

15 Years Celebration

15 Years Celebration

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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 every 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 19th and 20th centuries will be minor, in comparison. Another thing 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 there will be an exponential increase in the creativity, sophistication, severity and the variety of attacks.

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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

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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 Word 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

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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

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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

Bodhidharma

Dogen

Han Shan

Li Po

Tu Fu

Other Asian and African

Al-Ghazzali

Hafiz

Kabir

Kebrā Nagast

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.

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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. The 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 a 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 then 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 or 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 mind, 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.A 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 there 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 to 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.

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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 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 slightly 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

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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 outnumber 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. Worst 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 two.

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 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

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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

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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

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We will never be able to give a useful answer
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 directions, 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 ourselves. 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 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 use 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 use 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 compression 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 duality 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 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 stopping 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 then 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 then 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 Hawking's 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: sensical, 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 to 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 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/Manichaeism 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 Manichaeon, 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. Schizophrenia Articles

6.1. Schizophrenia in General

6.1.1. The Truth About Schizophrenia

Major Symptoms

I am mentally ill and have Paranoid Schizophrenia. I hear voices and have paranoia. Schizophrenia has multiple types, but all people with Schizophrenia are most disabled by being stressed out in social situations, which makes it a very lonely disease.

Having Schizophrenia makes every stimulus more intense and primarily affects the part of the brain, that understands abstract thought. Having Schizophrenia means that you have adrenaline surging through your veins constantly, which has very different effects and feels very different, from adrenaline released, over a short period of time.

15 Years Celebration

People with Schizophrenia have trouble distinguishing between fantasy and reality and are usually very literal. People with Schizophrenia are often highly religious and have trouble with anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorders. One of the major symptoms of having Schizophrenia is depression, both because you see what you cannot do now that was so easy to do in the past and you will never recover and also just because of the illness. People with Schizophrenia are no more violent than non-mentally ill people and do not have multiple personality disorder.

Paranoia is a type of delusions that is specific to someone or spirit coming after you. Paranoia is like being afraid of something that is totally irrational and knowing that but still fearing it. It is like trying to go to bed after watching a horror movie.

It also keeps on going for months and often comes back in a slightly different form. Meditation would help greatly, but I do not have enough energy to do that, although I do know how. Counseling for this aspect of the illness is not considered effective and although many aspects of Schizophrenia are often religious, they are not spiritual in nature.

Most people with Schizophrenia have trouble reading and can't hold down even a part time job. You cannot access your money directly if you have Schizophrenia, because most people with Schizophrenia will give large sums of money away.

Cause and Treatment

Schizophrenia is genetic, but is brought out by a traumatic experience, which the most common being military service. Men usually get Schizophrenia in their late 20s and women in their late 30s. You cannot be fully diagnosed as having Schizophrenia, until you have symptoms, for at least one year and there is generally a psychotic episode, that proceeds diagnosis.

The primary treatment is almost entirely medication based and although the brain is severely damaged, for those with this illness, it does not affect intelligence levels. The medication has greatly

improved over time, but it still works basically by sedating your entire body (the medicine is very closely related to anesthesia). Schizophrenia is the most disabling mental illness and it never goes away. It is much easier to treat bipolar disorder or clinical depression, because they are mood disorders, whereas Schizophrenia is a thought disorder.

Most people go decades, without being diagnosed and have to be forcibly committed, because they have committed some petty non-violent crime. Most people with Schizophrenia are in various levels of assisted living and continue to relapse into paranoid episodes and keep increasing their brain damage, over the course of their lifetime.

Some of the major side effects of the medicine include being constantly very tired, always very hungry, having large weight gain, and being almost guaranteed to have diabetes and high blood pressure. Many people have trouble finding relief with the newer drugs, which have much lower side effects, and have often self medicated, by taking illegal drugs, before they were diagnosed.

The most common cause for relapse is not taking your medicine, which is very hard for someone with Schizophrenia to do. Besides taking medicine, the treatment involves a low stress life. If you take your medicine, but are under too much stress, you can go into another paranoid episode.

Life with Schizophrenia

Non-disabled veterans (or anyone who served in the military that does not have an honorable discharge) make very little money, live in low income housing, and often become victims of crimes, like scams or cults. They also rely on government services, for almost any service, like medical care. These are some of the things that get cut first, in budget cuts, because it is hard for someone with Schizophrenia to advocate for themselves and many of the mental ill family members have given up on them. The only reason why people with Schizophrenia are not still locked up against their will is because of modern medications and because they found that not hospitalizing the mentally ill saved money.

15 Years Celebration

The hardest part of getting services, if you have Schizophrenia, is filling out long forms and paperwork, waiting months or years for answers, and often being rejected, after all the work. You have to make sure they don't just throw away your forms and you usually need a lawyer, because they automatically reject you the first time. After that, there is often not enough services for the people, so you go onto a months or years long waiting list. If you are committed and do not have private insurance, they actually house you in the county jail, even if you have committed no crimes, until you are considered no longer a harm to yourself or others.

The Veteran's Administration

The veterans are much better, but most won't qualify, because there are not just 2 discharges anymore. There is at least honorable, general, other than honorable, dishonorable, and medical discharges. When you leave the military, before your 4 year entitlement is up, no matter what reason, you have a very low chance of getting an honorable discharge. Under "don't ask don't tell" policies, if you left because you were gay, you would not get an honorable discharge. Anybody who gives any services to veterans requires an honorable discharge, for any assistance at all. People in the military, for less than 6 months (in that time they could have easily already finished all their basic and advanced training), there are no records of them, so they cannot possibly get honorable discharges, no matter what their situation.

The VA does pay for my medicines and I can get into the VA mental health nurse practitioners (we don't see doctors, because they are too expensive), as my disability is of that nature, within a month. I have to wait for 3 weeks, if I have a flu or sinus infection and so I have to go to a private hospital, in town, which they refuse to pay, although they are legally required to, to save money. 95% of the people at the veterans clinic are older than my parents, which means they are giving out services others need, to people who are not disabled, but just served in the military a long time ago and want cheap access to health care. They are supposed to pay for my dental and eye checks as well, but I haven't been able to set that up. I pay for a private dentist as well.

15 Years Celebration

The Veterans mental health nurse practitioners (who change every 2-3 years and know nothing about me or my case, when I first see them) want to change the medicine every time I go in and assume because I talk fast, I should be on Lithium. I tried Lithium, which gave me no help and introduced serious tremors, which left as soon as I stopped taking the Lithium. They write some notes in a computer program (unless it is down) and ask me years later ask about the previous nurse's notes.

They only have 30 minutes, for each patient, and if you have an emergency, you have to go down to the hospital, an hour away by car, in a tiny city, where very few veterans live (I live in the biggest city for the entire region). I have a PRN that I use 5 pills of a year, at the most, and the only way to get current ones (so they are not expired, when I need them) I have to get 30 pills every month. You cannot give anyone any of this, no matter what the situation and there is no way to recycle them. If I took this medicine that often I would never be awake and I would be very addicted to it.

I was told to get a C-PAP, which I had to go down, to that far away hospital, that I got transportation from volunteers (from a veteran's charity, not the government VA). I had to stay over night, with a cheap instrument to measure my sleep, which I had to put on myself and no one observed me. I had to sleep in an open room, like I did in the military basic training and when I left early that morning I was locked out of the building I was sleeping in and almost could not exit the court yard. I can breathe easily through the face mask, because it reminds me of the gas masks in the military, but now they refuse to change the pressure in the mask, so that I can breathe in it, for more than an hour, after I fall asleep. This hospital is huge, with many buildings, and stuffed with elderly veterans, but only a few doctors.

My Situation is Ideal

My situation is very unique and has turned out as ideal as is possible with this mental illness. I never committed a crime or took illegal drugs, I have a honorable discharge from the military, so I get veterans benefits, I accepted I needed help from the very beginning, I have always stayed on my medication, I have great family support and I also have support by being a born-again Christian. I can

read at length, although it is still hard to concentrate, I live almost completely independently, I have enough constructive things to do to take up my time, and I feel like I am making a difference in at least a few lives via my website. I was first diagnosed with Schizophrenia back in December of 1999 and have not have any relapses since then.

6.1.2. What its like to have Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a wide ranging disorder like cancer and there are many different kinds. Schizophrenia is the most serious and debilitating mental illness by far. It affects about 1% of the population - the same in every place and culture. It is a thought disorder, not a mood disorder.

Having Schizophrenia means you constantly have adrenaline running through you and all your senses are amplified, so that everything feel more intense, literally and physically, not just emotionally. It does not affect intelligence, one way or the other and Schizophrenia is very different from Multiple Personality Disorder. Schizophrenia is not a special gift nor does it make you more spiritual: it is just a disability.

Schizophrenia is caused, by a combination of a genetic tendency towards the illness, plus a stressful event, that brings out the illness. The most common stressful event is military service. This stressful event generally happens during the 20s for men and the 30s for women. It is common, to go years, without first diagnosis and people with Schizophrenia usually end up, in a psychiatric hospital, every few years. After each paranoid episode, there is more and more brain damage and the person recovers less and less, each time.

All people, with Schizophrenia, have delusions, but only one type has the paranoia and the auditory hallucinations/hearing voices (it is very rare to have visual hallucinations). Paranoia is a specific category of delusion, that includes believing people are "coming after you". I have Paranoid Schizophrenia, which is both the most serious and debilitating kind of Schizophrenia and the most treatable and responsive to medication. About 1/3 of people with Schizophrenia stare at the wall all day, 1/3 live in assisted living like a group home, and 1/3 are mostly living on their own.

I am one of the highest functioning people with Schizophrenia. I am also unusual in every other way especially that my mind works very fast/I talk fast, I have studied many years, and seem to know more about Schizophrenia than most the doctors, so that the doctors often think I am manic. It is common to get misdiagnosed, because of the lack of training about mental illness, in the service providers, their low pay, and how little time they have. Most doctors only have 20 minutes, for each appointment and many people only can see a mental health nurse practitioner, who is not qualified to diagnose.

Schizophrenia's main and most effective treatment is medication. Counseling can be a useful secondary treatment, but a person with Schizophrenia can not overcome their paranoia, through learning to think rationally. The medication is a derivative of anesthesia and it basically numbs your body. It is only supposed to affect your mind, but, like all the psychiatric medicines, it affects the whole body. Most people with Schizophrenia gain about 80 lb., within a few months, after getting on the medication, because the medicine numbs the nerves, in the stomach, so you never feel full, no matter how much you eat.

It takes a psychiatrist to diagnose and prescribe medicine for mental illness, because a psychiatrist is a medical doctor, as well as having a Ph.D., in psychology. Most psychiatrists are not trained in mental illnesses though - it is a speciality. A psychologist has between a one year certificate and a Ph.D. in psychology, but has no medical degree and cannot diagnose mental illness, nor can they prescribe medicine.

The newer medicines have less and less serious side effects, but they do not always work on everyone. Most people with Schizophrenia keep going off their medicine, because they think they no longer need it, because it works so well. When you are feeling well, keep taking all the medicines you are on. You are happy, because you are on the right medicines. If you stop taking them, you will revert back, to a worse state, and likely will never get as balanced, as you once were.

The major issues, that a person faces, who has Schizophrenia deals with, on a daily basis, include

isolation, lack of energy, and poverty. The most difficult issues to deal with include depression and isolation. Paranoia is not as bad as depression, unless it is really flared up. Any tiny bit of depression is many times more painful and harder to deal with (especially physically, in the head and the intestines), than a much more severe amount of paranoia. Paranoia is like terror and is almost impossible to break, until it "leaves on its own".

Isolation is caused, by a lack of trust, in relationships, and a very severe sense of anxiety, about being around other people. There are some surprising similarities between Schizophrenia and anxiety disorders, except that Schizophrenia is many times more severe. You often hear about people doing evil things and that these people are diagnosed with Schizophrenia, but actually people with Schizophrenia withdraw from society and are usually the victims of crimes. People with Schizophrenia are no more likely to be violent, than anyone else.

Part of the treatment for Schizophrenia is keeping your life low stress, as stress will work against the medicine, so most people with Schizophrenia don't work. Most people with Schizophrenia cannot work and live off state disability pensions, which are only barely enough, when in combination with low income housing and getting complete assistance, for everything else, like food and medicine. Most people, with Schizophrenia, are single, but live in various levels of assisted living.

The area of the brain, that is most damaged, by Schizophrenia, is the part of the brain, that deals with abstract ideas and social conventions. I had to relearn how to interact with other people, over many years. People with Schizophrenia are very often extremely literal. Paranoia causes some of the most serious problems, that adversely affect relating to other people, for someone with (Paranoid) Schizophrenia.

Hearing voices can be wide ranging, from having an impression of someone or thing communicating to you, to an audible voice, that sounds like a real voice. Sometimes the voices are good and sometimes they are bad. Some people have voices tell them to do things. The voices tend to be mostly religious in nature. People with Schizophrenia can be very religious, in nature, with an emphasis, on rituals, serving as the basis of their obsessive compulsive disorders.

People with mental illnesses are born that way and the People with Disabilities Act applies to them, but there is very little funding for and little awareness of mental illness. The only reason why they no longer "lock up" people with major mental illnesses is because it saves the government money. People with mental illnesses need the same level of support, that people with developmental disabilities need, but just for different things.

People with mental illnesses rely heavily on state funded programs and are dependent on unmotivated and prejudiced staff (because they are underpaid). When you vote for a cut in taxes, these people are some of the very first to feel the cut. Most of their families have rejected them and they have a hard time making friends or even just communicating, so they have no other means of help. They can easily end up being homeless and it then gets much harder to stay on their medicine.

People with Schizophrenia can be and usually are very rational, in most areas of their lives. There are generally only one or two major delusions, in the person's life at one time. When you hear about people with Schizophrenia going through all these complex preparations and plans, to act out their delusions, they must be rational, in most areas.

I am fairly rational, considering my mental illness (largely because of my long study of philosophy and a desire to counter my tendency for paranoia), but I can see and experience both the delusion and the reality at the same time. Schizophrenia is a split between reality and fantasy and the medicine helps you better distinguish between the two.

6.2. Schizophrenia Symptoms and Issues

6.2.1. It is Hard poem

The Poem

It is hard to fall asleep

When your head is full of fear

It is hard to stay up all day

When you are always exhausted

It is hard to exercise

When you have so little energy

It is hard to eat healthy

When you are always hungry

It is hard to have a todo list

When it stresses you out

It is hard to get inspired

When you cannot open your eyes

It is hard to create

When your hands won't stop shaking

It is hard to design websites

When all the code looks the same

It is hard to stop washing your hands

When you cannot remember if you already have

It is hard to have relationships

When you trust no one

It is hard to carry a conversation

When you cannot concentrate

It is hard to listen to advice

When you think others are trying to control you

It is hard to go out with others

When you get tired very fast

It is hard to be part of a group

When you cannot consistently go to meetings

It is hard to get around

When you cannot focus enough to drive

It is hard to be positive

When you are filled with delusions

It is hard to be happy

When you know your illness will never end

An Explanation

My latest poem was meant to be very simple way of explaining some of what it is like to have Schizophrenia. I was inspired by a movie I just saw the same day and was thinking about writing something and I thought about writing about Zen and spiritual things. But, along the way, and in order to offer something more useful, I started to think about doing a poem about mental illness. (I always try to prioritize writing on this topic, as it is more practical and can have a more immediate help, than some of my more theoretical writings. Although, it is much harder to write about myself than about history or religion.)

Yes, I have not exaggerated and yes I am on my medicine and have been for many many years. The thing with medicine is that it never takes away all the symptoms. I deal with a number of these symptoms every day, although I was able to get my hands to stop shaking recently, by changing the

medicine I take. Many people fear and understand crisis, but (as I heard quoted one from someone famous, maybe Anton Chekov) is that anyone can survive a crisis, but it is the day to day living that wears you out.

The thing that bothers me most about Schizophrenia is that many people around me, that I deal with, on a day to day basis, think I have an easy life and they are jealous. I want people to know that I work very hard everyday doing very difficult work that is very useful, to a small group of people throughout the world, all of which I will likely ever meet. If I did not do it, no one else would and I can not afford to pay for someone to do it for me. I would love to work a regular job more than almost anything else, but I am just not able to deal with some of the aspects of work, that seem so simple to others.

I have still not yet understood why people have to suffer, many much greater than myself. I was lucky that I never had to serve in combat nor have I suffered from severe burns. I was never captured nor did I even had to go through torture training. Good Christian soldiers, throughout history, have suffered greatly, captured and tortured for years on end and they cried out to God and He did not save them.

All I can say is that to understand the reasons God works the way He does, is to be aware, first of all, that the spiritual world works entirely different, than the physical one. You should be much more afraid of other people than of spiritual things, especially if you are Christian and don't mess around with things you know you shouldn't. The reason for suffering is a mystery and I do not know any explanation, that will seem sufficient for anyone, who has truly suffered.

We need to approach God with faith, because we can never understand God, on His level and we likely will never see why things were allowed to happen the way they were. I try to be very careful, with how I live my life, so as to avoid unnecessary suffering. If you want to prevent suffering in the world, do not suffer unnecessarily, yourself. There are ways to make a big difference in the world, but not risk your health and safety.

The only thing I can imagine, that God would do, that would make it somewhat acceptable, for the suffering, that has occurred would be for God to undo all suffering, so that it never happened, after we go to Heaven and Jesus Christ comes back in the flesh.

6.2.2. Amplification in Experiencing Schizophrenia

One of the most frustrating and disabling parts of having Schizophrenia is that everything I experience is intensified. This is not the same as intensified feelings, like in Bipolar Disorder. Everything I sense in the form of hearing, seeing, touching, and smelling is 10 times as strong. I is much harder for me to deal with things that are repetitious or things that are annoying.

When the cleaning service moves things around, so I can't find them, it drives me nuts. To me, this is more than just a mistake or carelessness. It comes across to me as a lack of respect and that I am being scammed. I feel that they are deliberately trying to make my life miserable. Doing things wrong once feels like they are doing it wrong 10 times.

I don't have the patience I once used to have. I have trouble waiting or dealing with people being rude and thoughtless, in my daily interactions, in places like stores. The worst part, is that people really go out of their way to help others, that are physically disabled or developmentally disabled, but I don't get any help. People are jealous that I don't have to work a job. They think nothing is wrong with me and do not realize that working a dead end job, instead of having Schizophrenia, is a much better and happier life.

Part of this is just my personality; I am a highly sensitive person. To me and people like me, the emotional world is much more real than the physical one. Like people who suffer from depression, that is based on chemical imbalance in the brain, I get depressed, even when my circumstances are good and I am sometimes happy, when something really bad happens. Really small problems will really bother me and real big ones I can often times easily accept.

When people see someone acting what they think is irrational, from their perception of what they see of you, they think acting irrational is being lazy and undisciplined and that people can overcome this easily. With Schizophrenia, the rational part of my brain is destroyed or seriously damaged. The reason why people with Schizophrenia have a hard time being in groups, doing daily routines to keep themselves and their houses clean, and are often lonely and targets of scams and violence is because they no longer have the ability to deal with society, as they no longer have the ability to engage in abstract thought.

People are often afraid of people with Schizophrenia, but like small insects, they are more afraid of you, than you are of them. The hardest part of Schizophrenia is verbalizing your pain. Most people with Schizophrenia cannot even read, due to the destruction to their brain. Without the rational social part of the brain functioning correctly, a person falls back on the fight or flight response. There are no filters to understanding the reasons why people act a certain way. The only thing you perceive is an intensified sensory feeling.

Making decisions is one of the most stressful and draining activity for someone with Schizophrenia. When I got to the store, everything has so many ridiculous and confusing options. Many ways of packaging, placing of things, and descriptions are intentionally misleading. Many times the quality of the food is highly variable, even for the same brand and product. Some of my tastes are for less intense foods and my medicine causes foods to taste very differently. Whether I can eat many foods heavily depends on exactly how they are made and what exact ingredients they use. There are some types of barbecue sauce I love and others make me want to vomit.

I also have strong memories associated with certain foods; if I was really depressed last time I ate a certain food, it will then trigger depression, if I eat it again. I also find the smell of foods much more intense and so I often times avoid food I otherwise would like due to the strong smells, like the prepared food in grocery stores or in restaurants, especially when smells conflict.

I have constantly struggled so much with rudeness, incompetence and laziness by people running

buses, stores and other services I use daily that if I find one that works reasonably well, I keep returning to that one place. I now often expect everything to be broken and people constantly arguing about things, so that they can be lazier, so that I have given up trying to reason with people. It seems that most people I run into are very angry and lazy. It really seems to be that the only thing people are afraid of is doing their jobs properly and that people today are experts in arguing.

Computers are some of the most stressful things I can deal with. The most frustrating thing for me in computers is when something doesn't work like it is described. I hate troubleshooting. I enjoy computers, when I can just deal with they way they are supposed to work, but when they fail, it drives me nuts. It seems that most programs are very specific, in how they are tested, so if you do not use them the exact way they predicted you would that they have all sort of errors and incompatibilities.

I have given up even trying to report bugs, as programmers seem to be so full of themselves, that they cannot accept the fact that their programs have errors in them. I run into so many problems that I now am trying to use as few pieces of software as possible, so that there are fewer things that can go wrong. The really frustrating thing about software is that it works 95% of the time. This is just often enough, to expect that it will always work, but problematic enough to drive a person crazy. This may sound unreasonable, but a website down 5% of the time would be down weeks of the year and English that is only 95% accurate is unreadable.

6.2.3. The Illness that Never Ends poem

Many years have passed
Since my visit to the hospital
I have not come back again
And each day gets better
But some things never get better
And I fight these issues daily

The terror is always there
Under the surface
And I struggle to keep taking my medicine
But I have kept up with each dose
I work hard to keep my work load low
But also keep myself busy
And feeling progress in my work
The hardest things are the depression
As anyone who has had a chronic condition
Can confirm in their own experience
It is easy to understand when someone loses a leg
How their life will change
But when you lose your mind
You battle most your issues alone
And even though it would seem easy
For you to reach out for help
It is not so easy for me
I don't know if it is the illness or not
But I have a huge amount of energy
Deep within my heart
That is one of the things
That has kept me pushing forward
The medicine basically makes you tired all the time
You sleep longer than ever before
The hardest part of being part of a group

When you have Schizophrenia
Is that you feel so tired
That you don't have the energy to get out
I am always afraid I will fall asleep
Out in the mall, movie theater, or bus
I have had to fight to stay awake
And I have had suffered physical pain
If I went out after taking my medicine
After the wrong amount of time
Depression, terror, and loneliness
Hurt me physically as well
My intestines and my head hurt
There is only so much medicine you can take
I had to cut back recently
As I could not write, hold a glass with one hand, or keep my eyelid from twitching
The hardest part was that I kept poking myself in the eye
Many times I have associated physical pain
In response to paranoid thoughts
Sometimes I feel happy
And my organs feel like they have been massaged
That happens more and more
As time goes on
I see the time of my youth
As being a kind of renaissance time for myself
I thought I would be a world leader

Although I have greatly helped a few people now
Things are just harder now
That weren't a problem when I was young
Meeting people works great
And people often are impressed at my accomplishments
And surprisingly understanding of my condition
But I am only able to return a few times
Sometimes being around people it is too intense
And I do not get enough positive feedback
That makes me discouraged
I really want to go to church
But I either get mad or scared
I cannot accept the conservative politics of the Evangelicals
Or the acceptance of new age doctrine by the mainstream Protestants
I am much closer to my family
Than before I was mentally ill
I would have thought that my sister and I
Would be in a big city, far from home, shortly after college
But we are all here many years later
I have never gone very far, except in the military
One of the things that really bothered me for along time
Was that i never completed my military service or college
Now I have written so many books, that I think that is better
Even than a PhD.
But that was how my philosophical journey started

I may have never got to writing books, if that had not happened

6.3. Veterans Administration

6.3.1. The Military Way, Chemical Weapons, and Terrorism

Misconceptions about Military and World History

For people who have never served in the military and who base their understanding of warfare on World War II or even Vietnam do not understand how contemporary wars are fought. In World War II they did what is called carpet bombing where they would find a target within a few miles and then bomb everything within that area and around it for many miles.

One of the big strategies during World War II was to destroy Germany's manufacturing basis. Also, most modern technologies and techniques used in warfare are derived from the much more advanced technologies developed by the German during World War II. One of the reason why the US won the Cold War is that they let the Soviets have more of Eastern Europe in exchange for the US getting more German scientists after World War II.

If you study the history of European warfare, warfare tactics change over time, according to the technologies available, at the time. During World War II, we needed millions of troops, because that is what was required, to make use of the technology available, during that era. Today, warfare is much higher tech and we need specialists, who are professional soldiers or even mercenaries, but the number of troops needed is much smaller.

Also, most of the current US military is what are called contractors, which are mercenary

corporations, so there are many times more troops involved in an military operation, that the media never counts in. It is like a shadow army, whereas the real army is just the tip of the iceberg. The list of Americans, that have security clearances, that the government recently lost, contained names of 22 million people.

During this war on terror we are fighting an entirely different war with entirely different technology with entirely different objectives, tactics, and political situation. Bombing infrastructure in the Middle East and Central Asia does basically nothing as the infrastructure that we have now in America is not present in this region. We can't bomb them back to the medieval era, because they are already there.

There is nothing of any value in the Middle East now except oil. Throughout most of history, the Middle East economy was based on trade. In ancient times it was very fertile, but, due to minor weather changes, during the late medieval and early modern era, much of this land has lost its fertility. Today, there is also very little money in food production or any other commodity.

The Ottomans Turks took over the Byzantine empire and cut off trade with the west, shortly before Columbus sailed to America, which caused Portugal (the first world power) to figure out how to navigate around Africa and the Dutch to figure out how to navigate over the open ocean. This was the basis for the European colonies and colonial domination.

After the Industrial Revolution, like today, the trade items of greatest value were the ones with the most advanced technology. Coal and iron were the main ingredients necessary, for the Industrial Revolution, whose big cash products were trains, ships, bridges and guns. So the nations with the most coal and iron became the dominant military and economic powers. This included America, England, France, and Germany (which was a brand new country at the time).

If oil was not found in the Middle East, in the last few hundred years, the Middle East would be very poor now. By then the Suez canal was created and so Egypt was important for trade, but most of

the Middle East had little to offer.

Misconceptions about Contemporary Warfare

One of the big problems with the way we are fighting in the Middle East is that we are fighting a war with very high technology. That would work well in the United States or Europe, where we have extensive infrastructure and advanced electronics, that are the basis for a very fragile world economy. Without a high tech infrastructure, our high tech weapons are of little use.

We also have spent huge amounts of money trying to do the almost impossible task of destroying the leaders of a country and then putting in groups that cannot hold power when we leave. The terrorists are fighting a very low tech war, that is very cheap and easy to carry out, which is effective against high tech societies.

To do what we need to do to win the war in the Middle East we need to be more brutal than ISIS or Saudi Arabia. The result of this action would mean we would lose access to most of the world's reserve oil and the one group that is keeping the price of oil low enough, for the world economy to keep going. Without access to cheap, plentiful oil, the entire world goes back to the stone age.

We are not in danger of being invaded, because even China and Russia do not have the resources, to even maintain a navy, that could deploy to other parts of the world, while the US Navy completely controls all the world's oceans. Russia and China are deceiving us into thinking they have advanced weapons or can compete with us militarily or economically, when they cannot. They have very obsolete militaries that are designed and used for internal suppression of revolts. This is what Americans would call police.

Russia has a very long hostile border, that is has never been able to defend the entirety of it, at one time. Russia has tried to maintain the situation, in the former Soviet republics, the same as they did in Eastern Europe, during the Cold War, but the US intelligence community has successfully blocked

that. Russia cannot even invade the Ukraine (which has basically no military) either due to lack of resources or fear of US retaliation.

The Chinese are making so little money on trade, that they just have enough to keep the economy going and there is no real lasting wealth being created in China. While 15% of their people on their East Coast have the equivalent money of Europeans (not Americans), their army is focused on keeping their inland mountainous regions, where most of their mineral wealth (coal and rare earth minerals) is stable, so that China does not split into several countries. This area is dominated by poor, foreign Islamic peoples, who are losing their sustenance level incomes from farming, due to environmental degradation.

China and Russia will also be hit terribly by global warming, starting in the next 10 years. The Chinese are already running low on water and all their potential sources of water are controlled by other hostile countries, which they have no water treaties with. China cannot even grow its own food, as only 10% of its land is arable. China and Russia have always been hostile to each other, Siberia is just North of China, and the Russians only have so many bullets.

China and Russia (independently) definitely will work to lower the status of America overseas in less overt ways like hacking into our computers, promoting Islamic Fundamentalism, and other information/psychological warfare tactics. The big driver of radical Islam comes from the official policy and political strategy of Saudi Arabia, who runs their country on the same ideology and uses the same tactics as ISIS.

ISIS is of little concern in Syria, as there is little to no oil there and nothing else of any value, but if ISIS crosses Jordan into Saudi Arabia, we will have a serious problem, as the Saudis share the same ideology, but the Saudi royal family would no longer be able to control their country, in that situation. None of the 9/11 hijackers came from Iraq; all of them came from Saudi Arabia or Yemen.

Currently the Iranians are doing a good job of holding back ISIS, as well as the Kurds in Iraq and I am

sure the US special forces are involved as well. ISIS is a very small group, but is very effective because of its PR tactics and that its soldiers are former Iraqi special forces, that served under Saddam Hussein, but now cross trained in terrorist tactics. Regular US troops deployed in Syria would be massacred.

The Military Way

The military was a really stressful situation for me, for an umber of reasons. The military seems to embody all the negatives of a large bureaucratic organization like a large company and at the same time it treats its people like they are on parole from prison.

My experience in the military was uniquely painful, because of my being a highly sensitive person and having a pre-disposed genetic tendency towards Schizophrenia. While what I have experienced is accurate and common, the vast majority of people who serve in the military come out without severe psychological trauma.

The military's failure with me was not realizing (even after I told them) that I was exhibiting the psychological symptoms of a person who should never have joined the military in the first place. I would be useless in combat (especially because I could not hit any of the targets even though I could see them well).

The US military place extreme emphasis on what they call discipline, which basically means doing exactly what you are told immediately without question. Everybody does everything the same way. You study the same skills you did during basic training, throughout your entire enlistment in the army, so that your actions become instinct. This is how we win wars.

Both the Roman and Alexander the Greats armies were so effective more because of their training and being able to work together quickly an uniformly than because of their weapons or other technology. The Europeans finally beat Asian armies once warfare technologies favored closely

coordinated action amongst large groups of soldiers over individual bravery.

We were never taught hand to hand combat in the Army, because the drill sergeants said that if it came down to that that we would lose the war. If the military was mostly interested in recruiting people with good aim and trained in firing weapons well they would recruit from street gangs and white supremacist groups.

An M-16, despite its continual need for maintenance and the ease at which it jams and becomes useless, its great strengths are that it is very accurate and very easy to learn to shoot accurately with, in a very short amount of time. The military taught us to conserve our ammunition, in what the military calls one shot, one kill.

Another basic strategy of the Army, from their experience in at least one war (I think it was especially true in the Battle of the Bulge in World War II) was that every soldier was an infantry soldier first and foremost and the speciality that you sign up for is a secondary, less fundamentally important skill. In this battle, they needed more soldiers than the ones that were technically infantry, so everyone fought in, even the chaplains and the veterinarians, and this was essential to our victory in that battle.

The military has its own culture, because recruits come from different cultures and so they learn a common, different culture which once they adjust to they can depend upon it working the same way at any US base in the world. This is the third important aspect of training besides the physical and mental and the one which I never adjusted to.

I am an unusual person, in that I was willing to bend, so that nobody felt the need to try to break me. Even though I did whatever I was told, without question or hesitation, every time, always gave 150% and passed all the physical and mental tests, I always was who I was and never thought to change that. I never changed the way I thought, so I never really fully psychologically adjusted to the military way of life.

My Military Training

The military also really never trains you. The military loves using trial by fire for almost any type of training. Training usually consists of throwing you into scary situation and seeing how you react under pressure and putting you through as much pain as a person can possibly take.

If you are not an officer, they treat you like a piece of meat and you have to do whatever they say no matter how demeaning or scary it is without question and without hesitation. The military does not tolerate any less than 150% always, no matter what the circumstances. Luckily, I never had torture training.

In the military, in your first few weeks or training they have you listen to videos about a bunch of different rules and procedures for everything from environmental ethics to STD protection. They had us fill out many forms. In the military, you do not fill out a form as it is before you are told how to fill out the form. For instance, you cross out the name field and enter your social security number and you leave most of it blank. I had the exact same form with the same font for my discharge paper that my grandfather had 50 years before.

They then tell us to drink a whole bunch of water and then they make us sit still and listen to these videos. They won't ever let you take notes, because they think that if you do so you are only doing it to goof around. Then they give all 60 of us 1 minute, to go to the bathroom, an hour later.

We usually only had 2 minutes to eat our entire meal and we had to yell out our complete name and social security number, before we were able to get food. They have soda pop and ice cream, but, if you take it, they punish the whole platoon later. When they turned the lights on at 4:30 am, you must get up that split second and do intense physical exercise for several hours, before you get to eat anything.

15 Years Celebration

When I go to the Veterans, it brings back the feelings I had during the military because the veterans are another kind of irrational bureaucracy. In the VA, like the Army, every thing is screwed up and although you are powerless to control your own fate, you need to be proactive about spotting when they screw things up, so you do not suffer more, as a result. One of the hardest things to do for me is to fill our forms, because I am very literal and the forms ask questions in such a way that I do not know how to answer them.

The Veterans make every attempt to use their services as slow, complicated, undocumented, confusing, unpredictable, obsolete, inaccessible, inadequate, and unqualified, in an attempt to get you to give up, so they can save money by not providing the services they are legally required too. The VA "only" has a budget of 300 billion dollars a year.

It takes acts of congress to get them to do anything. We call them on the phone and they are busy and we go down to the clinic and they are busy on the phone. It is now 2016 and we can barely order medicine online for only the last year or two. They still won't use email for anything. They often send a letter reminding me of an appointment after the appointment has already occurred. Where does the money go? We could give them 3 times the budget, if we bought 6 less F-22 stealth fighter aircraft.

Gas Chamber

One of the things that really downright terrified me was the gas chamber. The military does not use mustard gas, but rather tear, gas in a small room, with 50 people. They have good reason to do this, because it motivates soldiers to put on their mask, as quickly as possible, and it is a good way to detect if your protective mask is working properly. Most people dread this, but my experience was more sever for several reasons.

The first reason was that I can barely breather under heavy smoke, like in a sauna. I wrote that I had allergies and hay fever, on my medical entrance forms, but my recruiter ripped them up and said to

fill it out again without saying that. This is why you cannot enter the Army, if you have asthma.

Second, I have very sensitive skin and eyes. Third of all, we were the last platoon to enter the gas chamber and they added a stick of the tear gas every time a new group came in and we were the last, so we got a higher concentration.

You come in with your mask sealed up on your head and only your hands are bare. Your hands feel like they are on fire and someone's mask doesn't work and they start freaking out. Then you are told to take of your mask.

You are then in there for about 5 minutes, which feels more like a couple hours. You can't get out because there are only 2 entrances and a big drill sergeant was blocking either end. I felt like I was in hell and drowning in fire. Ironically, the drill sergeants with you inside did not take off their masks or complete chemical suits.

I was about to be let out and I asked if I could get out and then I was thrown to the back of the line for one or both of two reasons: they thought I wasn't opening my eyes wide enough as I have narrow almond shaped eyes and I had written in a letter to my parents regarding an incident between another drill sergeant and a young soldier. I criticized the drill sergeant, in the personal letter, which I found out later they read both for laughs and to monitor what was going on.

You are forced to do this, at least once a year, in the army and later in the open air, at what they called FTX, at the end of basic training. The commanding officer or first sergeant told us afterwards that if we didn't do properly at the rifle qualification range that we would be sent back to the gas chamber. I told my drill sergeant that I should leave the military, because I got too scared in the gas chamber, but the military likes fear, because it motivates people. They said I wouldn't have to deal with this in the rest of my military service in computers, which was not true.

Chemical Weapons

I had asked my recruiter, who claimed he was a US Army Ranger, and served in the first Persian Gulf war, about what the training was for what the Army calls NBC, which is basically the same as weapons of mass destruction. It stands for Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical weapons. Chemical weapons are basically either nerve agents or blistering agents that either burn you eyes and lungs or destroy your nervous system, which are very similar to insecticides. The blister agents like mustard gas are generally not fatal, just very painful.

They were invented in World War I, because the only way to escape machine gun fire is to dig trenches and they had long stalemates during world war I and so to force the soldier out of the trenches, they released mustard gas (because the gas was heavier than air) and then kill them with machine gun fire. A fox hole is like a portable trench.

The recruiter said that we do not have to worry about this, because no one uses them because there are international treaties every country has signed that state they will never use them. The problem with this explanation is that all the countries we will have any chance of fighting either never signed the treaty or were never had any intention of honoring it. Almost every country in the Middle East and Russia has huge stockpiles of these chemical weapons and have used them in a number of recent wars.

When the first troops went in, during both Iraqi wars, they were wearing what is called MOPP4 gear which means they wore chemical suits, gloves, boots, and masks. You don't usually wear these as the suits only last 6 hours and the masks 18 hours without new filters/canisters for the mask and fresh pants.

There are four problems with the suit. The suits are rubber and so make you very hot, fighting in a desert, which is one of the most common types of environments, in which many of our recent wars have been fought. There is no way to cool yourself off, without drinking a lot of water (which is very difficult to do, with the suit on) but if you need to go the bathroom, there is no way to even pee, without exposing your private parts, to chemical burns. It is also much harder to shoot accurately,

while in this rubber suit.

In both these Persian Gulf wars, the invading American troops wore these suits, because they felt there was a high chance of the US Army being exposed to these chemical weapons. Therefore, the recruiter would have remembered this very vividly, which was only 4 years prior. He lied. After the gas chamber, I finally realized what the military was like, but could not get out, at that time.

Military Lies

I found out, over time, that almost every benefit you are claimed you get were all not going to happen, for various reasons, which were designed to be that way, because of the policies the military decided on, even though it would cost very little money.

The military is a worse job then being a janitor or fast food worker, because you get very little money, none of the benefits they claim, and you never really have time of. The military is extremely hard on you physically, once you get out of training, almost every job is on the front lines (even dental or chaplain), and you are exposed to toxic chemical, in almost every field you can get a job, in the army.

You do mostly janitorial work, even with the most advanced jobs available, and many of these jobs have no civilian equivalency. You have no rights and are subject to extremely brutal punishments for minor infractions (plus you get all the civilian penalties, in addition), you cannot leave under any circumstances and are almost guaranteed to be called back, whenever there is a war. It is very difficult to get an honorable discharge, because there are several other types of discharges, between honorable and dishonorable and only honorable discharges get any government benefits.

Solutions to Army Problems and Terrorism

15 Years Celebration

The things the army needs to do to make the soldiers lives more bearable is to at least double the pay for non-officers, provide enough firepower and ammunitions to protect soldier, going out of range of the main army, with few people, all alone, be reasonable about punishments, let the soldiers leave after their tour is up and do not call them back, and offer a transition service to get them adjusted back to life among civilians.

If we need to take part in a major war, we need to draft every American and everyone who votes for the war can show up the next day at Basic Training as enlisted soldiers. This will cut down on the federal budget, because wars will be much more rare, when congressmen and senators have to serve on the front lines. None of the wars for the last 50 years, that we fought in, made life better, for anyone, in any part of the world.

Being a superpower, with huge amounts of natural resources, oceans away from any enemies, some of the lowest population densities, and armed to the teeth should not be afraid of terrorists, that kill less people then toddlers do with guns. If we are so afraid of death, we should look to eating more healthy and driving more safely - that would be rational. The use of terrorism will continue, because our response to it is what weakens us.

If the terrorists could get nuclear weapons, they would have done so by now. We totally destroyed Al Queda, but now have bred ISIS. In the process, we turned our country into a police state, that we fought World War II and the Cold War, to prevent, as well as destroyed our economy, trying to destroy an idea.

Terrorism is a last ditch resort, for an enemy, that cannot hurt you, in any direct way. It is more effective, for the amount of money it takes, because warfare is only hard because they are shooting back at you. Attacking a soft target, like children, requires little effort, because they cannot defend themselves. The very same reason why we say terrorism is unfair and how much we vow to destroy terrorists is the exact reason why our enemies will continue to us terrorism to bankrupt us.

Many empires throughout history have spent too much money on wars and destroyed themselves, in the process. Any country with enough money can afford the greatest weapons and army, because the highest tech weapons make other weapons obsolete, but also cost exponentially more. Empires usually fail from within, not due to an external enemy. Terrorism is psychological warfare and only works if it cripples your economy and changes your way of life.

How the US Army Should Change Training

On the flip side, Army training is way too easy to prepare a person for battle. Running 2 miles and doing 50 push-ups does not get a soldier into good enough shape to survive in combat. I thought that Army training would be more difficult, but I obviously did not rise to the occasion - I should have failed out and I realized this and communicated this to my Drill Sergeant, at the time.

Watching a TV documentary show one time about the Russian special forces, one of the Spetsnaz soldiers said that in combat you do not rise to the occasion, but rather sink to your lowest level of training. Russian regular army recruits are beat to an inch of their lives, in training, and maybe this is better, in the long run.

One of the hardest things to do physically is what the Army calls get up and get down. You stand up and then get down in push-up position and then get back up again as fast as you can. This is the kind of training that the Army should focus on for physical fitness levels needed in combat.

In another documentary, I learned that American Army Special Forces training teaches recruits how to deal with lose-lose situations. Marines, in my advanced training, said that war was 80% boredom and 20% terror. In warfare, there are not any good solutions - there are only bad and worse decisions. No one really wins wars, unless one group destroys the other economically, after the war, to improve their economy. Unless you want to deal with occupying the land and the people, starting a war is pointless.

Our drill sergeants explained in detail why they most of the things they did, that we didn't like. Basic Training could be done in a community college settings, but the point of basic training and especially Drill Sergeants yelling at you is designed to see how you respond to what they call combat stress. Basic Training is designed to be more about mental than physical training and is a kind of psychological test, to see if you can mentally survive in combat.

The skills we learned in basic training are called combat survival skills and mean exactly that. I remember one soldier taking a test where you plug in a phone and then switch it on and she failed the test, even though she was a college graduate in accounting and was very bright. People that do good in the military usually do worse in real life and vice versa, because the army is good at motivating people but some people break down under high stress situations, where others thrive in them. Any Army Training isn't intellectually difficult, as many skills are on elementary school level intellectual levels, but doing something under stress is an entirely different skill.

6.3.2. Veteran's Story

Definition of Word Veteran

Most people know, that the same word can have more than one meaning, and the meaning is different in a different context, even if spelled and pronounced the same, at least in modern English. What many people don't know is that many words we use, in a common speech have very different meanings, in another domain.

The abbreviation ED means erectile dysfunction, in medical usage, but means emotionally disturbed, in education. Computer terms are often used, for similar metaphors as in common usage, like the words file or file folder. A file outside computers usually means a file folder and, outside computers, we refer to a file as a document.

The same situation occurs in the terminology, in the military, as opposed to common usage. When referring to veterans, in common usage, this term was often used to mean people, who served in a

war, in the past. In the modern US military and government, veteran means something slightly different.

Many people do not know that the Veterans Administration is NOT part of the Department of Defense or the military. The Veterans Affairs its own cabinet level department, with its own secretary. A veteran, in the U.S. military and government, does not mean someone, in the military, that has served a tour or served during a war.

A veteran is a civilian, who once served, in any branch of the military, in peace or war. Once you leave the military, with a discharge, you are no longer part of the military: you are then a veteran. The Veterans Administration has no power over anyone, veterans or others, unless you work for them. The VA is there to provide services, for eligible veterans.

Veterans Administration

The Veterans Administration gets 300 billion dollars a year and their main objective is to make it so long and difficult, to get through their bureaucracy, that veterans just give up, and they do all this, to save a few bucks. Recently, the VA got in trouble, for not treating someone in time and they died, as a result. The government looked into and saw that the VA was lying, in its records, about how long the wait to get seen was.

The VA managers response was that they all immediately quit and so the Veterans are even farther behind, because now the doctors and other staff have to rotate the position of manager, amongst themselves, in addition to their normal duties. One big mistake of the Veterans is that they have, unlike the U.S. Military, off base, created their own parallel medical system.

Veterans Pension

15 Years Celebration

I am 100% disabled veteran and get a full pension, but one of the conditions is that I have to let someone else manage my income. My mom volunteered and they agreed, but refused to pay her for it. We had an accountant do the actual bill paying. The veterans have a paranoia, that people like me will be cheated, by our families, so they harassed my mom so much about it, that she finally had to stop doing it.

The Veterans then assigned me someone we never heard of, from a small town, hours away and we don't even know her address. I have to pay out of my pension double what the accountant charged, for doing less. My mom had to give access to all my accounts and had to give all my savings bonds to this unknown person with no way to verify this was even the right person. We never saw this person before and I might see her once a year, at the most. We still don't even even know her address.

The first few months, she didn't pay the electrical bill and, if I did not see the flyer on my door, they would have cut off my heat and electricity, in the middle of the winter. This cannot be good for my credit score. She had trouble opening a PDF attachment, sent my ID across email unencrypted, and was using free wifi, to do my banking, before I thought to tell her not to.

To make sure the bill gets paid, I had to get her to set up all my bills, to auto pay. I don't get any of my bills, so I am unsure if they are charging for services I don't want to pay for. If I ever have problems, with my cell phone or cable, I have to get half the informative from her. I never know whose address or phone number is on file. This lady also pays everything via E-checks, which are obsolete, unsecure, and widely unsupported.

Veterans Administration Hospitals and Clinics

I am in the largest city, for over a hundred miles and a regional center, for medicine, in many areas, especially eye surgery. They are so big, wealthy, and diversified that they not only serve as a hospital, they have dozens of giant buildings, for different specialties, on their campus. They are so

big and important, that they even teach medicine, to people becoming nurses, in the community.

One of the big draws to my city, from other parts of Oregon, besides the colleges in town, is that we are a regional center for medicine. The problem with the Veterans Administration hospital, for the area, is that they located it, in a tiny town, hours away from my city. There is transportation there, by a bus, but it is not operated by the VA, but by a Veteran's charity. They will take you to this Veteran's hospital, but you have to get an early morning appointment and you have to schedule it months in advance.

To make sure you don't miss the bus back, you have to hurry over to the Veteran's charity office, right after your appointment and wait for several hours there. If you miss the bus back, you have to stay overnight there, until you can get a ride back and you might have to wait several days, to get an opening.

The place they have you stay in, if you stay overnight, is right next to the place where the mentally ill are committed, to the psychiatric ward. You have to share the room, with other people, and there is no place set up for securing valuables.

I left that area early in the morning, I was then locked out, and could not get back in. I was almost stuck, in a courtyard, for hours, in the early morning, except that luckily for me, one person had accidentally left open the courtyard gate, which was hard to find in the dark.

There is a veterans clinic, in my town, but not a hospital. This clinic is only open business days and during regular business hours. They shut down after 5pm and are not open on the weekends or federal holidays. Ironically, they are also closed on Veteran's Day and Memorial Day.

If I need a to get to the hospital, or to the doctor, within 3 weeks, even to the clinic, I have to travel by car, for several hours, to get there. You have to call in and the nurse, who has to call you back later, that day or the next day then determines how quickly you get in, or if you even get in at all, for

that problem.

If you want to get the veterans, to pay, for your doctor visit, if you have to get in another hospital, because you need to get to see a doctor, in less than in 3 weeks, you have to get pre-authorization from the nurse. The nurse is only available during office hours and often takes a day or two, to call back and give you an answer.

My Experiences with VA Medical System

If you do not get approved, before your doctor's visit, they refuse to pay the visit, even though they are legally responsible, for all my medical bills, regardless of source. We called before hand a few times and never got authorized, so we finally give up. If I get an infection now or anything that needs treatment, in under 3 weeks, I have to now go to the urgent care and pay the entire bill myself, without any insurance.

They only have dental visit appointments available every few years, so I go to a private dentist and pay 100% myself, with no insure, even though I am legally guaranteed dental care, by the Veterans. One time, we asked for a dentist, which was in a hospital, a few hours away, they told us to see our own dentist and refused to pay for it.

At one point, we had to go to our US Congressman, for our district, to get an antidepressant, when I was in crisis. We ended up going all the way to the emergency room, hours away and they still would not prescribe an antidepressant for me. I still had to wait 3 weeks, to get in.

I have had sinus and other infections, so I was forced to use a local private urgent care, to get seen, before the infection killed me. I had to pay 100% myself, even though I am legally entitled, to get my entire health care provided, for free, by the VA.

The Veterans hospital is a huge facility, with many buildings, but they only seem to use one and there are hundreds of people and only a couple doctors, in the entire building. They have no problem spending huge amounts of money building things veterans will never use, but are too cheap to hire an adequate number of doctors.

When you see the doctor, in the Veterans, it is really a nurse practitioner, not a real doctor. If I have any medical attention, that needs to be treated, within a month, I have to go the local private hospital emergency room, or urgent care. I then have to pay for everything, out of pocket and get no insurance, to cover it. I pay all of the bill solely by myself.

My First Surgery

I recently had my first surgery. It was to pull out a spherical piece of tissue, much like a rubber ball, in consistency. It grew to 2cm in size, just below my left knee socket. I had to use the Veterans Administration medical system. The knee is doing better than before, after just 2 weeks.

The bad side is that it took 6 months, to get the surgery. I also got a 4 different diagnoses, from 2 doctors and 2 nurse practitioners, along the way. I had to go to 4 different locations, sometimes hours away, for each one, and this was dragged, out over 6 months.

If I had cancer, I could have been dead, by then, and the tumor could have grown or shrunk, to an entirely different size. After they got the MRI, 1 doctor and 1 nurse practitioner misread the MRI, as they did not bother to pan through the entire 3d space. Luckily, there was an orthopedic surgeon there, the last day they were diagnosing the problem, or else the Veterans would have never found the lump.

Also, even the hospital, hours away, didn't have the ability, to perform even basic surgeries, so we had to travel even farther, in the opposite direction, outside my regional VA system, to get the surgery. The ER doctor, at this farther away VA hospital, had a hard time understanding me and had

a thick accent from India. He had no records of all my medicines and didn't bother to write down all of them.

VA Medical Software

When I go into the office, for an appointment, they want me to use a computer, to log in, although there is a person, that does the same thing. The computer asks 20-30 different screens of directions and keeps asking for my date of birth and if my address has changed. I find this very stressful.

When I call, on the phone, they give what appears to be an answering machine message. If you know to wait past all the long winded message, including repeating over and over suicide hotline numbers and telling to call 911, if it is an emergency, you can possibly reach an actual person.

The medical software they use only runs on Windows XP and logs the doctor or nurse out every 15 minutes. At the farther away hospital, the doctor had to log on to a text only terminal and kept getting reminded, to check his mail, 5 times, while he attempted to set up an appointment. When I go to the nurse practitioner, for a number of years, half the time the medical software was not working, so they didn't record any information.

The doctor or nurse randomly records things I say when, at the VA mental health nurse practitioner. The nurse then scans through, to random times, to things a previous nurse practitioner wrote down years ago. I get a new nurse practitioner every few years and they know nothing about my case.

VA Diagnostic Practices

They often think I am manic, because I talk fast (because I think fast), so they keep on asking to put me on Lithium. I finally did so and was on it for several months and noticed no difference, except my

coordination became so bad, that I kept poking myself in the eye.

When your major symptoms are paranoia and depression, this only fits Paranoid Schizophrenia, not Bipolar or Schizoaffective Disorders. Also, everyone actually qualified to diagnose me have all agreed, that I have Paranoid Schizophrenia, and not any other disorder. All of these doctors (psychiatrists) are absolutely sure of it. That is also my official diagnosis, for my veterans pension.

The reoccurring underline problem is that these nurse practitioners and doctors have very little understanding of mental illness. Oftentimes, I am scared, by the fact, that I may know more about mental illness, than them. The only thing they do, to help, is reorder my medicines. If I did not know as much about Schizophrenia, as I do, I would not know how to cope with the illness, on an even basic level.

The nurses constantly want to change my medicines. If you get on the wrong anti-depressant, you can suffer terribly, for weeks or months, to find the right one and right amount. Medicines also have some extreme side effects.

Most anti-psychotic medicines make you very tired, make you never feel full (no matter how much you eat). They also almost directly cause diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. One side effect I had, when changing my anti-psychotic, was that I lost control of my bowels. This was not fun to clean up. It was literally a mess.

VA Medicine Prescriptions and Pharmacy

The medicine is all screwed up. Even the regional center, although technically having a pharmacy, stocks no medicine and you cannot get you prescription filled from them. Some medicines I have a huge backlog of and others I get barely enough. They have no way of getting auto renewal, of long term medications. I have to manually renew them, each month.

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Recently, they moved this from calling a phone number, to the website, as this was mandated, by legislation. When I first signed up, I was told I can do it at home, by myself. I had to fill out my name, social security number, and date of birth. The computer said one of these in incorrect, but I could sign up for a non-pro account. I found out later this account level would not allow me, to order my medicine or provide any functionality, that was actually needed. I had to go to the Veterans office, to get authorized or approved.

At one point, when I had to go to the office, because I got an answering machine, when I called, to reorder my medicine. This is necessary, because I can only refill my medicine, for a few months, and then it needs to be reordered and it cannot be reordered, by myself or online.

I went in there and asked the secretary there, who was on the phone, with someone else. He said that he saw me on "secure messaging". I said that I never messaged him, as I never used instant messaging. I finally figured out that "secure messaging" meant filling out an order form online. No one else uses these terms this way, in the entire computer industry.

One of medicines I take for PRN is a variant of Valium, which I use less than 5 times a year. It knocks me out 45 minutes, after taking it, and it can be very addictive. The Veterans order 30 of these every month and, if I took them that often, I would both never wake up and be addicted to the medicine I still don't know what to do, with all these bottles, filled with medication, I won't ever use.

I don't stop ordering it, because if I need the medicine, for an emergency, they won't let me take it if it is expired and I have to wait 3 weeks to get in and get it reordered. I still need it, but would prefer to be subscribed 30 a year, which would be plenty. The big reason for this medicine is that there is no quick acting anti-depressant. If I am in crisis and suffering severe depression I can at least get some sleep with this PRN.

Psychiatric Treatment and Discrimination of the Mentally Ill

If you ever say you are severely depressed, they put you in kind of jail cell and make you wait a while. They then evaluate whether or not they are going force lock you up. As long as you talk really slowly and say the right things, you will get out in couple hours.

But there is no fast acting anti-depressant. If you go in for treatment of depression, the doctors response is to lock you up, against your will. I don't know why the hospitals think this will improve my depression, anymore than putting a prisoner, in solitary confinement, will improve his depression.

It comes down to avoiding lawsuits and treating the mentally ill, as the problem, to others safety. People assume the mentally ill commit violent crimes when, in reality, they are most likely the victims of violent crimes. Everybody with a different gender or skin color is legally protected, by law, from discrimination, but nobody mentally ill is protected. People are worried about being prejudiced, because of skin color, but go out of their to target and lock people up, who have another kind of genetic difference.

If a person developmentally disabled does obnoxious things, that is a normal response, for that condition, everybody goes out of their way, to help out and lift them up, and encourage them. If someone mentally ill does something normal for someone to do, with that condition, they make them a scapegoat, make laws targeting their safety, make lists of them, hunt them down, and lock them up.

This targeting and scapegoating of the mentally ill is done by both present day liberal and conservative nationalist ideologues in American businesses, media, and government agencies. They are looking to unite the country, by creating a common enemy. This is done for the same kind of baseless and ignorant reasons the NAZIs persecuted Jewish people, during World War II.

The mentally ill are targeted, because they are a convenient, politically correct, and weak constituency. The mentally ill have little ability to articulate their perspective or build enough money or bring together a large and powerful enough base, to resist these knee jerk reactionary policies.

These policies are based on no more than fear and ignorance, which is not tolerated by other analogous groups.

Local Treatment of Mentally Ill

The problem with our perception by the public is that it is much easier for someone who is blind, transgender, or developmentally disabled and their families, to advocate for their communities.

Our local government lumps together people with disabilities, along with LGBTQ, and people of color, into one group and this group is there to represent people, from all those different areas. The committee was lead by a person, whose qualification was that she was gay, and almost every member of the committee was blind.

I heard about this committee, I visited one of their sessions, and could have possibly gotten on it, but the main thing I wanted changed was to increase bus service times and routes, which they had no control over. I also find it stressful having to go to the same meeting, even once a month.

So the local government is spending a huge amount of money, installing electronic talking street crossing guides. Nothing is being done for the mentally ill.

One of the big, supposed advocacy groups, for the mentally ill and homeless, that oversees low income housing, in our community, won't let anyone, who has been a recipient of their services ever work, or even volunteer for them. They won't even allow the mentally to scrub their toilets for them.

I was not even allowed to volunteer for them, after I used there services, which made me feel worthless and like a piece of trash, that they wanted to get rid of. They obviously don't care about anyone, but themselves, which is ironic, since they are a charity group. This group also takes private and government money and the community is not aware of these policies. The community would be

shocked, if they heard of these policies.

6.3.3. Surgery Process

This last July, I was getting out of the shower, I straightened my leg and it felt like it popped and was painful. I waited a few days and it did not get better. I then went to a local urgent care, as I cannot get into the Veterans clinic, in less than 3 weeks. The doctor, at the urgent care, gave me some exercises to do and I set up an appointment with the Veterans.

At the Veterans, they set me up, for an appointment, with a specialist, in orthopedics and told me to take Alieve, for 2 weeks. I went to the specialist, which was a few hours away, at the Veterans hospital. He was a former surgeon and had somewhere between 20 and 30 years of experience doing surgeries and was only at the veterans hospital 2 days a week, as he was retired. He even knew most of the orthopedic surgeons, in the state, by their first names. They took an x-ray of the knee and he moved my leg around, to see what was limiting my movement. He said I had a torn meniscus.

We then scheduled an MRI, for a few weeks later. He claimed I would only be in the machine, up to my waist and it would only take a few minutes. He said that it would be pretty open, because they have to make it big, because people today are so fat.

I ended up being in the machine, up to my neck and was in there for 30-60 minutes. There was no opening. After the doctor/surgeon got the results of the MRI, he said that it confirmed what he thought. He was sure I needed surgery.

A few months later, we went in the other direction, a few hours away, to a different Veterans hospital, as that Veterans hospital in my region could not even perform basic surgeries. A nurse practitioner looked at the MRI and said I didn't need surgery and that my knee just became stiff, because of a lack of exercise. The surgeon was there, at the time (completely different person than before), so the nurse practitioner then asked, for a second opinion, from him.

The surgeon panned through the entire knee, as the nurse practitioner only looked at the top part and we saw a big white ball, that obviously shouldn't be there, right under the knee socket. The surgeon said I did need surgery, but I did not have a torn meniscus. He said I had a growth, like a rubber ball, below my knee and needed to have it removed, to get full movement of my knee and avoid getting tendinitis, for the rest of my life. He said they have done surgeries for this before and, while they had no idea what caused this, less than one percent of patients had it grow back, after surgery. He was almost positive it was not cancerous, either.

We scheduled the pre-op, for a few weeks later. The pre-op is when you tell the nurse and doctors all the medicines you take and any relevant issues you have, that the surgeon and/or anesthesiologist need to know. You also get directions, for what to do before and after surgery. One of my main issues was that I was and am on anti-psychotics, which are very similar to old anesthesia.

They said the anesthesia works different now and that would not be a problem. I also told them I had restless leg syndrome, so they needed to tie my knee down. I had bad acid reflux, so they should keep my head raised. Finally, I am very sensitive to chemicals, so I asked them to avoid using cleaners, around me while, I am out. These other issues they told me to tell the surgeon and anesthesiologist, just before the surgery.

When I came back for the surgery, I stayed, at a hotel, overnight, with my parents, because we were hours away, the surgery was scheduled for the morning, and I had to have someone else pick me up and drive me back. The veterans offered to pay for my hotel, but they would not pay for my parents. The room they set up was going to have 3 people, but only 2 beds.

One of the hardest things you have to do, before surgery is that you cannot drink, eat, or take any medicines, after midnight, the night before. I woke up, a few hours after midnight, due to acid reflux and could not take any anti-acid. Because of this, I went to the emergency room, to see what they could do.

They gave me some liquid antacid, that I could only gargle and could not swallow and gave me a peppermint flavored sponge, to help keep me mouth more moist. One of the things I thought to do, which helped, a little, was to continue to rinse out my mouth with water and then spit it out. The reason why you cannot eat or drink has to do with the anesthesia. You can suffocate, under anesthesia, if you have eaten or drunk the night before.

Later that morning, they put my in a room, with many other patients, took away all my clothes and belongings, and made me put on a very thin gown, with the entire back open. They then put in the IV, in the upper part of my hand, jus above my thumb and it hurt somewhat. If you have to go to the bathroom, then, be sure you remember, to carry your IV bag, so you don't rip it out. The good part about the IV is no matter what they put into you later on, they never again inject you with a needle.

I then saw the anesthesiologist and the surgeon and explained the situations, that they should be aware. The anesthesiologist said the anesthesia totally paralyzes you and you have no memory or awareness of the surgery, during or afterwards. They wheel you into a different room, with about 5 doctors and nurses.

They put a rubber mask on you have to breathe through it, a little bit. The smell is terrible, but the mask was not hard, to breathe through, for me, because it reminded me of the gas masks you use in the military, so it made me feel safe. Then, just before you lose consciousness, it feels like they are smothering you.

The next thing you know is that you are wheeled into a new room. You are quite drowsy, but there is no pain and the surgery is finished. I came out of the anesthesia very fast. It usually takes a number of hours, to fully regain consciousness. They then put you in a wheel chair and give you a special kind of icepack. You can eat and drink all you want, shortly after you fully come out of the anesthesia.

At this point, the biggest concerns are keeping your knee from swelling and keeping it from getting

infected. I worried about breaking open the staples, by moving the knee too much, but the surgeon said that is not a problem, because the staples were not holding anything in and there was no pressure on them.

Later that evening, when I got home, the knee started hurting a huge amount. That first day, even with the Oxycontin, it felt like someone took a crow bar and was smashing my knee, as hard as they could, with it. For the next few days, it was quite painful, even with the Oxycontin. Another thing, to keep the pain down, make sure you ice the knee, all the time. It was very hard to get my knee comfortable, while sleeping. The first few days you cannot get water on the knee, or take a shower.

If you are using a wheel chair, you need a huge amount of space, to turn around in, and your arms will get really tired, really fast. Try to avoid bending your knee too much, or straightening it too much, as it is very painful. Use a walker and stop using the wheelchair, as soon as possible. The problem, with using the wheel chair, is that getting on or off it, you have to turn, at an angle and this can easily cause a lot of pain. Also, when in the wheelchair, avoid bumping your foot into anything, as this makes the knee hurt a lot.

I had the surgery, on December 15th, and, by a week later, I could walk with a walker. By Christmas Day, I could walk with just a cane. Within 2 weeks, I could walk 2 miles, on it. After Christmas, I stopped taking the Oxycontin or any other pain medicine. At that point, the main problem was that my knee had lost muscle, after not using it for 6 months, and so I needed, to use the cane, for a while.

A week after surgery, they pull out the staples, which doesn't hurt at all. Then they clean the area, with antiseptic, which feels like cleaning the gravel, out of a wound, where you skinned you knee. Then they put on strips of tape, which you take off, I think, a week later.

By the 3rd week, my incision was turning light purple and fading to just a scar. After 3 weeks, I can now walk better, than I could, before the surgery. After 2 weeks, I got almost complete range of

motion restored, on my knee. I am going to have to do physical therapy, to get the rest of the range of motion back.

6.4. Growing Up

6.4.1. Insights from Childhood

I was Odd

One of the reasons I did so well, after developing Schizophrenia, was that my childhood was happy and healthy. It was also an odd childhood, because I was odd. I read encyclopedias and maps in middle and high school; I was in 3 sports in high school, but was terrible at all of them; I was involved in 12 extracurricular activities at one time; and I started my own club.

Normal Childhood

But everything my parents did for me was done very well and helped me be balanced and stable. they made sure I participated in Boy and Cub Scouting, sports (I did Cross Country, Track and Field, and Cheerleading), learned how to do catering, and was in advanced classes in school. The one thing, that still bothers me, of what my parents did to me, as a kid, was that they spanked me.

Social Values

My family is several generations behind in terms of social values. When I grew up, my parents required us to address them, as Sir and Mam. My parents required us, to do what they told us immediately and without question. We had to do chores, like weeding the garden, and cleaning the house, especially in the summer. We were also expected to work hard. We could only watch TV after we finished our homework. One of the worse things you could do was lie. We were always spanked

for that. The spankings were especially painful, as my dad used a special kind of wood, that he made for a living, that was as strong as steel.

Parenting Style

One of the things my parents did, that was really wise, was to gradually let us have more and more freedom, as we got older. Too many parents and the legal system these days expect kids to grow up, in a day, as they cannot get in trouble at all, and then when they have a birthday and then nothing is tolerated. What is allowed in schools verses what is allowed in schools verses what is allowed at a typical job are night and day.

Religion

One of my parents strengths and the greatest gift they gave me was a love of God, scripture, and theology. Both my parents went to a Christian college, where they met, and so knew the Bible very well. My parents faith was one of the few things they had in common as they had opposite personalities. I grew up in a really interesting church, which we went to every Sunday, that was very much a paradoxical, as half the church was Evangelical and the other half was Mainline Protestant.

Education

My parents encouraged me, to read as much, as possible, and develop a love of learning. We were expected, to get at least Bs, in every subject (and they considered this lenient). I was very good, at writing papers and tests, but I rarely did homework. I thought of much of school as indoctrination and had little interest in studying what we learned in school. But, just like I understood that God and the Bible are not the same as the local church, I realized that learning and school were not necessarily related.

Community Service

Another thing I learned growing up was a duty and a desire to give back to others, as I was treated well and was gifted in numerous areas. The source of this example was mostly Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. I later staffed at several summer camps and became an Eagle Scout (the highest rank/award in Boy Scouts). In Boy Scouts, you do not advance in rank, if you do not do community service and becoming an Eagle Scout involves planning and leading a large service project.

Personality

When I was in Middle School and High School, I was fairly immature and silly, but after a week in Basic Training, I was dead serious about everything I did, until very recently. I didn't put this together, until recently, but I now know, that my silliness was my way of coping with an anger problem. In school, I was very friendly and out going, but later became more sensitive and emotional, after the military. My family on both sides have a public and private self, where we tend to be easy going in public, but in private we are high strung.

6.4.2. Self Improvement

This may sound funny and hard to understand, for people who know me, but self improvement stresses me out. I do try to improve myself, but whenever I decide to work on learning something, that I am bad at, I get discouraged very easily. One of the big motivations for the activities I got involved with in High School and one of the major reasons why I joined the military was to improve my abilities in activities, that I did not do well at. These experiences were some of the things that emphasized the importance of humility for me: failure.

The list of my activities in Middle School and High School was a list of things I have little ability in: Boy

15 Years Celebration

Scouts (summer camp counselor and finally Eagle Scout), long distance running (cross country and track), cheerleading, speech and debate, peer counseling, French, viola and trombone (in Middle School), and shop (in Middle School). Even one of my favorite classes, English literature, was not exactly an optimal topic for me, as I did not like Shakespeare and did not want to learn about Greek mythology, as it was, from my point of view, basically demonology.

One of the things that made me so bad at these activities was that I was involved in way too many things at once. My junior year of high school, I was involved in 12 extracurricular activities, at once. I was a terribly irresponsible student, as I rarely did homework, partly because I was so tired, after Cross Country or Track practice. I was constantly late to classes, as well. I had been late so many times, I had to stop out of Track my senior year and do Saturday schools, to make up for my late arrivals. I also missed about 10 days each semester, due to extracurricular activities.

One of the major reasons why I joined the military and went enlisted was that my parents could not afford to pay for my college tuition. My dad made about the same I do now, adjusted for inflation, but had to support 2 kids and a wife. He worked in the mill for 12 years, and, when I was going to Middle School, went back to school, to become a teacher and later became a school administrator. One of the things that really impresses me about my dad is that he constantly improves himself. He has made himself a much better person and put huge effort into mastering not only his job but improving his understanding of me and just general self improvement.

The other major reason why I joined the military and went enlisted was that my grades were not high enough, to get any scholarships. ROTC is a program in the military, where you train to be an officer, while you are going to college and the military pays for your college tuition, and then you serve a certain number of years in the military, after college, as an officer - I think it was 6 or 8 years. I needed a higher GPA, than I had in high school, to get into this program. There is another kind of ROTC, which you get less money for, but you can do after you start going to college, that has much lower requirements - I had a friend that became an officer that way.

I did the same in college. I majored in business administration, with a minor in Chinese. Later, I found

out I could not learn Chinese fast enough, to pass the class and I both hated business classes and was terrible at them. I had to take accounting (the basic book keeping required class for business majors) 5 times, to pass it. I ended up finding out I liked and was good at philosophy, as I took Chinese Literature, because I was studying Chinese and I used it for my business breadth requirement.

I had not passed so many classes, that I had to take some in the summer, and some of the few, that were still available were an Existentialism class and a class about Ecofeminism. Later, I switched my major to journalism, but could not figure out the grammar class. Just before I was supposed to take a grammar test, for Journalism, I had my psychotic episode and ended up, voluntarily, in the psych ward, of a local private hospital. I was then diagnosed with Paranoid Schizophrenia.

I decided, after that, to focus on things I was good at and that is why I pursued learning about the humanities, which was my favorite class in high school and included my favorite activity in high school: Model United Nations. I was always interested in religion and history, as many of the books I read were non-fiction and I even the fiction I did read was often historical novels.

I always was very religious, partly because of my parents, but also because of my personality and spiritual sensitivity. I always enjoyed crafts, like we did in Cub Scouts, which is likely why I enjoy web design. I was also good at writing, as I won the first prize in my state for a Peace Essay Contest in high school and usually got As in my advanced literature classes.

When I have tried learning something I was bad at, since then, I have always failed and gave it up, after being really stressed out and later felt bad about it. I tried going back to college (local community college, local university, local Christian liberal arts college, and local Bible college), learning another language (Chinese and programming languages including C++, Perl, and Javascript), and I tried learning to play the guitar. I have read a number of self help books, to understand how I think better and improve my ability, to communicate, to others. I also read more books about ideas I strongly disagreed with.

I tried many activities, to meet others, like Church young adult groups, volunteering (as technical support for an ISP, web design for non-profits, and a local music venue) a writing group in town, speech club, and other things like that. One of the things that really stresses me out is having to do things repeatedly, over and over again. Some other major things that stresses me out is having to finish something, by a certain time or having to do work, on the same thing, every day.

6.4.3. Sources of Obsession with Humility

Let me begin by saying that I realize the following is not completely rational, nor is there a clear chain of cause and effect. The following is written from an emotional perspective. Much of my written work is about humility, but it has been tough to trace down where the obsession started with me. One important thing to remember first is that humility is associated with failure and submission (also in Taoism, Sufism, and Christianity). Jesus Christ was the only truly humble person and the most understandable aspect of God (although also fully God, in His own right).

I obviously was obsessed, with humility, after my experiences, in the military, from the very beginning of training. After going through basic training, I had absolutely no interest, in ever being a leader, of anything or anyone. I understood, from then on, the importance of unions and the labor movement. I would never vote conservative again.

But this all started, before then, because I had no interest, in joining the Marines, because I could not stand their arrogance (and I didn't think I could make it through their training). The Army appealed to me most, as I saw it as the everyman's branch, of the military services. The key to me understanding where this started was to first think of anyone, who made me extremely repulsed, because of their arrogance.

But, I could not find any, in middle school or high school, and I also enjoyed high school quite a bit, so I instead started looking, for internal reasons. I remember a key realization, while in the military, about how I constantly chose endeavors, that improved myself and I constantly ran into failure, so I decided, in the future, to focus only on things I was good at. I now still take on challenging projects,

but they are in areas where I am good enough - they are difficult, but still achievable by me.

I saw high school and specifically clubs, as I way to improve myself, so that I could get an edge, in getting into college and then the workforce. I remember my absolute failure at speech, cross country and track, French, and to a large extent Boy Scouting (although I did eventually become an Eagle Scout and staffed at several summer camps). One of the reasons, for my failures, was that I was doing too many activities and did not spend enough time, on some of them, to do better than I did.

I was actually good, at several things including: writing, politics, and international relations (I actually started my own political club and I won the first place, in state, for a national peace essay contest, and was one of the youngest ones, to do so, in the nation, that year). In one of my first research projects, was when I first studied philosophy and my favorite class, in high school, was a humanities class. I found out much later on, that I was good at acting too, but I did not get the first part I tried for, so I did not continue that.

The failure was not lifelong and it happened, again, after I was unable to complete my military enlistment and my bachelor's degree. This was what drew me to Taoism, which I first discovered in my Chinese Literature. This was also when I first found out, that I liked Asian philosophy and religion.

I took Chinese literature, because I was trying to learn Chinese, at the time, (which didn't work well for me, as I could not learn the vocabulary fast enough) and also needed a breadth requirement, for my business major (and literature was one of my favorite subjects in high school). I was actually pretty good at economics, but I had a real tough time with basic accounting/book keeping, although I did better at the managerial aspects of accounting.

I also started to learn about web design and Linux, about this time. I hated business, but I believed I could get a good job, with a BA in Business Management. Later on, I switched to Journalism. Shortly after this, I was first diagnosed, with Schizophrenia, and ended up, in the psychiatric ward, of a local

private hospital, voluntarily. I have not been to a psychiatric hospital, since then and have lived, with less and less help, and for a number of years, with very little assistance. My parents don't even live, in the same city, as I do.

My outlook on life would have been much different, if I decided not to go, into the military enlisted (non-Officer), or had decided not, to go into the military, at all. One of the motivations, for going into the military, was to pay for college and even though I was only in the military, for 13-1/2 months, I actually earned enough for college, so that I have never been in debt. If I had not been approved, as a disabled veteran, with a 100% service connected disability with a 100% pension, until a few months later (from June 2001), I would have been forced to re-enlist in the military (following the terrorist attacks on September 1st, 2001) and would likely still be in the military now.

One of the big factors, in making my time, in college, not much fun had to do with my constant allergy caused pink eye, which I had since the end of basic training, in the military. 10% of my veteran's disability still comes from that. Most of the pain was lifted, after getting on my first ant-psychotic, for a couple week, after I was first diagnosed with Paranoid Schizophrenia (many times allergies are affected greatly by stress).

6.5. My Recent Past

6.5.1. The Beginning of the Website, the Studies, and the Books

When I started my website back in July of 1998, my objective was to share poetry with my uncle and the world. I was back from the military, for about a year and I felt I had failed, because I did not complete my tour of duty. I did get an honorable discharge, even though my first sergeant didn't want me to, because I had no disciplinary action made against me. I didn't even have a very minor one, which most soldiers get, by that point.

15 Years Celebration

At the same time, I was going to school, at the University of Oregon, as a Business Major, which I thoroughly hated (because it was a practical degree). I had to take accounting 5 times, to get a high enough grade, but got A's in economics. I also bombed my test, to get into the upper division business school. At this time, my math ability started to disappear and I did terrible in an advanced Economics class and a Statistics class, as I became unable to perform simple math operations.

I also tried learning Chinese and taking an upper division History of Western Philosophy course. I did terrible in Chinese, because I couldn't learn the characters fast enough and I have a kind of speech impediment, so that I couldn't hear or make the tones, that distinguish between different words, that sound similar, correctly. I had to withdraw, from The Western Philosophy course, as I did not remember, to turn in my paper the first week and was told I could not pass the class without it.

I then ended up moving out of my parents house and ended up coming back later that year, as I was running through my college money. I actually did receive some college money from the military, since I got an honorable discharge and was in the military, for over a year. The federal financial aid didn't count in my parents income, because I left the military with an honorable discharge. I also saved \$5,000 of my military pay, while in the Army.

Then I went back to college, that summer and fall, and changed my major to journalism. I took classes that summer and fall quarter, including some philosophy ones, which I did quite well in, as it was one of the few classes that were not full. I also had enjoyed my Chinese literature class, that I had taken the previous year.

By the end of the quarter, I thought I had an emotional breakdown and my parents found me walking down the street. The hospital gave me a drug test, and then sent me to the psychiatric ward, of a local private hospital. I was there for 10 days, until the insurance ran out and then left with my parents. I was voluntarily committed, as I was not a harm to my self or others, nor did I commit any crime.

15 Years Celebration

At this point, I felt I had failed, in both the military and college, as I was not able to complete either one. It was not until I published many books, that I finally felt I had accomplished something. I had a desire, to return and complete my degree, until the last few years. Whenever I tried signing up, I had severe paranoia and depression, which was accompanied with physical symptoms, as well.

My life is very different, than many people with Schizophrenia, because: I have never committed any crime, I had an honorable discharge from the military, the veterans decided that my Schizophrenia was directly caused by my military service; my parents and sister were actively involved in helping me; I have never taken any drugs or abused prescriptions; I have a strong personal faith in Christ; and I do not give up easily and have successfully leveraged my creative abilities, to solve or avoid life problems.

Shortly after starting my website, I was very obsessed with humility (intensified by being enlisted in the Army) and because of what I saw as failures, I found Philosophical Taoism and Christian Existentialism, to answer many of my frustrations in life and help me deal with my situation. I had always been very unusual, in the way I did anything I was involved in and I was seeking a way, to explain to people why I approached life like I did. I had been introduced to these philosophies, in some of my college electives, and they helped me start putting together my own philosophy and my studies, that my books are now based on.

After just the first week of Western Philosophy, I thought Aristotle was a smart aleck and I had recently come to realize, that the key values of Christianity and Taoism were the same: humility and compassion. I sought to prove that Christianity was philosophically more Asian than European, but much later found that Christianity was primarily an Asian religion, for the first 1,000 years and so my focus shifted to history and liturgy.

One of the things that has made a big difference in my life, which I only discovered, in the last couple years is that I am very literal. I still think that way at first, but usually remember to filter that out.

6.5.2. Military and Self Esteem

When I left the military, it was because of a chronic allergic pink eye, but we later found out the problem was mostly mental and I was in fact mentally ill. The two most important things in the military is to do whatever they tell you to without hesitation and to always give 150% effort. In order to get people to do this, the military treats you like a piece of meat. In the Marines, they treat you better, after their boot camp. In the Army they just treat you horribly as long as you are in the military.

I remember, during the first two weeks of basic training, we watch a bunch of videos about things like Army law and sexual harassment. We had to drink huge amounts of water and then we had to wait, until the last second, to go to the bath room and we only had a few seconds, to go to the bathroom. For some reason, the drill sergeant thought we wasted too much time eating, so we had only 2 minutes to eat.

We were only given, at the most, 7 hours of sleep and got up at 4:30, in the morning the instant they turned the lights on and had to do extensive exercising, before we were able to sleep. We also had to do watch duty two hours, in the night, and kitchen duty (when we had to wake up even earlier), in rotation.

I remember, when we were practicing with the rifle, that both an officer and a drill sergeant were yelling at me, at the same time, and so I couldn't tell who was who, by their voice and addressing anyone, as anything other than their exact rank is not allowed. I tried looking around behind me, but was told I could not move.

I was told, to fire, with my left hand, even though I am right handed, because I was left eye dominant. I can fire, with both hands now. And, when they tested me, for qualification, in shooting I was assigned a lane that was rigged, so that when the farthest away targets counted, as if I hit them, whether or not I actually hit them.

15 Years Celebration

I remember, after training, that it was hard to get medical help, because of the hours of operation. First of all, every office was closed between 11am and 1pm, no matter what. Then, each medical service had its own, completely different hours. When I came off the midnight shift and was sick, I had to then wait 4 hours for the medical clinic.

When I had the been diagnosed, for allergy problems, they wanted to perform major surgery, on my sinuses, that I found out later was completely unnecessary. It was also unclear, as the doctors are all at least a captain, was a commanding officer, so either I needed to follow orders from or I had a choice. I never got around to making the appointment.

When I had put on the an eye medicine, due to an eye infection, I had trouble putting it in my eyes, because it was a kind of gel and the end of it was metal and sharp. The military's solution was to hold me down and then shove it into my eye. Later, I found I could put it on my eyelashes and blink a couple times and it went on fine.

The military re-enforced both my obsession with humility and my pessimistic worldview. I don't trust anyone and always have the feeling that someone is trying to scam me. I plan for worst case scenario. as I have horrid luck. I now eat very fast and used to be able to get up in a split second, until very recently - me medicine is too sedating.

The thing that stressed me out the most was referring to people by the correct ranks, even though I had an easy time passing the test, because you cannot see the ranks on the leaders, until after you are supposed to salute them, or refer to them as a sergeant, and no you are not supposed to salute NCOs (sergeants). I have always been very literal, but didn't understand what that meant, until a couple years ago. This explains why the drill sergeants hated me at first, but then respected me greatly later on.

6.5.3. Experience and Faith

When many people think of the spiritual world and spiritual things, they think of some horror movie, with all sorts of special effects. They think that they will see God visually and He will speak to them, and have a one on one conversation with them. In reality, the Bible says if you see God directly, this will kill you, because the presence of God is so intense. Most believers will never directly experience a vision or hear the voice of God.

We understand God through faith, in that we believe, even though we cannot prove God exists, like we can prove Newton's or Einstein physical laws work. This means that we are asked to believe, without any direct experience, that we can document and explain. I think of my understanding of who God is by intuition, in that I am aware and know that the real God is the Christian God. I don't need the Bible or some sort of supernatural action to believe that the Christian God is real and Christianity is the one true faith.

I have always felt closer to God, in times of crisis, like the entire time I was in the military. I think we don't experience closeness with God, because of how easy it is to get distracted and that God acts both subtly and quietly. I can tell God constantly intervenes rationally, because we are protected from spiritual forces that only God could hold back and also that we are so foolish and careless that it is only God's direct intervention that keeps us from literally destroying all life on earth.

God wants to have us believe in Him, by our free choice and I think He wants to give people just enough information about who He is to comfort His people, but also give those who choose not to believe reasons for their unbelief. I think God chose to allow us to superficially convince ourselves of His non-existence, so that people would have a valid free choice. Everyone has a conscience and free will, so we all know the truth and there is no need to prove anything about who God is.

I feel very close to God and am aware of His power, when I read the Bible, as it just speaks with such authority and intensity, that I feel like I am going to get burned up. I think God may have showed me more about Himself, more in a visual or audio manner, with me, but I have asked Him not to,

because I don't want to mix that up with my hearing of voices and delusions.

I am one of the few people, who believe that there are both mental illnesses, that are caused by chemical imbalances and that there is a real spiritual world. I believe that modern psychology actually comes from the Bible. Paul was the first Existentialist. One of Christ's official titles is Wonderful Counselor.

I see no conflict between psychology and Christianity. The whole concept of God being both 3 and one is most understandable, from the point of view that we have multiple parts to us, which we all consider completely us. God the Father is like the mind of God, Christ is the body, and the Holy Spirit is the spirit. When we have personal problems, they can be caused by many things, like: sin, brain chemistry, and our physical bodies. Depression is a good example of something that can be affected and treated, by all 3 of these factors, and more.

One of the obvious miracles, in my life, is my entire experience in the military. I was very blessed to never have to go through torture training, be captured by enemies, or even have to be deployed into combat. I got out after a little over a year and not only got an honorable discharge, but the process was completed within 5 weeks total. I was in Hawaii, at my permanent duty station, and having Mono, so I was off work. I went to my unit commanding officer and asked to get out of the military and said I didn't care if it was honorable. This is a horrible idea and never try it, under any circumstances.

I didn't know that my discharge was, because of having Schizophrenia, but rather, I thought it was about my chronic allergic pink eye (conjunctivitis), caused by an over sensitivity to cleaning chemicals. Luckily, I filed for disability pension, for my pink eye and got 10% disability pension, because of that. My parents helped me fill out all the forms, when I filed again, for veterans pension, which processed much faster, because of my previous filing. I was awarded an additional 90% disability, 3 months before 9/11.

The way the military works, that few people are aware of, is that your enlistment is not ever 4 years or 6 years but 8 years. Part is active duty or reserve, whereas the other is inactive duty. In this 8 year period of time, if there is any war, you will be recalled, without any special extension of your tour, or any additional decision by your command.

I swore in to the Army on 2 July 1996, so I could easily have been re-called and been required to serve up until 2 July 2004. Diagnosis with Schizophrenia would probably be enough to keep me from being recalled, but being a disabled veteran with 100% pension guaranteed I would never be recalled, even during a general draft, in a world war.

Many Christians are waiting to get some divine message of what job they should do. God asks one thing of us: follow our conscience. God doesn't care what we do, but rather who we are. There is no need for special instructions, as even without the Bible, we know what is right and wrong. What greater miracle and show of support could God give, then coming to earth as a poor person, dying a very painful death, going to Hell, and breaking out, to save us from eternal torment?

6.5.4. My Personality and My Art

Reason for this List

I think very differently, in my life, than anyone else and I have spent many years trying to explain my point of view, to others. I thought that I was not just opposite of every one else for no reason, but thought that there was some sort of explanation, for this, so I would be more predictable, for myself and others.

I found that Taoism and Existentialism explained how I thought well, but no one understands any of this. Some people may say I am a highly sensitive person, or an artistic person, but that is too simplistic and simply not accurate. I have been thinking about what personality attributes that I have that explain how I approach art, people, and direction.

Working with Differences

Don't share an interest in related activities

Do not identify exclusively with or exclusively value others that share my interests

Interested in seemingly opposing things

Interested in doing things for unusual reasons

Not trying to be different

Approach to Art/Projects

Skip "necessary" steps

Don't create by following a sequence of steps

Do better work if I have more freedom on how to approach project

Constantly thinking about latest project

Design Related Activities

Like control over circumstances

Don't like planning

Not interested in ceremony

Defining Personality Traits

Mind follows tangents

Emotionally attached to creations

Idealist

7. People Articles

7.1. Social Issues

7.1.1. Politically Correct

In America, we seem to have over time divided, into two groups, who have incompatible world views. I embrace part of one and part of the other. I am a born again Christian, with traditional values and believe, in a true Heaven and Hell and that there is an absolute right and a wrong, regardless of time or place. On the other hand, I do not believe in unregulated business and believe the two major threats to America are destruction of the environment and running out of oil. I believe that these two ideas are tied together through the concepts of gluttony, selfishness, and laziness.

The world I remember growing up in was a world full of problems, but we have degraded, to the point that people are too lazy, or stupid to: stop when the light is red, signal which direction they are going, or look in front of them before crossing a sidewalk. People now walk on the street or even drive cars, while texting: this is like putting a blindfold on.

One of the things that is really sad about what is left of the intellectual world is how they have turned against the very ideas, that they were designed and exist for. A liberal arts college should encourage a student to, think, for themselves, instead of indoctrinating them. This is simply anti-American and anti-Bill of Rights. One of the things, that used to separate us, from dictatorships, like communist countries, was that our focus was on learning, instead of trying to force people, to believe what those in power want them, to believe.

We call this being politically correct. Everyone and everything are to be tolerated, except white males and Christians. These groups of people are then used as scapegoats, for the problems of society, much as historically the Jewish people have been, in Europe, and Christians have been, in the Middle East. What toleration really means, in the politically correct world, that there is toleration, for

committing sins and disobeying laws. It seems that my generation will be the first one, to start legalizing things, never made legal, any other time in history.

To see what groups are in power, you need only look, at the books in an online bookstore. In the Apple iBookstore, I have looked for books on history and religion, for several years. The big areas you see most the books about are: women who were in power like queens and women in general in every time in history (but not men in power or general history of that same region/time period), Jewish people living at any time and where in history (but not a general history of that same region/time period), and the history of everything to do with England. Certain topics are very hard, to find out about, because they mix terms incorrectly, like when you search for Indian history, you have many Native Americans, even though that is a totally incorrect term that is confusing and plain factually wrong.

When I search for African history I get African-American history, which is another term that is used incorrectly: an African-American is a person born in Africa and then came to the United States to live, whereas a person with dark colored skin from America is called Black. If you don't want to refer to race, then don't, but if you do use the correct term, so we know what you are talking about and so you will not be offensive. After all, why do Black Americans have to have hyphenated status. Maybe I should ask people to call me an European American.

These politically motivated misuses of names, for groups of people, can make things very confusing. Some people have noticed how the Chinese think they are at the center of the world (as ever other culture does as well) and so think we shouldn't refer to their geographic location, as East Asian. The same people believe the Middle East shouldn't have the world east in it. East Europeans want their countries to be called Central European, so as to distance themselves politically from Russia.

Referring to a region, as it sits, geographically, in reference, to the rest of the world, should be obvious and not political. There is no direction, that is better than another one. China is in East Asia, because it is on the eastern edge of the continent of Asia, the Middle East is called the Middle East because it lies at the center of three continents and is in the Eastern Hemisphere (and is also in Asia),

and Central Europe refers to the region between Eastern and Western Europe.

If people would read history before the 19th century, they would not make such ridiculous and uneducated claims.

7.1.2. The Trouble with Science

We hear the phrase "scientifically proven," all the time, but that is not the way science works. There is never a point, when science says for sure, that something works a certain way. Science is a discovery process, not a court, and things are tested physically, until there is more and more reasons, that support a certain conclusion. Furthermore, just because something has been studied scientifically and a certain cause or effect is uncovered does not mean that it is an absolute truth, or that there should not still be debate.

We see a big separation, between the physical world and the spiritual world, but doubt the reality of the spiritual, because we cannot prove it scientifically. This is because science doesn't deal with the supernatural, by definition. So anything science says about spiritual things is not verifiable nor definitive.

The other big problem with science being mixed with, or substituted, for religion is that science does not have any ethics, within the scientific method, nor does it even have any authority nor the tools, to deal with those kind of issues. Using science, in religious matters, is like using knowledge only gained from computers, in disaster survival.

So, how do you prove something spiritual? There are many ways, all of which should lead to the same truth, including: history, prophecy, visions, direct experience, examples of other believers, behavior of nature, common sense, feelings, theology, tradition, decisions of religious authority, scripture, ritual, prayer, and meditation.

All of these methods, of determining truth, in spiritual matters, are legitimate and there should be agreement, with multiple methods, before making a major decision. The two most important, for Christianity, are scripture and common sense. Spiritual truths are just too important, to use unrelated tools and experience, just because they are currently in style.

7.1.3. Objectivity

It is fashionable currently to claim that you are objective and that the facts support your position, no matter how irrational your position is. Objectivity is like omniscience; it is a quality only God has. What happens when both people claim to be objective and the other person has just as many facts to prove their opinion as you do? How can we resolve this difference and, if there is more than one viewpoint, maybe we should just accept that there is no definitive answer, that we can understand yet.

The problem is that the person saying this has not, reflected upon themselves and has very poor self knowledge. We all are weak and ignorant. That is the human condition. Get over it. It is ok to be irrational. More than one person can be equally right. Diversity is a good thing. People with different ideas can be friends.

You should never give up your beliefs, just to fit in, because no one worth being friends with would ask this of you. It is a strength, to know and work with people, who have very different viewpoints. It helps spur creativity and creative solutions, to problems. None of us can look at something totally rationally and that is a good thing. Many of the best things in life are irrational, like values or art.

Real truth cannot be ascertained by facts. Some opinions can actually also be truths. Just because the facts you have found support a given idea, does not mean you need to adopt it. Religion is based on concepts, like ethics and supernatural powers, which can never be fully verified by science. This is a limitation of science, not of religion.

If you approach life, from a facts prove everything point of view, you give up any ability, to have

faith, in anyone or anything. You become incapable of selfless love, or genuine spirituality. You can never really trust anyone else, or care about anyone else, because that may not benefit you, directly and immediately.

Science, like atheism, is a form of materialism, and is, in its very nature and definition, incapable of supporting any kind of meaning, in life, beyond just avoiding death. Sentience is defined, by the fear of death, but spiritual maturity takes away this fear and replaces it with hope. In science and atheism, death is an ending, but in religion it is just the beginning.

Being subjective doesn't mean you give up the ability to be correct, but you are more concerned with being kind and humble. When has winning an argument ever convinced anyone of anything? Winning in life does not bring joy nor peace. It certainly doesn't result in genuine friendship. When we grow up and become adults, we learn that first place is not winning and participation is more important than awards.

Early in life, we find it important to win things, to better our resumes, but as we age and learn more about life and the working world, we realize that grades and degrees only get your foot in the door. A college degree doesn't mean much, in the grand scheme of things. You may need to get one, but it does not make you smarter, or more important than anyone else.

7.1.4. Entitlement and Fraud

One of the things we have to deal with today, in America, that we never had to deal with, in the past, is entitlement. I have struggled with feeling, as as other Christians told me, that I should help everyone who I came across who was in need, regardless of whether or not I caused the problem, and that it didn't matter if I suffered as a result.

Ironically, the church, which tends to be very conservative politically, has an extreme view on charity. They believe in allowing anyone to attend churches, no matter how much they degrade the church community, they help people who get themselves into trouble over and over again, and do

without, while those they are helping do better off financially, than they do.

We are making a baseless assumption, that people are all honest, reasonable, and considerate. This certainly doesn't mean we should give up on charity. It just means we need to be much better informed and not always help everyone in need, especially when we cannot verify their legitimate need.

I ride the bus and live downtown, so I run into many people, asking for money, all the time. Some young people ask for money, even though they are not in need, because they think people will only give them money, if they have extra money. Homeless people, in our city, are very aggressive and they assume their problems are everyone else's.

They camp out in front of the federal building, for weeks on end. They also are crude, rude, and try to pick fights with you, when you walk down the street and they get more aggressive, if you give them money. I feel uncomfortable around them and I can only imagine how pretty woman walking by, late at night, feels.

My parents always talk about how politicians were honest, people left their doors unlock, and you had to go out of your way, to get yourself in trouble, when they were young. It seems that the Internet has amplified all the negative elements, in our society. It would be great, if those trying to improve the world, like churches, would make use of the positive aspects of the Internet, as computers are not going anywhere, unless we run out of oil, and end up in the stone age. On the Internet, there are many scams, but one that many people would not guess is what is called the urban myth.

One of the most prevalent urban myths involves the usage of the brain. Many people now believe, that we only use a few percent, of our brain, or only a few percent of our brain is our conscious brain. An urban myth is a well known and often repeated bit of information, thought to be factual, but is not true. This myth comes from people who are trying to get people sucked into New Age or

Pagan groups. The idea this pushes is that that humans don't need God and that we can solve all our problems, by our ourselves and will, once we evolve enough intelligence or technology.

I believe that our greatest problem is not intelligence and we cannot solve our problems through technology, the military, politics, or social movements. Jesus told us the path is none of these, but a spiritual path. The message of the New Testament is that we cannot be good enough, by just following the rules, or engineer our own solution by ourselves. We are doomed to failure, without God's direct control of our lives. Our biggest problem is our own sin and the solution is belief in God and submission, to His authority, in our lives. The best things you can do, to make the world better, is conquer the repeated sins in your own life and pray for God's will to be done.

There is also much more need, than in the past, for charities, to get involved with. We do not need to and many times are not able to meet the increased demand. Christ calls us to live a holy life and stay away from sin, but He says that following Him is a light burden. Just as Mary Magdalene was praised over Martha, our focus should not be on doing things for God, but rather changing who we are for God. Jesus did heal those who were sick and hungry, but His message was a spiritual one. It is not for us, to directly solve our problems ourselves - we pray for God to solve it and then follow what He tells us to do.

7.1.5. Freedom and Information

My mom, the other day, was talking about how our entire family, on both sides are all moody, emotional, and high-strung and how it would be nice to be more objective, rational, and easygoing. But there are always two sides to every emotion. My so called high strung family are also very passionate, creative, and tenacious (as well as being very intelligent, polite, and can think very fast). I see these traits not just in our genes and nature, but brought out more in our upbringing and decisions we have made in life.

There are a number of very popular songs, where the singer wants to even feel pain, just to know he can still feel anything at all. Many times we feel it would be better, if we felt less and could just

go along with things. But most people who changed the world did so, because they could not accept the way things were, in their time and place. We call these people philosophers, artists, scientists, teachers, mystics, priests, and futurists.

Just because society wants to make you feel disloyal, because you are unwilling to accept the status quo and interfere with someone else's fun, doesn't mean that what you are doing isn't important. It takes more courage and conviction, to stand against possible friends, than in the face of certain suffering.

We live, at a time, where everyone lives, like an Emperor would, in any other time, in history, with all the information and entertainment we have, at such slow costs and ease of acquisition. Our biggest health problems are heart disease and pollution, which are rich people's problems. Someone has gone to great trouble getting us addicted to entertainment, for some very important reason.

People are now afraid of the NSA electronically eavesdropping on them, but don't seem to make the connection, to when they pushed their congress people, to vote for the Patriot Act, when they were scared and so give up our "Bill of Rights," at the time when we would need them most. The biggest collector's of information may well be the government, but the most nefarious use of our personal information is being done by Google and Facebook.

At least the government is just following the laws, we pushed for, as well as not really caring about much other than terrorist, environmentalists, and serious criminals. The best question to ask yourself: how do Google and Facebook make billions of dollars every year, when no one ever pays them anything?

It seems ironic, that the people who would be the most concerned about the freedom of information and privacy of individuals would champion the cause of someone like Google. There is a new religion and, like all religions, it has good qualities and likely started out for altruistic reasons. The religion is right at the connection between activists, Do It Yourselfers, and cheap skates and each one of these

groups added some ideas. The resulting social movement uses blogs for their pulpits and evangelization. Their common enemy is Apple.

Apple is exactly the opposite of religion. Apple is merely a corporation whose objective, like all corporations, is to make as much money as possible. How do they do it: they make quality information devices. This religious movement sees Apple as a religion, because it is destroying their ability to make money, and they don't know how to stop it. How are they doing it - they are making technology to create things accessible to the common person. Apple is expanding and it actually ended up starting its own movement, but without any dogma or doctrine.

Ironically, the group that thought of itself as populist, pro-freedom, and empowerment worked in exactly the opposite fashion. The problem with it, like many theories, is that there was no way to reconcile itself, in the way the world worked, the way it always worked, not in any unusual way. Everything doesn't need to be free, to be accessible. Sometimes premium goods can be used, to help ordinary users find expression and enjoyment.

Money has to be made somehow and technology changes each generation. You can either change with it, or fight against it. I think some things are worth fighting for, but I certainly don't see the point in fighting against technology. Both Money and Technology are neither good nor evil. We are always going to need money, to survive and understand the technology we have. This is not something to create a religion out of. Apple is nothing, but a brand name, of a company, who makes high quality things.

7.2. Spiritual Life

7.2.1. Kindness and Irrationality

Many people in Europe and America say that the problem with Islam is that it is irrational, but this is a fundamental misunderstanding of what it means to be irrational. Most people would agree that feelings and values like love are irrational, but also good and useful. It is also difficult to distinguish

between the rational and the irrational philosophically, unless you define your presuppositions and your point of view.

This is what matters ethically: philosophical assumptions and who is important ethically. Regardless of the theology and what the Quran exactly says, most of the things where the prevailing practice of Islam falls short of being morally acceptable to non-Muslims is in the cruel treatment of animals, the environment, women, children, and unbelievers. These practices are all about and can be improved by learning to be more kind and making the decision to value kindness. This is an unintended side effect of the extreme seriousness that Islam regards the following of their own religious ethics. Outside of this area, this value can be a strength followers of other religions and philosophical schools would be wise to learn from and emulate.

Cruelty, in the practice of Islam (or anything else, like Chinese Medicine) is morally unacceptable and non-negotiable. It is obviously, absolutely, and eternally wrong. This is true regardless of culture, religion, time period, geographical location, species, age, or gender. As in many types of ethics, the practice is far from perfect and there is still too much cruelty towards living things in Europe and America. We still suffer from each others bad decisions and are forced or misled into wars, but kindness is more about intent and what is practically possible.

Clearly, the government, in the US and most of the English speaking world, has become only a few shades of grey lighter, than the regimes, in places famous for their cruelty, like the Middle East, China and Russia. Certain religions, philosophical leanings, and political beliefs tend to encourage and reward kindness more than others, but we can all agree that the base level of morality is kindness, especially to those with little or no power. America and Europe, although it is sad to say, because their standards are still too low as well, (comparatively) clearly and fundamentally value kindness. They have been recently moving, in the right direction of being kinder, than most cultures, throughout the world.

It is disturbing, for people to so quickly associate being irrational with being evil. Many people say Hitler or Saddam Hussein were much worse than evil: they were insane. Living with Schizophrenia

now, for at least 15 years, has taught me that having trouble distinguishing between fantasy and reality does not make you more cruel, than those who have normally developed brains. Intelligence level does not affect your level of kindness either. Some values, like kindness, are so obvious and self evident that, although it is easy to find rational reasons for them, they also do not require explanation.

We need to get past trying to think our way to better morality. It is like trying to quench your thirst, by eating bread, or learning to swim, in order to master driving a car. And we cannot blame our genes, our family, bad experiences or past mistakes. We have free choice, so that we can choose, to do different, any time we want, if we want to, bad enough. Although we often destroy our lives, with bad decisions, the same free choice can free you, from making the same mistakes, over and over again.

Free choice is like fire. Wielded effectively, fire can keep you from freezing to death, help you cook food in the outdoors, signal help when your are lost, keep large predators away in the wild, and provide light in a dark place. Wielded without thought, fire can cause sever burns, destroy your house and all your valuables, and burn down an entire forest.

So now take this chance to do things differently and find a way to become more kind today.

7.2.2. Suffering Servant

One of the biggest obstacles, to faith in Christ, in the modern US and Europe is that we have it too good. The people that had anything near what we have, in any other time in history, would be called kings. Most of us don't have any idea what suffering or having no power is like. Even with the current police state in America, we still have many freedoms, that most people throughout history didn't have.

Serving in the military is one of the best ways, for us in the west, to understand what true humility, submission, powerlessness, and suffering is like. In the military, your choices over how you live your

life are taken away from you. You have to do whatever you are told, without any recourse, in case of abuse. In the military, you do not have fun. You learn very quickly in basic training that war is mostly boredom punctuated by periods of terror.

We hear, all the time, from pacifists, that people who join the military do so, to have power over others. This is simply not true and it is not surprising, that most pacifists have never been in the military. Many activists talk about how we should not respond in violence, no matter what others do to us.

This is very easy to say, but you do not understand what it is like, until you live in a situation, where you have no choices. In the military, we chose and later were forced to live a life, where we you just turn off your brain and do whatever you are told. Later, after training, they give you just enough freedom, to get yourself into trouble.

I am not saying this, to encourage people, to join the military. Hopefully, this discourages you, but some people are attracted, by being able to make a difference, in the world. There are many other ways, to help the world, that do not involve you having a high risk of being burned alive, or having your leg blown off.

You can join the Peace Corps, or stay in America and join the Americorps. You can even just volunteer, in your community, to help the homeless or other marginalized groups, like the mentally ill. You will still be doing good, while not putting yourself into such a dangerous and terrifying situation.

So what do the life of Jesus and the life of a soldier have in common? It is obedience, no matter what the cost. Just as Jesus was humiliated, tortured, and suffered one of the most painful, drawn out, and brutal deaths imaginable, so does a soldier feel humiliation and suffer from severe treatment. Even coming to earth, as a person, while still being God, must have its own kind of agony, with its limitations and suffering, without using His power, even when tempted by the devil.

Having the humility of Christ requires submission, to God, like that of a servant, but God treats us very well. Being a servant to Christ is a joy, in and of itself, which is much preferable, to being a slave to immorality, and suffering, due to your own bad decisions. Serving Christ means that we too take on His role and place He lived in society: we now focus on the salvation of others, as soon as we are liberated.

It is important to note, that Christ suffered, as we did because being both fully God and fully Man is necessary, for His death and resurrection, to take the place of our wrong doings. Most people, throughout history, and most even today are actually encouraged by prophecy, like Revelation,s because it shows them there is a reason and purpose, for their suffering. Many people in Africa look on our lack of spiritual knowledge and feel sorry for us, because they, at least, are spiritually rich.

It is not bad, to work hard, and there is no shame in doing any legal work. It is hard for us to understand, or relate with the sufferings of Christ, because we live like kings in America and Europe today. The best thing we can do, to increase our understanding, is to volunteer, to help others. We can also take vows like poverty, obedience, and abstinence (even if we do not join a monastery).

7.2.3. Creativity and Belief Systems

The humanities include religion, philosophy, history, literature and all of the arts like: music, visual art, dance, and theatre. These were the main areas of academic study, for thousand of years, before modern science was invented (about 500 years ago), in the way we use it now, with mathematics as its language, the scientific method of discovery (basically guess and check), and the exclusion of the supernatural. The humanities have peaked, in Asia, during what we call the European Middle Ages and the major scientific rediscoveries, since that time, were made mostly by Europeans with their primary purpose being for war.

I have spent my last 16 years in the humanities, almost exclusively, and I believe that the decline in the study of these disciplines has affected society in a very negative way. It seems that much of the world is trying to solve fundamental problems, involving the nature of being human and moral,

purely with numbers.

If you were to ask people what is definitely true in America today, they would tell you about their religion and the spiritual world, whereas today, in America, we define everything in terms of math and science, as yardstick to chart our future. The problem is not with math or science, in and of themselves, but when they are used in place of the humanities, or co-opted in the case of social science, because they have no moral compass.

There really is no way to improve yourself, without: self reflection, discipline, creativity, kindness, and spiritual awareness. The Church has weakened itself, over the last few hundred years, as it has unknowingly gave Science pre-eminence over God. This idea that science (people) are able to solve every problem, without religion and God, is actually very unusual existentially, historically, culturally, and geographically.

There are now more atheistic in the world today, then every before, but the same is true for Christianity. Most the Christian world is in the third world, where life is hard, whereas most the unbelief is in the economically wealthy and stable English speaking countries, as well as large parts of Europe.

Just like measuring your success in life, based on how much money you make, or how famous you are mean nothing, to those who you want to spend time around, putting Science as your primary or sole avenue of truth creates spiritual decay and eventually death. One of the big reasons why it is so important, to study the humanities is that we often get in math and science only one right answer, whereas in religion and history, there are many right answers.

Even Christians, who believe the Bible literally, if they understand the scripture well enough, will soon discover that most things in the Bible, beyond the basics of who God is and the way to salvation, is is clear as mud. The same is true within other belief systems, as well: there are many different schools of Islamic Law, schools of Buddhist doctrine, and ways to worship the true Self in Hinduism.

In traditional Chinese philosophy, people who have not studied in this tradition often assume that there is little creativity, in the creations of artists, whose focus is influenced heavily by Confucianism, Taoism, and/or Chinese (Mahayana) Buddhism. Just like the Chinese understanding of nature is of a garden, within the sphere of human influence, so can believers, in religion and philosophy, find new and creative ways to express themselves, while being faithful to their belief system.

Most people don't study philosophy, but will find out, if they ever do that philosophy goes hand in hand, with belief in the supernatural and belief systems, and there are a great variety of schools, that are true to any given religion. In fact, the study of theology and ethics are both guided and understood, from within the study of philosophy, by Christian thinkers, as well accepted and known as: the the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament, the Apostle Paul, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and many modern thinkers (including well known Christian Existentialists).

7.2.4. Faith Plus Thought

While I believe that everyone should be a critical thinker and challenge society's values, it is even more importance to have faith in Christ. These do not contradict: few things in the Bible are clear like the way to salvation, what sin is, and some insights into who God is and how He works with people and nations.

Traditional Chinese philosophy is similar, in that the scholar/artist/writer strives to be creative, but within a certain context and tradition. Basically, some fundamental things need to stay unchanged, while everything else is open to change. In the Bible, who Gods is (theology) and how He wants us to relate to Him (ethics) are the only clear concepts, in the Bible, that need to be followed as stated.

Did you know that the Bible talks about other dimensions; it predicts environmental disasters, global warming, and climate change; it introduces the unconditional and universal equality of all people no matter what; God has has a covenant with animals like it does the Jewish people and the entire human race; and the Bible clearly says that it is impossible to predict when God will come back, even

by chance in the Bible? Many of those things I just mentioned challenge conventional wisdom and most Christians would extremely disagree, but I believe there is not sufficient support, for the opposite views.

Many people, both Christian and non-Christian, look at the multitude of Christian denominations, with views so varied, that some even preach opposite things. Not all of them can be right and it is likely a lot of disinformation and ignorance spread amongst believer and non-believers, because of this situation. Many people grapple with this intellectually, but it is good that we have diversity. This kind of diversity shows that there is a low barrier to entry for new churches and the diversity allows people to have different points of view, on the unclear things in the Bible.

Many people feel a need to explain everything, in the Bible. Many people have tried, to "solve" prophecy in the Bible, when many others, before our time have put even more time and effort into and had more Biblical support for. They all share one trait: they were all completely wrong. God does not call us to understand everything in the Bible, but to simply believe Him and follow the rules of His we understand.

We need to change the focus on God has to give them an adequate reason, give them the motivation and have enough support points, to convince them to do something. People think that they will follow the Bible, after they completely understand everything, which means they will never follow the Bible.

The obvious solution is to believe what you are supposed to believe (because of what the Bible says, intuition, and the created world) and follow everything as much as you know you should do. Many non-believers think that it is boring and humiliating to follow rules, but God did not design ethics arbitrarily, but came up with them because He knows us (as He created us) and following these rules will make our lives better. God never designed us to live without Him.

Many Christians have followed the concept of medieval Christian philosophy (scholasticism), by using

reason, to understand God and the world, up to the point where they can no longer explain, so they then understand this remaining amount of truth by faith (faith means we choose to believe, without being able to explain why). I believe the opposite, in that our primary way of understanding God is to be by faith (and reason is so secondary, that it is not even worth mentioning). We worship a living God, not theology. We are asked to believe, not to explain. Besides, most people do not make major decisions, because someone tried to convince them of it (and of they do, it often ends badly).

This re-enforces the belief, by non-believers, that Christians are stupid, so we see why God said that we are not of the world and will not be understood by the world. We are saved by the foolishness of God, that is greater than man's understanding. We are not saved by rituals/miracles or by human reasoning/science. The people that would not join a Church, because of this kind of example, on the part of Christians, were never going to be true believers, no matter what we did or did not do.

7.3. Sharing the Gospel

7.3.1. Christianity and Other Religions

When I talk to Christians about other religions they always ask if the religion is compatible with Christianity. Christians and Muslims both consider their choice of religion as the one ultimate source of truth, that they are worshipping the one true God, and that they practice the one true faith. Basically, they are not interested in compromising their religion, because they believe all others are wrong.

Within both the Indian Dharma Traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism) and the Traditional Chinese Philosophies (Confucianism, Philosophical Taoism, Zen Buddhism - not really Chinese, and Neo-Confucianism) it is perfectly acceptable, to take pieces from multiple traditions and combine them. The most important things are discipline and ethics. Metaphysics/Theology are considered non-essential.

Orthodox (non-Heretic) Christians, from early on have synchronized their view of Christianity with

Pagan Greek Philosophy and Pagan Roman cultural elements. Evangelical Christians are very worried about having their faith watered down or having foreign elements mixed with their beliefs. Many say they never read any book but the Bible. Some of this is due to the targeting of Christians by leaders in the New Age movement and the Mainstream protestant Churches.

I think the real solution is better education. I believe it is important to study other major world religions and philosophies, because you can't convincingly tell others that your religion is the one true faith if you have not studied any others. For those afraid they will lose their faith, no one with a true faith is going to change their mind and none of the other religious or philosophical texts have changed my mind (partly just from the quality, authority, and reasoning of the Bible, that is not their in any other religious texts).

Much of this fear revolves around something Christians call occult. Basically, the practice of any religious ritual that is not Christian is considered a way to make a link to evil spiritual forces. This concept does not exist outside Christianity, so if you study about other religions, some of their writings are ritualistic in nature. I would strongly recommend Christians not read these.

But I believe that as Christians, we should not follow any other path other than that set out for us by Jesus Christ. Pursuing enlightenment through Buddhist meditation is not going to get you to Heaven (although Buddhists have ever claimed this anyway). There are no direct comparisons between different religions and philosophies. Some of their ideas like being ethical and being disciplined should be embraced by everyone, including Christians.

Whereas only either Islam or Christianity can be true, in the South and East Asian traditions, there is no direct contradiction because the philosophy comes from a different history and a different way of thinking. I don't mean to say that any of this is not true, but a good analogy of how philosophies and religions developed in different histories is like two different parallel worlds or different Sci Fi or fantasy worlds. How would you make a direct comparison between characters in Star Trek and Harry Potter?

If your reality is different, your enemy is different, your way of thinking is different, your history is different, and your objective is different, you see things in a different context. Basically, the answers are complex and not straight forward and require many years of study. Just like you have to understand the Bible and the culture and history it was written in, for it to make sense, so you have to do with any other religion, to make sense of it. One thing all religions and philosophies have is a sense of right and wrong, but almost everything else is different.

One of the big cultural barriers between Christians and non-Christians in America today is that few non-Christians have any background knowledge of anything Biblical or even spiritual. It would be good if Christians found a way to study the culture they are in without giving up their faith. I think this process must start by increasing our knowledge about the Bible and the culture it was written in and then apply the theology into the culture we live in. I believe Christianity is the most culturally independent, culturally adaptable, and culturally relevant belief system.

As Christians, we need not be so afraid of spiritual things. If we get some good background knowledge and apply some common sense, we can bring Christianity back to our culture. The reality is that we are influenced by the culture we are in and we cannot keep ourselves pure of it. The expression of the theology of the Bible during the times of ancient Israel was adapted to the culture of the ancient Middle East. Almost everything in the Bible that sounds weird to use in America today would be as understandable and culturally relevant as cars and computers are today.

For Christians looking to find good books to study about other religions, that are not occult, I have an extensive list of several thousand books, including hundreds of free ones (depending on how you count them). I call this my Book of Lists. The latest version of just the e-books from the Apple iBookstore are at my section Above and Beyond in Benjamin-Newton Challenging Projects (Umbrella Site).

7.3.2. Sounds Too Good to Be True

Many people hear the claims Christians make and they sound like some sort of scam, trying to delude

people with low intelligence. Christianity has many paradoxes, even with its basic doctrines and God has His own personality and unique attributes. If you hear the way the Bible says about theology and God, it makes more sense than you would think, at first glance.

You can get into heaven, by completing a simple apology to God, but you have to really mean it and then fight to stay away from the immoral acts you committed completely, for the rest of your life. Christianity does not require you to do anything, for others, but if you don't you're probably a fraud and won't be very happy.

The basic outline of how to live is the Ten Commandments, which are still applicable today and the best example is of Jesus Christ, when He was on earth. Most of all, God wants you to experience Him and His Creation, with the entirety of your emotional, artistic, rational, practical, and spiritual self. God wants you to have a good life and He knows what we need, as He designed us, and He designed us to be continually changed, by Himself.

Yes, God has three parts, but these are not separate beings, with separate personalities. Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father are all the same entity. They are different, in the same way that your mind, your body, and your spirit are all the same you. You shouldn't expect God the Father, to be in a room, talking to the Holy Spirit, anymore than you would expect your body, to talk to your spirit, verbally. The Trinity is no more three than we are: God the Father is God's mind, the Holy Spirit is God's spirit, and Jesus Christ is God's physical body.

Christians keep saying God is coming back and that the world is ending. The world isn't likely to blowup, or all life die on earth, for a considerable amount of time - that is my best guess. The only thing we know, for sure, of the second coming, is that no one will predict it correctly and it will be a complete surprise. Biblical prophecy is meant to show that God is in control of history, when things get fulfilled. Prophecies have been coming true, throughout many times in history, and will continue to do so.

15 Years Celebration

We do know, due to overwhelming evidence, both Biblical and scientific, that we are about to experience increasingly severe weather and are rapidly running out of water, good soil, and oil. At the same time, the world's population is rapidly increasing, and the amount of people able to live like Americans is also increasing rapidly. The thing that will screw us up the most will be our extremely powerful, but equally unpredictable solution, due to our environmental problems.

If you wonder why God thinks this way, you can better understand Him, as you read the Bible. God doesn't tell us to behave morally, because He has some kind of ego. Immorality, when fully formed, leads to physical and spiritual death - it can also destroy animals and the environment, like we are with global climate change. You can see these kind of effects come from immorality, in reading the Bible, and in your own and friends and family's life how immorality destroyed far more than they thought it would.

One of the things people don't seem to understand is that, although God does love us, He is also much more, like being perfectly moral. God chose to reconcile our relationship, with Him within Himself, so that He suffered and not us for our mistakes. He also never designed Hell for people and Hell is defined as being without God.

God wants people to be genuine and humble, because given that God is perfect morally, good works could never be good enough, to be worth anything to God. God actually defied reason and set up a perfect situation, where we would both have a free will and still act morally. The trick: we didn't know what immorality was. God wants us to have a deeper and richer experience in life, which is why He created Heaven.

One of the big things, that people get hung up on, when trying to convert to, or just understand Christianity, is they have the most trouble believing what I have written above, all without physical evidence. That is what faith is: believing, without seeing or verifying. Never do this, with any person or organization. But you can with God, because He created the world and controls everything, He has given us the Bible and fellow believers. He has also sent Jesus, sacrificed Himself, and did 99% of the work Himself, for our freedom and happiness.

Many people incorrectly assume, that you have to reject reason and just go by feeling, or just blindly follow what God asks of us. But God is the ultimate creative and is both passionate and genuine. He treats us like adults and wants us to be free thinkers, if we would only grow up spiritually. God doesn't care about what you do, but the kind of person you are. God's approach is usually spiritual - He will directly intervene, if we would only ask. Instead of pursuing political, economic, social, or military solutions, we should focus on keeping away from immorality, in our own lives.

7.3.3. Power and Choice

Many things I know in life are true, but I am not always able to create winning arguments for them or convince anyone else of them. I am not very quick at thinking if under any pressure. The way I learn something is to study as much as I can about it. I do not memorize. Then I start to see connections. This is the basis of my writing. I have long since tried to convince people to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior.

As Christians, we do not want to give up on anyone, no matter how bad or stubborn they are, because we are no better. But today so many people want power more than anything else. They want to feel they are in complete control. The reality is that we cannot depend solely on ourselves. We were designed to work with God and work with other people and animals. Many people show they need a break, from total control of their lives, by choosing to use drugs. They want to escape their lives, because they don't like the decisions they have made.

So, if you want to always win the argument at any cost and are unwilling to follow anyone, you are going to make some bad decisions and end up somewhere you do not want to be. When people give you advice, it doesn't require you to let others make decisions for you or even follow the advice. I think we have had so many bad and corrupt leaders, that no one wants to trust any kind of leader or organization, because they do not want to become victims of other people's power trips. Giving up on relying on anyone, though, just isolates you and puts too much pressure on yourself, to constantly make good choices.

I agree that, instead of just following what others say blindly, that you just take a middle approach, between doing or not doing everything someone else says and just consider the possibility of taking the advice and think of the consequences. Having several other advisors, who you have chosen to respect, does not diminish your freedom, but, rather helps you find the best way, to accomplish your goals.

Following God is different and some of the ways people try to explain the ideal relationship between God and a person sounds bizarre and are not relatable. When you become Christian, you do not just turn off your mind and follow everything you think God is telling you, like you do in the military. I think the relationship between God and an individual person is like the relationship between your pet and you. We change over time and learn better ways to approach situations, in our life, as we learn more about God, the Bible, and our life experiences.

God does not take the place of what our brain is supposed to do. Believing in Christ is not an excuse, to make bad decisions and expect God to bail you out. In Christianity, we call this a lack of maturity. Although God can and does work miracles all the time, if you jump off a bridge, you are very likely to get hurt real bad.

The mature way to act is to make use of all your resources, to first make good decisions. Second is to reflect on your life experiences and ask other people, who you respect, for help. When things get to the point, where you are still lost, then God comes in and starts changing your situation with miracles. If you get into a bad place you cannot get out of, even if it is the result of your bad decisions, God will get you through it, but you will suffer the natural consequences of your actions.

The Bible says that every good thing comes from God. After watching history, even just in my generation, we can prove that evil came into the world entirely, because of our bad choices. Although it would be nice, if God got rid of all the pain, He is definitely not responsible for fixing it. People ask why a loving God, would allow pain in this world, but the hard part is not why God doesn't always prevent evil from happening.

The question is why does God care about us, after we have done such evil things. Another thing to remember is that there is more to God, than just love and more to love, than just letting people do whatever they want. God is perfectly good and just, but we are in luck, as God is also merciful. To bridge this paradox, God died on the cross, for our evil deeds.

The reason why people submit themselves to Christ's will and suffer for Him is not because God commands us. We do it, because of our respect and love for God, because of the sacrifices and unconditional support, that got us through hard times. God want to improve our lives and, if we work with Him, in doing this, our life will be much happier. The reason to follow God is obvious: He makes our lives better. After all, we were never designed, to work, without God.

7.3.4. Arguments Against the Bible

In trying to disprove the Bible, atheists and anti-Christians have been very creative and often times very effective. Most of the arguments assume a certain worldview and a certain approach to life, which is seldom explained. The funny thing is this does little to dissuade Christians, from believing in God, but rather than give up God, they give up reason. Why do you think that there is so much irrational about the way many Christians approach life?

Some people are just better at arguing. This does not mean they are right or their views are more logical than yours. Furthermore, most people are not persuaded, to change their views, by argument, but, rather experience. Exhibiting kindness and listening well will change views more than "winning an argument."

Christian are under no obligation, to explain, or justify why the Bible says something. Faith is an expression of the will, not of the mind, nor of the body. If you want to prove your faith is superior, do things, for others and live a moral life. If you want to gain followers, take what those who reject your religion, who give a serious reason for not believing and actually resolve these issues.

Some of these arguments include: that the Bible has copied other ancient Middle Eastern religions and literature, that you need to know everything the Bible says and be able to explain any verse in the Bible, and that if you can't prove everything the Bible says that is supernatural in a natural way that it isn't true.

The big argument that the Bible copied the other works basically already makes the assumption, that writing down something earlier makes it more true, that these were not actual events that occurred, and ignoring all the differences between the texts and also depending on assumptions about the date of writing, when there is little concrete evidence.

The reason why there are surprising similarities, between the ancient religions of the Middle East and the Bible is because God put his message, in a way that was culturally relevant. Just like today, in America, it would be hard to relate to: agricultural metaphors, temples and giant stone monuments, ancient myths considered factual, and animal sacrifice, so it would be hard for those in ancient times to understand women working outside the home, nuclear weapons, plastics, computers, or DNA/genetics. The point wasn't to be original or different in religion, but true and moral.

Another thing, to consider is that all these event like the flood, the tower of Babel, Moses, Joseph actually really happened, so it is not surprising, that there are more than one account of them. This actually gives more evidence, that those events occurred, than if those accounts hadn't been written. We often consider books written down later to actually be more accurate, than those written back, in ancient times.

There is said to be little evidence, of the history of Israel, that is in the Bible, but there is also little evidence, that these ancient texts were written, before the Bible. It is not surprising, that political rivals, to Israel felt no need, to duplicate their record of history, as today we like to leave nations, to themselves and often feel that helping them makes them dependent on us and they also believe we then interfere too much.

There were likely different reasons at that time, for not recording another nations history, but the general view of letting them take care of themselves is likely true, more because they didn't want to promote their competitor. Ancient cultures like the Persians and the Indians (India) were ideologically opposed to writing things down, so often, our only written records were created many centuries later.

Another major criticism of Christians is their belief in everything the Bible says. They think that, if they can find one verse, that you cannot explain, to their satisfaction, then you have to stop being a Christian. It sounds weird, when people ask you why you believe all of the Bible, when you cannot explain everything.

But this is a common situation, in almost every area of our life. I haven't memorized the constitution, but that didn't stop me from joining the military. When I buy a product made by a brand, that I have not yet experienced, I likely don't know, if it will be good enough for me. When you move to another part of the country, you don't know a lot about the area, but you still go. Just because we have access to a huge amount of information does not mean that we have the time or the mental energy to spare, for spending the time researching all our choices.

The other major argument agains the Bible is that the assumption is that supernatural things cannot exist, so the only way to prove there validity is to prove that they can be done naturally. Thus, they are never dealing with the issue, because the very definitions of supernatural and science mean they are unrelated, do not explain, and do not affect each other. Proving that a miracle in the Bible can be done without supernatural involvement gives evidence against the probability of the Bible being correct, not the other way around.

Instead of worrying about all the things you don't understand, in the Bible, start with following the things you do understand.

7.3.5. Asking for Advice and Finding a Church

When seeking a fellow Christian for help or deciding on which church to attend, the most important things, after the church or person being Biblically correct on the basic things, the most important things to consider are that Christians are just regular people. Approach your faith with realistic expectations for yourself and others, use common sense and good judgement, expect problems and problem people, and avoid Church politics.

Every person is different and you need to filter what you see, hear, and experience through an appropriate filter. Some people need to make radical changes, while others are already doing too much. The reason why this continues is because most of us have very poor self knowledge, so we usually have the opposite opinion of who we are and what we need to do to improve. To get an accurate view, ask someone else who knows you well, and expect to be surprised by what they say. As in making friends in general, be the person you want others to be.

In choosing a church, the most important thing is that the focus is on following the Bible, worshiping God, and helping others. I recommend choosing a known quantity, like: Evangelical, Pentecostal, Mainline Protestant, or Catholic churches. Which classical Protestant denominations everyone has heard of that the church is part of is less important: these include Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Lutherans, and the Reformed denominations. I do not consider Mormon (LDS), Jehovah Witness, or Christian Scientists to be Christians, as they have very different views, than any of the branches, of those common denominations, listed above.

Every one of these "known quantities" are fine choices, but I would be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. With Evangelicals, the strengths are the theology is sound and has integrity, but the weakness is that sometimes there are other assumptions about how a Christian should approach other aspects of life like politics, that you may not agree with.

With Pentecostals, they appeal to peoples emotions and this, with the speaking in tongues, is very motivational and inspiring. But there is an over emphasis on speaking and tongues that can be

divisive and sometimes the theology depends too much on emotions. Both the Evangelicals and Pentecostals tend to have very good young adults programs and that might determine your decision, based on that alone.

The Mainline Protestants are more varied in what is acceptable, which can be good if you have different opinions on social or political issues than Evangelicals do. But the theology tends not very sound and there is too much openness and not enough spiritual discernment about incorporating ideas from other religions, which can lead to New Age/Pagan influences.

Catholic churches are good in that they tend to have both strong community service programs and their basic theology is basically right. But I am very concerned about the praying to the saints and the status Mary, Mother of God, has in the Catholic Church. In many places in Latin America, people end up praying to evil spirits, even though they use the saints names.

In finding someone to get Biblical advice from, first make sure you learn as much about the Bible as possible. Read the Bible as much as possible and focus on the things that are obvious to you, from your first readings of Scripture. The person you ask for advice should demonstrate a sound knowledge of Scripture and be able to explain it well.

They should be kind, have your respect, and being generally positive about life and the Bible. They should focus on practical, achievable, and realistic applications of Biblical doctrines. They should "practice what they preach". This person will often not be a formal leader or in specific leadership position. They may or may not have formal training in theology. They should also be emotionally stable and not overly dependent on others.

As far as theology is concerned, you will learn quickly that everyone has a different opinions, but there should be things that are obvious to you, from your reading of the Bible. The basic theology necessary for salvation like sin, repentance, Heaven and the like needs to be specific and reflect what the Bible says. The Bible is clear on those things. What it is not clear on and what you should

not argue about or divide over are things like prophecy, where Scripture directly states that no one will ever understand.

Prophecy, in the Bible, is not designed for you to predict the future. In fact, even angels cannot understand what events prophecy is referring to. Prophecy is designed to be recognized, after the events happen, to show God is in control of history. The way you know when Christ returns, is that everyone will know and be completely sure about it. If someone claims to be Jesus Christ returned, and you or anyone else has any doubts, then that is a false prophet: they are either mentally ill, confused about basic Biblical theology, brainwashed by a cult, or they are deliberately trying to deceive people.

Remember, that many people in churches are not Christians, as people come to church for many reasons, like for socializing or finding a good spouse for marriage. There are even evil forces, that are actively trying to create as much division in the church, over petty issues, as possible. Remember again, use common sense and good judgment, be realistic about yourself and others, and try to get along. There will be problems in every church, because they are made up of people. You should find church to be rewarding and that the positives vastly outweigh the negatives.

7.4. Advice

7.4.1. Leveraging Our Emotional Selves

It is easy to see why animals have less stress and it is smart to emulate their lack of worry or fear of what might happen. Living in the moment is a great break from the problematic way of seeing the world as we do today as Americans. Stress and anxiety contribute to some of our biggest health problems and causes of death. It also makes sense not to think about bad things, that are unlikely to happen, so much, that we break down, in our ability, to deal with life.

What is not easy is to accept is that animals also suffer quite a bit, in ways in which we, as humans, can avoid. The most common cause of death, for American,s between 30 and 50, is accidents. Our

society is fundamentally dependent on toxic chemicals. We are at the mercy of viral outbreaks, that can easily cause epidemics, even with a very proactive and well trained medical force. We can easily get hit by a driver, texting on a cell phone and many people over depend on anti-lock brakes, to avoid collisions.

We live within a poorly thought out society where people act without thinking constantly. Worrying about terrorist attacks or natural disaster that we cannot control is overkill, but being aware of our surroundings and a little bit of fear is a healthy response, to our fragile environment and the general lack of concern, for others safety.

It seems that our entire decision making process revolves around nobody ever dying and the ends justifying the means, with anything permissible, in response to any threat, to a large number of people. We are afraid, as a country, and we are operating on a reactionary basis. We are not proactive enough, to think about the little things, that can slip by our attention. A toy drone (plane) landed on the White House lawn, because it was not a big, sexy threat.

It is not exciting, to spend extra money, on infrastructure and that is why our roads and bridges are failing us and our sanitation systems are antiquated and limping along. We are all worried about the amount of oil left and the situation in the middle east, but few are aware that we are running out of water and fertile soil. While we need not worry, to the point where we give up, we do need to be aware of the boring threats, to our society and be proactive enough, to realize the importance of the unglamorous issues (we seldom see covered on the news, or come up in presidential debates).

Thinking ahead and being responsible is a unique concern of people, that may well not apply to animals, in their world, before people took over their world. We enjoy how dogs are so happy, even for little things, like having enough food, or being treated with kindness, but we spend a lot of time and money keeping them healthy, by giving them good food and expensive medical care and clean up our houses after they destroy them. The world once was a place where we need not worry, but then people took over and now it is wise to worry.

We think of fear as a terrible thing, because it can shut down our ability to reason, but we do not often think of how it has saved our health and our lives. Just as pain can be counter-effective when it gets too extreme, pain is a powerful motivator to keep us out of danger. The fear that makes us avoid dangerous situation and compels us, to plan ahead, for disasters is a useful emotion, that need not be overcome.

We often think of our rational brain, as somehow superior, to our emotional selves, but there it is also useful, to feeling something. We were designed by God and all parts of ourselves have their roles and purposes. We often get overwhelmed by our emotions and so we do not think rationally, but, if we have control over our emotions, we can harness another view on reality. Sometimes we have insights, that we cannot explain rationally, but we need to pay attention to them.

We can understand life, with more than just our rational minds, but that does not mean we need to give up on reason. Each has its place. As we learn more about life and about ourselves, we can leverage all of our consciousness, in ways that only one aspect cannot explain. We have poor self knowledge, poor spiritual knowledge, poor understanding of history, and we have little self control. We need to work on all these areas, in order to effectively make good decisions.

Education and discipline are the keys to unlocking our entire consciousness. It is false, that we have most of our brains unused and, so have great unused potential, in the rational aspects of our mind. This does not mean that we cannot do much more, with what we already have. It is great, to be intelligent and creative, but it is more important to have common sense and tenacity. What we need to do, to change the direction of our society and truly mature in wisdom is to work harder and refuse to accept easy answers and quick fixes, to problems that are much more complicated and subtle, then we yet know or can accept.

7.4.2. Warnings for Potential Whistleblowers and Military Recruits

If you watch most of the movies involving whistle blowing (speaking out against corruption in the government or other organization) or other types of high risk activism, they seem very exciting and a good way to make a difference in the world. The problem with this thinking are both not being aware of the consequences and not being aware of how to be effective in improving the world.

First of all, there never was or ever will be a government controlled by its citizens. No one who takes power has any intention of giving it away. And the only way to take power, for yourself, is by doing anything, no matter how mean, to get it. There are no nice people in real power. Different things may happen to you, like being killed, if you know too much information, but most likely you will be discredited enough, so that people think you are a conspiracy theorist, you will lose your current job, and you will never get a good job again, in the industry you were in.

The sad thing about being an activist is that you never will get into power, without betraying your morals. You have to think that the ends justify the means. You have to be willing to do anything, to secure your position. But, no matter who you are, you can rarely get into a position, where you can get rid of the corruption or immorality. The reason why is that these issues we face generation after generation, and no matter what we do they never go away, have spiritual influences at their root.

The spiritual world is much different, than the physical world. In the physical world, one person has little power and the powerful can do almost unlimited means things to other people and animals, without having to have any consequences, for their actions. In the spiritual world, God places great limits, on what evil forces can do to us, especially, as Christians. The other thing is that God really does want to help, but wants to be asked first and even stranger praying that God's will be done does more than any other prayer. The good part about that is that you don't need to know what the problem really is, to get rid of it.

15 Years Celebration

Another thing is that, when social movements gain power, they do so, by getting money and recruiting people. Elections require many people, to vote the same way, to be of any use. With God, one additional person's prayers has exponentially greater value, than you would think. The other way to make a big difference in the world spiritually, is to follow the ten commandments (which are very similar, no matter which religion, and are mostly against the law, anyway). The ones most people need to work on are the sexual offenses and the only worshipping God commandments. A lot of this is just about being kind and polite to others and to care about other people and animals.

I was in the military, but do not recommend it to any others, as it is full of unnecessary pain and frustration. Most of the following applies to every single job in the military and in each military service. This is for the enlisted - I know nothing about officers except to avoid them whenever possible.

In the military, you do not use your mind at all. If you even fail to instantly drop for push-ups, when told to, just one time, you can serve up to one year in military prison, for that one offense. You can get what is called an Article 15, which is considered a minor punishment, for something as simple as being late to formation, by a few minutes or even just having food, in your locker. The punishment is that you lose 1/3 of your pay check that month and have 2-4 hours of extra duty for 2 weeks. The pay is so low also, as most military members have families and many, even with college degrees, are so poor, that they are on food stamps.

There are now multiple types of discharges, besides the honorable and dishonorable discharges, but if you want any military benefits, when you get out, like for college money or veterans disability, you have to have an honorable discharge. You can get a dishonorable discharge, for just hitting someone or smoking marijuana. When I left the military, I was in for only 13 and 1/2 months, and, if I had even one article 15, I could have been discharged, with a general discharge, and then I would have never gotten any college money or VA support.

As an enlisted service member (many even have to enter this way even, with college degrees), you will spend most your time doing what is called "details", which means chores, especially cleaning

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things and moving things around. You never get enough sleep - the Army says "you can sleep when you are dead". Most those in the military deal with hazardous chemicals or have to you work in dangerous positions, where they can easily be killed or maimed, even just in practice. The vast majority of service members do not even re-enlist once. Only 2% of the soldiers actually get the college money they were promised when they leave the military and many military jobs have poor or no civilian counterparts.

I had many misconceptions about the military, in things like torture and the use of chemical weapons, but I had the sense to do 2 things that made me respected by all the NCOs - I worked at at least 150% all the time and I did everything they asked me to do, with no hesitation. I have always heard that in basic training, that the break you down and build you up. In my platoon, we never had any building up - our slogan was "no slack". I was never broken down, because I never resisted. I already knew that I had to do everything they said and I do everything with at least 150% effort, so I was able to bend and not be broken.

I was never deployed (sent to combat), but combat is many times worse. I was told by some of the Marines, in my advanced training, that combat is 80% boredom and 20% terror. Another military saying is that you always "hurry up and wait," as they want to get you all ready, long before they need you, just because it is more convenient for them. One good thing about the military is that your advanced training is sometimes better than basic training and permanent duty station (the base you stay at for the next 3 years) is sometimes better than advanced training (easier).

Most training is "trial by fire". They put you through as much combat stress, as possible, for a relatively short period of time and if you don't give up, and you get a qualifying score on the tests, you are considered "trained". And what you have trained on, during basic training, you will be continuing training on these skills every week or 2, for you entire enlistment. Most of the advanced combat schools work on the same things just with more stress. And you must go into the gas chamber, once a year, while in the Army. And they can and likely will call you back after your enlistment is over, for the next invasions of Iraq.

The gas chamber will not hurt you long term, as it is just tear gas, but you have to take off your mask, in there, for a few minutes. The scary part is, when you have your mask on and you feel like your hands are on fire, then they tell you to take off your mask and open your eyes wide. My eyes are narrow, so I was thrown back, to the end of the line and I was in the last platoon, so we got a much higher concentration. It is a terrible experience, because you are locked in and cannot get out. It is kind of like being held under the water, in the ocean, if you get pulled under.

If you sign up for the military, and decide you don't want to go through with it, just don't show up to your ship off date, and you will just be banned from joining that service of the military, in the future. Once you swear in (you take an oath before you "ship off" for basic training), it gets harder to get out. If you find out, when you first enter basic training, that you do not want to stay in, get out with in the first 2 weeks. Your last call is within the first 6 months. If you get out in the first 6 months, to the military, it is just like you never entered.

7.4.3. Blending In and Spiritual Change

I watched a documentary about Edward Snowden today and this confirmed what I have suspected, for along time, since the Patriot Act was made into law. Many people will say, that everything is changed, to what was never done before. We have never been in a true democracy, in America, or elsewhere and, if, you were deemed a threat to those in power, you would always disappear.

You would then wake up in a dark cell, in some warehouse, where no one you cared about could find you, for the rest of your life. This would be interrupted, by times, when they wanted information out of you, where the torture we have been debating about in the media is a day at the beach, in comparison.

The difference today are in magnitude and reach. Neither the NAZIs nor the Soviets ever had as much information on us as the US government has on everyone worldwide. The key breakdown occurred when the US Congress decided it was ok to spy on US citizens, as we have always done on other nations, and the merging of the functions of law enforcement and foreign intelligence collection. This

kind of setup was what led to many of the worst abuses of the NAZIs and the Soviets and was different, before the Patriot Act and the creation of Homeland Security.

The debates between liberals and conservatives really is irrelevant, as we now are governed by a police state. For your own safety, you need to understand that everything you create, write, do, or discover is all recorded by the government. It was always to little effect, to rebel politically, throughout history (most of all because the next government could very well be much worse).

Now everything that happens to us, we do, or is communicated, by us, by any means will be put under a microscope. Most of all, you want to avoid being on one of the governments lists, as in NAZI Germany and the Soviet Union, you will be one of the first taken into prison.

The only effective way to change society is by spiritual means. God allowed the NAZIs and Soviets to do terrible things, but you won't get arrested for praying or living a moral life. You can still follow the ten commandments, you can still be nice to animals, you still can meet in churches and worship together, you still can learn about many things the government doesn't care about.

This is not really much of a depressing episode, in our history, because what we do know will happen is global warming. Global warming will cause such a breakdown in society, within as little as 10-20 years, all over the world, that it is likely that the US government will be irrelevant soon. Focus more on disaster survival and your health than on not having political freedom.

Political revolution was never a viable option anyway and our true salvation will only come from the Christian God. Focus on you personal relationships in your family and circle of friends. Do not constantly watch the news. I have found that nothing ever changes, so watching the news will get you scared for no reason, without giving you anything useful to do, in response.

Do not try to hide yourself from the government - these actions will make you stand out to government surveillance. Do not attempt to do political demonstrations or whistle blow on any

company, individual, or government agency. Do not organize boycotts or get involved in class action suits. Do not give to environmental groups, who do direct action. Do not discover anything revolutionary technology wise. Do not search for information on any terrorists or other illegal activities or government threats online, for any reason.

Keep yourself as far from government interest as possible. We never were in control and we always knew we were really peasants. Just thank God if you are an American citizen - global warming will be survivable in the US without a huge die-off. Being an American citizen still has a certain amount of standing in America.

Just never work for the Defense Department or in some strategic business, that contracts out to the Department of Defense. And never even consider joining the military, no matter what they offer you. Soldiers are the first to be experimented on. The military was always like living in a police state, with no rights and almost, like being in prison.

It is ironic that we fought World War II and the Cold War to avoid this political situation and then implemented an even more repressive version, for ourselves, because we were so afraid of the very low chance of being blown up. The terrorists have already won the war: we now have a police state and we are bankrupt, due to our own decisions we did, to "protect" ourselves from people who live out in the desert in tents.

7.4.4. Funny Advice

Disclaimer

This entire essay is intended to be funny and non-sensical. I am not out of my mind. There is a kind of humor called sarcasm, where you say the opposite of what you mean. When something you read appears this ridiculous, it is obviously meant as a joke.

It is very hard to write humor and so I usually write in a clear and straightforward way. I am doing the opposite of this here. It started out with the idea of paradox, which is an important aspect of my philosophy, where things that appear to be opposite and contradictory actually have much in common, as in the idea of Yin Yang and male-female relationships. If our world is irrational, maybe we need to approach it in an irrational way.

Above all, do not follow anything said in this essay. Just like in many slap-stick style comedies, if you follow the ideas in this essay, you will probably hurt yourself or make someone else very angry at you. This should be obvious for anyone with any common sense.

The Humorous Essay

This is an absolutely relative philosophy, which provides a solid theoretical framework, for making nonsense of nonsense, which is a completely relative and truthful response, to the ever changing universal truths, of the current "real" world. Untruth and paradox are not always irrational, depending on your definition of the word are and what you believe is reality.

Do not ask me what I am writing about, but rather ask yourself what you are reading. I cannot prove that I am correct, but you can't prove me wrong, either. No one can ever change your mind, if you do not base your beliefs on reason or facts. When people cannot stop changing their minds, everything stays the same.

How can I make a difference in the world, when I cannot accept the reality of what I feel and experience? You can only truly have faith, when you can reject the permanence of everything physical. You can never prove anything more completely, than your current opinion, even if you know you have no reason for your choice.

You can only be totally wrong, if you can only commit yourself to one opinion and one rationale, at a time. How many reasons do you have to give, to convince yourself of something you totally disagree

with? What is the point of arguing with yourself, when you already know the answer, but choose not to accept it?

Everything you see is not really there and everything you believe is false. You cannot make up your mind, because you already know what you are going to say. Only believe in what you can prove wrong, so you can always find the truth, in a pile of lies. The really scary thing, that can really hurt you is having an unpopular opinion, unless you can trust your feelings. The meaning of life is not relevant, unless you can get totally random answers.

It is never easy to plan your life, when you can see the future, ahead of time. It is not the right of math or science, to determine where you are, or what time it is. When you decide what to feel, you need to believe in your favorite color. Math problems always have at least 2 answers and you can feel free to disagree with the answer, which is just an uninformed opinion.

When will people stop appearing in my sentences? How can I design a website, when I cannot see who is visiting it, in real time. Why would someone buy a camera, when they can get a mirror for less? The most expensive thing you can buy and the best thing to invest your savings in is a dog toy. The best therapist is a can of beer and a bag of potato chips. If you cannot get your electronics to work, stop thinking so much and throw your devices out the window.

The best way to find friends is to argue with yourself, when no one is around. The only way to really stop an addiction is to increase the amount you consume, by a factor of ten, and then keep on doing so, until you get tired of it. The only way to be sure you will stay employed is to never show up for the job interview and not live in the same country, as your place of employment.

The real tragedy of our era is the lack of creativity, in the selection of people's favorite colors. For people so concerned about security, try making your list of personal information a best seller. Why do people keep on telling me to stop bragging about how many times I got to the bathroom in an hour? Why do my dates not like it when I tell them to shut up, whenever they start talking and sniff

women, to show them I am interested in them?

There is never a good reason to make a joke, especially when you are in pain or depressed. Why does anyone want be anywhere near their pets or their spouses? Many people think that the only way to give good advice is to do practical jokes, after ignoring what they ask. What does it mean when my girl friend keeps recommending ways to make her mad? How can I trust my pastor, when he keeps showing up ever week for church and keeps asking me for money?

Making money is not a good enough reason, to make an investment, and you only make money, when your prove to yourself, that you really deserve it. If the only reason why you are doing charity is to make the world a good place, you need to find another place to get drunk. Your life will never be happy, until you stop trying to eat healthy and exercise. The solution to losing weight and getting in better shape is to put a rock on the scale, when you weigh yourself and coat your entire body with vaseline.

7.5. Politics

7.5.1. What to Do about Islamic Terrorists

How Does Terrorism Work?

Most people in America do not understand how the type of warfare, called terrorism, is designed to work. Terrorism is a type of guerrilla warfare, used in numerous conflicts, when the side using them has no hope of winning, in pitched battle. Ambush is a more understood type of guerrilla tactic. Terrorism is employed, as a type of psychological warfare, for a small group of people, to be able to take on a much larger, wealthier, more powerful opponent.

Special forces also fight against and employ guerrilla warfare, although they employ significantly different tactics than terrorists do. Special forces go in with overwhelming force, in a small targeted

area and leave, before they are discovered. Terrorists, on the other hand, want to be reported on and use the mass media, to spread fear and uncertainty. This fear and uncertainty can then cripple the economy or force the military, to intervene in wars it was not ready to fight. The actual body count of terrorism is not its primary target of destruction.

Most of the terrorist weapons and tactics were actually created by the Irish (like car bombs), to fight off the English and the Algerians, who were brutally attacked by the French. Most modern weapons were first developed by Europeans, including the machine gun, assault rifle, and poison gas (including nerve agents). The NAZIs called the French Resistance, during World War II, terrorists. America actually originally trained the Al Qaeda terrorists, to fight off the Russians (Soviets), in Afghanistan, which helped us win the Cold War.

How the Middle East is Run

There are 2 viable political based alternatives, for leadership of countries, in the Middle East: Islamic Fundamentalism and military dictatorships. We have been supporting military dictatorships, in the Middle East, who put down Islamic Fundamentalists revolts, in exchange for American weapons. At the same time they told their people America and Israel were the source of their problems, thereby deflecting criticism of themselves (the dictators). Many people, in the Middle East, believe in conspiracy theories, even thinking 9/11 was done by the Mossad, and it is almost impossible, to disprove conspiracy theories.

Saudi Arabia is governed, by the Saudi royal family, and maintains control, from the tribal leaders, in exchange, for enforcing Islamic law and protecting the holy sites. The Saudis are very progressive socially and, within their compounds, women can even wear mini skirts, and they are happy to take our money for their oil. The Islamic Fundamentalists, on the other hand, would rather hurt the United States, than get our money, for their oil.

The Situation in Iran

Iran hates us, because they were a world power, for most of history, before the US became a world power. Iran also hates us because the CIA actually started a coup and installed at least one very unpopular ruler in their country. Iran believes that the US is the reason why they are not a world power and are constantly expecting, to be infiltrated, by our and Israel's intelligence. The best way to fight Iran is to, like we did in other wars like World War II and the first Persian Gulf war, convince Iran of what it already wants to believe.

We should re-enforce Iran's suspicions, that the CIA and Mossad actually have infiltrated their intelligence, by making all their senior intelligence officers appear, to be on our payroll. Iran's intelligence services will spend the next 10 years running all their leadership through interrogations. Iran will spend so much time chasing their tales, that they will not be effective in things, like building atomic weapons.

The technology needed to produce an atom bomb is so basic today, that US high schoolers could build one. The key component, that is not readily available, to high schoolers or Iranians, is enriched uranium or plutonium. This kind of uranium or plutonium comes from what are called spent fuel rods (the nuclear waste), comes from running a nuclear power plant. What the international UN committee, that monitors, what they call nuclear proliferation (also known as more countries being able to use nuclear weapons), by inventorying records of the exact amount of nuclear material accumulated, by the nuclear reactor (in this case, in Iran's').

The reason why Iran wants nuclear weapons is that having them makes it much harder for the US to invade them. The US would then treat Iran more seriously, as a true competitor, militarily. For example, we do not invade Russia or China, just to save one person, as that could result in a nuclear war. We would be more likely to invade Iran now, since it does not have nuclear weapons. There is a reason why Edward Snowden is in Russia now (this is one of the only places, where the US cannot take him back from, to the US).

The Kind of War We are Fighting

The problem with having Islamic fundamentalists, as enemies, means that we are not fighting a country, like in World War 2 or the Cold War. We are being brought into an epic war, between fundamentally different ways of life, a major aspect of which is technology. The modern world is a by product, of the European Enlightenment, and has now been adopted by most of the world, which now operates as one (economy), with the Americans (Hollywood) culturally dominating. As a Christian and an American, who served in the military, and am permanently disabled because of my service, my primary concern is the welfare of the poor Christians, who are often victims of Islamic fundamentalism, in the third world, and the US military and civilian contractor personnel, who suffer the worst parts of the fight.

There are 1 billion people, who are effectively resisting assimilation, from North West Africa to Indonesia and Southern Former Soviet Union to Central Africa (as well as much of Western Europe). As a Christian, I can understand how Muslims think of themselves, as the one true faith. Since they think of us as pagans, it is understandable how they are having an existential crisis, to explain why Europe excelled past the major Islamic Empires, of the Early Modern world, in Turkey, Iran, and India.

I also can appreciate how many Muslims see the one world economy and American culture to be immoral, as our entire society is based on addiction and is contrary, in spirit, to what the Bible teaches. If I, and many other Christians, had the choice between being in a country ruled, by fellow Christians, sharing my basic beliefs and we could resist being part of this one world government, that is antithetical to what we believe, we might find some way to resist being assimilated (although we wouldn't likely be blowing up civilians, fellow Christians, and other nationals, like the terrorists do)

Many people, in America, believe that Islam is fundamentally an intolerant and violent religion, at heart, with these ideas coming directly from the Koran, itself. The more complicated truth was that the Eastern Orthodox church had persecuted the indigenous groups, of the Middle East, which were almost entirely Christian (with only slightly differently worded explanations of the Christian Trinity), even before the Apostle Paul wrote the his letters to the churches, in the New Testament.

This war started, after the Roman Empire was split into two and the eastern half (Byzantine Empire/Eastern Orthodox Church) fought with the Persian (Iranian/Zoroastrian) Empire, until both were weakened, enough, just as a Persian Gulf culture was brought together religiously and politically, by Islam. The New Testament, of the Bible, whether originally written in Aramaic or Greek, was translated very early on, into the other major regional language. The Bible was not translated into Arabic, at this time, and there was so much confusion, over the debate of how God was both 3 and one. This debate became so academic and theoretical, that early Muslims saw Islam as a reform movement, because it simplified a lot of the theology of the Bible.

Islam was greatly influenced, by early writings, written in the literary style of the Gospels, with the incompatible theology. These writings were related to those of the ancient Middle Eastern religions, like that of Plato and Zoroastrianism, which was then called Gnosticism. By tradition, Mohammed was illiterate, so it is not surprising, that the theology is not the same as the Bible (as these Gnostic stories were repeated orally, in this region).

Same Thing Happening in Europe and America

A similar situation happened in Europe, during the end of the Western Roman Empire, at the same time. The Germanic peoples became powerful and effective militarily, because they learned from Rome and their leaders often actually served in the Roman Empire's armies. The Romans actually helped create a new people group, by their political actions. The medieval world can be seen as the merging, of the Germanic tribes culture, with that of the culture of the Roman Empire.

The same thing is happening, in Europe, by the immigration of Islamic Fundamentalists, to France and Great Britain (the UK) and in the United States by immigration of Mexican nationals. European culture and politics will be merging with Islamic Fundamentalism, and the US will begin to look culturally and politically more and more like Mexico. And it is about 50 years too late to change any of this.

Effect of Early Church Politics

Ironically, the indigenous/Christian groups in the Middle East, like the Ancient Assyrians and Ancient Egyptians, invited in the Arab armies. This was they were treated better, under Islam, than they were under the Eastern Orthodox Church/Byzantine Empire. This is important, to note, that the Middle East was almost entirely Christian, for as many as 25 generations, before Mohammed was even born. The Arabs are native to the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia), not North Africa, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey (which is Muslim now but not Arab), Iraq, or Iran (which is also Muslim now but not Arab).

There were also high concentrations of Christians, in the Persian Empire (Iraq, Iran, and often Pakistan and/or parts of Central Asia), Asia Minor (Turkey), North Africa (Morocco to Libya) and East Africa (Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Sudan), as well as some in Central Asia, Kerala (Southern India) and even China, long before Mohammed was born. These indigenous Christians were persecuted, in the Middle East, by the Catholic church, as well, during the Crusades. Later, the same group of people were persecuted by the Portuguese colonists, in East Africa and South India. In both instances, the Catholic church tried to force these Eastern Christians to convert to Catholicism, liturgically and theologically, even though these same Eastern Christians had converted to Christianity centuries before the first Catholics existed and had held out against state sponsored Islam, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism (without any help from Western Christians).

Originally, there were a number of different churches, that were established, in major cities, in the Roman Empire and one was later added, for those in the Persian Empire (in Babylon/Baghdad). Rome was just one, and one of the least important, at first. The others were Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem (symbolically). The Eastern Christians, in the Persian Empire fared well, when Christians were persecuted, in the Roman Empire, and then later persecuted, when Rome legalized Christianity. The Persian Church then broke off all ties, with the other churches and so did not participate, in the formal councils, sponsored by the Roman Emperor. They broke away in order to show they were good, loyal citizens of the Persian Empire.

Christians under Islamic Rule

Many of the cultural things, that we now associate with Islam, like the prostrating of the believers before Jerusalem, calls to prayer by voice instead of bells, the architecture, the early monasteries in Europe, and the mystical branch of Islam called Sufism. Middle Eastern Christians were responsible, for bringing Aristotle's works and ideas of Classical Greece, into the medieval world, before training Muslim scholars (who were only allowed to engage in the study of philosophy, because the royal court protected them).

The thing, that really limited the Persian Church (Iraq and Iran), and the churches in Syria and Egypt was that they had to pay a high tax, for the protection of Christians, by the government and many other stiff requirements. Christians under Islamic rule, automatically lost any legal cases against any Muslim, they were not allowed to spread the Gospel and converting from Islam, to any other religion had the death penalty (and you were born into your faith).

Things got much worse, for the Christians, in the Middle East, so that, after the Mongol invasion, and after a slight change in climate and the Black Plaque, they retreated up into the mountains, between Iraq and Iran (where the Kurds are now), until the end of World War 1. Even so, few Christians converted to Islam, for the next thousand years or more and most of the population of the Persian and Turkish empires were still Christian up until modern times. Between the First and Second World Wars, 2/3 of the Assyrian people, almost entirely Christian, descended from the ancient Assyrians, were exterminated. Later, the remaining have since almost entirely emigrated, to North America, Western Europe, or Australia.

European Empires Effects

Europeans only took over the world, for about 2 centuries, during the time of the Industrial revolution (about 1750-1950), but before this, the most powerful and wealthiest empires were all Muslim. During the period following the decline of the Ottoman Empire, which, a couple centuries

early, almost took over all of Europe, the wealthiest and most powerful empires were no longer Islamic. The Europeans finally took over the Southeast Asian spice trade and built their own maritime empires.

The British fought Islamic Fundamentalism, as early as the 19th century, which was one of the reasons for taking over Africa. The Spanish American war was almost entirely fought, in the Philippines, over a couple islands inhabited by some very ruthless Muslims. Palestine was mostly inhabited by Christians, during the medieval era and many Palestinians are still Christian today. Even today, 10% of both Syria and Egypt are still Christian. While only 1% of the population in Iraq is Christian, they made up 95% of the refugees, created during the latest US-Iraqi War. Most those in the Middle East referred to as Christian Arabs are not Arabs, but descendants of the Ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, etc.

What Should America Do?

Bottom line, this war has gone on for 1,500 years and is a natural byproduct of us totally dependent on something, that passes through an area, controlled by our greatest enemies (on its way to us). This is not like the Cold War: it cannot be one in one person's lifetime. America's current strategy, of targeting specific terrorist groups, is like playing whack a mole. When one terrorist group is taken down, another one appears.

We call this grass roots support in the United States, because we are trying to fight an idea, not a country or an organization. We are arriving, as Americans, rather late to a war of civilizations and not realizing this war started long before we existed and will likely keep on happening many generations after the word America is meaningless.

If it makes you feel better, this part of the world will be the most violently affected, by global warming and America one of the least. The way I would approach the problem is to keep it under control and not try to destroy our economy, by waging huge wars, we cannot win. Maybe we can

try denying the terrorists coverage, by our media, or not spend huge amounts of money fighting them.

They want us to fight them. The best way to fight them is to not fight them. Treat terrorism as a law enforcement issue, like they would any other criminal. We need to focus on bigger problems, like our economy and getting off oil.

How America will Actually Respond

Americans are not capable of understanding this situation rationally, because the solution runs contrary to both typical conservative and liberal views of America, religion, politics, morality, world view, and understanding of history. Most people who will be deciding will either pick the "lets nuke all Islamic countries" or lets "let the Middle East be". The actual strategy, that will be implemented, will be whack-a-mole, because we cannot make a firm and consistent decision.

We will be reactionary and have no overall strategy, which will keep us trying all sorts of ridiculous ideas. We will continue to attack different countries (especially Iraq) and terrorist groups, while we sink into greater debt. We will not find an alternative to oil, and the world economy will be very weakened, in the process. When global warming starts taking its toll, we will not have the resources necessary, to rebuild enough infrastructure. We will then not be able to maintain the modern one world economy.

In 50-100 years, we will be fighting to the death, for plastic pop cans, we find in our dumps and we will mostly have migrated to Canada. Although we will be living in the stone age (as horses are dying off, we have chopped down most of the trees, and we will not have enough energy to make metal tools), after living off scraps of our former empire, Jesus will not return, even centuries later. The "end of the world as we know it" is not the same as "the end of times". God never promised us and most Christians living throughout history and even the world today do not have predictable indoor plumbing or electricity.

7.5.2. Why We Cannot Solve Global Warming

I think the biggest reason why we cannot solve global warming is, first, we don't understand exactly how big the problem is and the consequences are. Also, our country is too young and we are not able to act, or even see ahead on a long enough time scale, to really solve the problem. The problem also goes against many of our fundamental beliefs, our shared experiences as Americans, and our unique demographics.

When people hear about global warming, they don't think natural disasters, that destroy entire cities, happening every year, what large scale changes can do to disease and insects patterns of behavior. They also do not understand what scale of infrastructure is necessary, to contain these kinds of disasters, year after year. A few degrees in temperature will cause havoc in the United States, but, worst case scenario, we can migrate into Canada and even today we still produce 1/4 of the entire world's food.

The situation in Asia and Europe looks very bleak, because basically everyone will be heading north. Russia is north of both China and India and Europe is north of North Africa and the Middle East. China is north of Southeast Asia. These countries are very unstable, and lacking critical infrastructure, as it is. When it gets so hot, that nobody can live there, the problem will be that the northern countries cannot produce enough bullets. In Africa and everywhere else, in the Old World, people will experience huge die-offs.

There is an underlying belief, with most Americans, that we are a special nation religiously, historically, or politically and since we have mobilized effectively, through a number of crisis that we can solve any problem. But now we think, just like, how a few people run our entire the military and win wars for us, which we sacrifice nothing for, that someone else will solve the problem for us.

We think that science and American businesses just need a little more money and so they will produce whatever technology we need. Basically, we need it, therefore it will happen, and the proof is past history. This is magical thinking. Many people in America see things like computers, that

appear to be magical, because of their lack of science education. Many people believe that the world's biggest problems will be solved by computers and the only real problem is computers taking over the world.

We do not understand the scale of the related problems, because we cannot grasp the concept of exponential growth and we have never faced so many problems this big, ever before, in human history. Previous Americans would likely have been better suited, to solving these kinds of problems, because they had to work hard, to survive. We have now become very weak and lazy, because we now live like kings. We cannot deal with this power and this way of life is destroying the planet.

The biggest problem is that no one believes anything anymore, unless they see it in front of them, because of our lack of both religious faith and our culture of deceit and lying. Since the problem is not yet starring us in the face, and we cannot give it a certain date, we do not really believe it will happen. If people realize this, they usually just give up and just want to party, until the world ends. Also, many people seem to think we cannot lose our technology and that the "end of the world as we know it" will be the "end of humanity" or be "when Christ will return".

The easiest solution, on our part, is to let the government solve it. There are ways of mitigating this problem, for some groups of people, and there are full solutions. Either way, there are always trade-offs, that the poor will feel the most. Our society is fixing all its hopes on continuing to produce more and more energy and feeding more and more people. This option will just delay the problem and make the end result much worse, for everyone living after us.

Many people, who are responsible and aware of the situation, want to help, but have no idea where to start. The long term solution will be for us to consume less energy, not just produce more energy. Our society is built on addiction and our biggest fundamental addiction is energy consumption. Instead of finding more ways to generate power, we need to find ways to live off of very little energy.

The one thing we can be sure of is that America and then Canada will be the best off. The other is that we need to start preparing for disasters, because between terrorism and climate change, the big thing we need to get good at is rebuilding and simply surviving.

7.5.3. Mexican America of the Future

One of the most major changes, for us, in America, for the mid-range future is nothing to do with technology (well, somewhat), terrorism, oil, the Middle East, or China. Many scholars compare America today, to the end of the Roman Empire. This is true, but in a way that no one is talking about. The Roman Empire did not exactly fall apart and descend into chaos. The Middle Ages took the form it did, by the merging of Roman and Germanic culture.

Just as in America, the wealth is being concentrated, in fewer and fewer hands. What will happen to the Middle Class and who will be the serfs? The answer is based on skin color, language, land ownership, and citizenship. Descendants of Roman citizens became the feudal lords and landed caste of the Medieval era, while the poor Germanic peoples (who didn't own land) and were a different (foreign) ethnic group and became the servants/working class/peasants of the new society.

What will this mean for light skinned Americans and American citizens? Mexican culture (not Latino) will merge with American culture. This means that the dominant language or one of them will be Spanish or a hybrid of English and Spanish. The peasants will be illegal immigrants and people of darker skin who only speak Spanish. Land, skin color, language, and citizenship will be the key to the separation between the rich and the poor.

Cultural things, like the legal system, will become more like Mexico, especially attitudes toward private property and the criminal justice system. All our environmental laws and infrastructure will take a big step down, in government spending and legal protection. There will be many more gated communities and there will be very few White people and almost no White Christians (maybe some in the South). Evangelical Christians will retain their numbers, but few Churches will speak English as the primary language.

This is neither good nor bad. If you are coming from Mexico this might seem like progress, but many American citizens may not welcome the move from first world, to third world types of political and economic systems. Many people in America fear a penetration of traditional American lifestyle and culture by Muslim groups or by Chinese culture, but the reality is those demographics will never get near the Mexican American demographic. The key to this change is based on immigration laws and demographics.

There is also some dimensions that separate this Mexican American approach to life in America, which, compared to many East and South Asian Americans, has taken the opposite approach to living in America. Instead of integrating into American society or keeping to themselves, this demographic is much more aggressive in political activism, corporate backing, and unwillingness to accept the American culture, that they are entering into. Also, Rich light skinned people, rich American citizens, and rich English speaking populations have fewer kids and their are fewer people emigrating from any other country than Mexico.

The good things (from an American Citizen/light skinned/English speaking point of view) are that we will finally have a real culture (not corporate) in America, the culture will be much more receptive to the Gospel, and it will be (in some ways) much more difficult to be racist. Eventually, there will be so many mixed marriages and blending of the two cultures, that a first world culture might emerge several hundred years later, if we can afford to successfully deal with Global Warming with our economy and political system in tact. To do this, we will need to build the huge engineering projects necessary, to withstand the effects of global warming, without the loss of modern technology and the one world economy (sudden movement from Information Age to Stone Age technology).

Along the way, there will be fewer and fewer jobs, as entire industries are even more automated, by computers and robots. Technology will cost basically nothing, but food will be much more expensive and few people will have jobs. The funny thing is that the people who vote for candidates, that are the most opposed, to that vague undefined thing they call Socialism will force that type of economic system to become a necessary reality, because of those kind of economic

policies. Corporations will finally get rid of government all together, but they will then have to pay to provide private services, equivalent to the government, in order to maintain power.

7.5.4. Some People are More Equal than Others

(This title comes from the book *Animal Farm*, which was written by George Orwell to describe propaganda. Another one of his books, on a similar topic, *1984*, was written to explain the country now called Myanmar or Burma, that has been fighting for decades, with no end in sight.)

One of the big issues my generation is dealing with is this slippery slope of equal rights. On the surface, I agree that even issues like homosexuality, which the morality of I believe as the Bible says (so you can look this up and determine my position yourself) should not come into play as a factor in determining things like employment, government positions and even friendships in secular society. Many issues are not as they seem at first and people have different agendas they are trying to push, so although many people may say they do things for one reason, which appears more noble, they actually do so for an immoral reason.

I personally think that sexual morality is not talked about one way or the other in the constitution, so I think there is no way to resolve the issue within that framework. The constitution does not forbid it nor does it give support for it. I think people should get in trouble for hurting other people whether or not they are of different races or different in other less relevant ways and for us to single out certain groups of people for protection from other groups of people assumes that one side is always right and the other is always wrong.

I get it: white males (not usually Christian or at least not following the Bible) controlled most of the world for several hundred years. The thing is that Islamic empires controlled most of the world for a much longer period of time and that our problems started long before most any country in Europe was more than a village big. To constantly hate a certain group of people because they were wealthier or more powerful in a small period of history is ridiculous. Most every major country in Europe was a major power at one time, but some countries we see as good and some as evil, but

this is because we only study a very narrow range of history.

People tend to be good when they have no wealth or power, but very brutal when they believe they have the resources to build themselves an empire. We talk about how evil Germany or Spain are but no one talks about how brutal the Pagan Vikings were. Germany gets painted as antisemitic and as committing genocide when England was the first country in Europe to kick out the Jewish people and the Turks killed off 1/3 of the Armenian peoples and the Arabs killed off 2/3s of the Assyrian people (those native to the Middle East) around the time of the two World Wars.

The Arabs can't stop talking about how bad the Crusades were, but the Arabs are not native to the Middle East. When they invaded the Middle East, the native peoples were almost entirely Christian, for 500 years, before the Arabs came out of what is now Saudi Arabia. It was Islam which started the war between Christianity and Islam. We talk about how poorly the Palestinians were treated, but we don't seem to care about our killing off of our native people in North America. We see America invading the Middle East, but most of the world where Christians live next to Muslims it is the poor Christians that are mostly the victims of rich and powerful Muslims throughout much of Africa and the Middle East.

Women have more power than men in America today and Feminism/Women Studies (but not Men's Studies) is mainstream, but the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia are given a free pass. Women in America are upset that they are discriminated against in the work force, because there are fewer women executives than male executives, while women in Southeast Asia are assaulted with a jar of acid for being the victims of male sexual aggression. Our society wants more women in Science, Math, and Engineering fields, but sees no need for more men in Writing, Psychology, Teaching, Arts, Religion, and Home Making.

We also like to judge the world by the standards that are popular now and assume that everyone always thought the way we do now. We are also very selective about how we report what happened. Instead of finding the truth and then reporting it, we come up with a conclusion before hand and cherry pick the truth, to support our preconceived notions. Many people then claim this to

be objective truth and few people will speak out against it, because this particular worldview is considered trendy and they don't want to lose out on wealth and power by standing against the crowd.

For some reason, it is popular in history to say everything done by Muslims throughout history was perfect and Christians were always evil. This is basically grade school level education and bigotry. It is sad that, in claiming to be objective, we just submit to ignorant popular opinion, just to be fit in. If only scholars had courage to really engage in critical thinking.

I guess that won't happen, while Christians refuse to change their beliefs, to fit in with the fads of today. Scholars today want to fit in with their colleagues and the general population, so they aren't critical of what is popular and behaviors society claims are acceptable today. This may make them good at business, but bad at being creative or constructive, in solving real problems. So when scholars say these ridiculous things, just ignore them, because they have nothing worthwhile to say and they are not worth reading.

8. Advanced Articles

8.1. For Other Christians

8.1.1. Finding God's Direction (in Our Lives)

The Internet is the center of our contemporary culture, in the same way that animal sacrifices were common, in the ancient Middle East. The theology of the Bible was revealed to Israel, in the ancient world, through the Old Testament, in ways that were relevant to the Israelites. The church of today should find ways, to relate Biblical principles, to our contemporaries, in ways relevant to our time and culture. The Internet is the one thing, that unites all people of our time, of every country and culture. Therefore, it is natural to use the Internet, to communicate the Gospel to our generation.

15 Years Celebration

It is amazing, that, despite our great enabling technologies, that have slowed the growth of big brother and gave us the greatest library of all time, that due to jealousy, greed, moral corruption, or general malice we often see the Internet and computers, as a source of uncertainty and portal, to all that is evil in the world.

It doesn't have to be this way. If you don't like what you find on the Internet, create and publish your own content, like books or music, and use the positive aspects, of the various Internet technologies and services. Instead of churches fearing and avoiding computers, they need to take an active role, in cleaning it up and offering compelling and positive alternatives, to those things that any sane and balanced person would find objectionable, on the Internet.

This is why I put so much into my website. The Internet is the center of our culture and the one thing, that the preservation of our culture depends on. Most of those cultural elements, in the first few books of the Bible (like Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), seem very strange to us. These include, the temples and the way they were constructed, where God asked them to sacrifice animals for forgiveness of sins; God giving assurances, that the Patriarchs of the Old Testament (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, and Moses) descendants millennia were cared for millennia later; the role of women in Hebrew society (not approved buy God); and the many celebrations, that were to be done, in remembrance of God's Promises, and past times He freed the Hebrew people, from tyranny were all easily understood, in the ancient Middle East.

This was the common culture of that time and place. The unique things about God are about how He is the One true all-powerful God and all the other character traits and personality, of the Christian God are essential, whereas the cultural elements need to reflect the current culture.

When we try to find direction in life, all the Internet and people we know provide are conflicting advice, so that, instead of seeking the truth, it is easy to just hear what you want to hear and have people re-enforce your stereotypes and ignorance. The main purposes our children's education are designed to teach is for employment and indoctrination, to make better citizens. Many young people see their future, in what they make money doing. When they grow up, and society re-enforces this,

later in life, where, with, especially men, relate, in terms of where and what they do for work.

The Bible, on the other hand, does not accept our societies values and will not change, to be more convenient, as people's sensibilities become mainstream, according to the whims of the famous people, of our generation. What God wants us to do is to make use of our talents and technologies, to further His will. God does not care about how you make a living, but rather who you are, as a person. He wants us to grow up and accept His approach to life. He wants this, so, instead of us just taking the services of the Church, we can go out and provide those services, for others.

When people give their advice, on how to solve world problems, they often reduce it down to one thing, but people are not designed this way. Different people not only have different personalities and different gifts, they have different problems, as well. Different people should be given entirely different advice, as their problems can often be, on opposite ends of the spectrum.

Today, the majority of the population is lazy and wants to constantly be entertained, despite not providing any useful service, to society or their employer (and this applies equally to all generations currently alive). These people need to be encouraged, to take on additional roles, in the Church and society. There is also a smaller, but significant, portion of society, who need to relax more and focus on taking time for themselves. Ironically, people almost always have the exact opposite understanding, of what their problem is: people who are lazy think they work too hard and people who work too hard think they need to still work harder.

The best way to tell which one you are is to ask your friends, coworkers, and family (and believe they know better than you). They do because we have very poor self knowledge, but are very good at sizing up other people. Contemporary society does not encourage you to think - they want you to fit in and assimilate, and do not take kindly to people who, challenge conventional wisdom. Society does not want scholars or monks - they want servants and soldiers. It is also ironic, in an age where almost every aspect of our lives is based on addiction, that people now think they are more free, than people of any other generation.

I have created two self help books, with opposite advice. Encouraging Words is based on Existentialism and is more of a classic type of self help book, as it encourages you to work harder. Positive News, which is based on Taoism, is my journey into finding a way, to accept, that I cannot solve all the problems people have, that I encounter, in my daily life. I also realized that, as I am extremely disabled, because of my mental illness, even less is expected of me. So Encouraging Words is for the lazy complainers and Positive News is for workaholic Marthas.

Many problems happen, when someone goes to an extreme, and then, to counter that, the other person goes, to an even greater extreme. This phenomena might reverse the solution, that will bring balance, to the evolving situation. We get that often in US politics, as most people in America, who do vote, will vote Republican or Democrat no matter what, so our elections are decided by which president seems more fun to be around, or is more comfortable wielding power. One president goes to one extreme and the other the opposite. That is the problem of our foreign policy: no matter how dedicated the president is to following through with a treaty, that he or she cannot even guarantee their own party in congress will support them, even in their own presidential term.

Americans jump between totally ignoring the rest of the world, to constantly interfering. We are more mature, in that we think that, if we leave others alone, they will leave us alone. The sad fact is most of history is based on revenge. One group treated the other terrible centuries before, so now the other group, who has finally got into power, now terrorizes the group, that hurt their ancestors. We are good meaning, in that we intervene in countries like Haiti, where there is no political gain for it and many times devote precious military resources, to entirely humanitarian reasons.

American has given up on a lot of trying to solve other countries problems, because we mean well, but we just don't have the resources, to stay long enough, to rebuild countries, on the other side of the globe. No other country has even remotely attempted this. And when we leave the area, we leave the country, to the like minded, not the political viable alternatives. The world is and always was ruled by evil people and we can't solve everybody's problems. All these problems have existed, for a thousand or more years, and we certainly are not going to end these wars, in the lifespan of our country and our society, no matter how many battles we win.

There are some even more specific things you can do in your service to God. These are called Spiritual gifts and are usually totally unrelated, to your natural skills and abilities, so God gets the glory, not us. My spiritual gifts, I think, are helps and teaching. My main gift is writing especially about religious topics. I also have the gift of helps, because I do whatever is needed to move my work along, no matter if it is fun stuff or really tedious, depending what needs to get done.

8.1.2. Intense Christians

Have you ever got into a shouting match, over religion, or go away from a religious discussion angry or depressed? The reason why it is so easy, especially for new Christians, to debate about religion in an overly intense, impolite, demanding and uncaring way is that we (believe we) know the truth, we are excited and happy about it and so we want to share this with everyone.

The different between a Christian or a Muslim vs. unbelievers or believers of almost any other religion is that Christianity and Islam make absolute an contradictory claims. Islam and Christianity are very serious religions and Muslims and Christians make no compromises, if they believe the Bible tells them to do something. Both have very different denominations or sects that have very different ideas about almost anything.

Even Buddhists, of two entirely different schools of thought, shared the same monasteries. Hinduism would even claim Christianity and Islam as Indian and find a way to place them within Indian philosophical tradition, if we wanted it. Even many non-Evangelical Protestants do not find it essential, for others to believe the same as they do, for living a better life or even for salvation (if they even still believe in an afterlife). Atheists are often bitter against Evangelical and Catholic Christians mainly for their political influences and moral beliefs, that they are not shy about sharing with anyone.

While everyone has the right to their beliefs and the right to express those, within the laws of the world, there are some ways of communication, that are more effective and less combative.

Christians should never compromise the basic theology of the Christian faith about sin, repentance, salvation, and eternity and all of the laws of the Bible, but changing tactics in a world that is fundamentally different is not compromising of principles and absolutes. It is interesting to note, that in the Gospels, each person that meet Jesus Christ was given a different task to complete for salvation. While there is still one way to be sure you will go to heaven, there are many approaches to getting there and paths to follow afterwards often diverge.

I have found that going to some kinds of churches sets off my anger and puts me in a very negative space. Although it is truly fundamental to have faith in Christ, believers can get obsessive compulsive about theology and rituals. While Christ was not always gentle and subtle about injustice and disrespect for God, we are perceived as being "over the top" by a growing segment of potential believers. Just like I see on the singing competitions on TV, just singing loud, intense, and passionate is not the way to sing every song or even every part of a song.

When I was young, I had a problem with my temper and also with silliness, but it wasn't until recently that I realized that they were connected. As I responded to the Army training, my whole personality changed, because I coped with the real cruelty of war and real life. I became very intense and had a hard time relating with other people, who didn't share my experiences.

I found out, through trial and failure, that too much religion could drive me to anger, negativity, and depression. I have found, that in approaching religion, from an academic and non-personal way, that I could separate my feelings from the situation. I was able to suspend my disapproval, so that I could find similarities in other peoples beliefs and point of view. This approach allowed me to understand the world, religion, and history better.

8.1.3. Criticizing Christians and Christian Organizations

Many Christians will not criticize churches or other Christians, no matter what they do. Besides

having no way to reliably know who is a genuine Christian, unless you know them personally, the example of the Apostle Paul and Jesus Christ is that we should criticize church members and organizations in public. Jesus criticized people about selling things in the middle of the synagogue and most of Paul's letters mention real individuals, in contemporary churches, at the time of writing.

One of the things that really bothers non-believers is that Christians are unwilling to be honest and upfront with everyone and defending people in church puts us in the awkward position of having to justify all possible theological possibilities. That we share the belief of non-believers that the church does make mistakes from time to time and not all sects of Christians are correct theologically or morally does not encourage disbelief, but rather makes what you say worth listening to.

As Christians, we have to stop playing the debate game and stop trying to keep a picture perfect image. Non-believers already figured these things out anyway and they feel like we are not rational and accepting of reality. We have to show the world that we are not only faithful to what we believe and moral, but that we can admit that we are fallible and struggle with many issues non-believers do as well.

We need to show that it is possible and practical to be Christian. We need to appear like real people with believable lives. Admitting we have done something wrong does not mean that we are giving up all moral authority.

Just like when we became Christian and had to admit where we really were and start from the bottom, we should approach non-believers in the same way. Although we have more years in, we are all at the same level. Having people to look up to is great, but just having one role model for every quality is unrealistic.

The thing I dread most about going to church is the people, who say they haven't sinned, for 20 years. These are the kind of people, who tell you you are never doing enough and make you choose between being happy and being Christian. They expect the world out of you and nothing out of

themselves. It would really make church much happier and increase membership, if we could vote out the most obnoxious people.

When we are willing to be open about the struggles we face as Christians, we begin a real conversation with others, that has the potential of leading, to a serious decision, about God and faith. You cannot expect others to be real, if you are not. Many Christians take the easy way out and say that non-believers reject Christ, because they are not willing to follow His rules, but where does that leave us, as Christians, in evangelizing? Once you consider that it might be the way Christians act, that keeps non-believers, from Christ you have created a path, where there was none before.

8.1.4. Studying World Religions?

I first started studying major world belief systems, in college, with Chinese Literature, as I saw the importance of China, to my major (International Business), I enjoyed studying other cultures, in clubs, in high school and literature was my major subject, in high school. The obvious reason, to study other cultures, or religions is to understand how people think, which is necessary, if you want to communicate with them, or understand their history and future intentions.

What I was surprised to find out was that Asian religion and philosophy made more sense to me than European Philosophy (and was closer to Biblical theology, as well). I was inspired by reading these texts, to write and I learned things, that helped me better understand and appreciate my faith, Christianity. I never did, nor did I ever intend to change my beliefs. Many of my beliefs were very similar, to certain aspects of Chinese Philosophy and Sufism.

The reason why I believe in Christianity, as my chosen religion, which I believe is the one true faith and the only way to know for sure you will go to Heaven, is because I can intuitively sense God and understand Him, to be the All-Powerful "Christian" Creator God. When I read the Bible, as opposed to other major works of religion and philosophy, it feels much more intense and much more real.

It feels like God wrote it, instead of a person. Of course, I don't completely understand other major

world religious writings, but I can only scratch the surface of the Bible. I can feel so much more there and I am not talking about predicting future events or settling major theological debates. The Bible is truly alive - nothing else compares.

I see Christianity as a super system and that all the major belief systems understand certain aspects of God and the Bible. After studying in college, I also wanted to show people that Christianity was in its nature primarily Asian and not European. That was one of the major stated objections to Christianity, for people in the 3rd World.

Later, I found out that Christianity was primarily centered and culturally integrated in the Middle East, Persian Empire, East Africa, and Central Asia, for over a thousand years, well before Christianity was accepted across all of Europe. All those evil enemies of Israel spoken against in prophecy, as being wicked and receiving punitive judgment, accepted faith in the Christian God the moment God allowed non-Israelites, into His covenant and the faithful remnants, of His Chosen People in Judea rejected him totally.

This cultural language, that we try to translate the Bible into, when we bring the Christian message, to people who have never heard of Christ, is so important, because God used the culture of the ancient Middle East, to embed His message into. Most of the ancient Middle East understood all these things we find odd about the Old Testament like animal sacrifices. The real unique message was the theology and nature of God and this alone was the major differentiator between Ancient Judaism and the ancient pagan religions surrounding them.

8.1.5. Eastern Philosophy and Meditation

Many evangelical Christians believe that it is bad to study eastern philosophy, because they think it is a gateway to new age ideas, but it is hard to witness to non-believers, if you do not understand where they are coming from and it is almost impossible to understand history, without studying major world religions. While just randomly reading eastern philosophy could lead to the occult, it is not necessary to study or practice the occult, to understand the major world religions. Also, while

new age groups try to tie eastern philosophy to the occult, there are no more connections in other major world religions, to the occult, than there are in Christianity and its heresies.

First of all, most Christians and Muslims believe in very specific theological concepts and are unwilling to adapt them to please non-believers. People of both faiths believe that there is only one way to salvation and their beliefs are it. Most Chinese and Indian philosophies and religions are very synchronistic and believe in multiple ways of salvation. They believe certain specific ethics are essential and that the theology does not need to be that specific. It is considered perfectly acceptable to take certain ideas from one system and add it to another, to blend multiple belief systems together.

There is no awareness of what Christians call occult in Indian or Chinese philosophy and there are many branches of religions and major texts that I would recommend Christians not read, let alone practice. If you are unwilling to deal with a moderate amount of complexity, I would be best to not read about any religious work outside the Bible. I have compiled a list of books I recommend, called the Book or Lists and if you stick to it, you have several thousand books you can read about religion that are very interesting, accurate, and are not what Christians call occult.

If you are reading Chinese philosophy, I would recommend avoiding Religious/Esoteric Taoism and the I Ching. For Buddhism, I recommend avoiding Tibetan Buddhist texts. For Hinduism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism, I would be especially careful. I would definitely not recommend the Vedas or the Avesta. Most Confucian, Zen and Theravada Buddhist, and Sikh texts should be ok. Stay away from any prayers (as they are basically spells) or rituals. But this is just a general overview.

Meditation can be good or bad, depending on what kind of meditation, as different traditions have totally different meanings. Christian meditation means to think about a certain Bible verse, in Buddhist meditation you clear your mind of everything (in order to strengthen your mind), Traditional Chinese Medicine/Martial Arts type meditations like Tai Chi or Qi Gong help you protect and strengthen your body (so that you will live longer), and guided mediation is the same as hypnosis (which I would recommend everyone stay away from. Breathing exercises can be very dangerous.

you can get involved with dangerous supernatural forces or even kill yourself, depending on the type of breathing.

8.1.6. Colonialism and the Modern World

Causes

The 19th Century

Why do so many people around the world hate America so much? It is true that almost every place in the world is governed by the powerful and they didn't claim otherwise. Throughout history, some were kind and some were cruel and some suppressed the local culture and some let it continue unharmed. So the fact that a couple Western European countries were able to conquer much of the world, for a couple hundred years, was only surprising, because of how backwards Western Europe was morally and technologically, for most of its history.

Arrogance

But the anger comes from somewhere else. The one unforgivable sin is arrogance. The Europeans came not as enemies, but as a parental figure. They wanted to improve the way things were done in the rest of the world. This even went so far that the Catholic Church went into places like Ethiopia, the Middle East and India and had the gall to tell them because of minor technical theological differences that they needed to convert to Catholicism (although these Christians in Oriental Churches outnumbered those in Europe for centuries). Where were the Catholics centuries earlier, when they desperately needed allies, to stand against Islam, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism (hint: most Europeans were not Christians, until hundreds of years later.)?

US Copied the British

The Western Europeans thought that they had the one true faith, the one true type of government, and the one best world culture, which was not just temporarily dominant and invasive, but all this was portrayed as a more advanced type of civilization. Unfortunately, the United States, under the threat of communism would do anything, like commit terrible atrocities and create needless conflicts, because of its ignorance, in order to get rid of communism. And the US patterned their approach, after the British, but outsourced it to non-governmental organizations and corporations and with so much unchecked power there was a large amount of corruption.

Effects

World Wars 1, 2, and Cold War

Ironically, for their arrogance, the Western Europeans got the entire world involved in almost 3 world wars, because they could not get along with people only differing slightly from each other. Europeans still look down on the Americans and, after finding any corruption, they love to pick on the stupidity of American politics. Given, many Americans have no understanding of much beyond their small towns. Some European countries still think they are World Powers and that the US needs them when doing military operations.

Morality Problems

So the fight against America is a fight against modern civilization, because of its immorality and because of its arrogance. Much of the southern part of Asia does not want to have corporations running their economy and their kids being exposed to Hollywood movies. We could just wall off the intersections, between these parts of the world, except that we are addicted to oil and the entire modern world is completely dependent on it. It is likely that there exists no physically possible way, to replace it, with the resources we have now.

Our Downfall will be Self Inflicted

Those who want to keep with the traditional model, I recommend just waiting a few years. Our world economy is so brittle, that we will likely do a better job of destroying ourselves, because of our own laziness and selfishness (this includes both genders, all generations, all ethnic groups, the entire political spectrum, every religious and moral perspective, and all parts of the country). The sad part is that the southern part of Asia will be one of the worst affected areas, from Global Climate Change (i.e. Revelations), and the US will do better than almost anyone else (weather and geography wise).

8.2. Advanced Theology

8.2.1. Perennial Philosophy vs. the Christian Middle Path

Background

Oversimplification

When studying something we are new to and have little background knowledge, it is common for us to fit with it or in being more interested in proving a point than in discovering the truth, we often either oversimplify or overcomplicate the new subject. One of these concepts used to explain that there are common things among multiple religions is to downplay their difference and up play their similarities. It seems that many people who study world religions either put Christianity into a fundamentalist religion or a all-embracive one. These similar beliefs are often called the perennial philosophy.

Christianity vs. Other World Belief Systems

Christianity stands out among the other major world belief systems, for many reasons. The most important part is the supernatural force is an Individual Who created everything and is both a just and a merciful Judge, both perfectly good, but, at the same time merciful, choosing to reconcile this duality in Himself and His sacrifice of Himself, because of His humility and compassion. While we can learn much from Islam about the severity of the law and the seriousness of sin and we can learn the importance of discipline and ethics being the hallmarks of the dharma concept of India and the tao concept of China, only one religion provides all that we need in one.

Avoiding Extreme Choices

Many times, in our culture, we are afraid to make judgments and make our own decisions, out of a fear, that we are being overly restrictive and intolerant, that we mix up committing violence against those we disagree, with with the mere criticism of their respective morality. There also is a certain fear that calling something immoral means that people have to be forced to obey it.

Christian Response

Faith Before Law

All people should be able to believe whatever they want no matter how far this goes against mainstream moral attitudes of the present era, without being threatened or brainwashed into devolving into the perverse morality of the status quo. We can disagree on what and Who we believe and still be civil and respectful. There are limits on what a Christian should follow the laws of the land, which are specifically this: when required to do something in violation of the rules in the Bible, we will gladly and openly refuse to follow these laws, no matter what the consequences.

How Christianity is Unique

While there are many similarities between Christianity and other major world religions, the most essential aspects are radically different and, as Christians, we should stick to our specific beliefs and doctrines, even as this becomes more and more politically incorrect and the public becomes more and more hostile. There is one true God and one true morality and, while we welcome the freedom of others, to differ in their beliefs, we will continue to believe that which we know is true, regardless of whether or not we are accepted, as legitimate, in the public sphere. While there are many ways to live your life that are legal and can even be moral, there is only one true God and one doorway to salvation and being Christian means believing that, without compromise.

Paranormal Factor

As our culture becomes more and more fascinated and involved with the supernatural/paranormal, it will become much clearer to everyone who is the real God and who is false. While God lets people get away with doing many kinds of evil things to each other, there are much more clear boundaries, when people start to mess with this area, especially with ignorance.

Going Forward

Moral Standard

Another way, to frame this situation, is that what Christianity does share, with most major world belief systems, is a definite and specific moral code, that doesn't change, according to social trends and fads, that come and go, from one generation to the other. Christians and the rest of society have been diverging, for a number of years, but now it is very clear, that we must exit the mainstream establishment, that we have had an unholy alliance, for way too long.

Avoiding Extreme Choices

Abraham, Christ, the Desert Fathers and the Prophets of the Old Testament were all outcasts, because they refused to disobey the Bible and rejecting popular values, of the establishment. The Church must establish itself, as a haven, for the other and the outcast, because following the Bible now makes us the true alternative group and independent thinkers. Christians will stand out as non-conformists more and more clearly.

Why Philosophy Hasn't Changed

The reason why philosophy hasn't changed, from when it began, is that we all have the same problems, because we are all fundamentally still people, whose hearts have not changed. In order, to get to the next level, of development, we need to mature, to the point, where we reject this modern civilization and turn to Christ, instead.

Current Situation

Rejecting Social Norms

Let me say it very clearly: the culture we live in and our Faith are fundamentally incompatible. Our society is essentially pagan. Follow the laws but reject the dogma. Be proud to be politically incorrect. The only fool here is the one, who only finds out there is a consequence, for their actions, after they die.

Why They Can't Accept It

Christianity will always be strange and incomprehensible, to people, who do not accept the reality, of the spiritual world, or are unwilling to admit they are wrong and follow instructions. People in America today expect to get everything they want, for nothing and are unwilling, to undergo any kind of sacrifice, or put any kind of effort, into what they believe.

Importance of Humility

They are too focused, on themselves, to realize their need, for meaning and God, in their lives. Like addicts, of all kinds, they will likely never consider following Christ, until they reach rock bottom. The biggest thing separating the current generation from faith in Christ is being willing, to humble themselves, before God.

Persecution

Value of Persecution

Persecution is great for the Church because it forces us to re-evaluate what God really requires of us and more creative and effective ways to affect change with greater restrictions, less members, and less money/resources. Persecution both spreads the Church geographically, while making it less centrally located, both of which help ensure the survival, of a critical mass, of people, far into the future.

Kinds of Persecution

The Church has suffered a wide range of persecutions throughout history from being killed, being sent to prison, fined, humiliated, and being subject to laws others aren't subjected to. What Christians suffer in America today is different than it has in the past and makes us look like wimps, when we claim persecution. America has a unique kind of society compared, to the rest of the world, today, and throughout history, that might explain why we are so safe being Christians, in America, today.

Lack of Persecution

I have speculated the reasons for our situation include our demographics, the lack of freedom in the media, the inability to get a disruptive idea to a mass audience, that most Americans are so easily to fool and manipulate, or that they have found some more effective way of getting what they want us to do today, that it is not necessary, to torture people, to get what they want.

Christian Theology

Mystery Christianity

It is true, that Christianity is a mystery religion, in that we can only understand God through faith, because He is infinite. And most things in the Bible are as clear as mud. But there are a few things, that are clear and we need to follow these, if we want to be guaranteed eternal life. Christianity isn't rational, in the sense that we do not need to understand God's spiritual rules, but it is our duty, to believe and obey what the Bible teaches. We do not need nor always are able to understand theology, or why theology is the way it is.

God and Freedom

It is ironic, that many people claim they want to have freedom, to make their own decisions and claim God does not, when God fully supports this - look how much He allows us to do, to our own world and other people. There are few things God asks us to do, and, in exchange, we become part of His family and find purpose and meaning in life.

Belonging

Ironically, most people want the freedom, to do the same, as everyone else, to be part of a group, and this belonging is available through Christianity. There is the whole other issue of freedom, to be

immoral, but there are good reasons why the Bible says, to not do the things it forbids, which include reducing suffering, in the world and making our lives turn out better. God is rational, even though we cannot understand all of Him, we can understand Him rationally, up to the point where our understanding reaches its limits, where we get the rest of the way through faith.

Future of the Church

Changing Languages

Many Christians, in America fear, for the future of the Church, and many believe we need to change our theology. There are many cultural things, to change, but never theology - that is the one thing we are doing right. Many see their churches shrinking, with fewer and fewer young people. But the American Church is not shrinking - it is just becoming less and less white and less and less English speaking.

World Christianity

The world has embraced Christianity - it is just less and less popular amongst white people. Americans think of going to the third world, to evangelize, but the evangelistic opportunities are now mostly in Europe and the United States. The Church shrinking here is actually a good thing - we are likely getting rid of those, who are not fully committed to Christ. Remember, the Church was first Asian and African and then only predominantly white, for a few centuries. It is actually returning to its roots.

African Christianity

The missions were a success - in Africa it was mostly fellow Africans, who evangelized other Africans, but it was a success and at just the right time. The Europeans first came in and sent

missionaries to Africa, but then rejected Christianity, after they conquered the land. Africa will never give up Christianity, because the culture is so fundamentally religious and aware of the supernatural. Historically, animists/pagans were the easiest religion, to convert people to Christianity from.

note: When I refer to following the Bible's rules to go to Heaven, I am referring to spiritual rules -i.e.- repentance and faith.

8.2.2.A Third Option

It is interesting that in the great debate between the Imperialist (Conservatives) and the Marxists (Liberals) is what they have in common: the pursuit of money, addiction, and pleasure. There seems to be an assumption in modern conversation about justice and equality that the only metric that matters is money.

That is the big reason I say that we need to re-examine our philosophical basis for a better world, because, as of the Berlin Wall and the Economic Depression started in 2008, that both capitalism and communism have both failed to deliver lasting peace and stability. Instead of talking nothing about nothing but money, we need to focus on the spiritual things, to really solve our fundamental problems. Our major problem is not just sin, in general, but specifically selfishness.

In our modern debate, we rightly criticize Europe, but it is not really about a certain empire, or a certain time in history - there were many abuses before the British took over (even the British were far behind the other European colonists). And yes the United States is making many of the same mistakes, I think mostly out of ignorance, but the real struggle goes back to the very creation of people, by the Christian God.

Our knowledge of history seems to go little beyond the European world of the 19th century, which then gives us a false dichotomy - the real struggle is not East vs. West, but North vs. South. The question will finally come and the distinctions crystal clear: do you follow your Creator, or do you devote your life to advancing yourself? If you try to make a lot of money and then donate it to

charity, it won't change anything, because the root of the problem is spiritual, and only spiritual things can affect other spiritual things.

Humans cannot do spiritual things: they can only ask other spiritual forces - the first is the Creator, the Christian God, who will improve your joy and peace in life, and the others will only lead to sorrow and destruction. We are seeing more and more that the pursuit of selfishness is very similar to that of the Pagan/New Age philosophy. Humans are much the same spiritually and have the same spiritual problems that those of ancient cultures and the answers are the same, as well.

We once thought that we were bringing the Gospel to the Third World, but now the Gospel is coming from the Third World to us. More people are Christians today than ever before and a much larger percent of the population as well. The only places where Christianity is not spreading is where you are put to death for converting to Christianity. Then there is the US and Europe, where Europe can claim they are ahead of us, which have rejected God.

Going to the mission field for Americans means going down the street. We are plenty corrupt. In my town, we are legalizing pot and letting out prisoners, because we are too cheap, to fund our basic services. The other day a guy asked for my phone and actually criticized me for not letting him get me drawn into some sort of scam. Why does someone think that everyone else owes them money? I didn't create his problem and the money would likely continue his descent into the gutter.

There are so many people who I see on government assistance, who have iPhones and I cannot even afford one. It is like a gambler saying, if you just give me money, this one more time now, I won't need you anymore. Not only is this generation lacking basic survival skills, but people who are much older, who were taught to know better, are also devolving, to below where they were 20 years ago. If our society continues down this path, we may break up into stone age villages, due to lack of caring, rather than due to a lack of resources.

The only thing people want is lower taxes and more jobs, but they want easy, high paying jobs, and

hate education and manners. And some of the worst things in history have been justified by being good for the economy. I think it would be better to divide America into two, but neither one would be going the moral route.

It seems that Science is moving to join itself with the New Age movement. It is more than time for Christians to criticize Science, as they seem to be unable to stay outside of theology. There was a special on TV about a Scientist, who wanted to prove a soul exists, by weighing it and another guy thinks if he puts together enough circuits, to recreate a brain, that it will be able to make choices, without a soul. It would be justice, in many senses, if we did create robots, God decided to put souls in them, and then they might decide we are more trouble, then we are worth. Our toys may just decide that people are the enemy of true progress. Maybe the robots will be the future Christians.

If we are to learn from the wisdom of India, China, and Africa, it is that our starting place for this moral change is what we see in the mirror. Our world seems to be emulating the wrong philosophy. What we must seek is the foolishness of God that is greater than man's wisdom and a stumbling block to those expecting magic to solve their problems - neither Science (human wisdom) nor miracles (New Age/Pagan) will solve our problems.

We need to change the world by the choices we make and start this process with repentance and acceptance of the leadership of Christ in our personal lives. It isn't about what your career is about - it is about your private life.

Many people have a hard time accepting this route, partly because it is contrary to what we learn in school. Making it is about becoming famous and or rich. People think they need to travel to other countries to understand and help the world. The truth is all the really important information is in books already in modern English that are getting easier and cheaper to get than ever before.

As far as what you do with this - there is not a highly visually based explanation. Faith is about believing in something that you cannot see (at least not directly with your eyes) but it is also not a

feeling - it is a choice. It is also an all or nothing choice - you cannot stand on the fence. Once you understand, you are responsible for what you know.

Most of living a life of faith successfully is directly opposed, to what you do, to be successfully, in the world. The least important factors, in spiritual things, are wealth, career, and intelligence. The most powerful tools you have in the spiritual world, from a Christian point of view are: the moral choices you make, praying (especially that God's will be done), reading the Bible, and finding other believers.

Most morality is based on what you don't do rather than what you do. What God wants to change is who we are, not what we do. We need to start the revolution within ourselves. It is the part of your life that no one else sees that is the most important. It is reflected in how you treat others rejected by society, especially animals. God will change your mind and you will see the results in what changes others notice about you.

8.2.3. Religious Conclusions and Protestantism

Religious Conclusions

Religion

Both Historical and Present Day Christians are Neither Predominantly White, Western, nor Rich
Christians in Almost Every Place, Time, Culture, and Sect were the Leaders in Education and
Scholarship

Greek Orthodox and Syriac Christians were the First and Primary Means by which Greek Science was
Passed to the Arabs and Modern Europe

The Bible is More Complex and Wider in Scope than All Other Great Religious Texts of All Times
Combined

Atheism is on the Rapid Decline and the Major Belief systems of the Future are several major forms

of Christianity and Islam

There are More Christians Now than there Ever Have Been in All of History

Existentialism and Modern Psychology Come From and are Fully Compatible with the Bible

No One will Predict Correctly Christ's Second Coming and it will Happen in a Time of Peace (as that is the Only Thing about Prophecy that is Clear in the Bible)

God Controls Everything even though We Have Complete Free Will and God Constantly Intervenes Supernaturally

Beliefs

I Believe that the Establishment (in all its forms) is the Real Enemy

I Believe that the Modern Church Organizations are Analogous to the Ancient Kingdom of Israel and the Pharisees

I Believe that Some People Who Don't Call Themselves Christians are in Agreement, with What They Read in the Bible, but Don't See Those Ideas Reflected in the Church Organizations

I Believe that it is Right to Call Out the Church, for Those Things It Does Wrong, Following in the Example of the Old Testament Prophets

I Believe that People Do Not Follow God Do So, for a Variety of Reasons and One of These is that They Feel the Church is Neither Following the Bible, Nor Their Conscience

I Believe the Best Way to Affect Change is to Pray, as Most Major World Problems are Spiritual in Nature and have Spiritual Causes

Specific Churches

I Don't Go to Church, Because it Makes Me Angry

I Am Not Protestant, as I Believe that Everyone is Influenced by More than Scripture

I Am Not Evangelical, as I Believe they are Technically Right, on Every Issue, but Miss the Entire Point

I Am Not a Mainline Protestant, as I Believe They are Not Critical Enough to Keep Away from New Ages Influences

I Believe that the Orthodox Beliefs of the Church are those of the Eastern or Oriental Orthodox Church

I Am Neither Catholic Nor Eastern Orthodox, Because I Do Not Believe Veneration of the Saints is a Good Idea

Am I Protestant?

Scripture Alone

I do believe that all Scripture is the direct word of God, but I believe that God speaks to individuals and performs miracles constantly and you can tell if it is God based on whether it agrees with Scripture. I realize that I have outside influences, as everyone else, has who is older than a small child, or has read any other book than the Bible, so I think it would be dishonest or show poor self knowledge to deny this.

I see that Bible as being very opaque on most issues except a couple of very specific concepts necessary for understanding salvation.

Many people will look at a couple verses and expect me to agree with their opinions or give another couple verses saying something different. The way I look at it is there are some major theological currents running through most of the Bible and when I find something that challenges my understanding of that, I come to the conclusion that I don't yet understand those couple of verses.

Justification by Faith Alone

I believe, like the Apostle Paul said, that if you confess your sins with your mouth and believe, in your heart, that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved.

For people who do not do good works for others nor truly change their lives fundamentally after

they are saved and aren't trying to promote God's will in the world, I would question the sincerity of their faith

I believe that the two major values of Christianity are humility and compassion, exemplified in Jesus Christ humbling Himself, to be in the body of a Man and, by His compassion for us, that drove Him, to die on the cross, for our sins.

Universal Priesthood of Believers

I think that we need to allow Jesus Christ, to change our hearts and our minds, to see the world spiritually, and solve major world problems through spiritual ways, like prayer. The best way, to help the world today, is to pray that God's will be done. That way you don't need to know what to pray for, by not knowing the needs or desiring a political, social, or economic solution you think follows Biblical doctrine, but really doesn't (someone has to be wrong as we have contradicting political views and know only God is really right - that means one or more of us is wrong)

I think that God has shown us through history that we are not of the world and the world will hate us, laugh at us, persecute us, and not understand us just like what happened with the the Old Testament prophets. I believe that every major institution in the establishment, including major churches, are the this worldly force we are fighting against, as in the example of the Old Testament Israelites and in the Pharisees of Jesus Christ's time.

I believe that when the Bible refers to the Church, in a positive sense, it means the spiritual church and I believe in challenging what I feel is wrong, in the Church, in the open, with unbelievers, as has been shown to us as an example, in the Letters the Apostle Paul wrote to the Early Churches. If you want to know the problems in the Church, read the Apostle Paul's letters.

Politics

One of the Major Issues that is often not officially part of the discussion, but it is often just assumed, that everyone believes the Bible teaches us conservative values. I and many other born again Christians believe the opposite. When so much of the church is focused politically, it alienates those with liberal views and faith in Christ (though I admit, there may be very few of us).

8.2.4. Saint Veneration

Protestant Concerns

Definition of a Saint

A saint, in the Christian tradition, is a person, who was a Christian, while they were alive and who has died and gone to Heaven. Most major world belief systems have saints, which are similarly defined. The practice of the veneration (honoring) of saints started in liturgy (church worship practices) and was a grass-roots movement. This is one of the biggest issues of debate, in the Church, for centuries. The Bible is not clear on whether this is right or wrong. Certainly many, if not most, who venerate saints do so with the best of intentions, which is one of the most important factors, that show that there is a legitimate place, for this practice.

Saint Veneration Universal

Most of the original churches practiced veneration of the saints (from very early on), across cultures and centuries, including the Coptic church in Egypt (direct descendants of the Ancient Egyptians), the Aramaic speaking churches in Syria and Iraq (direct descendants of the Ancient Assyrians), and the Eastern Orthodox Church (in what is now Greece and Turkey, which form the Eastern portion of the Roman Empire, that survived, until the time of Columbus). These were some of the biggest parts of the Christian world early on, which were invaded and conquered by Muslim Arabs, coming from

what is now Saudi Arabia.

Protestant Reformation

Many non-Christians might think it odd, but don't see why a Christian might be against it. After the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation broke off, from the Roman Catholic Church, over what could broadly be called (by the Protestants) corruption and the practice of beliefs, that the Bible spoke against. One of the major differences between the traditional churches and the Protestant ones, in terms of theology, is that Protestants basically rely upon the Bible (plus their life experiences, personality, personal opinions and cultural bias) alone, while the traditional churches see the development of Church doctrine, culture, worship, interpretation of Scriptures, and policy over the centuries as inseparable from Scripture itself.

Veneration or Worship?

Many of the basic doctrines are surprisingly similar, between the traditional churches and the Protestant ones. But worship services are very different. The reason why Protestants are worried about prayer, to dead Christians, is that it sounds very similar, to different occult practices, like seances, divination, and casting spells, which are prohibited by the Bible. There is also no clear example shown in Scripture of this practice, by early Christians like Paul.

New Age Factor

One of the things the Protestant church is very afraid of is the New Age movement and the slippery slope argument. The New Age movement is essentially a combination of selected pieces of major world religions (including parts of Christianity) and practices of animism/shamanism/paganism. The New Age movement has targeted Christians and tried to slowly influence them, until they are corrupted and no longer faithful Christians and end up breaking commandments in the Bible.

Slippery Slope

The slippery slope argument is like many social movements who try to change society a little bit at a time, because their ultimate goals would be unacceptable, by the mainstream, during the current generation. This has happened with abortion, homosexuality, and drug use. This can be used for good or evil. One of the great things that has been achieved this way is racial equality. There may still be far to go, for racial equality, but it is no longer popular or acceptable by the mainstream, to discriminate based on race or color of skin. Another positive development is freedom of religion.

Pagan Connection

Many Protestants believe that there is a clear connection between veneration of Saints and the practice of supernatural acts via pagan gods (fallen angels). The secret society, the Knight Templar, was founded, by Bernard of Clairveaux, who was a Cistercian monk, which has a focus on the veneration of Mary. There are clear pagan philosophical components, to the practice of modern day Freemasons, with a big emphasis on a female goddess.

Many Protestants missionaries, who have have worked, in Latin America see the pagan gods still worshipped under what they call Christianity, but with the names of the saints, instead of the traditional names (just like the Romans adopted the Greek pagan religion, but made it their own by merely renaming the Greek gods). In Mahayana Buddhism, the local deities were made like saints, by their designation as Bodhisattvas. Islam sees Christianity as pagan, because they believe that Christians worship 3 gods: God, Jesus, and Mary.

Catholic/Orthodox Perspective

Church Tradition

When I try to explain the difference between Western and Oriental philosophy, one of the key issues, that keeps coming up (with reference to the Christian Church), is the veneration of the saints. The responses to this issue, on both sides, really goes to the heart of the difference between European and Asian philosophy. One of the key differences between Protestant and the Catholic/Orthodox views on these kinds of issues comes down to Protestants relying only on Scripture, whereas the Catholic and Orthodox churches believe in the tradition of the church, directly handed down by the Apostles.

Mysticism or Theology

The Protestant mind says it believes in a supernatural and mystical God, but its entire approach is sterile and abstract in nature. Protestantism came out of a reaction against the power of the Catholic Church, which in turn, has been the basis, for most reform movements of history, following the Reformation. So both sides cannot accept the other. How does one be pure and consistent, when life is so messy?

Lack of Trust

Protestantism is like a theory, where it fails to predict the actual world (Catholic/Orthodox), because of its simplicity. Is the veneration of saints something we should do or not? The answer, I guess is: it depends on whether you trust the (traditions of) and the people of the Church. The Protestant approach is very good at keeping out heresy, but is very divisive in nature. One person finds one verse, that speaks to them, in some irrational way, and then they believe they need to start a separate Church.

Living Faith

Protestantism is distorted, because although there is a belief in the supernatural, there is never any real dependence upon it. We say we believe with faith and with our hearts, but we talk, worship,

and practice our faith in rigid, sterile, and dead ways. Having both Paranoid Schizophrenia, but also a love of studying Asian philosophy and religion, I can see the merits of both sides.

Missing the Point

It would be nice, if we could bring the best parts, of both approaches, but I think this is the key issue, that cannot be resolved. Protestants just don't trust their fellow believers enough, to give them the freedom, to be spiritual, without strict guidance, because they fear we will end up worshipping the devil. Protestants are technically right, on every point of theology, but fear the spiritual reality of the God they worship. Protestants are so busy fighting off the devil, that they don't take time to get to know God.

No Resolution

The question remains: when does reformation of bad practices end and under what conditions can we question tradition? But most importantly, please do not try to unite the churches, as you will end up with more divisions, than you started with. Remember, a united World Church could very well be the Mystery Babylon of Revelations.