and Europe, over the last 50 years), even though the vast majority of the world was and always will be very religious.

Just like when a person lives beyond their means financially, they get into trouble, they can fix the problem, by being responsible, or just put off the problem, but eventually they will get themselves into so much trouble, that they cannot fix their situation, by themselves. Just like a gambler, fixing the long term problem, of someone who is an addict, is not giving them more of what they keep on using. Giving someone more credit, who spends beyond their means, does not solve their problem. To solve addictions, you need to realize that you need help and cannot fix your problems yourself, alone. You go to counseling and learn how to make better choices. You also need to find others, with more experience, with the same problems (but with more success in prevailing against them), to help support your new, better decisions.

But most people, who become addicts, die of their addiction and are not

successful, even though they could, if they were to make the right choices. Why do we continue, to make bad choices, when we know the results and have the ability to change? The answer is not one that can be found within politics, society, the economy, social movements, technology, drugs, medicine, diet, exercise, counseling, tradition, family, friends, or experts.

The solution is to first repent, of these wrongdoings, to God, our all-powerful Creator. We need to then accept that we did these things of our own free will and are fully, personally responsible, for all these decisions and their consequences. Next, we need to admit, that these decisions are wrong, unnecessary, inexcusable, and unacceptable. We must accept, of our own free will, that we do not have the power, within ourselves, or within our human institutions and human understanding of the world, to make the right choices.

The most important, significant, and most influential aspects of life always have and always will be spiritual, in nature. We were designed, by God, originally, to be in a close, daily, immediate, and personal connection with God, our Creator. Even before we made bad choices, we always have needed God, to even physically function, in the ways necessary, to stay alive. We have had bad influences and the accumulation of many bad choices has put us in a more desperate situation. When we reach rock bottom, we will know that we need God, and, if we are to survive, we will need to continually submit ourselves and our decisions, to the will of God. God knows us better than we know ourselves and it is foolish, to attempt anything, without His direct, continual, and spiritual support, in all aspects of our lives.

While our leaders continue, to try to make the world a better place, by trying to find a cause and a solution, we are pursuing a non-achievable goal. What we want to know is a way to solve our problems, without changing our habits and our way of life. We want an easy, one time solution, to solve everything, so that we can go on and continue, to live like kings. We want to know the exact limit, of how bad we can be, before we pass the line of no return, so we can

enjoy making our bad decisions, as much as possible, without having to suffer the consequences. If we cannot solve the problem this way, then we want to just give up and party, until the apocalypse.

It all appears very discouraging now, to accept the world, the way it is, and realize that we have no control, over the decisions others make, as well as refuse to make good decisions, ourselves. The good news is that it is not too late. We will suffer, from our bad choices, along the way, but we can make our world a better place, by submitting ourselves, to the will of God and pray for His will to be done, rather than ours. People do terrible things like Hitler, Stalin, or Mao, but evil forces do not get to commit mass exterminations. The difference is that God wants us to be in control, of our own human world.

Although God can and does act, all the time, in our world, He wants us to ask Him, to involve Himself, in our world. Until we do so, He will take a less active role. The definition of faith is believing in something, that you cannot prove conclusively: it is the exact opposite of science and math. We do not know the future, or how God will change our world, even if we pray for this. Our world can go in any number of different direction, but, if we ask God to change our world, no matter how the world changes, we can know God will give us joy and meaning in life. We will also be guaranteed that, after we die, we will live forever, without any suffering. The only condition is that we own up to this being entirely our fault, be truly sorry, take a complete 180 degree turn, in our lives, and accept God's complete control over our lives, forever.

## 4.2 God's Ideas

### 4.2.1 God's Point of View

Many theological concepts coming from the Bible don't make sense, the way people explain them, because people are unwilling to see things from God's

point of view. For instance, why is it so surprising, that the way to salvation and everlasting life, is by repenting of our sins and believing God raised Jesus from the dead.

From a human point of view, we look with awe, upon people who do great things, but we find out more and more about people's decisions in life, due to the instantaneous flow of information, that everybody has skeletons in their closets.

If we were to go back to the Bible times, we see that King David was a man after God's own heart and one of the few people before Jesus Christ's time on earth, who was filled with the Holy Spirit and he committed adultery. This was the source of the division of Israel into 2 kingdoms and the eventual diaspora of the Jewish people. This also affects us in modern history with the Holocaust and the re-establishment of the Jewish state, accompanied with the problem of the Palestinians.

Even, say someone was perfect morally: they are still finite, in everything they do. Even the greatest acts of heroes pale, in comparison, to God coming, to earth, as a Man (while still knowing He was God, but not using His powers) and dying in one of the most humiliating and painful deaths possible, at that time. It is the equivalent of us becoming electrons and living with the knowledge of being a human, but living with the restrictions inherit, in not even being a full atom.

The true enemy of God is not society, but His own people, who revolt against Him. Many people either believe they are following the example of Christ, by supporting the establishment, or by trying to bring it down. Few people in history really understood or were able to accept the way Christ revolutionized the world.

Christ was not a military or political leader, so do not expect positive spiritual news coming from military action or any of our political leaders. He did not

transform the economy or the social world by activism or by enforcing laws, so do not risk your life or health by resisting political leaders or trying to uphold the laws.

He did not expand and discipline His mind by meditation, taking vows, building up His physical strength, taking drugs, or hurting Himself, to liberate Himself from or harden Himself to suffering, so do not expect to change the world mystically. Even healing people and feeding the poor was only a secondary goal of Christ on earth, so do not expect solving problems like hunger or disease will really solve our problems.

Christ refused to let anyone shift his focus, from the spiritual understanding of life and solutions, that transform us spiritually. When He healed people, He said He did something greater and more important: He forgave sins. Our biggest problems in life are usually caused by us, or someone else committing evil actions.

Christ wanted us not to reform others, but, instead, reform ourselves. Our greatest enemy is ourself. If you want to change the world, first focus on yourself. You can never do anything greater, than to overcome the evil, in your own heart, no matter how many people you feed or liberate.

You will be laughed at, by the world, when you pray God's will be done and keep yourself from evil, that can be done legally. But your true opposition will come from your fellow Christians. Who really wanted Jesus dead - the political establishment or the religious establishment?

Some of the greatest spiritual battles will be within our own churches, because they are one of the biggest targets of spiritually evil forces. Remember how religious people treated the prophets, of the Old Testament, and expect the same, to happen to you. If they do this, you are on the right track.

Reforming yourself is not just about following the Ten Commandments or even praying. There are many simple things you can do, in your life, that will help spiritually.

Here are some economically based ways to reform yourself and those close to you: make ethical decisions in the products you buy, find creative ways to reduce your expenses, get supplies and training to survive disasters, promote internet usage to empower individuals, and give away free content to support alternate opinions.

Here are some socially based ways to reform yourself and those close to you: network to expand your circles of influence, form relationships with your neighbors, encourage others, stay positive and increase your positive influences, and avoid mainstream assumptions.

Here are some spiritually based ways to reform yourself and those close to you: pray for God's will to be done, improve a specific animal's life, increase your understanding of the world, raise your kids to be good citizens, and take time to relax.

The news is very negative and your life may be depressing, but no matter what situation you find yourself in individually or we do collectively, you and we can improve our situation, by making good choices. There will be at least one big positive surprise, in our lifetimes, that will change things as much as the Internet. The future is not written and we need not give up. We will always find a way to exist and be happy, we will always find friends who serve God, and God will never leave us, no matter how far away we travel physically or in time.

## 4.2.2 God's Rules

## 4.2.3 Inviting God In

Many people don't understand why someone would be a Christian, because Christians follow additional rules, that they are not legally required to and help others, knowing there will be no reward in exchange and helping regardless of whether the person helped is even grateful or a mean person. Christians then talk about how much God gives them and all of these things that they are given are abstract ideas (values) and a promise of eternal life, which both have little meaning, to a dishonest and carnal generation or society.

Why would anyone want to follow a rule they didn't have to? Why would anyone take time to exercise or eat less food, if they didn't have to? The answer to both questions is that denying yourself short term pleasure can give you long term happiness. The other thing is that it becomes easier over time and many even take pride in it. The reason why we need faith (believing in something we cannot verify), to understand God is because it is hard to think long term and also hard to wait.

Abstract concepts, like values and theology, are hard for many people to understand. That is why the Bible tells stories and why pastors go to seminary. One of the things that makes it harder to understand abstract ideas, than it is necessary, is because explanations are often too vague. All values should have specific situations that illustrate the situations, in which a certain value is personified. Art is a good way to illustrate abstract concepts.

If you study world history and religions, you will find that most societies and belief systems have very similar ethical rules. Many people think that there is no right or wrong in Chinese or Indian philosophies and religions, but the

opposite is true. The ethics are not only the most important aspects of these belief systems, but Chinese philosophy is almost exclusively about ethics. In Hinduism and Islam, it is common to take additional rules, upon oneself, that aren't even required, by the religious doctrines, or even do rituals, that produce physical pain.

We often see God as requiring us to give everything we have to God, in exchange for eternal life and other things we cannot verify independently. God only ask us to acknowledge who He is and ask for His help and this is the entirety of the cost to us of salvation. Christ's cost for our salvation is the eternal suffering, on the cross, for our sins (because God experiences things outside of the limitations of time) The reality is, most of the Bible is about living in this world and finding joy in life. We are given freely from God, so it is natural for us to want to give freely to others.

Most people have trouble believing what God has said is true, because it is so different, from what we have been taught, in school. God wants us to be critical thinkers and, if you do not believe God, you need to speak to Him directly about it. You cannot start a relationship, without honesty, and God will take you from where you are. The secret to finding faith is prayer: if you can't believe, then ask God for faith. Reading the Bible and going to church helps increase your faith, as well.

Many people ask for proof, for them to believe in the Bible. First of all, no one has yet made a logical argument for logic and we believe things everyday that we cannot see or prove. Most people believe that the Earth is round and that we are a very small part of a very big universe and there are many very good proofs of this, but you are still taking someone else's word for something you have not experienced for yourself. Were there Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq before the US invaded and do businesses contribute more to society than they take?

The thing that makes people put a microscope on religion and politics is that

the ideas are controversial. You can find proof, for any view of any political or religious ideas online and argue about it for years and never come to a conclusion. Some of these things have to be one way or another: something did or didn't happen and it happened at a definite time. Sometimes, in these debates, on some issues, we will never agree, because our emotions speak louder than our rational minds.

There is a God or there isn't and Christianity is either true or not. I believe. What do you think? Would you like to bet your eternity on it?

As far as historical proof goes, many people think that there never was an Israel and there is no conclusive archeological evidence, for some major events in the Bible. There is also little recorded outside the Bible about Israel, during the time of the Old Testament. There were many scholars, at that time, outside Israel. At the time of Christ, almost all of those people, from Ancient Egypt to Iraq were some of the earliest converts to Christianity. If these scholars didn't believe in the historical accuracy of the Bible, then why did they convert long before Christianity was legal in the Roman Empire?

### 4.2.4 God Only

Are you a believer in Christ? Do you believe that spiritual things are more important than wealth, power, knowledge, fame and the like? Then take God at His word and live like you believe in Him alone. Fully reject all these things that we think we need to use to spread God's message. Forsake every advantage we have gotten for ourselves in anything of the natural or social world.

If you really believe, choose Christ as your main and only thing. Choose the spiritual world, as your true reality. Think in terms of eternity alone and what is really important in life. Communicate this to others, in the way you deal with challenges in life. Be blind to and completely avoid using wealth, power, fame, and money, to further the agenda of the Church and never mix God's ways with

peoples ways again.

The key to understanding God is through faith and not through knowledge. It is fine to understand why God says to do what He says for us to do, but this is not required. Obedience is. Faith is an act of the will and is the basis of what we need to do to accept God's salvation. A life based on faith is never really easy, if you make the choice to believe above all else and through it all.

Your life will also be completely unrecognizable and incomprehensible, to those who don't fully embrace the spiritual world. A life of faith separates you fundamentally from the way non-believers think. Today, we believe that we need evidence, to know what is true, but the true things that really matter are very simple, but extremely difficult to believe, because we must choose to believe, with a lack of complete knowledge.

Christianity has long attracted the best minds, because the Bible is beyond all other books of all other faiths, in every way, including subtlety and the number of levels of meaning. Remember, even the devil know there is a God, but that does not save him. We have to choose continually, to move closer or farther away from God.

To really live scripture, we need to change the way we think. Other people, who do not believe, should be shocked and confused by our behavior. Being Christian is about doing God's will, in place of our own. When we do something spiritually good, we seldom get any credit for it and often even suffer for it.

God is supposed to get the credit. That is why we need to reject building the Church through money and power. If we use money to buy influence, we get credit and not God. This is the way the world works, but the Church should not work this way.

This is not what the world thinks of as rational behavior. It is ok not to be accepted by the establishment or even by the Church. Jesus was rejected by

the equivalent of the Church of His time as were the prophets of Israel. The downfall of ancient Israel can be attributed directly to the people wanting a king, whereas God's will was for Israel to be ruled by prophets He chose. Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived and started out faithful to God, but turned away, due to His wealth and His lust. Wisdom was not enough to save Him.

Most people are not scholars and most people throughout history never learned to read. We now see most people often choose not to ever learn, even when they have the opportunity. We need to forget trying to reason out our faith and convince others by our superior arguments. This may be the American way we think we run politics, but it is not God's way.

Obedience does not come from knowledge. You can be extremely smart and still have no self control or common sense. You can be extremely cunning and politically adept, but still be stubborn and rebellious. Just because people follow what you say, does not mean what you say is the truth.

The truth is that we are really driven by our emotions and that we only use reason, as an excuse to believe, what we have already decided to believe. How often have you ever convinced anyone of anything, they didn't already believe? Did God try to reason with the religious and political leaders of his time? He even spoke figuratively expressly, so that even the religious scholars, who did not care, did not understand His message.

If you want to have faith and do not have it, read the Bible and pray for faith. God will surely freely grant you faith, by His grace. The way of Christ is not one of supernatural and flashy visual effects, that shock and awe people or the wisdom of the Greeks or modern day science. God describes His way is one of the foolishness of God, which is greater than man's wisdom, which is incomprehensible, to both those who reason things out and those who like to see dazzling act of power demonstrating it.

God wants us to use our will, not our minds or our hearts, to continually make a decision to believe in what we will never fully explain, and is beyond our comprehension. That is that God gives us freely what we could never earn or deserve, even if we were morally perfect. God accepts that we make mistakes and do morally wrong things, but decided to take the blame for that, if only we would choose to believe in Him, without complete proof or full comprehension of everything involved in this arrangement. If only we put God first, in our lives, God will save us, at any cost.

Remember, in life everything has a cost, both spiritually and physically, but God has chosen to offer the greatest gift free. He has done this despite our complete rejection of Him and our creation of suffering, by our lack of self control and greed. God has given up everything, and so we need to give up our minds, bodies, and souls over to His control day by day. This is the only way we can truly be happy or have peace in this life or the next.

### 4.2.5 Fate and Freedom

Many great philosophers have thought and written about dualism, where life is composed of opposites and some have sought to see beyond this and see them as part of a larger system. This is called non-duality. One of the oldest dualities is of free will and fate or human will and God's will. Many have sought to prove one and disprove the other, as the answer becomes easier to accept and easier to fit within the way we think.

The hard part about accepting this is that although time and reality as we know it is nothing compared to eternity, the illusion is thoroughly convincing. When you are lost in doing something you love, time goes by faster and when you are in great pain, time goes by much more slowly. Even though the spiritual world is more real, we can only understand it through faith and many doubt its existence entirely. But sometimes we get brief glimpses of this reality in situations that we cannot explain without a spiritual origin or causality.

Even though we have eternity, in only a few years away, we cannot wait while always keeping the faith in sight. We get distracted and lose our way. We spend our time on unimportant things and fighting about things that don't really matter. We have so little faith. Why is it so easy to believe the reality of what we know will perish quickly and struggle to accept the more pleasant and rational ultimate reality?

We see that the world does not make sense after spending years trying to control it. We become the play things of the natural world and we get pulled into its way of thinking. We get discouraged because we are impatient and are mentally and spiritually weak. Just as the disciples could not stay awake even a few hours, to pray in the garden of Gethsemane, before Jesus was placed on the cross, we give up far too easily.

Do not accept the reality that you see before you. Do not give up on God, because He will never give up on you. We see evil and pain in the world, like a snowball going downhill and speeding up and growing, as it travels. There is so little we can do naturally, but so much God can and will do. God decided long ago that people would control their own destiny. For those who love God, we wonder why he ever gave us free will, but those who hate him revel in this freedom and chain themselves to suffering, while thinking they are becoming more in control.

So yes we have complete freedom, to make the choices we do, but God can and will intervene to fix our mistakes as He wills. We each play our part like actors in the play, but God is the author of the play. We think we play by our own rules and think that God has abandoned us, until we grow older and realize that our quest for control is the road to our suffering. We need not give up on joy in life and accept pain as inevitable, but we do need to learn to choose God, regardless of the difficulty to master our own selfishness and how little we understand how this works. Faith is by definition blind.

The way free will and God's will (or fate) is meant to work is for us to choose

God's will. We are given many choices in life, that matter little, but some choices define us. Instead of letting your circumstances define you, choose to have God transform you and your circumstances, not as a weak and passive observer, but as a willing and active partner. Don't choose God because He is all powerful; choose God because He is good and merciful.

Unfortunately, in life we have no grantees, until after it ends. We need to make good choices and be responsible adults. It would be very immature of us to just expect God to solve all our problems, without putting any effort in to solve them ourselves. God wants us to be equal partners, in our choices in life, but He also wants us to grow up and be able to handle some things on our own. But it is ridiculously hard to have patience, when you know the pain will not end for many years. But, God understands, as He lived a very difficult life on earth as a person and He does and will intervene.

We just have to understand that God is not responsible for our suffering and so is not going to always bail us out. Just like when an adult breaks something, they must pay for its replacement or to fix it, so we, as the collective creators of pain and evil, must take responsibility and do our best to minimize this suffering, in ours and others' lives.

## 4.3 More Spiritual Ideas

### 4.3.1 What is Spiritual?

We have been snowed and misdirected, on what is important in life. History is a lie and we are not aware of the hidden battles, that we must fight, to control the world. You may think I am talking about aliens or some sort of supernatural forces. These are again misdirects.

The true spiritual battles take place in your mind and in the Church. The devil

cannot make you do anything you do not want to do. According to the Bible, there are some very powerful forces out there, that wish to enslave us, but, although we have had cruel dictators in the physical world, we need not be fearful of these. The spiritual world has its own rules, but they are very different from the physical and human ones.

So, when I talk about spiritual solutions, to our problems, I mean two things: prayer to the Christian God and making better, more moral choices, in all aspects of our life. Your enemy is not anyone else, but your own mind.

Sin and evil does not come from any external forces. Sin is addiction and addiction is sin. Just as more money does not solve a gambling problem or more alcohol solve an alcoholics problem, military, economic, or social solutions will not solve our problems with sin.

We are our own worst enemy. We need to both depend upon God, to give us strength, but also take the responsibility, for the change we want, totally upon ourselves. We cannot achieve this, without divine intervention, but it will be us, that needs to exercise our will, to make these better choices. God will save us, but for it to work, we need to put our will in check and assume full responsibility, for all our choices and actions.

Our world is going into a very bad place, because we are taking the wrong strategy. We don't need more energy, more technology, or more knowledge, to solve our problems. To change the world for the better, we need to get control of our own lives. It is easy to solve everyone else's problem; it is hard to solve our own problems.

The reason why the world is so discouraging now is because we feel like we have no control over how the world works. We know some obvious things, that need to be done, that could fundamentally solve these problems. We have the power; we just do not have the will. We know the solution, but we are unwilling to pay the price.

The good news is that Jesus Christ has paid the price and we do have a solution, that everyone can be parts of and help out, that will really work. We do not need to be leaders, scholars, or businessmen, to solve these problems. We can make our world better, than it ever has been; we have the power, all by our individual selves. Any one of us can solve the worlds problems, all by ourself. The solution is to solve our problems, in our own individual lives. Embrace God, fix yourself and you will fix the world.

We may have no power politically, economically, or socially, but we have enormous spiritual power. People who mean well, all throughout history, have tried to make the world better and were often very well meaning and suffered greatly, but they never solved the problems, because they had the wrong strategy. Why do we, as Christians, believe that the spiritual things are the most important, but refuse to use them and try to solve the world without God's help, or don't do so, in the way that Christ showed?

Christ was not a military, economical, or political leader. He did not advocate for human rights, the environment, tolerance, or for gender equality. That does not mean that any of these things is not essential, for world to be truly just. The reason why the world is unjust is not because our leaders make bad choices and are selfish. The reason for these problems is that we are selfish and make bad choices.

We are the source of our own problems and we will not be the solution, yet the power and ability to change rests entirely, on our shoulders. We do not have the solution; God does. But it is our duty to follow His strategy and carry these ideas out, in our own lives. In this way, we will solve the world's problems, but God will rightly receive the credit.

## 4.3.2 How Christianity Can Be Misleading

### The Main Problem

To many outside observers, Christianity appears to be a social group, for political conservatives, to push a 1930-1950s AD idea of American culture, throughout the world, and to ban homosexuality. Surprisingly, the Bible never mentions America, gun rights, or capitalism/imperialism. Islam has some very shocking similarities to Christianity. If there was no Judaism or Christianity, there would likely be no Islam.

This is not exclusive to Christians; it is more of a generational thing. Kids today are not raised in a way, that adequately prepares them, to get high paying jobs and have the ability to survive, on their own, responsibly, when they turn 18. I don't believe this is what most Christians believe.

### A Better Christian Strategy

It is however how Christians are often portrayed, in the media and in politics. I think the problem, on the part of Christians, is more one of strategy and adapting, to a very different world, than the one my parents grew up in. The theology is the one thing, that should never change.

All Christians, both young and mature, as well as unbelievers, need to understand that it is not easy for anyone to become Christian. Submitting yourself to Jesus Christ is only the start of a long and difficult process. Instead of going for huge numbers of Christians or trying to make the rest of the world follow our laws and worldview, we need to instead really put all our effort into fighting, for each seeker (person interested in Christianity). We are not going to get genuine faith and long term commitment, by arguing theology we learned in church, or proving our take on theology.

We do not worship theology and having correct theology (beyond the basics) is not necessary to understand, in order for God to provide your salvation. Homosexuality is the issue that the media and major political groups want to be the focus of the religion discussion. Christians need to be smarter strategically and change the conversation, to what they find most important. Mormons and Muslims are not fans of homosexuality, yet that is not how their religions are being defined, by the media.

### Spiritual World Changes

It is bad news, for the Church, that feminism has become mainstream, but science fiction and the spiritual world have become mainstream, as well. The next generation does not hate Christianity; they know nothing about it. We no longer need to fight bad theology; we can start on a clean slate.

Christians need not be afraid of the spiritual world and evangelism is much more effective historically amongst pagans, than it has been among atheists or Muslims. Once people are aware of the spiritual world, the Christian worldview makes a lot of sense. If we are willing to put Christmas trees in churches and have easter egg hunts as church activities, both of which are pagan rituals, we can surely embrace Halloween and make it Christian.

### Issue of Homosexuality

This issue of homosexuality has become a mainstream issue, for a number of reasons (It solves many leaders problems). The rich and powerful can keep the conservatives and liberals at each others throats, while wealthy businessmen, that don't care about social issues, take even more money, from average Americans. There are something like 65 people, who now which control 1/2 of the world's money. Businesses are struggling, to find new markets, to expand into, new products to sell, and new people to sell to and gay people (statistically) do well financially.

There is a trend, on making what are called "victimless crimes" legal, like drugs and gambling. Furthermore, many people see this struggle as an extension of civil rights. In the academic world, the study of gender, feminism, women studies, and sexuality in general all are becoming entire areas of study, on the same level as history or philosophy, in the humanities. This is likely a bid to make the humanities seem more relevant to young people.

The reason it happened now is that it is currently socially acceptable. It is socially acceptable, because there are slightly more people that are pro homosexual, than those who are anti homosexual. This social change just happened, in the last few years, and will likely continue in that direction, indefinitely.

### Difficulty of Being Christian

The big lie about Christianity is that there is a huge emphasis, on the first decision you make, to be a Christian is thought, to be the key to salvation. Choice though is a key aspect of salvation. But faith is obedience, rather than simply acknowledging what is real and it is difficult, because you have to make the same choice, day in and day out. I had a plaque from a famous writer " I think Anton Chekov - that said something like: "Any idiot can survive a crisis; Its the day to day living that really wears you down".

Christianity, like marriage is hard work, if you want to keep it healthy. In Christianity, the way you think needs to be changed, for you to really change who you are. Instead of asking yourself what is the bare minimum needed to be saved, but rather now that I am saved, what can I do to serve Him who saved me and bring this same salvation to others suffering without it.

Christianity is more of a process than an outcome. It is not an epic journey like in the Lord of the Rings. It shares more in common in what living with the technology of the Shire would be like. The fancy magic of the elves may seem enticing, but that was what got them into trouble. Living with sin and trials is

like living, without indoor plumbing and electricity, in the contemporary world. Living off the grid is the level of difference and the level of difficulty, that living in this world, as the Bible tell us to, is.

### Christian Living

It is all exciting in the church service one a week and you will be excited and supported and you will agree to almost anything. But Monday will roll around real quick and you can barely make it past waking up, without making bad choices. The big impediment to people improving their lives is that they are so busy and distracted, that they don't have time to think or reflect. The luxury today is in not having a smartphone.

One of the things that helps you make better decisions is time. Experiences over your lifetime, experiences you have heard about others, time reading, time sleeping, time exercising, time eating healthy, time spent with family and friends, time relaxing, time listening to God, and the time you think through what to do next are all about making time for what is most important. That is the point of the Sabbath. So, while you can be technically assured of eternal salvation, in a minute, it usually take both half a lifetime to reach that decision and the other half of your life, to live that decision.

We all have different situations in life. Some, like me being born in America, is like winning the lottery, whereas being the part of the 1% of the population that has Schizophrenia makes my life extremely difficult. I always say everything is going well for me except the Schizophrenia. I think being blind, in a wheelchair, and homeless (at the same time) would probably be a happier and less disabling life than having Schizophrenia.

### Significance of Being Christian

Being a Christian is a serious commitment, much more serious than your choice of marriage partner, whether or not to have kids, where to go to college,

where to live, how to invest your money, or anything else in life. Christianity comes at a high price (your pride: you will never be able to say this again: "I did this all by myself"). What Christianity can give you that nothing else will is eternity, not just eternal life, but eternal purpose, in this life. Becoming Christian means that God has chosen you and invited you to find out more about Him and spend time with Him, one on one, with His undivided attention.

What does Christianity bring to the world? We were unwilling to choose God or even be decent people, so God did everything, to make us part of His family. You don't choose God. God chooses you. Everyone will get the opportunity, at least once in life, but you may only have one chance.

We spend our entire lives documenting our lives. Make regular time to actually live your life and make time for God: He has created everything for you. Just like there is more to writing than grammar, and there is more to learning from books than just buying them and not reading them, salvation is not a one time decision. It is always easier to solve someone else's problems than our own; our problems do not arise from a lack of knowledge, but, rather from lack of discipline and motivation.

# 5 Religion Articles

## 5.1 General Religion

### 5.1.1 Science and Relevancy

The belief in Science, as a way to solve problems is understandable for unbelievers, but for Christians it is unacceptable. The Church today is uncompromising, in their beliefs that society is corrupt and Christ is the answer, but then they fear the supernatural and then use human methods, to

solve their problems. Paul talked about how the Church was very immature and weak, in that they would not really question and stand against what unbelievers believe in.

Christianity is not a one time decision. The biggest problem with Science, for Christians, is that it is a big distraction and most people now see Science as a belief system, that cannot be questioned. There is no logical proof for logic. We just assume that truth is just facts and that the only things, that are really true are the things that can be reduced to math or computer programs.

Why does every website look the same now? We have no soul. We fail to win people over, with our ideas and our products, because we have nothing of value to offer. The problem contemporary Americans have is that they have too much of everything. Technology has not liberated us or improved our lives.

We do the same things with computers we did before computers, just by employing less people and doing everything in a more complicated way. Everyone expects everything to be free and yet get paid huge amounts of money, for doing a very sloppy job and performing basic functions of their jobs, without any consistency or accuracy. We are fat and lazy and it is killing us and our world.

We spend huge amounts of money buying aircraft, that can do somersaults in the air, while going at full speed and we can bomb one building, without touching adjacent buildings, but this does not solve any problems for us. It is a very expensive attempt at solving a problem, without fundamentally understanding the problem. We make very sophisticated technology, like how Facebook is designed, in the behind the scenes parts, but no one asks do we really need Facebook?

Before Apple released its first iPad, a significant minority of the population already knew they were going to buy one, before they even knew the cost or the capabilities. Now schools think the future of technology is in tablets and

don't even realize laptops and tablets are designed fundamentally different, for fundamentally different markets. Kids today are not losing out on jobs, because they cannot type fast enough or aren't able to use the Internet. They are failing because they cannot read, write, or do basic math.

There are few jobs, even in the science, technology, engineering and math fields. Instead of getting more women into technology jobs, why not get more men involved in the helping professions? Instead of educating our future generations, to do nothing, but do math and engineering, we need to questions why we are willing to pay hundreds of dollars for a smartphone, but nothing for software or media.

Our society is optimized for efficiency, which is why businesses adopted computers and this is achieved, by saving money, by employing less people. Technology reduces jobs, but it does not add any. Our leaders claimed technology would liberate us, but now the government uses it to control us. The problem with our society is that while it is very efficient, it is also very brittle, in that if one terrorist blocks one port, by exploding one bomb, or there is a hurricane or earthquake in one place, the world grinds to a halt.

What the Church needs to question is the assumption that materialistic thinking is really the best way to solve our problems. What really matters is what we and other experience and the way we feel and think. If we have a bigger car, a newer smartphone, or better medical treatments does this solve the problem of where we spend our eternity?

For people who suffer depression, because of a chemical imbalance, know that just doing something that sounds fun does not necessarily make you happy. We live the world in our minds, so no matter how much a medical treatment would fix your body, if it is so painful, expensive, or debilitating is the cure worth those costs? Just having more money does not solve your problems and just having more free time does not make you more happy.

Whether or not we know we live in a 2 dimensional world or we can travel through space of time, how does this give us joy in life? Science answers a lot of questions, but are these the questions we need to answer to live well? Are we going to treat animals and people better, if we are able to be lazier and have cheaper Internet access. When you are in pain, life goes by much more slowly, then when you are having fun. Science would say the time is the same, but is that relevant if it does not reflect your experience?

It is well known that our memories are not always scientifically accurate. People witnessing the same event, at the same time, communicate totally different experiences, that do not reconcile with the facts. When you are in surgery, when they put you out and you have no memory or have any awareness of what is happening or that any time passed, it is as if the surgery ever happened. You have the results, but the process is just not relevant (because it didn't happen for you).

When we get older, we experience time going by faster than when we were young. Time seems to go by much faster when we are happy in life, then when we go through struggles. The fact that objectively the time is the same is irrelevant, to what we feel and how we experience life.

## 5.1.2 Why Religion Makes Sense

People use words in common speech that mean different things philosophically or in other fields. For example, Modern European History started 300 years ago. This is because it was based on new ideas from the Enlightenment, which was also called Modernism. With Modernism we get the idea that we are the center of the universe, we are the highest form of intelligence, and we know what's best for us.

Modernism's solution to our problems is technology and we only value what we call Rational, which we define as facts determined by the Scientific Method.

The highest good is what gives us physical pleasure and we only want to solve problems with solutions that don't require material sacrifice.

For thousands of years before and after, the most important thing and the focus of society was on religion and worship. In most revealed religions there are many methods of determining truth. In religion, these are some of the methods of inquiry: faith, worship, ritual, scripture, prayer, code of conduct/ethics, divine healing, tradition, prophecy, paradox, mystical experience, visions, fasting, living a life of poverty, taking vows of silence and/or chastity, intuition, history, and feelings.

What really separates Science from religion is that Science relies on physical proof, whereas Faith, by its very nature, means there is no physical proof. Many people spend much of their lives trying to prove whether or not God is real, and they will never get any of their "proof". Science and religion are in a special kind of parallel worlds with separate histories, all starting from a breakaway from each other at a common point in history.

Many people talk about how Animism preceded World Religions and how Science is the most evolved development of determining truth. Besides there having always being someone who worshiped the one creator God and more now than any times in history, only Europeans traditions saw the world as moving in straight line and always improving. Most other cultures see the world and human history as going in repeated cycles like our current understanding of economics.

Our whole American society is based on fear of death. The basic directive in modern medicine is to keep the person alive as long as possible at any cost. Soldiers get so much armor they cannot move and the armor only succeeds on stoping bleeding, so the injured are kept alive even with severe burns, without even checking to see if they would really want to live like that. One of the reasons why our health care is so expensive is that old people will pay unlimited amounts of money to live even a day or more longer. Many of the

treatments of cancer are so bad, that they seem worse than the cancer itself.

Today, being young and looking young is considered more important than learning and growing our discipline, ethic, creativity, or even just intellect. There is so much we could do, if we would only ask God for help. Most of our pursuit of pleasure results in addiction and pain. We make bad choices when we take drugs and when we get overweight we get discouraged. It is very hard to break free from addictions and totally not worth the pain. If you feel bored or depressed, the best first step is to volunteer to help others, so your life has meaning outside yourself. It is a very lonely world when all you care about is yourself.

Life beyond Science, or Religion, gives us a much broader and more balanced view of the world. The physical world is one tiny subset of the spiritual world. When we choose God to be first in our life, we have something to look forward to after we die. We can be part of a community, just based on our beliefs. We can live a life affecting others more in our current jobs and lives than if we ran for office. God doesn't care if you are a lawyer or a doctor - He care how you treat others and yourself. He wants you to be free of immorality and its bad consequences.

The world's future looks bleak from a materialistic and Scientific view of the world. We are running out of drinkable water, fertile soil, moderate weather, and energy (oil, coal, propane, and nuclear). We have many solutions, but none will give us enough energy. Our society is not focused on seeking life on other planets or exploring the universe. It won't be long before we will be scavenging off of the remains of our garbage dumps.

There are people who now live in garbage and make money of of selling what they find in it. They are called squatter villages and shanty towns. They exist all over the third world. many of these people are much more wealthy in terms of spiritual knowledge and hope for the future than we are, even though we in the first world all live as kings did in the past. There is not a direct connection

between hope and money, technology and solutions, and lifestyle and living a good life.

## 5.1.3 Why are Some People Kind?

One of the biggest mysteries to Christianity is why are so many Christians so unkind? It would be much easier, if all Christians were just kind like Jesus and it would make defending the Gospel easier. The sad truth is that none of us are even good, by our own low standards. Unlike what many people think, you do not get into heaven by being better behaved than others. Otherwise, none of us would get in.

Christianity and just general life as a human being involves constant choices, where we decide who we will be, in the future, with each choice we make. Even a mostly kind person can be and often is cruel at sometimes in their lives and mostly mean people are often kind at least sometimes.

There are many reasons why we are unkind, but what really matters to us is what we follow through with action wise. Even when we try to avoid choosing, we make a choice then as well. So why would a Christian be kind, if they never gets any reward for it? Christians are often kind, because of what God has done for us, or after watching how animals behave a lot of times.

So, if kindness is a choice, is it a learned trait. So can people become kind, who were not raised to be kind. I think that is what Christianity is about. This is what you will see in any Christian, who is really trying, is that, over time, you will see real change, in their lives. Kindness is just one of the attributes, that Christians should strive for. It is hard for many people to understand why God would save people, who are not even trying.

But the thing is that we never really know who has committed their lives to God and has asked for forgiveness for their sins. Many people, in Church, have

never accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. In fact, the Church is one of the biggest targets for spiritual warfare. There are likely people in every Church who come every Sunday and always seem divisive, but have huge power and act very selfish, could be there just to cause problems and may totally reject God and everything about Him.

One of the hardest things to accept about Christianity is forgiveness. We are happy to get forgiven by God, when we are saved, but we don't really understand what that means until we forgive someone else for doing something really bad to us. When we do something really bad to others, especially as Christians, we start learning what the cost of evil is. Then we begin to appreciate what Christ has done for us, in a much more tangible way and the Gospel makes much more sense.

God has never taken the easy route. The way God has chosen to judge us by His grace and by our faith, He has opened what they say "a can of worms". For God, everyone's life is a special case. How can anyone really know what someone's true intent is in life and if they are really trying or not?

No one knows everything about your life and everything you did and why and all your past and all the factors of every situation. No one really knows if you have genuinely submitted your life to Christ. Only God knows and it is far from simple even for Him.

So when we ask why are so many Christians mean, if we are Christian, we should know why because all of that failure and selfishness exists in us as well. If we are not Christian, then it is going to be hard to accept, until a Christian forgives us, for a major evil we committed to the Christian. That is why we, as Christians need to realize that we are representatives of God and that forgiveness is a two edged sword and it cuts both ways. In the Lords prayer, we actually pray for God to forgive us only as much as we forgive others.

So when you see a Christian commit a sin, understand first that you do not

really know if they are truly a Christian, second that would you have done any better, think of how God will forgive you when you commit a similar evil act, and finally think of how you are going to forgive something someone did to you like that. To God, everything matters, but to other people, the actions are really what matters most. But these actions first arise in our minds and start from what we are thinking and our true intent.

So, the key to understanding the God, the Bible, and Christianity is to understand what forgiveness means. And this just comes with life experiences and especially being around Christians. Being Christian does not mean you are a good person. Becoming a Christian, means you have accepted that you are a bad person.

A Christian is very much like an addict. The only thing that they have to be proud about is God and what He has done for them. There is nothing that we do to earn a spot in Heaven: that is the definition of Grace - that it is freely given.

If you think you are better than Christians, then you might be happier with another religion or wait until you are convinced. Being good does not get you anywhere with God, because, first you are already supposed to do so like following government laws, second of all God chose not to judge us this way, third we aren't actually good people and are doing bad things, and finally even if we were perfect, we still would be nothing in comparison to God in every other way.

## 5.2 Christians and Christianity

### 5.2.1 What is so Unique About Christianity?

Throughout most of recorded history, the ideology was religious in nature. In Africa, the supernatural and the community/ancestors were the focus, while in East and South Asia the focus was on ethics and discipline and abstract ideas (with less emphasis on the supernatural). Christianity brings with it a union of both ethics and discipline (of East and South Asia) with an acceptance of the importance of both community and the supernatural (of Africa).

The beginning of the anti-religious sentiment starts with Plato and Aristotle, in Late Antiquity, but didn't really start until the Renaissance and Reformation. With the huge expansion of European wealth and power, people challenged both the Church and the government and formed what is now the modern world, with the one world economy, run by capitalism/imperialism.

The basis of our modern world is atheism, which has some direct philosophical parallel to Paganism, in that the values are beauty and strength. The reason our entire world is running out of resources is because we have been so afraid of death, that we keep making more and more food, to feed the ever increasing population, and won't let our elderly die, when they are ready.

What life really comes down to is are you a person who follows rules or someone who breaks them? Do you feel a need to risk your life, to feel happy, or do you find joy in things others may say are boring? Are you willing to put off immediate pleasure, for long term happiness? Can you find joy, in working for others? Can you feel free, even when you have a boss?

Christianity is the one true religion, which has a God that really exists, is all

powerful, and is truly good. It is not like, in many belief systems, that you are all alone spiritually that you don't strive, to better yourself, and do what is good, without a tangible reason. Christianity sets you free, because what we need more than anything else is God living within us and forgiveness of our sins.

We are truly our own greatest enemies. After saying a simple prayer and believing in one simple truth, you can be sure where you will live after you die, forever. The only real thing you have to do, before you die, is plan for the hereafter. You truly change with God in your life, because you literally have God living within you and divinely intervening, in your life and most importantly providing all that you need, to live a good life and experience true joy and peace.

When you enter into the Christian faith, you give up some things like popularity and the ability to fit in. You will appear absurd and irrational to most people. Christians are not part of the world's values, or its system of relationships. Christians do things for others and make sacrifices for others, when there is no obvious gain for themselves. This does not make sense to someone that only values beauty and strength.

People ask me why do I put all this work into my books and websites without anyway to make money? This comes right to the heart of the key issue, that separates the modern world and traditional Christianity. Is there something you would give your life for, or spend your life working for, that does not push your own fame, wealth, power, ideas, or agenda?

## 5.2.2 Why are Christians so Irrational?

To understand where Christians are coming from, this most important and first thing to wrap your head around is that religion, in general, and Christianity, in particular, is not based on reason. First, let me explain what I mean by rational and irrational. Irrational is not an insult, nor do I mean that when people act

irrationally, that that means what they doing is stupid or insane. Unfortunately, there is not a word, that distinguishes the spiritual rational, from the physical rational, in philosophy.

Just like the word Modernism has nothing to do with Contemporary, as used in Philosophy, the word Rationalism refers to a certain type of philosophy and is not a value judgement. We could substitute a word like utility or practical, to distinguish between spiritual and physical reasoning, but we run into the same problems, because spiritual things can be very practical (ethics and even sometimes the supernatural) and have clear utility (they help keep our society together and provide hope and purpose in life).

Whenever someone uses the word spiritual, many people think that means supernatural, but ethics are a big part of spiritual reality and most sins are only possible in a physical world. I think a better way of breaking down the difference between our different modes of existence are the different aspect of our self awareness, including the spirit (the mind, the heart, the will/soul), and the body. I would say that Christianity sees the will, as being the primary actor, in our world, not the body or mind, as Science teaches. Psychology deals with the heart but, while seeing the connection to the mind and body, fails to factor in the state of the will.

So Christianity is not about why or what but about Who. If God did not exist, then praying to Him would do nothing and nothing (including us) would not even exist, in the first place. While there are many rational reasons, to believe in God and to explain it to others, the concept of faith is not defined by belief in what we can understand. God doesn't ask us to believe He merely exists. God calls us to choose to obey Him, by repenting of our sins, believing in His worldview, and asking Him to interfere, in all aspects of our lives, so that we continue to choose His will, instead of ours.

We do good for others and follow His rules, not because we have to do so, to be saved, but that, if our faith is real, we really want to do the right things,

because God has changed the way we think and our priorities in life. We help others, because we are thankful that God helped and helps us. Many non-Christians do not understand why someone would feel they need to change themselves for God to accept them, but they do not hesitate to totally transform their beliefs and their lifestyle, just to gain one weak human friendship.

God takes us where we are and we change, because we realize, that God knows what is best for us (as He made us and lived as us, as Jesus Christ) and following Him will improve our lives. God is not interested in: what you do for a living, what kind of personality you have, what your artistic views are, what you have done in the past, where you live, or other less significant things. God cares about who you are now and He is just there to make you a better person and give you hope and meaning, despite whatever circumstances you have found yourself in or what decisions you have made, good or bad.

So whether or not religion is rational or not rational, more importantly it makes your life better and Christianity does so be God working directly in your life. Isn't it amazing that God cares so much for us, after all the terrible things we have done and how weak, stupid, and unimportant we are, in the grand scheme of things. Think about how big the universe is and think how sparsely populated it is: God went to great lengths to make our lives possible. If the conditions were slightly different, in physical laws, the universe would not hold together and fire and flight are possible on earth only due to a very specific range of properties.

Christianity is often thought, to be in the dark ages, in some of the beliefs we follow, that are written in the Bible, compared to what non-believers believe today. If you want to see something truly ridiculous, just look a couple hundred years back in Science and compare to what Scientists believe today. I remember, when I was kid, black holes were thought to be impossible and now they are thought to be micro ones everywhere and the center of each galaxy is

a great black hole. Stephen Hawkings even tried to prove the whole universe is one big black hole. Now there is a direct correlation between the necessary chemical components needed for our form of life and black holes.

Who knows what Science will say about the world in the next 200 years, but the Bible will still say the same thing it said 2,000 years before us and it will still be the most widespread religion in the world. Christianity is already outpacing Islam 2:1 today and growing more rapidly, in some of the fastest growing populations, than Islam (and relevant to many more parts of the world than Islam ever will be). The Islamic world has no faith in the dedication of fellow Muslims or else it would not be a death penalty, to spread the Gospel or convert to Christianity, in most of the Islamic world, even today.

Most of the modern Islamic populated world was Christian (including the entire Middle East), for 500 years before Islam left Saudi Arabia. This situation continued up until 2/3 of their (Assyrian/Syriac) population was massacred between World War I and II. This was the culmination of ethnic cleansing and genocide of Christian areas by Muslims, for hundreds of years, by radical Islamic fundamentalists (much as Jewish people were persecuted in Medieval Europe). Most of the world (outside the Middle East and Europe) only heard the Gospel a century ago, while Islam has been in many of these countries 500-1,000 years before.

## 5.2.3 What is Rational?

When many people read that I am promoting what is irrational, they say that it is ridiculous to do things for no reason. This is not what I mean by using the word irrational. This current generation of people think that facts are the only way to determine actuality or truth. A good example of what is commonly referred to as irrational is a feeling/choice like unconditional love. Faith, by its very definition, is based on the concept of knowing something is true without having to prove it.

The reason why we sin and/or refuse to become Christians (be sorry for and stop committing our sins/evil acts) is not because we lack enough understanding or that there is not enough reason to believe. Faith is an act of the will, not the mind. Sin is when we choose to do wrong, when we know better. God has called us to believe, not to understand. The reason why things involving God involve believing, without being able to prove it, is because God, although I believe is completely rational, is infinitely beyond us. Much of biblical theology is based on paradox and cannot be explained by math or science.

The basis for Buddhism is that we need both good actions plus we need to strengthen our mind and we are saved by doing good deeds and by training our mind, to transcend the physical world. What enlightenment means is a big debate, amongst different schools of Buddhism. The Islamic Fundamentalists in the Middle East are often asked why they kill fellow Muslims, in terrorist attacks, and the response is usually that if these people were living good lives, they will be able to live in paradise forever. The unique thing about Christianity is that it deals with failure.

If you have committed too many sins and you do not have enough time, to do enough good deeds, to cancel the bad deeds out and/or don't know exactly what you must do, you will likely give up or be very depressed. Christianity is based on the idea, that although we can and should always do the right thing, we unavoidably don't, repeatedly. The Christian worldview sees all people as addicts, to doing the wrong thing, and solves this by God divinely and directly intervening, in our lives, to change the way we think and to support us making good choices.

In an overly simplistic sense, salvation is too easy and all you have to say is that you are sorry for your sins and go to heaven. Many people wonder how this makes any sense or gives any justice. The other aspects of salvation paint a very different picture. Not only are you to feel sorry for your sins and

confess them to God, you also are supposed to stop committing them and then live life completely differently.

When you repent of your sins, you don't just feel sorry for them: you submit your entire mind, will, emotions, body, and soul to God's will. You then live a completely different life and your main goal is to further God's will in the world. You make the decision that, instead of leaving for your own gains, you live for the gains of other people and animals and the Kingdom of God on earth.

Does this kind of Christian salvation make sense? Can you prove it conclusively, using only factual evidence, that can be quantified in numbers? This is what I mean by irrational: sensible, but not limited by the material world and a purely factual understanding of life.

## 5.2.4 Separation Between Christianity and the State

Our country is founded on the idea of separation of Church and State, so that people can worship God or not, in any way they choose. I personally am not concerned with other religions, but as for Christianity I believe that Christianity is irreconcilable, with the very concept of politically and socially based change. I do not see Christianity as some kind of partition-able aspect of our lives or that we should look to create Christian compatible versions of everything.

The very concept of Christianity is at war against the ways of the world and despite the Biblical laws to follow government rules, we are supposed to resist thinking like the world, and embracing its way of life. The only way we can do this is by Christ's direct divine intervention in our lives. Even though our future depends on our choices it's God's choice to die and rise again for us that truly liberates us.

Being Christian is not just one among many equally good religions and it is not reducible to just following a set of rules. It is about personal spiritual growth through Christ's help. It is about overcoming addictions. This is fundamentally different than following laws as while they are overlapping, they are not the same.

I fully agree that we should follow all the government's rules, but this is not enough. There are many things that are illegal that are corrosive to the spirit like worship of other Gods, divorce, sex outside marriage, excessive gambling, gluttony, drug use, vanity, gossip, hazing, being a workaholic and the like. We need to first transform our minds, if we are to transform our world, and, in turn, the whole world.

We often think of some things, that we know are bad, but think they won't affect others, as vices. The problems relate spiritually, but not just like that. The very concept of addiction leads to a point of desperation, that a person will compromise everything, for their fix. Their behavior becomes obsessive compulsive and just continues to get worse, until they can accept they have a problem and make the decision, to stop, with outside help.

So the problem with promoting the morality of the Bible in the forms of laws first is that, without treating the spiritual sources of the problems, it doesn't bring about real change. There has to be a reason why we follow rules other than we get punished for not following them. People need to be inspired, to take on the challenging reformation of their morality.

The thing that really discourages people to deal with life primarily from a spiritual point of view is that faith isn't visual. We want to see results. Even in politics, you can eventually see some changes. But the very concept of faith is that you live it and make choices to further it, without understanding how or why it works.

Praying for God's will, instead of our own, requires great courage and it is hard

to believe in a God who speaks so softly and so rarely, but you will be able to see the changes in your own life and those of your family and friends. It is hard to believe in a God who allows suffering, but God only calls us to believe what He promises.

God has not created evil in any way and does not promise to stop it, but rather lets people run their own governments and cultures how they want to. But God still does intervene all the time. I am not comforted that God will protect me from all suffering, because He never promised that and He never created the problem, in the first place. It is, however, hard to fully trust a God, that uses the suffering we already have to deal with, to help make us more mature.

We can see that, even in times when the government claimed to support Christianity, our leaders still did bad things. The real difference now why evil has grown so much in the last few hundred years is that we have more power than ever before and have opportunities greater than ever before. These same things that can make life better, for the disabled or the poor, are a double edged sword and allow for greater suffering, to everyone, as well.

Many times throughout history, the Church has sided with the government and it is a big reason why many people reject Christianity and what has made our society as a whole reject religion in general. Government will always be corrupt, because the people who are drawn to it get addicted to it and will do anything to win an election and stay in power. People who like power tend to be unwilling to listen to others, with superior knowledge in some areas than they have. And finally, the only people who usually get into power are the cruelest, because only the meanest will survive against the opposition.

## 5.3 Church History and Theology

### 5.3.1 Reformation Never Ends

#### History of the Reformation

I have been reading a lot about the Protestant Reformation and one of the things that people don't understand about it is that it was not a one time event. The Catholic church got too big and got corrupt, as it faced little opposition. The situation was opposite of the churches in the east. People tried to reform the Catholic church and bring back a genuine faith, for hundreds of years.

Originally, the Catholic church and the medieval kingdoms in Europe, after the demise of the Roman Empire, in the west, were both very weak. They both decided to support each other and so religion and government became the same thing. The church was the only unifying factor, in the region. The church gave legitimacy, to the king and the king protected and raised money, for the church.

In the first half of the medieval period, called the dark ages, many people starved to death and almost every part of Western Europe was ruled by tiny kingdoms, that most people have never heard of. Scotland, England, and Wales did not become recognizable, until the second half of the medieval period. Countries like Germany and France were originally part of the same empire and the only difference was language. The Vikings called the Dutch and the Anglo-Saxons by the same name. Portugal did not come together, until around 1300 and Spain was not recognizable until the end of the medieval era. Italy did not become one country until the 19th century and what people think of modern Germany did not occur until about the same time.

There was a lot of fighting over how much power the church should have and

how much power the government should have. Some of the greatest fights were between the Holy Roman Emperor (medieval Germany) and the pope. The pope was accused of being the Antichrist, hundreds of years before Martin Luther. Around 1100, there were many reform movements, that happened throughout Europe, and in the following centuries. Martin Luther was not even the first Protestant reformer. There were a number of Catholic orders, that were created around 1100-1200, like the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Cistercians. They were created, to help promote a more genuine faith, in the church and society. Later, there were also many Christian mystics and philosophers calling for similar reforms and genuine faith.

There is another major situation that is poorly understood about medieval Europe. In the areas of the former Roman Empire, in the west, were converted to Christianity, before the fall of the Western Roman Empire. But, Northern Europe took hundreds of years to convert. Even Central Europe was not all converted, until the Renaissance. Eastern Europe was a big mix of Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, Pagan, and various less known Protestant denominations. For centuries, Christians in the British Isles were tortured, to try to convert them to paganism, by the Vikings.

Many things throughout history keep on resurfacing and many things never change. The origin of questioning everything and everybody having a different opinion and driving reforms and divisions, based on their ideology, started mainly with the Protestant Reformation. There were many simultaneous religious reforms, at the same time. And the British had an entirely different, although related, Protestant history, than the rest of Europe. The Protestant Reformation was the first major western revolution and its legacy still inspires most reforms movements and revolutions today.

### The Reformation Today

When most people study European history today, most focus on the economic and political reasons, for the start and the success of the Reformation. The

more important thing is that people did actually believe these things, of their own free will, and were willing to suffer and die, for their beliefs. Just like today, everybody had their own opinion and, like with both Christianity and Islam, they each believed that their particular convictions were the one true doctrine and faith.

It is interesting, to see this from the point of view, of the contemporary world, we now live in. With the Internet and the corruption of the media and business, we no longer trust anyone. Technology allows us to find out more than ever before and we can easily find something, to reinforce our opinions, no matter what they are. But we are at a loss of determining what is eternally and objectively true.

For people, who want to know what the truth about religion is, who believe there are certain spiritual absolutes, there is no one clear direction. Many good, honest, and devout people believe so many different opinions, that can't all be true, but no one is able to determine what is important and what is not. If most true believers in Christ were asked what are the essential of their faith, they would say everything in their theology and each person would have a different idea. I think I know what the essential things are, but no one thinks like I do and I am as fallible, as anyone else.

I think there is an over reliance now on theology and the point of how we are to live our lives, worship God, and help other people is lost, in a lot of this elaborate theology, so that religion, to many devout Christians becomes reduced, to defending their particular set of theological beliefs. If we are to be honest and objective, many of our ideas are wrong.

We have to consider, that it is likely we are all completely wrong, about vital parts of our faith. It is important, to realize, that God is not going to judge us, on our theology, because we are all equally wrong, but rather on our hearts. I wish there were a way to keep our dedication, to our beliefs, but still be able to accept others, for who they are and avoid all this conflict (over things that we

cannot be certain about or all agree upon).

## Why Theology?

Theology has always been a necessary evil. If you believe what the Bible says, that it is clear about, there is no need for doctrine. There is a good reason, for all this emphasis on doctrine, even confusing doctrines, like the Trinity, and for not compromising, on anything. The reason why doctrine evolved was that people came up with bizarre, unbiblical ideas. Some of these ideas form the basis, for a number of "churches", that claim to be Christian, but are not (many of which originated in the United States, in the last couple hundred years). There have been movements, like the liberal theology in the church and the New Age movement, which are actively trying to sabotage and discredit the obvious doctrines in the Bible, that they do not like.

But, there must be some limit, to this lack of compromise. Devout Christians need to find some core set of beliefs (that is clear cut in the Bible) and allow differences, in the other areas of doctrine. The church has way too many divisions, that have agreement on all the doctrine, for those things (that the Bible is obvious about).

I think the reason why God allows this lack of certainty, in doctrine, is that people can become arrogant, if they think they know the truth and everyone else is wrong. The truth in the Bible is absolute, but we are not. Many Christians may see this as relativism, but I believe that this is part of being humble before God. God seems to really hate arrogance, which is understandable, if you have any appreciation, for how perfect God is and how even the saints and martyrs have done nothing, compared to what God has done for us. Even if we had never sinned, we would still be mortal and insignificant, compared to God.

European History, After the Reformation

Before the English, the French, and the Germans got their empires and became world powers, the Swedes, the Polish, and the Turks were some of the greatest powers in Europe. The Habsburgs, who came originally from Austria, were traditionally Catholic and owned both what is now Germany plus the entire Spanish empire, at its height. But the Portuguese were the first Europeans, to build an empire in Asia. People hear about the 100 year lease Britain got from the Chinese for Hong Kong, but the Portuguese got a lease for 500 years for the Chinese port city of Macau. The Portuguese became a world power, until they became victims of Spain trying to conquer them, as each owned an entire hemisphere, at the start of the European colonial empires.

Dutch history is very intertwined with British history. The English basically came to Britain from what is now the Netherlands. During the Hundred Years War, where the English pillaged France for 100 years, the English allied with the Kingdom of Burgundy (which is now the Netherlands). The English Navy fought the Dutch 3 times and lost every time. Most of the achievements of the modern world like the stock market, central banks, international trade, free enterprise, and freedom of religion all came from the Dutch originally. They were later copied by the British and later the Americans. The English finally joined up with the Dutch. In a variety of treaties they divided up colonies, and the British got India, whereas the Dutch got Indonesia (which is much larger than India and much wealthier, before the industrial revolution).

Most of the successes of the French and the British came much later and for only a couple hundred years total. The British were like Microsoft or Google, with nothing original, but just became powerful, by being at the right place, at the right time. When the Industrial Revolution happened, labor was worth most of the cost of goods and commodities were worth little (the opposite of most of history). The Industrial revolutions started in England, with the automation of wool production, because of small climatic changes, that allowed them to grow more wheat. The reason the British, French, Germans, and Americans became world economic powers was because they had the largest supplies of

coal and steel, which were necessary for the production of finished goods, like: guns, ships, and trains. If the outside world and the common people, in Europe, did not value these higher technology goods, more than commodities, then these countries would have never become world powers.

## 5.3.2 Christian Theology and Unity

What does faith mean? Just admitting or intellectually being convinced that Jesus Christ is the Son of God does not get you to heaven. Even the devil knows and admits this. We are not saved by knowledge of theology; we are saved by obedience. The obedience that God requires to save us is to repent of our sins and believe in Him. Faith is an act of obedience; faith is a choice, an act off the will.

Theology is not an end in and of itself. Theology can even distract us from our faith. The big emphasis on theology of the Evangelical church is there for a reason and is a response to a movement that has attempted to make Christian beliefs symbolic and empty. The great Protestant theologians were not chiefly trying to bring about a separation of church and state or bring rational knowledge as the defining characteristic of European civilization.

Protestant reformers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries believed in very specific things and often were killed, immediately after they professed these beliefs. They argued and persecuted each other over what most of the Church would now consider unessential things. A big part of the Reformation was often more about Church policy and worship, rather than a huge difference in the profession of faith, at least as we see it today.

The Roman Catholic Church is very similar in beliefs and worship as most of the other traditional churches of Iran, Syria, Egypt, and Greece, throughout history, but the difference is that the Roman church never had to deal with persecution, like the other churches did and refused to compromise on any

issues, even up until the last 50 years. One of the big ideas that is missing from the Protestant churches is the idea of mysticism.

Mysticism is about letting God be who He is and having an awesome respect for Him. When we pray to God, it is important that we are honest about where we are in our faith and are willing to speak to God directly about things we think are unfair about the Bible or how God acts. At the same time, we need to realize that we are speaking to the all-powerful, all knowing, and perfectly good authority figure.

Although we need not refrain from questioning God, we need to have awesome respect for Him. It troubles me that even believers have no assurance of escaping even the worst forms of suffering in this life, but God has not created nor is He responsible for alleviating our suffering. We caused all suffering, by rejecting God and disobeying Him.

The Protestant churches see theology in a very European legal and rational expression of Christianity. The Evangelical church has poor representation overseas, despite a huge push to evangelize in the third world. The big world Christianities are Roman Catholicism and Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism is the closest to mysticism of any major Protestant group.

One of the limitations of Evangelicals is the emphasis on the rational aspects of God and the idea of convincing people of faith by debate. Oftentimes conversion is reduced down to what seems like a sale of a car. I think there are spiritual reasons for why the Evangelical church exists now in history, despite nothing like it existing before the 20th century or at least until the Reformation. The Evangelical faith is a very effective counter to the New Age movement.

The very uncompromising and very specific theology and the lack of toleration for diversity in beliefs make it next to impossible to water down. The sword cuts both ways, though. Many people such as myself share many aspects of this faith, but cannot accept how narrow this worldview is. One of the big

problems with the Evangelical faith is not so much the theology, but the practice. There is a huge fear of the supernatural and an absolute uncompromising unwillingness to learn about other religions.

The other major issue that many potential evangelicals cannot accept is the weird spiritual status they give to America and the support of the business establishment. When leader like George Bush tell people they are born again Christians and then authorize torture and the establishment of a police state, it makes a mockery of Christianity. When the richest Americans claim to be Christians and Christian non-profits keep asking people to give them money, there is little room for God, in this worldview.

This idea of moderation is an important aspect of faith and personal growth and maturity. I have long been extremely literal and this has made it hard for me to understand some important aspects of theology and scripture. I think it is important to not take such extreme stances on things the Bible is not clear about. It would be great if Christians could find a non-denominational core sets of beliefs that the Bible is very clear about and separate core theology necessary for salvation, from more worship or practice related issues in the Church.

It is great that the Church has such continued emphasis on keeping theology pure and continuing to reform the Church, but Christian unity has a place as well. I think we have plenty of different churches and I think it would be great if we could find a way to have more unity. So many Evangelicals agree on so much theology that it would be great if they at least could join together, as they would not need to compromise on core beliefs, to do so.

Too much theology can be as bad as too little theology. Our faith should be about who God is, not who we want Him to be. We need to prioritize our lives the way God has in scripture and need to be able to separate our opinions from what Scripture teaches us. Just because we believe something to be true, it is important to realize that we can and are wrong about much in theology and

that is ok.

## 5.3.3 Post-Enlightenment Church

For the least few hundred years, since the European Enlightenment, there has been a battle in the Church over doctrine as big or bigger than the Reformation. While the Reformation was half about politics, at that time, most of the religious leaders, as well as many politicians were very literal and specific about their beliefs and were often hung from a tree the next day, after they announced these beliefs. People felt very concerned about the details of beliefs like the type of baptism, the type of music and languages used in worship, detailed beliefs about the end of times, and more.

This tradition continues to this day and is big reason why there are so many different denominations in Protestant Christianity today. One of the big reasons for this hyper emphasis on doctrinal issues reflected the Church's belief that the end of times was imminent. Another less literal and doctrinally based movement began several hundred years after the start of the Reformation, focused more on the "social gospel" or ethics and practical applications of Christianity.

The leaders of the Enlightenment were for all intents and purposes what we would now call atheists. Starting with the secret societies, especially with the Freemasons, sought to bring back ancient hidden knowledge from pagan/animist traditions. In the 1800s this movement became led by the Theosophy Society. This was the beginning of the New Age/Neo-Pagan movement, that reached its height in the 1990s.

In order to bring in followers, the New Age movement, like most religious organizations, started with the most common sense and easily accepted beliefs first. Their gateway to these pagan beliefs were some of the earlier translations of classic Asian philosophical writings. Although thought to be

associated with Eastern philosophy specifically, these New Age beliefs took from most major belief systems, as well as most pagan traditions worldwide, including a great deal of some of the most widely accepted ideas from Christianity.

The church was concerned about Christians not having solid teaching in theology, so that they thought that they were still Christian, even though their beliefs were less Christian theology than paganism. Many religious and philosophical traditions, especially those from India and China, see no reason not to embrace major theology of other belief systems and adjust their beliefs, to link the two belief systems together. Christianity is meant to be practiced singularly, without any changes in theology and without any worship, to any other deity.

On the other hand, scholars have looked to philosophy, even from pagan believers, like those of Plato and Aristotle, to explain and support the various doctrines of Christianity. One of the most famous of these is the Trinity, and the formulation of this doctrine by Early Church Fathers was made in response to two factors, relevant to their time in history.

First of all, the general concept of the Trinity is very obvious from Scripture. The explanation was developed, because of analogies we use today, that reflect modern psychological understandings of people (soul, spirit, and body) and modern scientific ideas (ice, water and steam) were not known at that time.

At the same time, there were several different widespread heretical formulations of God the Father and Christ that were competing with the Scriptural version (Gnosticism/Manichæanism and Arianism - nothing to do with NAZIs). Unfortunately, several other clearly scriptural explanations of the Trinity by the Coptic church in Alexandria (now in Cairo, Egypt), Syriac churches in Antioch (recently in Aleppo, Syria), and what is now Baghdad, Iraq were also falsely identified as heretical, at the time.

So, while there is clear scriptural reason, to not change Christian doctrine, to make it more compatible, with another religion, using philosophy to help explain and understand Christian doctrine was first done by the Apostle Paul and other great early Christians, like Augustine. But a mistrust developed between Indian and Chinese philosophy and Christianity, as many in the Christian community saw this Eastern philosophy as a gateway to paganism. And Augustine understood Gnosticism well as he was previously a Manichaean, before converting to Christianity.

In reality, most of these philosophies are mostly concerned with ethics and are either: not explicitly claim one particular theology, they are so vague that the theology can be matched with anything, or they do not even concern themselves with theology. Furthermore, there is no more taken from Eastern Philosophy in neo-paganism, than their are elements drawn from Christianity.

Some of the major charitable causes to be widely associated with this neo-pagan movement were the environment and feminism. Unfortunately, this led many Christian groups to not accept either of these movements, even though they could have found common cause with pagans and common ground, to further expand the reach of the Gospel. The point of Christianity is not to be opposite of non or other believers, but to do what is right and serve the Lord our God.

In my life, I have found that Christian Existentialism and Philosophical Taoism, which I was first introduced to in a public university, helped me understand the Bible and God better and reflected the way I saw the Bible, before studying any belief system besides Christianity. One of the things that few others, in the Christian community, understand is a certain kind of non-dualism or paradox helps explain much of Biblical theology and how to incorporate Christian ideas in life and still be happy.

I believe that these non-dualistic philosophies explain God and the Bible much better than Plato or Aristotle. Christianity is not about miracles or about

knowledge, but about a decision we make of our own free will. You will never adequately explain God, because although He is perfectly rational, He is to a large extent beyond our understanding and always will be. We are not asked to understand but to believe. Not to explain but to obey. Faith is a choice to obey God and cannot be chosen by primarily understanding theology.

Theology is important, up and to a point, because people get mixed up and come up with some weird, baseless, and destructive ideas without it. But we worship a Living God and theology, if taken too far, can come in the way of this. The Bible is more relevant today than ever before, but your current worldview may not be.

## 6 What is Failure?

### 6.1 My Life

When a general devises a strategy for a war, they can only plan the first part, because everything in the war afterwards has to take into account what the enemy will do, which is unknown because the enemy doesn't know how you will respond to what they do. Life is like this too. You can make all the good choices you can, but you never know what life will give you.

I was going to go to college and become an international business manager for distribution. Things changed very much for me in the next few years after high school that changed the direction of my life forever. I never would have guessed I would be doing what I am now or living now before then.

What is failure and what is success? This website was founded on absolute failure. I left the military early, I did poorly in college and wasn't able to finish. Then I found out I was mentally ill since the military, after my psychotic episode.

I have a very short official work history, so that while I believe everyone contributes equally by merely working their job for money, I want to contribute as well. I have tried to work with local non-profits, but they have not worked out because I could never do anything that felt significant to me. I do my writing as a kind of volunteer work to help make a contribution to society in lieu of my working. I realize this is not required or expected of me by anyone.

I have kept in a repeating cycle of learning to rest and take it easy and then working hard to document that. I don't plan on giving up writing, but I do plan on doing less in the future and feeling less like I need to do more.

20 years later I have published many important books, even though I only started it to share poetry with my uncle. I plan little ahead on what I am going to add to my website or books. I am not sure what I have accomplished or not is worthy of calling my work a success.

Websites are just so much work to do now. I think we have reached a critical point where computer security really needs to be addressed on a much more profound level and must be resolved to a certain degree, or the entire world system could easily collapse on itself (sooner than it would otherwise). I still want to share my writings with others, but I need to find a way to make it easier to do and less error prone.

There is only so much I can do in life as I am mentally ill and dealing with that alone is a huge deal and accomplishment in and of itself. I especially want to be able to document what I learn about Schizophrenia so that others can learn without having to learn by experience.

## 6.2 The Industry

In a business, you can do everything right and then things change that are out

of your control and then you lose your business. We are in a position now globally where there is no growth anymore. This does not mean everything will stop, but everyone will have the same wealth or less over time, averaged out. People have bought the last things they needed years ago and the iPhone was the last thing people wanted to buy that made more than peanuts.

Everybody today wants to sell something to make extra money, but nobody wants to buy anything. Electronics are dirt cheap, but no one has a job anymore. Online stores like Amazon.com are now putting out of business physical stores. Everybody wants to either become the next Amazon or Google or give up.

Computers continue to reduce the need for jobs by automating them. Businesses also need less and less people to make the programs over time as well and now everybody wants to be a programmer. If you want to sell something, you have to get people to upgrade and survive the big name players copying you and putting you out of business. The internet helped the lunatic fringe at first but is now going to help the big technology companies solidify their market control.

Right now there are some huge changes going on in the technology industry. There are now two sets of people in developing websites: the ones that create the software that runs them and those who assemble the pre-made parts together. There is very little design work available, because businesses generally don't care about design because it is considered unnecessary, pretty, and takes a lot of time to do right (although users care very much about this).

Everybody now just copies the stuff Google, Facebook, Amazon and the like do. In design, the middle has disappeared and so you either use a child's toy tools on the iPad or iPhone, or the mega-complicated, old, and unreliable Adobe software on Windows. The other choice is to just write the whole design in an elaborate program yourself using hundreds of different interlinked programs.

There are huge problems in how to make money off websites as well. Advertising or in app purchases worked for a while, but there is so much junk out there that only the biggest names/ established players survive. Advertising is being blocked because the ads are out of control and makes the websites unusable. They cannot charge for access as few people will pay making the amount they have to charge ridiculous.

They never should have offered services for free. People like me are offering better quality for free. People are now making money off our personnel information and connecting the digital world to the physical one to track everything we think or do anywhere.

These same companies are constantly having this personnel information stolen, because of poor choices in building their software to save money up front and saving money by not maintaining them. Even those that aren't cheap, and do all the right things security wise are affected by the leading security software being full of holes.

## 6.3 Avoiding Pain in This Life

The best thing in life to me is to avoid suffering when possible. Be responsible and follow rules (including the Ten Commandments) and common sense, because that will enable you to control the problems that you bring to your life – the only ones that you can fully control. Keep taking care of yourself physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Eat lots of vegetables, take all medicines as prescribed, go to counseling, volunteer, and keep reading the Bible, praying, and going to church.

In general, thinking long term is the key to making good decisions. Bad signs include doing things in secret or you have a bad feeling about it. If you are not sure of the morality of a particular decision, don't do it. Always side on caution and use your conscience.

Avoid anything you don't want to tell your mother about and stay away from anything addictive. Avoid anything too good to be true or something that comes too easy. Nothing is free and everything costs something.

Keep learning as much as possible and find joy in it. Be as self sufficient as possible. Never rely on anyone for anything you can do yourself.

Keep busy doing something productive (like a job), work hard at it and give it your best, to keep yourself out of trouble. Always keep a huge amount of savings on hand and always allow extra time to do things. Always obey authorities who rule over you without complaining.

Try not to anger other people, because they might be vindictive later on. Remain as anonymous and unimportant as possible so as not to get unnecessary or unusual attention of criminals, the government, or angry neighbors. Do not trust anything someone says or how they appear for anyone asking for money or personnel information from you.

Be careful not to break things, especially other people's things and even more other living things. Never loan anything to others – give or don't. Forgiving others sounds hard, but it is harder to stay angry. You should forgive others for yourself not for them, just as God wants us to stay away from sin for us, not for Him.

It is good to have others like you, it is better to like yourself, and best of all God already likes you no matter who or where you are in life. It is good to care, better to empathize, but greatest of all is to forgive and love unconditionally. It is good to take care of yourself, better to take care of your family, but best to take care of your everlasting life.

## 6.4 Avoiding Pain in the Next Life

You will find in life you serve God or the devil as there is really no option to

serve yourself. It is actually a great honor that God still cares and wants us to be His children, even though we brought suffering into the paradise He created.

Avoiding unnecessary suffering by ending up in Heaven rather than Hell can be achieved by through a complete change of heart and submitting your will to God's. This is not demanding or abusive as God is not a person and is actually our Creator. Emperors and leaders of vast religions have submitted themselves before God throughout all of history.

The important thing to realize is that life is a kind of waiting room, where what happens afterwards makes what happened before hand largely irrelevant. Life is like being in the womb and death is like being born. Just like they say to middle and high school kids to just stick with the program and then most of life will be much better. Just as we live the vast majority of our lives as adults, so life on earth is really a very small part of our entire life which will be everlasting after death.

So do not worry about what you achieve on earth, because you will do so much more in Heaven. You will look at the greatest things people accomplished on earth like middle school science projects or like still putting on their resume what they did in elementary school when they are over 40. Just get your key to Heaven and try to find something constructive to do in life, to pass the time.

We are all born once, are all called to be born again, and will all live forever. Heaven is free but it will cost you your pride. God will forgive you for anything, but the catch is you have to truly be sorry for it, change who you are and submit yourself to God wholly. You also have to forgive everyone else, no matter what they do to you or those you love.

I once found it difficult to deal with many people on the bus, but after several encounters, I think that others see me as a bus person now, too. I thought of complaining about the smell of pot on the bus but realized that I might smell bad sometimes too.

It is not very good to be hypocritical about anything in life, especially not for someone who tries to follow any philosophy or moral code. Jesus did not like hypocrites and unbelievers and believers alike feel the same. It is extremely bad for the spread of Christianity.

## 7 Mission

### 7.1 Intro Page

I have written up what I have learned over the years and put it online, because I would rather learn from reading than experience. Learning from experience is too painful. My experiences are useful to learn about because these areas are not written about very well and they have a very strong effect on those who live through these experiences. The most important things I document are serving in the military and living with Schizophrenia along with the faith and philosophy that helped me through it.

Another major area I have documented are my design decisions on my website and how I decided to present my experience and ideas. I am learning all the time how to be as clear, concise, and direct about explaining things as possible. I want to reach as many people as possible and my website to last as long as possible so I focus on performance, accessibility, maintainability, compatibility in all my design work.

My big goal in life is to reduce the pain both I and others suffer, unnecessarily. I also seek to get closer to God and continue to help my family, as both have done so much for me. I am Christian and in some ways like other Christians and others ways very much unlike other Christians. I am doing fine financially and realize that there is very little money to be made in this kind of writing, so I am happy to produce and maintain my website at no cost to the visitors.

If you want to give money, I recommend the farm sanctuaries as my preferred charity. Everything they do is legal and they do some very nice things for animals that are not easy to do. Unfortunately even though people are often treated like garbage throughout the world, most people think animals are even less important than people. Animals are God's greatest creation.

More importantly, if you want to support me better, pray for me and my family. We could all use prayer but nothing in particular. The best thing you can pray, if you don't know is to pray that God's will be done. One of the most powerful things to pray is to thank God for what He already has done for us. Prayer is just talking to God.

Should you follow my advice? The better idea than just thinking the same as me is to think critically about everything and everyone, including me. Do I want to change your mind? I would rather convince you to think and create things by yourself. I like the idea of teaching others the importance of thinking and creating as I do not have time to everyone's thinking and creating for them.

I also can be and likely am wrong on many things. You should never follow anyone blindly other than the One Creator God. I definitely do recommend the Bible and the Christian God, unconditionally. My values are humility, compassion, kindness, and seriousness. I also think creativity and hard work are very important too.

## 8 Shifting Values

### 8.1 1 Corinthians 1:17-31

this subsection quoted from the Bible

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of

words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

That no flesh should glory in his presence.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

## 8.2 No Power

this subsection written by me

You may have failed in life and have no power, like me, but you can still save us all, while being perfectly peaceful, unknown, and perfectly safe.

You can accept reality, follow all laws, risk nothing monetarily or your personal safety, with no money or power, be a threat to no person or group, and your contribution left entirely unknown, without needing any followers or to convince anyone of anything and still truly revolutionize the world.

We all know the world is going in a bad direction, and we fight war after war and start revolution after revolution, trying every solution we can think of, and things have just gotten successfully worse, in every measurable way, from every point of view. What if we are going about it all wrong? Consider the enemy is really us. People are the problem, but specifically we are our own problems.

We see that things are wrong, because we are blindless followers and not in control, but our real problem is that we are in full control. We need to give up control to God. It is not that we need to avoid following, but just that we need a better leader. God is our true, best, and most natural Leader. He will save us from ourselves, if we choose to accept His help.

The evil within is the ultimate battle. If you can defeat the evil within, and achieve full self mastery and control, you have one the war. But we need to understand that we cannot do this on our own and need direct divine

intervention. The good news is that God cares about us and intervenes constantly. He only wants us to ask, as He wants us to control our own fate and make our own decisions. Luckily God is all powerful, perfectly good, and merciful.

What we need to start this journey is the forgiveness of our sins. We need a miracle and that is convince us, to submit ourselves to God's will. All human plans have failed. We need to follow God's plan now, everyday and constantly.

## 8.3 Complete Failure

this subsection written by me

I started my website, after my complete failure in college and the military, ending my tour in the military early and failing out of college. At the time, I was studying Chinese Literature, for my Business Management Major breadth requirement and I learned about Confucianism and Taoism. I was inspired by reading Chuang Tzu, to write poetry, which I put online, to share with one of my uncles.

Along the way, I tried again, at college, as a Journalism major and that summer, and, when I was making up credits, I took an Existentialism course. As I later found out, I had been mentally ill for several years, in addition to my chronic allergic pink eye. I used ideas from Philosophical Taoism and Christian Existentialism to help me deal with my personal crisis: trying to figure out how to manage my Paranoid Schizophrenia.

## 8.4 Most Important Jobs

this subsection written by me

Many people feel that they are just a cog in the machine and their jobs and

roles in society are boring and unimportant. Nothing could be further from the truth. The things we as a society don't value are the most important of all. A modern society could function, without some of the leaders and specialists, but not without the cleaning, transportation, waste and pest management, and various other types of maintenance.

The "dirtiest" jobs are the most important. What is the biggest difference between modern and premodern life? It is modern plumbing, trash removal, and chemicals that make it easier to be clean and pest free. If you want to stay healthy, you have to take care of your body and mind. The same goes with any housing, factory, office, road, or plot of land. Even though you may not have time, to do more for others in your free time, you are already doing a helping job, like nurses, school teachers, and social workers.

We can all find significance spiritually, because God is concerned with every one of us, as individuals, regardless of whatever we have done or what place we find ourselves in, geographically, socially, and financially. He knows everything about every one, but He uses it to help us, and free us, not force us to conform or scam us. God cares about who you are, not what you have done, or your place in society.

God cares about stuffed toys and animals, just like He does people.

## 8.5 Rich and Famous

this subsection written by me

Most people want to be rich, famous, and young and believe that they need to take a lot of risks, to have a happy life. When I joined the military, I took on many risks, but it was not fun: I did have a lot of adrenaline going, but it was all very scary.

Right now, I feel similarly, although in an entirely different situation (because

of having Paranoid Schizophrenia). It is not fun either. When you have a high, you have an equally low level of depression afterwards. On anti-psychotic medication, you have both happening, at the same time.

Since then, I have I tried to live as low a risk life, as possible. Taking risks and going on wild adventures is not as fun, as you may think. Living what most call a boring life is really quite a blessing. I am also much happier being older and learning certain things about myself and the world, than I was when I was younger.

I found that I am in a very good situation, where I live in both United States and in the northwest corner of it. I already "won the lottery". Even if you were born in America, and were in the luckiest 5%, you would have a real hard time finding a job in this state, as the job market is extremely brutal and unforgiving.

There are some many interesting parts of the world, but I would never want to live there. There are many more poisonous, aggressive, and larger pests there. Furthermore, there is even less concern for the environment and it is often very hot there.

The best of the interesting parts of the world can be experienced in literature, which I can get in English very cheaply and easily. It also is now very unsafe for Americans overseas, especially in the touristy areas.

## 8.6 Slaves to Technology

this subsection written by me

Technology is designed to liberate us, but it actually makes us slaves. We see our society as us vs. them. We see the struggle as material and we see it as outward. We can't seem to accept that technology is really neither good nor evil, but just gives us more power. Why does technology become mandatory

and we end up serving it?

It is because we make technology an idol. We are merely projecting our internal battle onto the development of technology. What would an artificial intelligence think of us? We think of computers as being objective, so what would they make of our situation? Computers would likely see us as the problem.

If we have self control, why do we let computers pull us in and keep us dependent upon them. We talk about society forcing us to serve machines, but we never consider that we never struggle against, it in ways that we do have control over. Are we really addicted to how we use computers at work or are we addicted to them for entertainment or distraction?

We may not be able to be free from technology, or be able to truly live off the grid and be independent of others' choices, but it is our choices that have the most control over our lives. What is bigger than corporations, the government, or our pride? - the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is always bigger than any of our problems. The solution to our sins always begins with prayer. Make time for God and He will make time for you. Seek God and He will answer you. Trust God and He will help you overcome.

Obeying laws and contributing to society is not weakness. We all think that, if we had the power, that we would fix everything. Submitting to authority and following rules is a good thing. Certainly there is evil in society, as we are governed by other people, but it does not fix it to put someone else in charge.

Our biggest problems in life are not caused by society, but by our own bad decisions. Society and the physical world are illusions and its concerns are misdirects. We are being distracted, to fight and struggle against each other, rather than with the evil within.

## 8.7 Alternatives to Reason

this subsection written by me

Our society ingrains deeply in us, from a very young age, to never question fact or reason. We see being "irrational" as a negative. It is not that we should reject reason, but that we should broaden our view of the world, like the rest of the world does today and the entire world, throughout the vast majority of history. Facts will never answer our most important questions or help us find solutions to our worst problems.

There are many other ways to decide what is true or right than just facts. We learn from world religions and philosophy that many other things (faith, tradition, scripture, prophecy, history, fate, theology, prayer, worship, charity, volunteer service, religious laws, forgiveness, free choice, intuition, common sense, life experiences, divine intervention, mystical experience, meditation, and similar methods of inquiry) can provide us with better answers, than just reasoning with facts alone.

## 8.8 What is Faith?

this subsection written by me

Faith is not about understanding; it's about a choice. You will never fully understand God, because He is infinite. We are not asked to fully understand God, to believe. The decision to believe, by definition, has to be in absence of full understanding.

If you try to fully understand God, before you choose to believe, not only will you never make that decision, but you will also never provide complete "proof" for your belief. But we make most decisions without full knowledge, explaining everything about the situation or topic. It is perfectly natural, to not fully

understand and that is what faith is about.

Paraphrase from Discovery Channel Documentary

If everyone is crazy but you, you should take a long look in the mirror. --  
paraphrased from the Manhunt: Unabomber series on Discovery Channel

## 8.9 What Should You Do?

this subsection written by me

Do not believe what I say, just because I say it. I am mentally ill. Consider the ideas yourself. Do they make sense to you? There are undoubtedly errors in my thinking. In any discussion about opinions, you should agree with some things and not with others. I do not want any followers. My ideas make sense to me, because they are not my own.

Anyone who has studied Asian philosophy and religion know that these ideas go back further than the time of the Buddha, Lao Tzu, or Confucius. the same is true with Plato and Aristotle. There are no new ideas in philosophy. There will be none, in the next few hundred years. What is different is the combinations.

Existentialism has some similarities with Taoism, but I have not read any books uniting the two schools, before I started my writing. I have combined these two schools, to create my own unique combination. The big similarities are paradox or non-dualism and humility.

Some of the greatest philosophers united major schools of philosophy. Some examples were: Bodhidharma, Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas, Kabir and Nanak, and Hegel and Sartre. Existentialism is not ancient, as it comes from the 19th and 20th centuries, but the ideas come from the Apostle Paul's writings, and the ideas are timeless and classic.

# 8.10 Popular Misconception of Nietzsche

this subsection written by me

Look what happened to Nietzsche. He is often described as an Existentialist, but there is much more to his philosophy. Nietzsche was an independent thinker, much as Kierkegaard was (and they desired to read each others works). He wanted people to not be weak in their exercise of free will, to stand up for themselves, and not just blindly follow leaders. He wanted strong people, not strong leaders.

Nietzsche was a fan of the philosophical and artistic ideas of ancient Greek paganism. He based his ideas on the Greek philosophers, before Socrates (these Pre-Socratic works only exist in incomplete fragments). He wrote many books, one about aesthetics (The Birth of Tragedy) and composed a volume of poetry (in The Gay Science - no he was not gay). He had some original ideas on the afterlife (eternal return).

Nietzsche did not like Germany (or German Culture) or Christianity (or the New Testament). He was a fan of the Eskimos (north men) and the Old Testament. He was a big critique of Nationalism and Fascism (or faith used to promote politics). He was an anti-Christian, because he believed that the traditional Church ideas about following the government ("God and country") and New Testament ideas like forgiveness promoted the idea of a "slave race".

Nietzsche was a "positive nihilist" - he believed life had no meaning, but this did not discourage him from enjoying life (like Camus). He also served as an inspiration for Postmodernism and the deconstruction of opposing ideas, like modern religious values (The Antichrist and Thus Spoke Zarathustra).

He died of syphilis and his sister was a NAZI (and inherited the copyright for his

work). She heavily edited one of his unfinished writings (The Will to Power), to reflect Hitler's views. And Nietzsche gets blamed. Heidegger was a National Socialist (although not a fan of Hitler) and Hegel helped inspire communism, but you never hear that used against them. This is the context I am writing under.

## What I Believe

First and foremost, I believe the Bible (and Murphy's laws), but doubt everything else. Consider reading the Bible, to see if my ideas fit into your understanding of your Biblical worldview. If you don't respect the Bible, try to find the parts of my writing that reaffirm what you already believe.

I am not here to change your mind, but to re-enforce what you already believe. Too many people think they are the only ones that are right. If my ideas are right, they likely come from somewhere else. So what is different about my philosophy is that I admit my ideas not unique.

# 8.11 1 Corinthians: 2

this subsection quoted from the Bible

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.

# 9 Spiritual, Emotional, and Physical Reality

To many today, the only real world is what they can experience physically. Many of us know that there are many more ways to suffer and many other ways to understand and experience things. Physical suffering pulls us into the physical world violently against our wishes to leave that reality. But those who do not know that suffering transcends the physical world do not truly know suffering. Suffering comes from our own bad decisions, but it takes place in our minds, where the physical and spiritual world intersect.

To say that the physical world is the only one, because it is the only thing you can experience is like saying because you are blind, the physical world does not exist to you. We may not identify the true sources of our pain and of what drives change in the world, but that does not make it any less real. Just like not knowing about the history of another nation or the personal lives of individual people make those experiences any less real to them. Not knowing why you are in pain does not make it hurt less.

So whether we believe it or not, the spiritual world does affect us greatly. We may not want to accept why it works the way it does or purposely keep ourselves ignorant of this understanding, but that does not make something less real. You may not understand why someone hates or distrusts you nor they be able to even verbalize it, but people feel the way they do regardless of evidence. Whether or not there is evidence available to prove what we know to be real by experience, finding the evidence does not actually change anything.

So evidence will not change reality. Our opinions rarely change, because of this either. Some things that all of us agree are real can be hard to define. Emotions are one example. We know we love certain people, but we don't know why we do. Life is filled with us running into things we don't understand and dealing

with them, without us ever fully being able to explain them. We make decisions like career choices, where even after years of training, we later find that they are not like what we thought they were.

We make decisions early in life that affect us more greatly than we could ever imagine before hand and then later experiences like illness or injury dictate our life to be entirely different, than we could ever have believed. Life is full of uncertainty, but we still feel the effects of what drives reality.

Cause and effect seem simple enough and they explain a lot, but they operate in more areas than just our bodies and minds. We feel all the effects of other people's choices, even if we do not know what they were and our own, even if we don't think that they are significant enough to be consequential.

Reality is what it is regardless of what we want it to be. We hurt emotionally, even when we have no rational reasons. to feel the way we do. But our choices, especially how we respond to others choices. can be what we want them to be. We cannot change what someone else believes. or even what they choose to do, but we can choose our attitude towards the situation.

We will suffer and we will make bad decisions, but that does not need to define us. We can find hope beyond the physical reality and we can overcome our own issues, but we need to look to a higher power, while still acknowledging our complete responsibility, for our own choices.

When you do something wrong to someone else, it does not matter much to them, if it was unintended. You don't stop having a broken arm, because the person who gave it to you signed your caste. It does of course matter spiritually why you do what you do. The significance of intent is one of the most basic differences between physical and spiritual reality. Just like the physical world, the emotional and spiritual worlds operate according to specific parameters.

Faith is when you believe in something you do not fully understand and that is the way in which we perceive God. Of course, believing in God does not make Him real, but Him being real gives you good reason to believe in Him. Belief in something does not make it real, but believing in someone real has value.

God has no responsibility to solve our problems or prevent our suffering, because He never caused sin to happen. But God does still intervene constantly in the world. In fact, if God did not intervene at all, after He created the world, believing in Him would not solve any problems. Knowing God to be real and following Him matters, because He intervened, to take our place in suffering the penalty, for our immoral choices.

It is great that God is perfectly good, so we know He won't create problems for us, but it is essential for our protection that He is also merciful, because we do create problems, that we seek God to help us through. The full penalties for our bad decisions are incomprehensibly horrid. That is why God treats immorality or sin as such a serious issue. He went to the greatest lengths possible and likely suffers eternally for our sins.

It is hard for many to understand why God chose to forgive any and every sin and base the criteria for salvation solely on what He did for us. It does not seem to make sense, from a human point of view. Humans have a hard time accepting the idea of forgiveness, until they need someone to forgive them. Animals understand forgiveness though, although they seem to be the only ones doing the forgiving. So what we really need as people to overcome our bad decisions and immoral acts is the forgiveness of sins. And for our world to heal, we need to forgive the sins of others.

# 10 Meaning in Life

Many people talk about finding meaning in life, but what do they mean? What

exactly does one do that is meaningful and to whom? How do we know we are doing enough? For many people, sports, video games, Hollywood, drugs, or music are the key to a fulfilling life. But that is not enough for me and many others. But at the same time, is more than that realistic, especially when you have a severe disability? I think our expectations are too high.

We are expected as Americans to solve everyone's problems, because we have so much more wealth than the rest of the world. Most Americans though have very little extra time and those that do have very little money. To most people, their family is more important than anyone else's and so they usually devote most their free time to that and the single over-achievers often spend their free time putting themselves into better shape financially. And with all these vices on the Internet, we have very little left to give.

Is it even possible to find meaning in life and how should we respond? Reading is one way to find meaning in life, but if you spend so much time on that, you sacrifice time to spend on other life experiences. The more you learn, the more you learn that you know very little and this knowledge helps little to improve your or anyone else's life and you can get easily discouraged.

To see the cause of our problems, in the world today, you have to have a very wholistic worldview, which is contrary to the way society wants us to think and act. Our leaders say that we are unwilling to do what is right and stand out from the crowd, but the work world does not support that premise. Famous people all want you to think for yourself and be open minded by doing exactly what they say.

This is where I see religion providing an answer and Christianity actually providing a solution that works. Life is short and has little meaning by itself. God is the ultimate source of meaning, perfectly good, all powerful, and wants to help us out. We are really the source of our own problems.

The situation we are in, where we find no meaning in life, is caused by our

decision to attempt to live without God's help. Just like it doesn't work well for us to live well without a good diet or enough rest, spiritually we need to find meaning. The only meaning in life that will improve our lives is Christ. And the situation in which we will find that meaning will be after we die.

So it seems odd to many people that Christians only really expect to be happy after they die, as it appears as nihilistic and cynical. Life is hard and short for most people throughout history and there is only so much time and money to try to deal with life's continual challenges and setbacks. You don't need to do something immoral to destroy your life. You can do so by just not taking care of your health or failing to engage in networking.

Do not get discouraged, if life is very difficult, and you feel like giving up. Just find and then maintain your faith until you die, and you will be happy forever. Americans are mostly unhappy, because they expect too much out of life and we think because we have more money, we can avoid the principle causes of suffering in this life. Intelligence rarely help avoid many of these problems and self control only solves some.

Many solutions to finding purpose in life are based on making yourself smarter, imparting you with special knowledge, developing more discipline, or making yourself richer. Creativity and motivation seem to me to be the best ways to make your position in life all it can be. Combine that with prayer and praising God and you will find it more encouraging than just trying to become smarter or richer.

What does a psychologist often tell you to do when you are feeling depressed or having a lack of meaning in life? Volunteer. When you change your focus on solving your problems, to solving someone else's, you get perspective and often find out your situation is much better. That is actually encouraging. We need to expect things to go wrong, get worse, and life to generally be difficult and just surviving is quite a challenge. This is the way things are in the other 95% of the world and the other 99% of history.

# 11 Neighborhood by the Road

Like a room full of wood fire smoke

Like a low fog down by the river

Like the neon green grass constantly being mowed

Like the splashing of rainwater under car tires

Each step I take and as I look around

There are big groups of people walking together

The trashes are full of new electronics

And people on bicycles root through the trash

Walking along the side of the road

Littered with dog poop and broken glass bottles

The street is a tribute to a great leader

And the big thing here is a football stadium

I don't go one way because I fear falling off the bridge

I don't go another because the apartments are depressing

I don't go to the nearest mall because of the homeless trash

I don't go to down to the park and river because everyone is fishing

Everyone has a big dog and a big car

But not everyone has a job

The stink of pot is everywhere  
Except in front of the pot store  
When you have so many trees  
There are many little birds  
When you have so many cell phones  
You get poor reception  
We are all looking down walking  
Me to avoid stepping in poop or glass  
And everyone else  
To play a never ending game  
We take everything with us on these little machines  
Be careful not to drop yours  
They cost a lot to fix  
But they still work with broken screens  
What is the cost of modern life  
Less and less jobs over time  
Everything costs a dollar  
But no one has even that much money  
I consider today's world

And compare it to others

Before, after and parallel

We have too much of a good thing

People can even die of water overdosing

Too many things are too easy

We can afford too much sugar

No wonder everyone has diabetes

We have the local mental health, National Guard and juvenile detention

Just a short walk away

And this is the wealthier end of the road

The police seem to be constantly patrolling

Maybe there are too many students

Or just too many apartments

At least the stadium keeps expanding

And we can buy more cars just up the road

## 12 Gift of Boredom

To many people

Life should be an adventure

They want to be a hero

In an action movie

Or be famous

And have a huge number of fans

In real life

No one plays a theme song

When you are going through something tough

No one claps or pays money to see you

Your adventure does not end in 2 hours

You do not get advertised in commercials

And you are not monetized with games or toys

You do not get your own website

You don't get a gold star in Hollywood

With the other famous people

You cannot afford to travel between LA and New York

You do not have time to show up in the best clubs

A hero in real life

Often cannot release what happened to them

Life in the military is far from exciting

It looks cool to jump out of an air plane  
And it sounds cool to fire assault rifles  
But the greatest adventure in the Army  
Is carrying things around and cleaning things  
It looks cool to be in combat  
But this part of the military is terrifying  
Until you get a leg blown off  
Or catch on fire  
You are either terrified or bored to tears  
There is no in between  
Torture is not cool in anyway  
Even though most action films  
Seem to think it necessary for their plots  
A life of boredom  
Sounds like a movie without a plot  
And a life lived like that  
Of no importance  
But today the real luxury  
Is being off social media

And not having to carry a smartphone  
You surely can do great things with fame  
But it distracts you from your own life  
Who you are matters more  
Than what you do  
Just because you do not record something  
Does not lessen its importance  
You have only so much time and energy  
No matter who you are  
Do you want to spend your life  
Gaining low quality friends  
Or spending time with people  
Who care about you unconditionally  
Jesus changed the world  
More than anyone else  
But he didn't travel far  
He wrote no books  
We do not know what He looked like  
He didn't even own a house

And He would be considered homeless

And likely mentally ill today

He received no awards

And no one paid any money to see Him

He did not live to middle age

He only really spread His message for 3 years

He had not children or wife

His entourage was by no means special

And His friends uneducated and poor

He was not even a citizen

Of the empire He lived in

But He did forgive sins

And we can live forever because of Him

Not in the underworld of the pagans

But in the paradise of the Bible

## 13 Religion

### 13.1 My Approach to Religion

Christians seem to combine an older way of looking at the world with passion,

they are mostly honest and direct, seem to be motivated by entirely altruistic means, and the very base of their arguments and identity is humility and compassion. So if the content and methods of evangelism are sincere and even highly logical, why are people so often argumentative or dismissive of Christians and their values?

Many Christians expressions of their faith may come across as formulaic, using common terms in esoteric ways, overly technical, assume basic background knowledge, emphasize old school ways of teaching and learning rituals like memorization and daily devotions, and seem uninterested in modern kinds of celebrations. Christians are not very good at controlling their branding, networking effectively, adopting technology in a timely fashion, and utilizing contemporary vocabulary.

In short, they have a great message and are they are very concerned with actually making a real difference and go to great lengths to not be offensive, they are extremely generous, and only persistent, because they want to help others. They just have an image problem. They are intellectual in a nerdy fashion: they are nerdy to everyone.

They are most known for the most controversial and least popular aspects of their message, which are not even fundamental to their beliefs: gender issues and being too pro-business, which are mostly not true for the average Christian. Christians need to work on their presentation, not their content.

Some of the biggest criticisms of Christians that are often true is they are very conservative politically (the financial side) and they ask for money. Christians are also very organized in some very visual ways. Many people see the common problem with religion to be when it is organized. Also, feminism (depending on how extreme) is not really ever going to be compatible with Christianity as they don't want a male God or men to have authority over women in any way.

The way in which I approach religion is by using plain simple words, natural conversation, personal experiences, I explain things in an intellectual way by comparing religions, and I try to be subtle about calling out non-Christians for unbiblical behavior. I hold Christians to a much higher standard than non-Christians. Just like being overweight, it does not matter how you got there: I just want to promote being healthier spiritually so we can live happier lives. God didn't make a set of rules for us to follow for His sake: immorality/sin is bad because it hurts us.

Christians need to understand how different their worldview is from the typical American point of view. Most Americans don't know even the most basic things about Christianity, but the good part is that we don't have to fight against subversive theology anymore. The Catholic Church and Protestant churches ran some of the greatest educational institutions all over the world for centuries. But today, the Church is considered anti-intellectual. The universities embraced several things that made it hard for Christians to coexist in the universities: the rise of feminism and evolution.

Sadly, it is still true that many Christians do not prioritize the global catastrophes so innocently called Global Climate Change and are heavily involved in politics. Political involvement is hard to justify scripturally and climate change related destruction is described in detail in Biblical prophecy. Most of the judgements of God on corrupt Christians and non-believers in prophecy are one in the same as what we now call environmental disasters.

Many people around the world see American Christians as joining together the ideas of Capitalism/Imperialism with Christianity, but the Chinese government has seen this to not be true as it is legal in China to be a Christian if you register your church or with no registration for a Bible study group. The Orthodox Church is coming back in Eastern Europe and Russia after being violently forced out for many years under Soviet communism.

One of the biggest overlooked part of Christianity today by other Christians is

their demographics. Most Christians live in the third world, are some of the poorest people in the world, and they are often persecuted by wealthy Muslims. Christians also outnumber Muslims 2 to 1 and are the fastest growing and most cross cultural belief system in the world.

Islam has been in most parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia between 1000-1500 years and Christianity only penetrated most of these areas in the last 100 years. Most white people are not Christians. Christians are outcasts in Europe and there are more Muslims in Europe than Christians.

Also, the center of Christianity up until the time of the Crusades was in Iraq and Iran, centered near Baghdad. Christianity did not penetrate all of Europe until the Renaissance. Atheism had little traction in Europe before the 19th Century, before Napoleon. As late as they time of the Crusades, Vikings were torturing Christians to force them to convert to paganism. America has always had a huge amount of unbelievers as were most of the founding fathers (what we now would call terrorists or anarchists).

Even at the start of the 20th Century, 1/2 of the Ottoman Empire was still Christian (and at that time the Ottoman Empire had no territory in Europe or Africa). The status of Christians in the Muslim world was like that of Jews in Europe. They were educated because they needed to be literate in order to keep their faith and in a world of illiteracy became the scholars and were influential despite their persecution. 2/3s of a native Middle Eastern ethnic, religious, and linguistic group called the Assyrians/Nestorians were massacred in the early 20th century as were 1/3 of the Armenian people (another native Christian civilization near the Middle East) by local muslims.

## 13.2 What Christians Shouldn't Do

For Christians wanting to know if a subject or area of study or practice is compatible with Scripture, there are several concepts that should hold true

fairly independently of time and place. First of all you can safely assume that anything you feel might be wrong or illegal is off limits.

Some others signs that should send up red flags is anything done in secret, anything you wouldn't mind acknowledging in public or in writing, or anything that would make any group you associate with think less of you. Any sexual activity outside sex between a married man and woman is not Scriptural.

Anything that involves being irresponsible or greedy in regards to money or resources is not compatible with Christianity. Saying negative things about other people except when necessary to protect someone is wrong. Almost anything online that is online, especially the things that are free are highly subject, until proven otherwise.

Deceiving or misleading people in any way, or rushing someone into a big decision, or lying about your qualifications are all obviously forbidden. Keeping two different records of money or other reporting methods is obviously wrong as well. You should always follow through with your commitments to God, family, country, and everyone else.

Be kind, gentle, and patient and be especially careful and compassionate with animals. Don't talk about things that are someone else's personal business in public, don't spread rumors about other people, and encourage people and stay positive. When you make criticisms, be constructive and try to be consistent in your judgements.

Be a team player and volunteer to help make the world better and improve your own mood by changing your perspective. Pray for help in maturing in wisdom and decision making and commit yourself to a life of learning and self improvement. Put everything into your work, stay employed and be loyal to your boss. Do your best in anything you do, especially things directly involving God.

Read the Bible, attend church services, pray, and continue choosing to follow God everyday. Make glorifying God your biggest goal in life along with complete submission to God, inner peace, and doing all you can to eliminate unnecessary suffering. Be careful what and who you read, watch, and listen to. Focus on those things that are good and positive and don't hurt yourself or others.

Reach out to others by serving as a role model both formal and informal as well as find a role model for yourself. When you make major life decisions, do prayer but don't rush. Think about how everything that you do effects others. Stay physically and mentally healthy so you can live longer so you can help more people and animals.

Anything that you do habitually, that you are not proud of, is something you should stop immediately. Anything that is addictive should be avoided as well. Seek outside help when you run into physical, mental, and spiritual problems. Putting more money, time, and effort into some physical object than you do for God and those suffering is a form of idolatry.

Anything similar to these activities should be considered off limits as well. Finally, anything you are unsure about, ask several people you respect if it is a good idea. If that is not an option or they have no opinion on the matter, I would recommend not doing it.

Above all, follow Christ's example and the Bible. Remember that spiritually it matters most what your intention was, but physically even being hurt by someone you love hurts as much as being maliciously hurt by a stranger. In other words, do good not evil and follow your conscience. God made these guidelines to help us have happier lives, not to control us. Continue to be creative and unique, just be a good person as well.

# 13.3 Christians, Critical Thinking, and Evangelism

Many times Christians are confronted with anti-Christian rhetoric in their daily lives. So many arguments against Christians are now cliches but Christians fail to recognize these things as being just elaborate excuses to not deal with the responsibility to be moral, have respect for spiritual things, and obey God.

First of all, you should never feel the need to justify or explain yourself and your beliefs. If you feel lead or feel for whatever other reason to state your beliefs in public or private, feel totally free to do so. You never have to accept anyone else's worldview or assumptions about life. Feel free to challenge anyone else's statements about religion or morality.

Realize though that everything we do spiritually significant has a cost. The person may be alienated by that or you may lose your job because of it. This is not fair or right but it might happen as a result of your statements.

This isn't much different then being fired because you are in poor health or getting older. For anyone who really believes in diversity, this is a completely contradictory position to get rid of someone because of religious beliefs. The kind of person who would respond that way would not be someone I would want to be friends with nor are they open to changing their beliefs.

The goal here is not to convince anyone of anything but just to encourage you to think critically about everything. Christians thinking critically about the Bible and God can actually lead to spiritual and emotional growth and the Bible actually encourages a lot of creativity, in areas it is not very clear about or doesn't cover directly. Thinking critically does not require you to ever argue with anyone about anything. It does sometimes challenge beliefs but most of

the time it will merely reenforce them.

I gave up trying to change anyone's mind on anything about 20 years ago after my experiencing living where I do now and going to public schools, community college, public university, and enlisted in the Army. Most people change their minds due to two factors: repetition and life experiences. Some of my most enduring and shaping life experiences besides my own intuition were the military and my mental illness.

First thing to remember about witnessing to a person is to realize that God brings people to Himself. We may be used by God to help a person realize this, but are seldom the only one God calls or serves in that role. You really don't want someone who is so easily convinced about religion to be your focus of evangelism, because they will be convinced by the next religious person they meet to change to that religion.

Do not change doctrine to make evangelism easier, but you should make Christian doctrine penetrate as deeply as possible into the current local culture and sub cultures. Most things outside the basic character and attributes of God in the Old Testament were done that way solely because they were culturally relevant practices. Sacrificing animals was done because it cost money, worked as an important metaphor, and communicated obedience and repentance to God.

Spiritually it was only their obedience to God's command that we believe in Him alone that connected from the faith of the Israelites through Jesus Christ to allow us to reconcile with God the Father. The Holy Spirit now serves as what scripture describes as God writing the law of the Old Testament on our hearts. We are saved by making the conscious choice to believe in obedience to God's command to do so.

The most important thing we can do when we don't know what to do or need something from God is to pray. God will likely grant it if you are clear and

resolved about it and you pray for something you genuinely need that is in keeping with Scripture. If you lack faith, scripture says you should pray for it.

Use this in evangelism too - offer to pray for others and pray to God to learn how to help bring this person to Christ. Remember just like in counseling the first step is to begin a relationship with the person you are trying to help and the best thing you can do for them is to listen to them and genuinely show you care about them unconditionally.

You won't have an answer to every question they might ask and don't need one either. You are changing their mind by being a good example by being honest, caring about them beyond just their salvation, and making moral choices in your own life. The point isn't to win a debate, but rather by just caring about the other person and showing them God cares about them by your example.

Remember faith is believing when you cannot explain everything and people do many things on faith. When you sign a contract, do you always read everything in great detail? Before you take a job, do you do a background check on the company and every other employee? Do you record everything everyone says to you on the phone? Do you know everything about someone before you date them?

You probably should do all these things. This is the hardest part of evangelism today. There have been way to many people trying to scam others by convincing them of things. Do not try to change someone's mind. That sounds to many like a scam. Instead, care for them and pray for them. Communicate to them by what you do not by what you say.

Do not speak in cliches and do not sound like someone selling you a car. They are not someone to sell things to. They are a lost and hurt member of the family you are helping bring home. Make your methods match your beliefs.

## 13.4 Christ and Literature

What does I mean to be a Christian and a thinker, a writer, or another creative? How and where do you innovate in theology or symbolism? To some it might be comforting to put Jesus into a simple and literal expression that challenges neither the Christian nor the unbeliever.

Unfortunately, just like for the Pharisees and the people of Israel as a whole, Jesus Christ, although very specifically described in prophecy, was not at all, what was considered appropriate by the establishment. Many Christians in the US would call a contemporary Christ living today a hippy and not let him in the country. What would Jesus think of how little His "followers" are willing to risk for Him today?

Christians today are really afraid of the spiritual world, but at the same time don't make time to pray and read the Bible. If you are worried about the fate of our society and slippery slope making Christianity less acceptable to younger people, start with your own mind and then fix the problems in the Church. If in this kind of fantasy, you can only see literally and you have little imagination then yes it might be disturbing for you, but you will have a very limited ability to turn others to Christ as well.

A lot of the ideas of these knee jerk reactionary interpretations of Christian doctrine are not bad or theologically incorrect. They just fail to inspire most people to whom their life and their relationship with God are not so simple and easy to explain to begin with. Think about how God has written the Bible in a literary way and did not even talk about salvation and Christ or even have the any of the Bible written down for maybe most of history.

God does not shy away from difficult to resolve philosophical issues. He seems to both defy our attempts at putting Him in a box. The weirder things get in our scientific discoveries and social movements, we continue to find in the Bible

that the less understood verses leave hints to a much larger and complex reality than we can imagine. The Bible goes even farther into the fantastic and unbelievable, for those with a simplistic understanding of God.

There is a place for everyone in Christianity and it is healthy to have these kind of debates. Christianity can be both correct theologically but still not the same for everyone in how they express it. For some people, the fantastic nature of some aspect of theology scares them and rightly so for some with certain experiences and temperaments. We have to accept though that no matter how we try to understand the Bible, much of it like prophecy is not meant to be understood even symbolically by us or even angels.

God is not afraid of opening a can of worms. Consider how God will have to deal with each person individually, who has never heard the Gospel, or has been alive before Christ was born into the world. There are a few things that are unchallengeable and the Bible is very clear about those. But remember, we do not worship theology but a living God and our theology is only there to make sure people don't get too crazy with the basics.

When we look to have entertainment or fantasy that is family friendly and promotes the Gospel and really effective at both we have to accept that there are more ways to express faith than through quoting Scripture or giving sermons. There is a time and a place for everything good. If God wanted us to experience Him in the same way for everyone, then the Bible would be nothing more than a list of rules.

We are called to worship God with all our mind, heart, and soul and that includes our emotions and imagination. Be careful of what you condemn, and look at what the Bible really says and doesn't say and be willing to get uncomfortable with some expressions of it, if it brings others to faith in Christ. The most effective way to evangelize is to be real with unbelievers and reach out to them in a way they can understand. If something makes you feel as if it is bothering your spirit, you will know and be upfront with unbelievers with

this as well.

Some fantasies we see today might be scary literally, like any fairy tale should in the same way. But fantasy has traditionally been a way to explain morality symbolically throughout many different cultures and historical periods. If you can separate fantasy from reality and be able to accept that although the vehicle (the mythology) for the message is not perfect, the message is the most important and only vital part.

The reason why it is so important and so Biblical to put the Bible and theology of God into our current culture is this formed the basis for how God revealed and related to Israel and the prophets throughout the Old Testament. The problem with being too narrow in our understanding of God is that we may miss His return or His voice in our lives, if we cannot let God be more than what we can fully understand and explain.

## 14 Remember

The most important thing spiritually is to spend time with God. Spending time with God is spiritual warfare.

## 15 Me

### 15.1 Background

I have had a roadblock in my faith in Christ, because I was afraid God would have me do something very painful, but recently it has become apparent (I have been convinced) that I need God in all aspects of my life, being, decisions, and actions without caveat (without conditions). I have been aware for a long time that repetition of anything is one of the most effective way to change

someone's mind, but only recently realized how effective and quickly that can work (both good and bad). When I was taking classes in college (I never graduated) in graphic design for journalists, I learned that it is very important what things you put into your head. Be very careful what you read or watch online.

When I was first writing my books, I used to try to find others with similar views as I online, but ended up finding some really creative but very dark theological ideas. The Internet and our world culture in general is a place where you cannot believe what you see or depend on something being what it claims to be. There is no more (if there ever was) integrity of data (there is no way to verify if something is true or if someone changed something in any publication or bit of information). We really need to default to not trusting anyone and need to put our own salvation above that of others, at any cost.

At this point, my number one interest in bringing people to God is keeping myself near God as I think it is enough of a challenge to save myself. And the only one who I can really control and make decisions for is myself. There will likely be more Bible verses on my site in the future and for those who that bothers, my website is only one among billions of others, so exercise your free choice by finding something else to read.

## 15.2 Stepping Forward

Chained to myself

One hand tied to another

My left against my right

My enemy is my conjoined twin

How can I wrestle out?

What is within me?

I can feel the subtle compromises

I cannot run away fast enough

I fight even in my sleep

Who can help me from myself?

Calling out to God in the middle of the night

I can barely stay above the dark waters

It is so cold that all I can feel is my heart

What do I do after I emerge?

Like taking off a suit of armor

That has transformed from protective gear

To a hazard and a danger

Each step is still painful

I can still feel the weight of the cold steel

But the weight lessens as I walk away

What counts as a useful life?

How do we find purpose

When there is no freedom in our hearts?

Like swatting at a mosquito

While we die of food poisoning  
We cannot see 2 feet directly in front of us  
Maybe it is time to bring God back  
How can we do the right thing  
When none of us is good?  
If we cannot agree on the existence of God  
And accept responsibility for our choices  
Who do we think we are  
Preaching to the older citizens of this world?  
When we can barely survive  
Having too much to eat  
And our only thought is how do I make my life easier  
Maybe we are on the internet too much

## 15.3 The Road Untravelled

Less knowledge is a blessing  
Conflict is a great sign  
We think too much  
And act too little  
The things that seem little

Are often the most significant  
Sometimes it is not the outcome  
But the process that brings significance  
Unresolved conflict is not just a lesson  
It is a purpose in itself  
Knowing which direction to go  
Does not always provide meaning  
You have to step forward in your mind  
Before your body will follow  
Changing your own mind  
Has greater significance  
Than bringing new people to Christ  
It is within our own church  
That we face the greatest threats  
Faith is acting without full knowledge  
Wisdom sometimes gives more questions  
When we often prefer definite answers  
There is freedom in Christ to make different choices  
What is most important is The Who

What we need to know is obvious to us  
The rest we will understand at the right time  
You cannot travel back or forward in time  
You have to live your life chronologically  
But your mind and spirit are more free  
What if you could return your mind  
To an earlier state  
So many things we battle are mostly mental  
The actual events are less important  
Your decisions are often spiritually significant  
Everything you need to know you will know  
Your mind may be weak  
But your spirit is still strong  
Sometimes we face uncertainty  
The choice is ours  
Sometimes going in any direction  
Is the truly important decision  
We need not remember the commandments or verses  
We have the law written in our hearts

People were making spiritual decisions long before

Anything was written down

Only the simplest questions have step by step directions

When it is not clear what to do

It is your choice

God is very clear when it is important

Gods voice grows louder when it is more important

When you are making bad decisions it is obvious

Unbelievers are often very confident without faith

We can be confident too if we want to

## 15.4 Makes Me Weaker

Whatever doesn't kill me, makes me stronger — Russian proverb famously attributed to Nietzsche.

Many people go through life learning and growing and getting stronger through wisdom as their body often becomes worn down. I am experiencing the opposite. I seem to be in good health but sometimes I think my mind is getting worse. I see more and more weak I am over time.

I doubt more and more things I was so sure of in the past. One of the things that keeps surprising me is how people feel intimidated by me. I just can't comprehend is how they see me as so strong.

I am having more trouble with my paranoia and voices. It feels like there will be

big changes in the world and my life this year. I am finishing up on a 20 year project and can think of many things to do, but I am still way more ambitious than I have the energy to do.

I feel I need God even more than ever before. I have put so much in my 20 year long project that I am now doubting much about it. Who am I to give advice on anything?

I have tried to stay away from things I know nothing about like relationships. Unless you include my stuffed toys and the voices in my head. I am realizing more and more now about God. Did you know that "merely" spending time with God is the secret to spiritual warfare?

I always thought that going to church was about strengthening your faith and I was stubborn enough that I knew I would never change that about myself. I guess I thought low enough of myself that I would never even be tempted to be arrogant in any way.

I have realized now that why I like to talk about world problems is not because I have a unique perspective or that I have studied a different part of history or that I am good at teaching but because it is easier than dealing with my own problems.

I have so much on my plate now dealing just with my symptoms but one of the best ways I know how to cope with them is to keep busy. Maybe I am still too ambitious.

I just look at all the volunteer jobs and am not qualified for most of them or I don't think I have the energy to go through all the steps to be considered. I find writing very fulfilling but only do that well when inspired.

I am so burned out with my website after 20 years. I seem to spend half the time backing things up and the other half fixing simple errors and trying to get thing to work. And most people want to make everything even more

complicated.

All I can say for it is the tools and support have improved a lot over the years and I have learned how to avoid a lot of the complexity. I know the history of web design and so can appreciate that it is actually better than before. I can spot things that are unlikely to be supported a few years from now.

In tech you have to time things right. If the infrastructure in our country is ever updated, it will be literally 1,000 or more simple to do later updates. It comes from how stupid and literal computers are and that things that make computers easier for us to use tend to be much more complicated and error prone for the computer to do.

A computer is very fast but does not know the difference between photos and drawings or spoken audio and music. On a certain level all it does is turn off and on different parts like Morse code or putting down a zero or a one.

Since computer security also known as malicious creativity plus too much time has gotten so bad, I do not trust the integrity of any data. Even the most responsible group usually has at least one irresponsible, cheap, or clueless person who making a seemingly simple and obvious decision opens everyone else's stuff to hackers. Even the best software has enough holes in it to make it easy for someone to break in with enough time and motivation.

We are so afraid of China sending a fleet over to attack us or get shot by a shooter at a school, which are both very unlikely but are not afraid of losing our savings or be sent to prison for someone else's crime. Just like the Church or an individual, the greatest enemy is your neighbor and yourself.

So how does one create now and share it with others without the risk? I guess one has to choose. Most people don't even think about this but most people haven't created anything they value on computers. Or at least I hope they don't.

At least we can still buy ink and printers. Imagine going online to buy a pen and paying extra to get it without advertisements and tracking.

And I remember watching a film the other day about Winston Churchill. Churchill reminded me of Trump and he took huge risks that lost the British their empire. How would he respond to his own countries recent decisions on spying on its citizens?

It is so much simpler to solve problems for someone else, then to solve your own problems.

## 15.5 Words of Encouragement

The world we live in today is a discouraging place and many of our problems are global. Our world is a result of us having way too much power long before we had gained the maturity and self knowledge to use our resources responsibly. Things can not expand indefinitely. Even if we reached a solution to our energy needs, we would use more. And we are all part of the problem by just living in this society.

At the same time, we have big problems with religion and self control as well. Americans are turned on each other, both having some wisdom and nuttiness on both sides. Unfortunately we cannot agree to disagree. And our differences with some of the more religious parts of the world we are renewing a conflict of more than a millennia and the other side is shocked at why the other parts of the world want to wage war against us. In many ways, life is so good to us here that we actually fear death as a society, but we are less happy than those with much less money and power.

Our understanding of each other is poor, but our understanding of ourselves is worse. We even have it documented now that there are groups in the world trying to increase our conflict. The interesting thing is that the division was

created within and only enhanced due to outside involvement. This is very much how evil forces manipulate us is to find our biggest problems and magnify them as we make bad choices.

In my life, I am trying to get closer to God but for some reason I still seem to see spending time with God a chore rather than a joy to look forward to. Some of the ideas talked about in the sermons some of the greatest pastors of our time give are spot on but maybe long beyond our reach. Just like the media who has to make the news interesting each week, I think some pastors feel a need to challenge their members way beyond where they are at with their spiritual life.

There are a lot of positive things going on in the world today and my life. There have been a number of decades long conflicts that have been peacefully resolved in the last few years. There has actually been a drop in global violence lately. Americans are afraid of the Chinese, Russians, and ISIS but most of their power over us is fear. You hear about them, on the news so much because they want to be covered.

They are not anywhere near as powerful as they claim. China is not anywhere near as wealthy as us and the Russians have a military that could only fight one small war across the globe. The US was able to wage two giant wars across the edge of the world in some of the most violent places on earth both weather and conflict wise. Also the Russians and Chinese hate each other and have nuclear missiles pointed at each other for decades.

The only obstacle the US is facing in the military is to continue to use software in place of people as it gets less and less recruits. It is good people in America do not rush out to join the military in great numbers. They feel they have greater opportunities elsewhere. This automation is not far fetched at all factoring in what the general commercial technology available on the consumer market alone.

The major reason why the military computers look antiquated is because they have to be much more reliable and they are interested in how to do their job best in how they design software. Consumer software has to look pretty but the military has serious things to do. Also, what you see on TV about future weapons of the US military, they are currently being used. The government goes to great lengths to hid its exact capabilities.

Some of the best security experts in the world and looked at the virus sent by the US and Israel against Iran nuclear efforts and estimated this technology which they allowed the world to see is 20 years ahead of the rest of the worlds technology. It sounds like they can scan software and find any security problems in it just be software based analysis. This would totally change the security of information and computers. They are likely much farther ahead than that but just needed that level of software innovation to solve the immediate problem.

So I have written about 20 collections of about 3 books each totaling at least 1,000-1,500 pages over the last 20 years. I have developed my own unique combination of Christian Existentialism and Philosophical Taoism, talked about my experiences being in the military and being mentally ill for many years, my paradoxical look at biblical theology, world history between ancient and modern times, future trends including disaster survival and global warming, and technology books about general computing, web design, and tech people sociology.

I have found a way to be happy and feel I am changing the world that anyone can follow and is not risky in any way, not costly or complicated, and is more effective than anything else you can do. Before you try to change the world, try changing yourself. You might find you can do both at the same time.

Jesus said that people need physical healing but a more important need we have is the forgiveness of sins. The small decisions no one else sees are usually more important. The spiritual world is much bigger and more important than

the physical world but operates on different laws just like comparing economics to psychology, even though they are tightly related.

Faith is the key to understanding spiritual things and forgiveness is the key to understanding God.

## 15.6 On Buying a Printer

How does a person create

Without fear of loss

How does a person lose their creation

Without losing their heart

Each page I write

Each design I code

Every step and everyday

I must fight my own mistakes

And make a thousand copies

It is great to send things around the world

Instantly sending out the latest updates

Within a few seconds

What is not so great is someday finding

Someone locked you out of your own creations

Sometimes a tool that has less capabilities  
Is a blessing  
And sometimes the instantaneousness  
can feed an addiction  
Is is better having been seen less  
Across the world  
Or risk the loss of a lifetime of work  
Sometimes the most profound choice  
Is to do nothing or simply wait  
Maybe there is just too much to do  
And maybe I am just too tired  
I want to help others  
But maybe I could do something  
That requires less housework  
Maybe I could be creative  
Without piling up a stack of work  
Maybe I will just buy a printer  
While they still make them

# 16 Society

## 16.1 God and Spiritual Warfare

The critical difference between Christianity and all other religions is that the Christian God is the one, true, all-powerful God. He has the power which He will give you freely that will permanently kill all your demons for you. It is not a matter of trying harder. It is about surrendering your entire life and choices to Christ.

You are the only thing blocking your recovery and your victory over death. Christ has already won the entire war against death and immorality (sin). You need not fight your battles alone. You need to not engage evil at battle at all.

Flee from evil (bad situations) and use the Bible as your only weapon. No one can force you to do evil. You have to believe that you are fully responsible for the bad choices in your life. If you didn't have the strength to make those choices, how are you going to have the strength to choose not to do those bad things (when you are tempted again)?

Do not fight evil! Surrender to God, flee from evil, and let God change your mind, so that you can make better choices. Then make better choices. The devil is not your enemy: you are your own greatest enemy.

How do you get stronger and let God change your mind? Accept Christ as your God and Savior, read the Bible, go to church, and pray. The answers are not difficult to understand. Spiritual things just work according to different laws than those in the physical, legal, and economic worlds.

Faith is the key to understanding God. Choose to believe that you will overcome, thank Him for the good things in your life, and pray for spiritual things that are consistent with the Bible. Then keep praying, listening, and

waiting. God will do things in His own timing and way. Be careful what you pray for, because it is likely God will make it so, if you ask for the right things.

Prayer is simply talking to God. You need to listen and thank as well as ask. God wants more for you than just experiencing His intervention when you are in an emergency. Prayer is not a punishment. It is a great honor that He who created the universe chooses to talk to us, who we can all agree screwed up a literal paradise God carefully and generously set up for us into a world full of suffering.

## 16.2 Paradox of Fighting without an Enemy

Many people ask how can I fight evil by just allowing God to do all the fighting for me? It is a struggle, just not an outward one and not one we should fight via psychological or physical means. We all depend on God whether we acknowledge it or not. This does mean we should give up. We are always responsible for our own actions and our relationship with God.

Most of the spiritual battle takes place in the mind, so accept Christ as your God and Savior, read the Bible, go to church, and pray. You will learn in church to pray and read the Bible, learn to pray and go to church in the Bible, and learn in prayer to read the Bible and go to church. This is a kind of Zen concept where you are in a continual repeating cycle and the process being the result.

Christianity is about getting close to God and that happens by making Christ your habit or anti-addiction. This process is not for you to comprehend concepts you never heard of. These tools are there for you to transform your mind and strengthen you spiritually. People do not change their minds based on argument, but rather on repetition and major life experiences.

That is why we practice Christianity the way we do. It is like the ads we see on TV or the logos we see on everything we buy. The fight for peace is less about fighting the devil and more like surrendering to Christ. Any fighting against external spiritual evil should only be done with the Bible as a weapon.

The "battle" is the combination of your surrendering your will to God while accepting complete responsibility for your immoral decisions, and then resisting temptation. God is always beside us and will provide the necessary difference in strength necessary to overcome our spiritual problems, once we choose to work with Him and on His side. God is always helping us - it is only that we either resist God or do not cooperate that causes us to get over our heads in immorality.

If you are at a boring time in your life in general or specifically spiritual one, this is probably because you need the rest and/or you are already on the right path. I have generally felt closest to God during crisis in my life. I actually hope for a boring life for the rest of my natural life on earth as exciting is generally painful.

## 16.3 The Key to Living Christianity

Christianity is like a reverse or counter addiction. That is why many recovering addicts have turned to Christ and Christianity for help. The point of Christianity is not just to avoid Hell, but to avoid it on earth as well. Do you really want to be counter culture and resist the mainstream world? This is why living Christianity involves submitting your will to God, reading the Bible, praying, going to Church, and giving to the needy. This is similar to the five pillars (basic commands) of Islam (although totally different in theology).

You need to spend a lot of time and effort, to avoid being truly a passive consumer/follower, as your primary role in life. But this is not a chore, like going to the bathroom. It is to be a joy, like eating. The way bad Christians act,

that turns people off to Christianity, is not part of any denomination of Christianity's doctrine and is directly and specifically forbidden in the Bible. You will find that in being a Christian, you will have aspects of your life and attitude that turns others off to Christ.

The frustrating part is that the people who create the most problems in the Church tend to be the least critical of themselves, and you have the nicest people constantly beating themselves up and getting discouraged over minor mistakes. Remember, Church is not a building, organization, or network. The Church is the spiritual entity that is the female counterpart to Jesus Christ. We serve Jesus Christ, and should be loyal to Him (personally), Who is there to help return us to think like we did as children and undo what the mainstream culture has taken away.

No matter how many books you read, you will never find wisdom or joy, until you find the Christian God and make Him the first part of your daily routine. It is ok to question God and still believe in Him. One of the things that bothers me about Christianity is suffering. It makes it hard to fully trust God. But God did not create suffering, did not promise to rid us of it, and very often intervenes to stop it. So it is unfair to hold it against Him, but the emotions are not very rational.

The answer is just like the most common answers to teachers questions in Sunday school: Jesus, go to Church, read the Bible, and pray. None of these is essential to being Christian, but going to Heaven and being happy in life are not essential either. Do you want to be judged by what you have done or by God's free and unconditional gift of forgiveness (always available to all)? Living your life for God and spending time with Him is a privilege, not a duty and is for us, not God. Remember, He made us to be in constant connection with Him and without this connection, we suffer.

# 16.4 The Key to Being Spiritually Healthy

In addition to being physical and emotional life forms, people are also spiritual and just like your mind and body must be taken care of to live a happy life, so your soul needs care as well. Not staying close to God and hearing His message continually can make you weak spiritually. The world is getting darker and darker, so we as Christians should stand out more and more from the general population.

One of the things you need to keep your spirit healthy is to continue to follow your conscience and not dismiss it or ignore it. Feeling fear or repulsion to things that appear good is a sign that they are not. One of the biggest signs something is bad for you is that someone offers you an easy shortcut to solving a difficult problem. Another sign is when you find a loophole or parallel way to ignore your inner voice instead of really avoiding the entire category of the problem.

An example of this situation is studying in school. It is hard to discipline yourself to study and so many people have resorted to taking a pill, to help them focus. It can still be legal and not show any bad side effects, but later you realize that it has prematurely aged your brain (you have increased your chance of dementia, as you age).

Another example is that people take a medicine for pain relief from their doctor but later on they realize they are now addicted to it. Then, when they need the pain medicine for something temporary like a surgery, it may not work as well and they have to choose between being in a huge amount of pain or in having to re fight their addiction.

Some medicines must be taken and if they are not, then that is the reason for a

greatly worsened condition. If you don't take your heart, cholesterol, or high blood pressure medicine, you can die without warning. Many mentally ill people feel so much better after taking their medicine for a long time that they then decide they don't need it anymore. Then they end up back in the hospital.

No matter who you are or how strong your faith is or how well you know scripture, you need support that you can only get through hearing scripture. There is no substitute or good enough reason to not take the time and effort to keep close to God by hearing His Word daily. There are also many ways to do this with modern technology, so not being able to go to church is not a good enough reason.

## 16.5 On Problems in the Church

I think the Church is like the Army or any large group of people is that it is a reflection of the greater society it is in. I think most Bible believing Christian organizations as a whole have and continue to do as much as they can think of to appeal to every demographic. We have to at some point accept that the Church will never be perfect and one organization cannot alone be all things to all people (only Christ and Scripture can).

We are spoiled in America so much that many people are more worried about their future after death than dealing with problems in life. We don't need Christian versions of everything and to keep pursuing a perfect Church community and perfect theology. We continue to try to change our world socially, but what goes on in the Church is much more important prophetically, as it is one of the biggest targets spiritually.

But there is always more we can do and we should not get discouraged to the point of giving up, because society as a whole has rejected Christianity. Every person (and animal) is worth fighting for. The good part is the war on doctrine has been won conclusively as most young people in America know little about

the Bible at all.

God will never give up on us and so we should never give up on others. We need to just keep following the voice of God and our conscience. The rest God will work out. Keeping to the faith, while patiently waiting for deliverance is what faith is about. Faith in Christ does not often provide very visual or immediate feedback.

## 16.6 Glamorizing Dangerous Behavior

Hollywood is well known for glamorizing sex and violence. This means that they minimize the negative consequences and portray this behavior as having good outcomes. Why does the church constantly talk about money and sex almost exclusively? These are the two biggest things that cause life changing problems in most people's lives.

Although I would argue that Hollywood is conservative not liberal because it is a giant business motivated by money, it is definitely corrupt. Are violence and sexual immorality made worse by Hollywood or are they merely a reflection of society? Both are probably true. It goes in a unvirtuous cycle.

I think many people believe that the way we think does not affect the way we act and what other people do in their private lives is not our business. We make this huge distinction between action and thought although the one directly affects the other. This brings us to what have historically been called deviant behavior and vice.

Gambling, sex outside marriage, drug use, aggressive pan handling, traffic violations, bullying, gossip, dirty words and jokes, and the like are slowly being legalized and this can and does affect others. I think it is great that we do not discriminate or bully people who have made different life choices like different choice of religion, political views, spoken or written language, subculture or

ways people are born. The thing is though that we have to agree on some basic moral standards or society will slowly get worse and worse by all measures.

I see how the media and military recruiters glamorize the military. They only show the exciting parts and not the terrifying, painful, risky, stressful, difficult and monotonous parts. The military basically has a price on your head and you are not worth a cent more to them. From a Marine's perspective, combat is 80% boredom and 20% terror.

You are exposed to toxic chemicals in one way or another in almost any job in the military. You also do not get most of the education, financial, and vacation benefits they claim you get. If you leave early which usually takes the intervention of a US senator, you are almost guaranteed a discharge that although not dishonorable will not qualify you for any VA benefits when you get out.

You are paid so little that as most soldiers now have families, it is common to be on food stamps in the military. The military justice system is truly brutal as you always get a civilian penalty in addition to a military penalty. You can get fined 1/3 your monthly salary and get 2-4 hours extra duty a night for 2 weeks for very minor infractions that wouldn't be a crime in any other jurisdiction.

If you fail out of your chosen career in the military, they reassign you in the Army to another career that is the job that is hardest to fill, and in the Navy you lose your rate so you have no guarantee of what you will be doing. If your kids ever do anything bad or you miss a payment on your car, God help you. Most people do not stay in for another enlistment because they try to get out as soon as possible as few people in the military would stay in if they could leave.

This is why I think bible believing Christians tend to be conservative socially.