

Rational Paradox

Theological Positions (A Unique Perspective on Christianity)

July 24, 2017

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1 First Things

1.1 For More Information

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1.3 Introduction

The purpose of this book is to bring together the complete theological (non-)system explaining: the historical and future trends of the society I live in, what I believe, what I believe my mission is, the nature of the Trinity (God), and responses to the typical counter arguments. This paper is highly technical and exhaustive theologically, but written in simple language and brief in length. I call this theology Rational Paradox, because it is based on a unified and holistic worldview, drawing from both rational and mystical sources, for theological arguments. I believe in worshipping and following God, in my entirety, with my: heart (emotions), mind (reason), body, and spirit (will). I see the world, in a way, that doesn't feel the need to choose between emotions and reason, as I believe that they are meant, to work together, in harmony and need not be at war. Due to our fallen nature, this is a constant struggle, but I still find it worth the price, for the possibility of living a happy and balanced life.

2 Historical Background

2.1 World History

2.1.1 Role of Technology and Economics

Origin of Middle East Problems

The Middle East was the way it is today because of decisions the people who live there made in the past. The spread of Islam and the Arab people was another anomaly of world history. Throughout most of history, people had far fewer freedoms than we enjoy today and at the most there were a few religious choices that were approved. The others were persecuted.

Technology and History

One of the keys to world history is the level of technology available at the time. For a very long time, throughout most of recorded history, what is now Europe traded with what is now India, Southeast Asia, and China and this was important for the world economy. Our modern way of life is all based on the energy we get from coal and oil. Without it, we will lose our technology very fast. How many people could build a printing press from scratch or know how to make an effective plough. These inventions took centuries and can be lost very easily.

Roman Empire Success

The Roman Empire was made possible because the technology of that era allowed people to navigate the Mediterranean, but was not advanced enough to allow voyage by the major world oceans. Rome became powerful when they took over North Africa (which supplied most of the food for the Roman Empire), Egypt, and the Middle East (which allowed them to

financially benefit from the trade that went from the Mediterranean through the Red Sea and into the Arabian Sea to India).

Ascension of Europe

Europe was able to dominate most of the world during the last 500 years, which a big contributing factor was that the Portugese figured out how to go from Europe and around the coast of Africa to India, China, and Southeast Asia. One of the very important things that Europe needed from South and East Asia were spices, because they needed to preserve food and make them taste good enough to eat without modern refrigeration.

Technology vs. Morality

At this same time, Asia became increasingly weak and Europe became much stronger. This was partly because of slight weather changes and European mastery of weapons technology like guns and the shift in warfare technology that favored discipline over personal combat skills and bravery. Another factor that made India and China weak was the desire to focus on moral development and to not pursue technological advancement as aggressively as the west. European nations also gained wealth and power through taking over what they called colonies which were mostly along their major trade routes to the Orient.

2.1.2 European Experience

Rome Not First Church

The Roman Catholic Church has convinced many people that it was the first church, but this is wrong. There were four equal and independent Christian centers and Rome was the least important (although it and the churches that separated from it after the reformation were the most successful politically for the last 500 years). The centers were, in order of importance: Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome. The Church out of Alexandria became the Coptic church and the Ethiopian church is part of this, the Church out of Antioch divided into the East and West

Assyrian Churches (who were responsible for the Islamic renaissance) who spoke Syriac, the Church out of Constantinople became what is now called the Eastern Orthodox Church who spoke Greek, and the Church out of Rome became the Roman Catholic Church who spoke Latin.

Parting Ways

The Roman Catholic Church has historically persecuted the other churches more than any other church. Each of these centers were political and economic centers as well. Antioch was an important economic center and Alexandria was an important intellectual center. The Western Roman Empire out of Rome became the basis for the church and political power of medieval Europe, but mostly just in the former Roman Empire lands including what is now Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, and England and Ireland shortly afterwards.

Christianity and Paganism

During much of the Middle ages, much of Europe was pagan. Christians, in what is now called England, were pillaged and then if caught were tortured, until they converted to paganism, by the Vikings (from Norway, Denmark, and Sweden). The reason the English came, to what is now called England, was that they were invited from Germany, to fight off the pagan Vikings. The English became powerful enough and pushed the indigenous Celts into Cornwall, Wales, and Scotland and took over what was now England, with what started out as separate kingdoms.

Viking Legacy

The English monarchy starts with when the Normand's invaded England in 1066. The Scots came from Ireland and the King of Scotland eventually inherited the thrown of Scotland and England. They were united in the start of the 19th Century and that is where the Union Jack comes from. England never took over Scotland. The Vikings eventually converted to Christianity and the ones that settled in northern France became the nobility throughout Europe and became the leaders that started Russia (with the help of the Byzantine Empire). Russia was considered by many to be the

third Rome after Constantinople and was a major center of the Eastern Orthodox Church until the Russian communist revolution during World War I.

Christianity as Unifying Factor

During what Europe called the Middle Ages, Europe regressed technologically and became very religious and the Church was the only unifying factor. People starved for centuries, until they started to join kingdoms together and England, France, Spain, and Portugal united, to form the countries in roughly as they are today, the weather then changed in the 13th century, then after the bubonic plague which killed 1/3 of Europe, the Renaissance was started with the help of the Byzantine (Eastern Orthodox) monks, just before church in Constantinople (more important than the church in Rome) was taken over by the Ottoman Turks and turned into a mosque.

2.1.3 Asian Experience

Asia was the World

During this same period, Asia was the world and Christianity was most active in Syria, Iraq, and Iran (as well as Ethiopia) and a small part of India. During the Roman Empire, Asia was just as important or more with the Persian Empire and the Chinese Empire (Han Dynasty). From the 4th to the 14th centuries Asia was at its zenith. The Church out of Rome and Constantinople persecuted the Church out of Antioch, so the Syriac Christians moved into the Persian Empire.

Reasons for Spread of Islam

Then after the western part of the Roman Empire fell apart, the Byzantine Empire (out of Constantinople) and the Persian empire became weak after fighting each other. Islam started and became a politically uniting force for the Arabs (who lived in what is now called the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and then they were able to take over the Middle East and

North Africa. The Christians there welcomed the Arabs (who were Muslims) into the Middle East, because they feared the Byzantine Empire more.

Europe Fights Off Islam

The Islamic Empires almost took over Europe twice, the result of which would have made Christianity an obscure African religion. The first time was after the Arabs took over North Africa, they went into Spain and luckily were defeated in southern France. Centuries later, the Ottoman Empire almost took over Europe, but were defeated by the Hungarians. The reason why the Muslims were there in Bosnia was that they were settled resettled there by the Ottoman Empire, which was expanding its empire into Eastern Europe (at the expense of the Christian nations there).

Ethnic Cleansing of Christians

Muslims got along with Christians in the Middle East for centuries, but many Muslims began to persecute many Christians about the same time as the Ottoman Empire was born. In fact the word genocide was developed after World War 2 to describe how the Muslims were destroying an entire linguistic and religious group (the Syriac Christians). At the beginning of the 20th Century half of the Ottoman Empire was still Christian. There are still some Christians in the Middle East. 10% of the population of both Syria and Egypt are Christian. There is also a large community of Christians in modern Lebanon (mostly Maronite).

2.2 The US and the World Today

2.2.1 American Perspective

Baseless Worrying

I remember as a kid how we feared Japan would own most of the US and how we thought we couldn't compete in areas like electronics. Now Sony and Nintendo are afraid of Apple and Japan has been declining for some

time and has a much grimmer outlook than the US. The problem we have in America with too many old people and not enough young people is much worse in Japan. People seem to be afraid India and China will overtake the US.

We Can Feed Ourselves

The thing that people in our country don't understand is that China cannot even feed itself without food imports and the US still produces 25% of the world's food. Even without modern technology it would be conceivable to be able to feed our entire present population if we were smarter about what we grew, where we grew it, and where we lived. If we lost our modern technologies we would very quickly adapt.

Life will Return Soon

For a few weeks, things would be rough. But there would quickly be less crime. Once one person loots and they are shot for it, people will stop stealing. When the electricity (including hospitals and the sewage system) is off for a week, people will realize that it will never come back again and adjust. People will actually become closer friends as we will need each other. The church will be much stronger because people will feel they need God. People will be so much healthier that most people who need modern medications will no longer need them. Most people will be happier than before and we will likely have a higher literacy rate.

Importance of Economy

I think the thing that is most dangerous to the US is our debt. I think that every country that wants us to fail including the Muslim extremists (there are Christian Arab terrorists as well) are trying to kill us by bankrupting us. Wars have often been one by one side over spending to fight the war. When we spend 100 times what the terrorists spend, then we are losing the war. The key to our economic problems in America is our personal and corporate debt. The most important part of national independence is the economy. Many empires have failed because they didn't understand economics.

2.2.2 Rest of the World

China's Problems

Another problem China has is that its population is growing, so that it needs substantial growth just to keep everyone employed. China is also very polarized between the rich and fast growing eastern coast and the remote inland parts of China where people are of different ethnic groups, very poor, and the agricultural land is being destroyed by sand blowing in. China will likely split into multiple countries. This would make democracy more likely in at least one of the new countries.

Indian and Russian Problems

India and Russia also have large problems. Russia depends a lot on oil prices being high for its economy. Another problem for India which directly affect Russia is that in the next generation or two global warming will likely dry up the major river in India. Russia might have a hard time integrating a billion people into Siberia.

Europe's Problems

Europe will suffer a lot from global warming with increased immigration from the Middle East and North Africa (as they will become uninhabitable in a couple generations). Europe could also become a lot like Siberia very quickly if the major ocean currents change. Europe has a very dense population and even though they have diversified their energy sources more than the US, they still depend on oil, especially from Russia. Europe will not do well in this situation and cannot feed its population without modern technology.

2.2.3 Comparing the US to the World

Europe is Falling Apart

Many people think that Europe will outdo the US economically. But this is unlikely, if we think about the history of Europe and its geography, demographics, and natural resources. Before the 2 World Wars, the UK, France, and Germany were all global power, by themselves. When they lost their colonies, mostly after the next few decades following World War II for France and the UK and World War I for Germany, they almost destroyed themselves from centuries of war after war. Now the UK, France, and Germany have to unite together, to compete against America economically.

Non-US Economies Weak

One of the big weaknesses of Europe and Japan, which makes their economies less resilient than the US, is that they focus on only a few industries and these are dominated by a few big corporations, so when one of these companies loses market share, the whole economy suffers. At this point, there is little still left that can keep European countries at First World economic status, over the next two generations. Many people now think the same fate will fall on the US, but our empire is mostly in the continental US, and we are much bigger and have many more resources than Europe has. We are still the world's main consumers, so China, India, Europe and all the other major economies still want to trade with us, for their own survival.

US Not Like Europe

Another thing to consider is that we have plenty of free space in our country and will have a big increase in our population, which will allow our large quantity of baby boomers in retirement a big enough base of young people, to support them. Of course, we will still go through tough times, in the US, but in Europe, China, and Japan these countries are all going to see a

much bigger bubble of retired people, to support, as their countries are shrinking in population and cannot afford to keep increasing in numbers, even if they did have enough kids.

The other major factor, that puts the US in a better position than other major economic powers is that our empire is not far away geographically, nor is one part of our country holding another part of the country under their control. Even if the US split up, into regional countries, we would still be able to provide for ourselves, because most of our country has a least enough natural resources, to survive on their own, especially if they are willing to trade with each other.

2.3 Religion and Society

2.3.1 Religion vs. the Government

Politicians and philosophers have debated how government and religion ought to relate, with each other, for thousands of years. Many religions support the government, as many of the moral laws are the same and, in Christianity, we believe as Jesus said that we should follow the government and then let God break down the nations, who become too corrupt, except when we are not allowed to practice our faith. Interesting enough, although Jesus gave a good example, of how important the social Gospel is, He was not a pacifist or a social reformer. The Bible, although it doesn't endorse slavery (and the values Paul talks about in his letters definitely sets out a morality that is incompatible with owing people as slaves), accepts it as an inevitable part of society.

2.3.2 Who Christ Really Is

Many people want Christ to be something He is not. They often like to play up certain attributes of Him, that more easily fit with their worldview, and play down the others. One of the things that even many Christians have trouble understanding is why does God allows evil and sends people to Hell, if He is a loving God. The Christian God is definitely humble and forgiving, but He is also perfectly good and cannot tolerate evil. As far as the origin of suffering is concerned, God developed an ingenious situation, in which we could both have free will and still not be able to sin, by not giving the knowledge of what evil is, but then the first people (Adam and Eve) could not even follow one small rule, and that is the source of all the suffering in the world.

2.3.3 Abraham

If you read through the Old Testament carefully, you will see that God set up several contracts, with a group of people, starting with Abraham, which gave them special benefits, so that they: would eat well, be successful in trade, always easily win the wars they fought, live easy lives, and be the jewel of civilization every one else looked up to. The first problem they had was that they kept on worshipping the false gods, coming from the religions, of the neighboring countries, and still expected to keep their special status before God.

2.3.4 Ancient Israel

Once they took over Palestine (Canaan), God would have prophets, also known as judges, come out of the woodwork, whenever their was a spiritual crisis, so that God would rule over His people, directly. But the people wanted to have a King, like the other nations, even, as they were told, that

they would be treated cruelly because of this and so Israel eventually split into 2 parts and as the people became more and more removed from following God's contract, they were overtaken, by one empire, after another. Many of God's people (now called Jewish people) decided to live in Egypt, Iraq, and even some in China and India, so that they would not have, to suffer, when their people turned against God.

2.3.5 Paul's Explanation

After this, as explained in great detail, by the Apostle Paul, in the letters following the Gospels, God sent part of Himself, into the world, to live a perfect life and then be killed, take on the sins of the world, and then descend into Hell, break free into Heaven, and rise again from the dead. God did this because He understood, that no one could follow even His basic laws, so He chose, for the criteria, for who should escape Hell, (even though, in sinning, we committed high treason, against God and were rightfully sentenced there), not that we be good enough, but that we would submit, to God' authority, in our lives and let God continue to work, in our lives, to make us better people. In essence, God did basically everything and all we have to do is to believe, what we know is true, and accept reality and, in doing so, we are guaranteed no pain forever, after we die.

2.3.6 What Christians Must Do

So what is it that Christians need to be able to do, in order to follow the laws of the country they are in? There must be no law, that forces Christians, to violate any of the laws, in the Bible. Christians must be able to gather together, to perform the rituals, described in the Bible, like the Lord's Prayer, Communion, and Baptism and worship God. The final thing which many people think is necessary for Christians to be allowed to do is to convert people, of other religions, to become Christians.

2.3.7 How Christians Should Affect Society

Many Christians now believe that we should not follow laws, so that we can protest things, that we believe are wrong, like torture or businesses polluting the environment. Many Christians also believe, that we should work through politics, to get leaders, that will make non-Believers follow the Biblical laws. The common problem I see, with both of these approaches, is that they are focused on and depend upon on people and the physical world. Our problems are spiritually based and God's solutions are spiritual, as well. One of the things God gave us, which provides us, with great power, is prayer. The best prayer is the Lord's prayer - you pray that God's will be done.

2.3.8 Be the Christian We Want Others to Be

Instead of getting non-Christians to behave morally, we need to convert people, to Christianity first and then they will want, to follow rules. Our goal should not be following rules, but faith in Christ. Christianity is not about what we do, but about who we are. Christians should not be running about worrying how much they have contributed to society. They should, instead, worship God, by adopting the values, that God want us to have, by accepting His control over our lives, through reading the Bible and praying.

2.3.9 Focus on Our Own Problems

We should not be afraid, to stand up, for what God wants us to. There should be a stark contrast, between what kind of people Christians are and

what kind of people non-Believers are. If we ever are unwilling or unable, to stand up against homosexuality (and divorce) as sins, even though they are accepted by society, then we need to stop pretending, to be Christians. This is what will bring about the most conversions and positive changes in society. Fundamentally, we need to worry about the sin our own lives and not how other people behave. I think it is good, to live in a society, where Christians are in the minority, because the people left are more likely, to take their faith seriously.

2.4 Middle East, Africa, and Christianity

2.4.1 African Origins

Many consider the Middle East, to be part of Asia, but the more I study about Africa and the Middle East, the more similar they seem. Biblically, Ham is African and the major descendants are Mizraim (Egypt, North Africa, and Crete/Philistines), Canaan (Modern Israel), Cush (Ethiopia), and Put (Central and Southern Africa). It is likely that the Garden of Eden is in Central Africa and modern genetics can trace the origin of people, back to Central and South Africa.

Genetically, it seems early humans travelled from Central Africa, to North Africa and the Middle East (likely through Ethiopia, across the Red Sea). Linguistically, based on archeology, it is most likely that the major Middle Eastern languages like Aramaic, Syriac, and Arabic were descendants of languages, that originated in Ethiopia. Also, North Africa was a huge forest, about 10,000 years ago, and most people lived there, before they migrated to Egypt, once the Sahara turned into a desert, due to a 1 degree shift, in the

Earth's orbit.

2.4.2 Race and Skin Color

Interesting enough, there is no Biblical evidence that the descendants of Ham were all black and color and race are not necessarily related. This is very evident in the Middle East and in Libya, where you cannot tell if someone is from the Middle East based solely on skin color. And in America, people don't ask you first, where you are from, before they discriminate against you, but rather discriminate racially, against anyone with darker skin, whether Latino, African, Indian, Native American, or South/Southeast Asian.

That is why dividing people into groups, like African American and Latin-American make little sense, since there are white people from Africa, there are both light skinned and dark skinned Latinos, and I wouldn't be surprised, if they are treated very differently. Also, if anyone in America that is black is called African American, then why aren't white Americans called European Americans, and what do you call someone, born in Africa, who emigrated to the United States? - they likely have more in common, with recent immigrants, from other parts of the world, than black Americans. Also, much of the world outside America is biased, against people, with darker skin.

2.4.3 African History

Africa was also connected, to the Middle East, via trade, for centuries. Islam spread in Africa, mostly through traders, which one of their major commodities was the sale of human slaves. The Swahili trade language, common in East Africa, is derived from Arabic. The major areas that Islam spread most successfully were in East Africa and just South of the Sahara

desert, along what were both referred to as the “shorelines” (of the Sahara Desert and of the Indian Ocean). Up until the Ottoman Empire began to lose its power in the region, the Ottomans had the most political influence in Africa. It was because of the power vacuum, that happened once the Ottoman Empire left in Africa, that led to Europeans moving in to colonize Africa.

The reason for the lack of stability, in any modern African country, and the common political situation being dictators, running the countries, that keep in power, due to the wealth gained, from mining, is due to the Europeans leaving, during the early Cold War, so quickly and not providing a smooth transition, to independent rule. Later, during the Cold War, Russia tried to befriend many of the new nations, but the US knew they would never leave and so many in Africa blame both the US and Europe, for their situation, but it is a little more complex than that.

2.4.4 Christianity in Africa

We often think of Christianity as coming into Africa, via white missionaries, from Europe and America, but this is not very accurate. Some of the very earliest Christians were in Egypt, North Africa, and Ethiopia, long before most of Europe became Christian. Ethiopia even practiced Judaism, before even the Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon, and the most logical explanation, as to where the Ark of the Covenant went, is Ethiopia, as well. Much of the early doctrine, of the Church, was formed in Alexandria and North Africa (including such famous theologians as Augustine). Most of those who were recently converted, in Africa, were converted by fellow African prophets, that often came back, from slavery, in America.

There is a common saying about Christianity and Africa, that goes

something like this: When the Europeans came, we had the land and they had the Bible. We closed our eyes and prayed. When we opened them, we had the Bible and they had the land. Some of the biggest Churches in Africa are Catholic, Anglican, and the AICs. It is likely that there are more Africans, who are members of the Church of England, than there are in America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand combined.

The AICs are the fastest growing churches, in Africa. They are often called African Independent Churches and often take their inspiration, from the Ethiopian Church. They have no connection, to any Churches in America or Europe. They follow the Bible well, but very differently, than we do, in America. They are very often supernaturally aware (one of the greatest fears in the African churches is witchcraft) and often follow many of the laws of the Old Testament.

2.4.5 Future of Religion in Africa

The US once feared that communism would take over Africa, but that is very unlikely, because not only is Christianity very compatible with African traditions, most Africans are extremely religious, and it would be hard to be atheist and still be part of the tribal community. Even as more and more Africans move into cities, religion is still fundamental for the average African. Many Africans are proud of being African and actually feel sorry for Americans, because of how most Americans, even though rich in material wealth, are poor in spiritual knowledge.

Africa will likely be the center of Christianity and fulfill an important prophetic role, for a long time to come. Christianity outnumbers Islam 2 to 1, is growing faster than Islam, is culturally relevant in more countries and regions, and Islam had over a thousand years head start. There are now more Africans sending missionaries to Europe, than the other way around. There are also a number of American Anglican preachers being ordained,

by bishops in Africa, to avoid having to accept liberal social values, like gay marriage (because of recent decisions by some American Anglican leaders).

2.5 How Greek Philosophy Influenced Christianity

2.5.1 How Greek Culture Came to the Middle East

The Greek language and culture first came, into the Middle East, via the conquest of Alexander the Great (who was educated by Aristotle) and the setting up of Greek centers, in a few cities, throughout his empire. When the Roman Empire took over the Middle East, it reinforced this Greek culture. Greek became the international language of scholars and of those in major cities. The elite spoke Greek, while Aramaic was spoken in the higher interior lands and Hebrew was spoken in the lowlands. Syriac was an important dialect of Aramaic, which became the scholarly language, of the medieval era, in the Middle East.

Much of this land was traded back and forth, between the Persian and the Roman Empires, depending on the success, of the current military campaigns, of each side. Persia was slowed down, by having to fight the Mongols, on their eastern borders. Rome was an opportunist and took more and more territory, as situations opened up, but only became a world power once they were able, to take over Egypt and the Middle East, which had a very lucrative trade based economy.

2.5.2 How the Church became Greek

The chief proponent, of Greek culture, was the Christian Church, that was based on the open and international center of scholarship, in Alexandria. Greek philosophy was considered, to work well, with Christianity, because all the scholars were raised in a Greek culture and they outnumbered the Jewish converts. Early Christians' worldview was that philosophy supersedes religion, as they were obsessed with explaining theology, in a rational manner.

From the Greek point of view, religion progressed in 3 stages: first there were pure rituals, second came moral agency, and the third step was speculative philosophy. The Greek view on Christianity was, that everything was guided, by a philosophically based theology, that set about a higher rational purpose: to explain the problems of existence. Morality was based on the speculation, as to the human place, in the universe, duty was involved in our reason for existence as well, and that rituals are the expressions of morality, based on doctrine. Basically, both ritual and law came out of a rationally explained reality.

2.5.3 Rivalry between Christians and Jews

The main rivalry, of the time, that shaped later religious debate, in the Middle East, was started, with the rivalry, between Judaism and Christianity. Many, of the early persecution, of Christians, was pushed, by Jewish zealots, and their influence, upon the political powers, that be. Just as Christians

were opening themselves up, to a wider world and embracing new ideas, the Jewish community decided to take the opposite approach.

The Jewish community started a reformation, that pushed for increased focus on rituals and the law and the separation, between the Jewish people, and outsiders. The Jewish community went back to an earlier, more conservative era, while Christians decided, to be progressive, and embrace a more open future. This early persecution was one of the major causes, for the spread of Christianity, beyond the confines, of the Roman Empire.

2.5.4 Why Reject Greek Philosophy?

The problem. with the Greek view. of Christianity. is that it is based on a pagan world view. This comes. from an intellectual approach, to Christianity, based on the flawed understanding, of the relationship, between the rational and the mystical, in the Biblical tradition. The universe and humanity are designed by a rational Creator, but we can only understand Him, by faith, because all the Biblical doctrines are based on the concept of paradox. Just because God is rational does not mean we can explain Who God is, or our relationship, with Him, relying on reason alone.

Christianity, from a Biblical point of view, is not going to be accepted, by those who are elite intellectuals, because the only way, that we can understand God, who is a mystery to us, is by faith, in what we cannot explain. The Bible gets both those who are obsessed with supernatural power and those, who are believers in human wisdom angry, because it shows clearly, that they are both wrong.

The Bible is a sore point, to non-believers, because they cannot reduce it down, to what they can accept, from an emotional, or rational human point of view. The Bible requires, that we first humble ourselves, before God and are saved, not through what we know, or what we can do, but based almost

entirely, upon what God has done for us and gives us freely.

2.5.5 Starting from Scratch

This means, that accepting Christ, as our Savior, means giving up doing things our own way and, so we no longer get to receive credit, for what we have done. We give up everything, when we come to God and He then gives us everything. What separates us from God is not unforgivable sin, but our pride, in our own abilities.

Just like when die, we give up all earthly possessions, so, to before being born again, we first give up doing things, our own way. We have to start all over again, in Christ, after we have spent many years accumulating earthly success. The reason why Christianity is so popular amongst the physically weak, materially poor, and persecuted is that there is less for them to give up.

2.6 Christianity in Asian Golden Age

2.6.1 Introduction

There were more Syriac Christians, at one time, than that of the Latin and Greek churches combined. This was the time period referred to, as the Middle Ages, in Europe and the Golden Age, in Asia. Syriac Christian priests were scholars in fields as varied as diplomacy, linguistics, and medicine.

2.6.2 Christian Doctors

Syriac Christians were the best doctors, at the time, and they were early proponents, of the importance, of fresh fruit and vegetables, in keeping

healthy. They used sugar, from India, as medicine and popularized the use of Sherberts (boiled fruit mixed with honey) and Rhubarb, for medicine. They built a teaching hospital in Susa.

2.6.3 Christianity Amongst the Turks

Christianity was popular, amongst the Turkic people, at first, with many of the major kings converting, to Christianity. There were, at least, 8 million converts, amongst various Turkic tribes, during this period. Syriac Christians developed the written language, for the Uigur language, from their center, for translation, Merv. which was later adopted, by Genghis Khan, and his Mongol descendants.

Syriac Christians were treated better, under Mongol rule, than any other government. Genghis Khan's uncle was Prester John (which is a legend of a Christian missionary spreading Christianity into Asia or Africa). Genghis Khan himself believed in one all powerful creator God and it was one of his first laws for his subjects. Many in Genghis Khans royal family were Christians. The Mongols and the Crusaders attempted an alliance, to hold off the Arab retaking, of Palestine.

Many of the major cities (also major Christian centers), along the Silk Road, were destroyed, by Genghis Khan, including: their churches, the people, their libraries, artwork, wealth, and industry. The Mongols killed off a larger percentage, of the Earth's human population, than any other single ruler has ever done, in human history. When the Mongols gained power, they helped rebuild the churches perviously destroyed and removed most of the legal restrictions, on Christians, like having to pay a non-Muslim tax.

2.6.4 Christian Influence on other Belief Systems

Christianity had considerable influence, on the theology and rituals, of a number of different religions. Syriac Christianity was popular, at this time, in southwest and north India. The future Buddha called Maitreya and the Hindu incarnation of Vishnu were likely inspired, by Christianity. The hand symbol commonly used, in meditation, in the Indian belief systems comes, from Syriac Christian practices. Tibetan Buddhism likely based much of their practices and organization upon Christian traditions, like: prayers for the dead, holy water, demons, confessions, red ceremonial clothes, and the Dalai Lama (Pope).

In China, Christianity was called the Luminous Religion. Syriac Christian missionaries were first sent, as ambassadors, from the king of Persia to China. In China, during the Tang Dynasty, the Emperor gave monetary support, for churches, in exchange for the Christian priests praying for them and their ancestors. The emperor knew enough about Christianity, to know, that it was irreconcilable, with Buddhism, when he ordered that Buddhists and Christians stop working together, on the translation of sacred scripture. Syriac Christians developed a simple alphabet, for the Korean language. The lecture Hall of the Koryuji Buddhist temple, in Kyoto, Japan, was once a Christian church.

When Tamberlane and the Chinese Ming Dynasty came to power, Christian communities were persecuted relentlessly, until Christianity fell from prominence, in most parts of Asia.

2.7 American Naivety

2.7.1 American Point of View

Americans are very naive, to how the world works. I read on a blog recently, where a high school kid thought, that instead of devoting billions of dollars, to Department of Defense information warfare, that we should refrain from doing anything, that makes others outside the US mad at us. I have a response that may surprise many: the reason why we are hated is because we are the dominant world power and the world will hate us, until some other country wields the same amount of influence, that we do. We will know, when we are no longer the major world power, because people will hate the next superpower, more than they hate us. Much of the world hated the French and the English, but most don't anymore, because they are no longer world powers.

There are two things, that Americans really don't understand about the world: how things work politically internationally and how other countries respond differently to our intervention, than we would to theirs. They both are due to our ignorance of world history. In America, we seem to think that none of the major world problems existed prior to World War 2 and that we caused all of them. In America, we have a long history of not getting involved worldwide and were content, to ignore most world politics, until World War 2. I think that this is due directly to the American psychological response, to national threats. We are willing to leave others alone, until they directly attack us.

The CIA was designed, for the main purpose, of preventing another Pearl Harbor, from happening, during the Cold War. The Homeland Security

Department was set up to deal with attacks, from within America, that were not military threats, but rather psychological threats (like Terrorism). America generally waits, until the last minute, to solve a problem, over reacts, and then ignores any problems again, until the last minute. We are not proactive. It seems that the things we do to win wars often trigger later conflicts. Our support for the Soviet Union during World War 2 made that country a world power, that we fought several major regional wars against (sometimes via allies) in East Asia and the Middle East. The final straw that broke the Soviet Union was the war in Afghanistan, which we trained and armed the same Taliban, that we fight today.

2.7.2 Historical Background

These wars, that we started getting involved in, starting with World War 2, all were happening, in a larger historical context, well beyond World War 1, or even this millennium. Much of this history involves the struggle between 2 religions, that look very different, but in fact are very similar. One of the big problems, that started, in the early Church, was the development of complex doctrines, like the Trinity, by the application of Greek philosophy and the struggle for the survival of Christianity, under many different empires. Most people today think of Islam, as a direct opposite of Christianity. What most Christians, in the US, don't realize is that early Church was far from united, either politically or by doctrine. Many groups of people ended up following what they thought was the one true God, when they were, in fact, being led astray by a heresy, while others were called heretics, but were, in fact, doctrinally correct.

All these variants, of the one true faith, were also entangled, into the politics, of their region. We here a lot about the success, of the Latin speaking Church of Western Europe (France, England, and Italy), now called the Catholic Church. What we haven't heard of is the other 5 major

regional centers, of Christianity. Eastern Europe (Greece, Turkey, Balkans, Russia) was dominated by the Greek speaking Church we now call the Eastern Orthodox Church, Africa was dominated by regional Churches in Egypt (who spoke Coptic, the direct descendant of the Egyptian hieroglyphics) and Ethiopia. The other major centers were the Syriac speaking churches (the rural Assyrian regional dialect of what Jesus and the Apostles spoke) in Asia (Syria/Lebanon and Iraq/Iran).

There were many heresies, of the one true God, in the region, at first, including: the Gnostics, the Aryans, the Manicheans, the Zoroastrians (the ancient religion of Iran, before Christianity or Islam), the Jews (Pharisees), and the Muslims. The Arian and the Gnostic heresies quickly lost power, but the other 4 hung around, for a considerable amount of time, with only Judaism and Islam still here today. The success of Islam had a lot to do with politics and timing. Many people in America are aware of Islam, as a religious force, that affects politics, but don't realize that the politics is an important part, of the formation, of the religion of Islam. Basically, Islam united the Arabic speaking tribal people (like the Afghans or the Scots), who came from what is now called Saudi Arabia, which contains the Holy Sites of Mecca and Medina.

2.7.3 Christianity and Islam

One of the reason why the Koran contains many of the same characters as the Bible, but with different theology comes from the Prophet Mohammed hearing many Biblical stories, that were not part of the Bible, and were works of fiction or heresy, that spread amongst the local population. Other reasons include there not being a Bible translated into Arabic by this time and the obsession of the early Church, with confusing technically worded theology, that didn't appeal to the masses. The political situation, that allowed the Arabic people, to take over what we now call the

Middle East was a combination of many wars, between the Persian and Byzantine Empires, as well as the persecution, based on obscure theological positions and political rivalry, of major Christian regions, made both the regional powers weak and the local population supportive, of an invasion, from Saudi Arabia.

Islam was, at first, considered a religion, of the Arabic people, and the local Christians (who were the direct descendants of the original inhabitants) were treated better, under Islam, than they were under rival Christian sects. In many ways, both in practice and in spirit, Muslims, in the Middle East practice their religion, that both looks very similar, to how the original Christians practiced their religion and also is more philosophically related, to Christianity, than the synchronization of Greek philosophy and paganism, with Christianity, in the Church, outside of the Ethiopian and Persian Churches.

In America, the only history we study, outside our own, is Medieval English and French history, so we often think of Europe, as being strongly Christian. The reality is that, although the Roman Empire converted to Christianity early on, most of the Germanic tribes like the English and the Vikings took a very long time, to convert and the kings only converted, because they believed, that the Christian God was more powerful, than their pagan gods, so that, as a result, of conversion, they would win more wars. The Church was also the only thing, that held Western Europe together, politically. We don't hear much about the persecution, of Christians, at this time in history, because we only learn about Latin speaking Christianity and then Protestantism.

2.7.4 Christian Persecution

The reality is that Christians were persecuted, under Zoroastrian and

Muslim rule, much, in the same way, as the Jewish people were persecuted, in Medieval Europe and at the same time, in history. We hear over and over again about how evil the Crusades were, but we never talk about the Muslim conquests, of the Christian Middle East, North Africa, and Spain, as well as the later invasion of a Muslim empire, into Eastern Europe, from the Renaissance, up until World War 1. We also hear about how evil it is, that the Israelis control the 3rd most holy site, to Muslims in Jerusalem (which sits in the exact location. that the Jewish Temple sat, making it the number 1 holy site. for Jewish people) but we do not hear about Muslim control of the Christian Holy sites of Bethlehem, Nazareth, and the Hagia Sophia (The Vatican of the Eastern Orthodox Church, that was turned into a Mosque). We also heard about the evil ethnic cleansing, of Muslims, in Bosnia, but not about the ethnic cleansing of Christians, by Muslims, that were the reason, for the Muslims, being in Bosnia, in the first place, or the ethnic cleaning, of the Syriac Christians, in the Middle East, for hundreds of years, under Tamerlane and the Ottoman Empires.

We here a lot about the rise, of Islamic fundamentalism, in the world today, but the Muslim world has fought the Christian world, so long (even as Europe and America are no longer Christian nations), that the same battle has been going on, for over a thousand years. Even this recent wave, of fundamentalism, is over 100 years old. The difference is, that Europe, even all together, is barely a world power, and Saudi Arabia is one, of the richest countries, in the world, due to our addiction to oil. It is likely, that only a small sum goes, to fund terrorism, but that is still a lot of money, mostly due to alms (like the Christian tithe) given to the major charities, in the Middle East (to help the Palestinian cause, which is mainly done by terrorism). Iran directly and publicly funds terrorism.

The best thing American and European women can do, to help women in the Middle East is to be much less aggressive politically and much more

modest in dress, and less promiscuous. The more women gain power, over men, in America in Europe, the longer it will be, before women, in the Middle East are treated decently. Just like the extremism, of Bush brought in what many consider the much more liberal Obama, so the increase in concessions made to women in America, makes things worse, for women in the Middle East.

2.8 Political and Social Changes

2.8.1 Defeat of Atheism

The reason why this is a turning point in history is not just a matter of the decline of the US or the decline of the world economy, but it is the culmination of the downfall of the human ability, to solve our own problems, especially through technology. If the war on terrorism has taught us nothing else is that creativity and drive beats wealth and technology. We have learned that even the smartest people in the room don't give you the right answers and that pride can beat even the wealthiest. Not only have we seen that we cannot rely on government, to save us, during Katrina, but that capitalism can self-destruct, just as quickly, as communism.

2.8.2 Ascension of Christianity

We used to be afraid that most of the world would lose their faith, but now we fear that people are taking their belief in God too far. During the last few centuries, the Church has seen a huge barrier, to its expansion and its very survival, in Europe and most of America now, but, in the same period, many times the population of America and Europe have converted to Christianity, in every other major continent, in the world. The biggest contribution from the US, to the world, may very well be Pentecostalism.

2.8.3 One World Economy

The US is not going to fall, unless the rest of the world does. What we have is a one world economy, so that no one really wants anyone else to fail, because even the slightest damage done, to one of the major economies, in the world, will damage the others, just as much. The flip side of the US's complete dependence on China for its manufacturing has the side effect of China depending on the US, for both its market and for its ability to produce so much of the world's food. Basically, if the US is hurt too bad, China not only goes bankrupt but starves.

2.8.4 US Power will be Regional

It is true though that the US will return to a more maintainable world status as a major world power instead of the only world superpower. Some of the most successful and happy years of our country came as a result of our ability to focus on our own problems, and let someone else be hated, for interfering, in world politics. It looks like China and Saudi Arabia might be the world's police force, in the future, and people will forget about the US, just as quickly as they forgot about how much they hated the UK, France, and Russia.

2.8.5 Biggest Changes

The next generation will most likely see the greatest changes, in the recorded history, but they will be more social, than technological. The biggest commodities of the future will not only be oil, but water and soil. One of the sad things, that will happen, in just a matter of time, will be the die off of a major part of the world's population, because there are just too many mouths to feed and most likely Africa and Southern Asia will be hit the hardest. The world balance of power will shift, as a direct result of

climate change and weather will be the biggest destructive force and the major focus of national security in the future.

2.9 A Third Option

2.9.1 False Dichotomy

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.

2.9.2 Problems are Spiritual

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.

2.9.3 Timeless Issues

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.

2.9.4 Poor Knowledge of History

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.

2.9.5 How to Affect 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.

2.9.6 Gospel 180 Degrees

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.

2.9.7 Current Mission Field

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.

2.9.8 Moral Devolution

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.

2.9.9 Selfish, Ignorant, and Lazy

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.

2.9.10 Science Goes New Age

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, than we are worth. Our toys may just decide that people are the enemy of true progress. Maybe the robots will be the future Christians.

2.9.11 The Foolishness of God

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.

2.9.12 We Need to Change Us

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.

2.9.13 Don't Need Anything

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.

2.9.14 What You Don't Understand

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.

2.9.15 Life of Faith

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.

2.9.16 Change Yourself First

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.

2.10 Lessons from 2 Empires

2.10.1 From British to American

In many ways, the British handed off their empire, to the United States, during World War 2. One of the big things they did was train the US in how to run an intelligence agency. The CIA was formed, after World War 2, to prevent another Pearl Harbor from happening, without our fore-knowledge. Before World War 2, the US was not as interested in intervening overseas (except Latin America) on the world stage, but as the US often does, they take an overly extreme response - that being to get involved world wide (this time to stop Communism). The CIA was said to be tasked with keeping the Cold War Cold, by fighting proxy wars, that would prevent a nuclear holocaust war.

2.10.2 The African Tragedy

Africa received the brunt of much of this struggle, and as the British and French left their colonies in a hurry, the new African nations were not able to transition peacefully, to a stable government. The Communists often portrayed themselves as a poor peoples empire, but many African leaders did not heed the warnings of the US - that the Soviets would not leave, after they helped them win their wars. Ironically, there was never any real chance of Africa converting to communism, as African culture is extremely religious in nature and not taking part in any of these community rituals would cut them off, from the rest of the tribe.

2.10.3 Fighting this War Sets up Next One

At the time, the US put all its energy, in defeating the Soviet Union, but failed to see another enemy growing more powerful, in the process - the Islamic Fundamentalists. Just as we gave too much to the Soviets, to win World War 2, so Radical Islam was supported, in this effort, creating a new conflict, after the fall of the Soviet Union. Ironically, Russia was the chief rival of the British Empire, as well, only a hundred years earlier. While we focused on fighting the German and the Japanese economies, during the (although ironically we were the ones that spent a great part of our wealth building them up) end of the Cold War, only to realize that the real power was shifting, to China and Saudi Arabia.

2.10.4 No Longer Alone

I think the best idea now is for America is to relinquish the responsibility we feel, for being a global police force, because we cannot afford it financially, no one will be pleased no matter what side we take, and we would not have as big a target on our back, if we let China and India become the dominant world powers. The most important things we need to do for our national security are to work on our economy and find an unlimited source of energy. I think the US can still remain an important player, in the international community, but we no longer should feel the need to take on everything, by ourselves. I think America was happier in the 19th century, than in the 20th.

2.10.5 Christianity and Race

One of the big things, that critics of the British and American Empires hold against both of them, is the introduction of Christianity into Asia and Africa (although it was already partly there, in another form). For those who think that Christianity is purely western, they need to read about the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Church of the East, the Coptic Orthodox Church, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. They also need to learn about the AIC (Ethiopian Churches) in Africa. The Third World is more Christian than the West by a long shot. Right after Europe finished rejecting Christianity (which they had never had a real faith), the Gospel was brought to Africa by other Africans. Biblical Christianity is much more compatible with an African view of the world than a European one.

2.10.6 Christians Care

I don't understand why it is considered rude, to try to convert people, to Christianity, but it is ok to solicit people, for donations to homeless people, environmental charities, labor unions, or political parties. For a Christian to want you to live forever, without any pain or suffering, is truly an act of unconditional love. Just because some people claiming to be Christians did things that were wrong does not mean that Christianity is a bad thing. Buddhists in China, Japan, and Sri Lanka have fought wars and Krishna tells Arjuna, in the Baghavad Gita, that his duty is to fight. Many of the greatest liberal reformers were Christian and the greatest educational institutions, in almost every part of the world, throughout most history, after Christ, were run by Christians, of all different sects and races.

2.10.7 The Idea of Empire

Many of the things, that the British Empire did are obviously unBiblical,

like pursuing wealth, above all else, and the concept of a world government is abhorrent, to any devote Christian, as that is a sign of the Apocalypse. The big push, for Imperialism, in both the British and America Empires is rooted in the New Age movement, not Christianity. And as far as empires going for global domination and the persecution of people of other races, look no further than the Ottoman Empire, Ming China, and the Sassanid Empire of Iran. If the British and French Empires did not rise, at the time they did, Europe could now be primarily Muslim.

2.10.8 Colonies Benefit from British

We really need to study more history, than that of just that, of 19th Century Europe. Also, the British brought some very useful advances, in India and Egypt. How much do you think Egypt benefits from the Suez Canal or why many of India's greatest cities were former British colonies? The Indians understanding English so well is one of their keys to modern commercial success. And it is also interesting that Hong Kong is such an important commercial center and that the British and Americans helped fight off the Japanese, when China was occupied, during World War 2. How would the Middle East have developed, if we didn't buy so much oil? The British also put in railroads in India and Africa which were helpful after the British left.

2.10.9 Uniting India

India, in particular, had additional benefits from British rule, like the bringing together of the entire Indian subcontinent - an area bigger than any empire in India ruled. India also was ruled by many other foreign rulers - either whole or in part, throughout much of its history. The Mughals, who held India, just before the British were not native to India (they were descendants of Genghis Khan that came from Afghanistan and were of

another foreign religion - Islam).

2.10.10 Pakistan and India

The reason why India has as few a problems with religious infighting is because they separated Pakistan (with its radical Muslim population) into its own country - which, incidentally, holds the land which the river Indus runs, which is where the name Hindu and India comes. Really, Pakistan should be called India and India called Bharata (from the epic Hindu poem Mahabharata) from. And the Hindu civilization of the Aryans was not the first advanced civilization in India, the Aryans invaded the people that now live in Southern India (which have a completely unrelated group of languages).

2.10.11 The British Strategy

The reason why the British and French were so successful in gaining colonies, in India, was due to the fact that the local groups hated their neighbors more than they hated the foreign powers. The same technique was used in North America with the Native American tribes. It may be surprising that India or China did not try to invade Europe, but I don't think they had the right technology, at that time, and I also don't think there would be enough economic reasons, to put in the effort.

2.10.12 Chinese and Indian Approaches

China had decided to stop developing new technologies and keeping everything the same during the Ming dynasty (centuries earlier), although they did invent many of the things the Europeans later perfected for

warfare, like gunpowder. The Chinese rulers, historically, were more interested in the humanities than the sciences and India seemed much more interested in developing their religions and philosophies, than in even trying to rule their own country. I think we can learn a lot from this, but it did not work out so well, for them, during that period.

2.10.13 Same Technique for Europe

I think the Europeans came very quickly, from being dirty peasants, to taking over the world, before India or China saw them as a threat. The British were actually able to pass up the original European explorers and colonists (the Portuguese and Spanish), due to some clever advanced business practices, learned from the Dutch, some luck, and good strategy. They essentially snuck up on the previous European colonial powers, as well.

2.11 My Historical Perspective

2.11.1 What I Learned in College

The arguments that my books are responding too are based on what I learned in college. I began to see Christianity, at its heart as very multicultural, inclusive, and liberal politically, at the same time that I was indoctrinated in class, that white Christian men were the source of all the problems, in the world. I also continued to see on the news, that the common perception is that Europe is some how more advanced than America and is more peaceful, that the Muslims in the Middle East have somehow been the targets of persecution by the US and Europe, and that American foreign policy is the biggest evil force in the world.

2.11.2 Why Things are Complicated

So my arguments come out of this framework and although I believe in not even attempting to be objective, I reform my opinions over time, as I learn about new things in history. Much of the books I have written are correcting historical prejudices and, when I find counter evidence, I present this as well, as I do not believe that I need to make anything up, to support my arguments. This is how my works become more complicated and the answers not so simple.

2.11.3 Historic Cycles

Most of what I have heard about history comes to this: that when one group was powerful, they took over another group and then this other group then retaliates, against the other group, when they get into power, often centuries later. Sadly, but understandably, most history unfolds, as a big cycle of revenge, and everyone tries to be as powerful, as they can, at any given time. History is determined by luck, technological edge, strategy, and economic decisions.

2.11.4 Unusual Combination of Views

Since I have combined a fiscal liberal politics, with a Biblical worldview, which I ironically see as highly complimentary, I have really turned the arguments on their head. In the process, I may insult those who are both conservative Christians and liberal Atheists/Pagans in America, but my ideas are not just meant to stimulate thinking, but are the ones I truly believe. I can only write what I am inspired, to write, based, on what I really believe.

2.11.5 Misunderstanding European History

So some of the many things, that transformed my views, over time, were that Christianity was primarily Asian and African and Europe historically and only accepted Christianity, much later, because they believed a more powerful God could help them win wars and they did do, at a much alter date, then commonly thought (The Scandinavians are thought of as very peaceful, but they tortured Christians, in England, to force them to become pagans, for centuries, late into the Medieval period). Germany and Poland have both gotten bad raps. The historical Germans were not really the ones behind NAZI Germany and Germany was successful in many fields long before World War 2.

Poland was one of the major powers of Europe, controlling almost 1/3 of the land area, at times, not afraid of Germany or Russia, until the 19th century, and became weak, because they had a progressive democracy, with civil rights and peaceful coexistence, of diverse ethnic and religious elements. I was recently surprised, that the big reason why the Europeans took over such large colonies, and the British became the dominate group, happened more out of chance and speed of advancement, than out of just technology. They basically snuck up upon most of Asia, out of nowhere.

2.11.6 Obsession with 19th Century

One of the reason why I have such a different view of history is that I have been concentrating, on the period before the ascent of the European colonial powers. Most peoples's view of the world comes from an obsession

over 19th century Europe, and so the Western Europeans and America look like the big bad guys and everyone else looks like victims. But it has been common, amongst much of history, for a series of different groups to dominate and victimize different groups of people, who caused them political problems. If you look back, a few centuries before, Islam almost took over Europe, a second time. One of the things, that is very hard to find is what Africa was like, before the Portuguese came, but Asian history (before the 19th century) is quite well documented.

3 The Future and the Apocalypse

3.1 The Apocalypse

3.1.1 Making Predictions

What Christians Think

Many of the most prominent and influential Christian leaders have thought that we are very close to the End of Times and the Apocalypse. There are several reasons for this. One reason is that there is a certain number of years between the major events in biblical history and the year 2000 timeframe gives the same amount of time between Christ's death and His return. Another reason is that technologies are available now, that would allow people to be able to destroy, on the scale described in Biblical prophecy about the End of Times. The third major reason is the return of Jewish people to Israel and the establishment of a Jewish nation, which was prophesied to happen before Christ's return. The fourth major reason is that we are getting close to bringing the gospel to all the nations on the

earth. The fifth reason is because of all the wars going on in the Middle East, where Armageddon is supposed to happen.

Every Prediction was Wrong

This belief in the eminent return of Christ has had profound impact on the focus of Christian' efforts. Because so many Christians believe God is coming back so soon, they are not going to invest time in bringing social justice and the relief of suffering to the masses. But this generation is no more likely to be the End of Times than any other time in history. Biblical scholars have all been wrong in their predictions of the End of Times and this is because that Biblical prophecy is very cryptic about when this will happen, just like how people were surprised about the first coming of Jesus.

3.1.2 God will Help Us

God is in Control

Many people think that the devil is planning the apocalypse and we are waiting for him to decide what time, but this is not biblical. God is in control of history and the Apocalypse and the reason why World War II, Napoleon's empire, or the Cold War did not end up being Armageddon is because God said no, even though the devil wanted it to happen then. In fact, the cryptic nature of the prophecy about the Apocalypse was designed not only to keep Christians on their toes and motivate them to do what is right and spread the gospel, but it was also designed so that the angels, including the fallen ones, could not predict the time either. We continue to try to put our preconceptions about reality on God, and we do not see His plans, because we are too focused on worldly endeavors, like politics and business.

We Know Very little

Jesus could come back today or even a hundred thousand years in the future. In fact, when it happens we will likely not even see it, until the end of the first half of the seven year Tribulation. Also, from God's perspective, a day is the same as a thousand years, so the time could be very different than we have guessed, from the prophecy in the book of Daniel. We don't even know whether or not Christians will be in the world during the Tribulation or how to reconcile the battle of Armageddon, which is the last battle, with the battle that seems to follow it, called Gog and Magog.

No Reason to Worry

There is no reason to worry when we know so little about it. God has always been with us and provided us a way to cope with everything, that we have had to deal with, and He will do the same in this situation. The fact is God intervenes supernaturals almost constantly, so we do not need to fear any situation. We should focus on improving our own lives and stop worrying about things we have no control over.

Trust in God

God cares about humans, even though we have done nothing to deserve it, and we are in control of our destiny. We can make choices that make our lives better or worse. We were born into different situations, which we have no control over, but worrying doesn't solve anything. We need to accept the things we cannot change and change the things we can. Besides, what would knowing about the future now help you to deal with it? If there was some way to prepare for it, don't you think God would give us that information. We often cause more worry from fear beforehand than we suffer from the situation we fear.

3.2 Misunderstandings of Prophecy

3.2.1 Putting God into a Box

Let me start by saying I don't believe that I, or anyone else even has a basic grasp of prophecy, in the Bible, but I wish to have the Church expand the possibilities, so that they are not so set on something, that they are not able to accept what will happen, when it will happen, and how it will happen.

3.2.2 God and Time

The first misunderstanding we have about prophecy is that we think we know about certain lengths of time, or orders that things happen in. This could be very misleading. God is not limited by any number of dimensions of time, so that things all happen, at one for God, and God can and does do things, that defy our conception of time.

Not only can God move between the past and future, at will, (more like he is already there); He can act at multiple times, in history, simultaneously; He can change the motions of our planet and solar system, move us to another planet or moon, so that our measures of time could radically change; God could have the same events happen, at parallel times, in history, simultaneously; and in God's estimation of time a day is, as a thousand years. This all means that you cannot hold any of the sequences, or time periods, as absolutes, in prophecy.

3.2.3 Why Does Prophecy Ignore America and China?

One of the really interesting things about prophecy is that it appears to deal with all the countries in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, to Persia and Ethiopia, but never directly mentions the current major global powers, some of which existed at that time, as well like China or India or even the regions of what are now Russia, Northern Europe, the United States, and Latin America.

When you look at the prophet Daniel's prophecy, about the major ancient world empires, who declined and were taken over by another, which expanded in size, as each one fell, one of the things, that they all have in common, throughout succeeding history, is that they correspond, to the major divisions, of the historical Church - Rome, Greece, Persia, Babylon, Assyria, and Jerusalem. These people groups were all cursed, but all accepted the Gospel, as soon as it was possible, to be part of God's covenant, including the 10 tribes, in captivity, and the faithful tribes, of Israel, rejected Jesus and persecuted early Christians.

3.2.4 Symbols and Events Not Clear

Another thing to understand is that these symbolic references to different animals based creatures could be something not understood until now or even later in history, like: corporate logos, software companies, or program icons. And another possibility is that these things already happened throughout history, over a very long period of time, and could refer to historical events, that American and Western European scholars were not aware of, or grasped the importance of like: the fall, of the

equivalent, of the “Vatican City,” of the Eastern Orthodox Christians, to the Ottoman Turks and the Hagia Sophia church (most sacred site for Christians in the East) being disgraced and defiled, by being turned into a mosque; the fighting off of the Ottoman Empire, from invading Christian Europe, just before the Turks made it to Vienna, Austria; the final fall of the Ottoman Empire after World War I; or the Communist Revolution in Russia, which got rid of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow was often called the third Rome, the second being Constantinople).

Our typical understanding of how God coming back is that it would occur, in some world war, or collapse of the world economy, but early Christians were sure God would come back, after the fall of Rome, and God didn't. Many thought, after all the terrible things Hitler did, like the concentration camps that he was the Antichrist, but God still didn't return. The only thing we are sure of, in scripture, is that when God comes back we will all know it and it will be as great a surprise, as the first coming of Jesus Christ.

3.2.5 It Will Be a Huge Surprise

One possibility is that God may just come, without any warning, at all, when we are at peace, think that civilization is, moral as the time, and everything is settled down and even idyllic. Another possibility, that we often don't think of is that the future fighting, if there is any major battle, as Jesus comes back, it could either be: a space battle like star wars; it could be on another planet; our planet could have a major re-alignment, in the solar system, or a major change in geography, like an ice age or a major continental re-alignment; we could have traveled back in time millions of years; and/or our energy supplies could be so depleted, that we literally use swords, to fight and have so little metal left, that we need to turn the swords into plowshares, in order to feed ourselves.

Remember, Bible prophecy is designed, so that no one will ever know about the events, until after they happen and no one can interfere, with God's plans. Even the angels, and especially God's enemies cannot decode when, where, or how Jesus second coming happens. The only thing I am sure of is that any pagan/new age prediction of the end of the world will be wrong and any other announced day will be wrong, as well. Also, bringing about a crisis in history, like World War II, will not force God, to come, at any other time and manner, than of His choosing.

3.3 Peak Oil Worries

3.3.1 Moderating Factors

Not like the Dark Ages

Many people now worry about, when we run out of oil, how our country will be affected. I had at one time compared what could happen, in the worst case scenario, as similar to the end of the Roman Empire and the beginning of the Dark Ages. There are also many reason why this situation, although very traumatic and serious, will end up being much easier to deal with.

Preservation of Information

The Internet may be the poster child of what is wrong with out society, but it has allowed us to gather supplies, from the far reaches of the world and preserve books, in many different locations. One of the big things that allowed the Industrial Revolution was the invention of a more effective

plow. All the secrets to doing well, without oil, are already in books and they will still be here, if and when modern society falls apart.

It will Happen Slowly

Not only will we avoid a lot of the really bad possibilities, due to the preservation of information, but the shock will not be there, because at this point, if things fell apart, it will happen very slowly. The most dangerous and devastating effects of a break down of the world economy is not the lack of modern conveniences, but, rather the violence and disorder caused by the rapid change. The federal government has a plan to deal with these things, and it looks like bailing out the banks was one of the best ways to start.

3.3.2 Advantages

Violence will Decrease

Another thing that we worry about is that we think society will break down and there will be no political or social order. One of the things that will help deal with a lack of law enforcement is the number of people with guns. Once one person steals something, from another person, after they get shot, the violence will stop suddenly.

No More Red Tape

The biggest reason why people commit crimes is that they think they will not be caught, and one of the big factors that helps them with this is the red tape, of the modern legal system. The beauty of having no official police means that we don't have the problems of a bureaucratic government and we don't have to convince anyone else of what happened or prove it. In Saudi Arabia, they cut off your right hand if you steal, as the left hand is

the hand use to wipe your butt, and there are very few robberies there anymore.

Increasing Church Involvement

Another real benefit of this kind of situation is that church attendance will skyrocket and it will be much easier to meet people and form long term relationships. Churches will be a great way to organize and form communities, around those who survive. The Church was the major center of civilization, during the Middle Ages, in Europe, and will likely rise to prominence again in this kind of situation.

We will Be Healthier

This will have a moralizing influence upon the entire population. Many of our addictions to video games, junk food, the Internet, and sex will die down, as they will be hard to maintain, in this situation. Most people, who depend on modern medications, will become healthy enough, so that they will no longer need those medications. And the polluted environment will finally have time to heal and future generations will live better lives, the sooner this happens.

3.3.3 Likelihood of this Situation

Somewhere in the Middle

The most likely thing to happen is some situation in between, where we are now, and the complete breakdown of modern life. We will likely have more disasters, both man-made and natural, in most parts of the world. The US will fare the best, compared to the rest of the world, from the more violent weather, caused by global warming.

American Future is Bright

We may not still be one nation, and we will we have a vastly different culture, but whoever lives in America as our descendants will do well, in almost any likely situation. The only conceivable event, that could destroy America, would be a once in a million years asteroid hit or a once in ten thousand years event, like the eruption of a super volcano.

3.4 Worst Case Scenario

3.4.1 First Obstacles

Full Scale Invasion of the US

One of the things, that scares Americans, in a Worst Case Scenario, is an invasion by China or Russia. Some might think this could be a possibility, if things get bad enough, in our struggle for limited oil, that we decide not to honor our debts, or some other hypothetical situation might happen, so that things get out of control, to the point, where our leaders feel they have no other choices. We can piece together what would happen, if we look at situations, that involved some of these factors, that have happened at other times and places in history and the unique combination factors specific to the US, including: our geography, our demographics, our military readiness, and our willingness to accept loss.

Our Military Strength

Some people might think that a country as large and advanced as China or Russia could take us on and have a chance at winning. The biggest thing

that protects America is that we are an ocean away from our major enemies and rivals. Even Hitler wasn't able to reach as far as America during World War II. It is certainly possible, with current technologies, but it is more expensive and slows things down significantly. If our enemies get that far, other factors will hold them back. The first is that our military is the best in the world and is 25 years ahead of the rest of the world, in things like stealth. Even the latest Russian technologies are not as reliable or have the same abilities in key areas, that would allow fewer US tanks, helicopters, aircraft, and ships to inflict as much damage as their opponents.

3.4.2 Secondary Obstacles

Special Forces and Intelligence

Another major factor, if we don't count in the conventional military, is that there are other agencies that would step in. We have very large army of intelligence agents and special forces, which could even, just by themselves, make the war so bloody, that there would be somewhere like 90% casualties. Think of what the success of a tiny group of terrorists can be when they target us. The intelligence agents and special forces use similar tactics, but are much better trained, much better armed, there are many more of them, and they have better intelligence, than those they are fighting against. They have been through training, that makes this kind of situation, as easy to operate in, as it does for a kid playing paintball.

More Sources of Weapons

You also have to figure that the US military has a whole range of technologies, that are unknown, to the rest of the world, but we are ready to use, if we needed them. We had laser guided weapons and night vision battlefield ready in the Vietnam War and we had a whole fleet of stealth

fighter/bombers ready to go, when we bombed Libya in 1985. Another thing to consider is that in many rural areas of the United States, the local population is often armed to the teeth already. In many rural states it is legal to have fully automatic military-style assault rifles, and that right is exercised, by a large number of people. Many people have enough ammunition rounds, to last 20 years of war. Our Department of Defense has already planned and prepared, for every possible scenario, including this one.

3.4.3 Final Obstacles

Weapons of Mass Destruction

And as for weapons of mass destruction, we have them too in as large or larger quantities, so that we can drop the same stuff on them. Also, it is not possible to destroy all the nukes of ones side, because we have nuclear powered submarines with nuclear weapons. No one knows exactly where they are, except the captain on the ship, those missiles can reach anywhere in the world, and they can survive for years, without any more fuel and only need to briefly rise up, to get food, every 6 months. Even if we had a full nuclear war, with a major nuclear power like Russia or China, most people would survive, if they build a simple shelter in their houses. The kind of nuclear bombs, that would be dropped currently would be very small and targeted, because destroying the entire country's infrastructure makes the land gained much less valuable.

We Won Last Time

If the US were invaded, we would have instant unity, between the most fundamentalist Christians and the most extreme feminists. The last time we fought a major world power on US soil, during the Revolutionary War and

War of 1812, we won. It is true that the end of the Revolutionary War was a stalemate and the British decided it wasn't worth it, but it doesn't matter how you win a war. The British were the biggest military power at the time and the US was just becoming a nation. In Vietnam, the communists never won a battle against the US and were technically losing the war, yet the US was forced to leave and the communists are still in power, decades later.

Final Limiting Factors

Having a much bigger army does not mean that you will win, even if you have technology that is almost as good. This was proven in a number of wars, when Arab armies fought against Israel. Also you have to consider that even the Soviet Union was forced out of Afghanistan because of public opinion even, with no free press. Another factor is that we would likely be able to arm and train resistance in China or Russia and take the war home to them and could quite possibly break down the public order in their countries.

4

5 Statement of Belief

5.1 Philosophy Fundamentals Points

5.1.1 Philosophy

- questioning the reason for things you think you know
- encourages skepticism and rationalism or doubt and reasoning

- similar to debate and argument
- almost any area of study has a philosophy to it
- philosophy itself is defined by its own branch of philosophy

5.1.2 Paradox

- paradox is when you learn two things, that appear to be contradictory, but upon further examination you realize that they are actually related
- mysticism, non-dualism, asceticism, monasticism, and paradox are all closely related
- male and female are paradoxically related, but good and evil are not
- most major Biblical doctrines are based on paradoxes, and the Church has historically split because of most of them

5.1.3 Mysticism

- attempting to find closer relationship with God
- main values are humility and compassion
- based on the concept of paradox (two things that appear to be opposing, that are found to be related, after closer inspection)
- most major world religions have a mystical form
- live life of service, seclusion, and teaching (monks of most religions are an example)

5.1.4 Chinese Philosophy

- support for argument based on way society was ruled in mythical and idealistic ancient times
- focus is on the what rather than the why
- philosophical but not religious
- easily applies to ethics, psychology, literature, art

- includes Confucianism and Taoism plus many other less well known philosophies

5.1.5 Confucianism

- moral or reform based philosophy of leadership ethics
- became official philosophy of government for most Chinese history
- was not accepted for hundreds of years after Confucius died
- emphasizes manners and just treatment of subjects
- main goal is feeding subjects so that they do not revolt or that subsistence farming is the focus of economy

5.1.6 Taoism

- formed as response to Confucianism
- related to Confucianism paradoxically (as man is related to women in the yin yang concept)
- is personal and non political
- goal is long life
- emphasizes values of humility and compassion
- is basis for Tai Chi, Kung Fu, and the Zen in Zen Buddhism

5.1.7 Existentialism

- literally means human being; it defines what is unique about human beings
- first 3 famous existentialists were all Christian
- freedom of individual to determine universal values
- is accompanied by an extreme personal responsibility to do what is right
- texts often written in a literary format like a short story

5.1.8 Kierkegaard

- major ideas include humility, paradox, individuality, and responsibility
- believed when most people claim to be Christian, no-one is a truly dedicated Christian
- we cannot be objective (only God can)
- when you are asking for forgiveness for sin, you are closest to God, because you are more humble
- faith is based on what appears to be weak and absurd, by human reason (Christ's death and resurrection / Christ being both God and man)

5.2 Paradoxical Message: Saving Faith = Free Thought

I know that I appear to have two contradicting opinions, namely: that I believe that Christianity is the best religion and want people to have the peace and joy that comes from that and, at the same time, I want people, to follow their hearts and make their own choices, independently of what I believe. I have a lot of faith in Christ and believe that I do not need, to put any pressure on anyone, to accept Him as their Savior. God very much believes in our own freedom and would rather we spend eternity in Hell, than be forced to obey Him and enjoy everlasting life with Him, if we don't want to.

Throughout the centuries, people were forced to convert to various religions, in order to avoid death, but as John Locke said, in his Letter Concerning Toleration, as the reason for toleration, is that becoming a Christian must be done as an exercise of free will, so that people can only

be granted everlasting life through God's grace, if they believe of their own free will and are not manipulated or fooled into believing by any means - even by argument or by trying to please others. God actually holds Himself back, because He wants us to be in control of our future and so praying and living a life of submission to Him is the most effective way to change the world. Even one or two people worldwide make a huge difference spiritually, which is the key way, to effectively solve our major world problems.

Not only does God want salvation to be given, to those who choose to accept the gift of grace, without any pressure, so God wants us to approach theology the same way. The Bible was deliberately written as, to be obvious on certain theological points, in some areas, like that Jesus was fully man and eternally is God and that there is only one God who created the world and is all powerful, and in other areas like in the end of times prophecy and in issues involving free will and predestination, God wants us to accept Biblical theology that we don't understand and cannot explain, in a way that humans can comprehend, by faith alone.

God also wants us to realize that it is ok to have different opinions about theology in the Church. If God wanted us to all have the same opinions on all of theology, then He would have made Biblical doctrine absolutely clear on every point. The same spirit which allows differences in opinions is also a humble spirit that is in emulation, of Christ's submission, to death on the cross. God hates arrogance more than anything else. Instead of arguing about issues we will never comprehend let alone resolve, we should focus on following all parts of the Bible, which we do understand and in which we fail to follow.

5.3 My Approach to Christianity

5.3.1 Paradox and the Bible

I believe in the miraculous of the Bible, plus the social gospel, as I do in every other major paradox of the Bible. Most my beliefs are based on paradoxes. Many people often consider paradoxes to be contradictions, but I use the term differently: I think of paradoxes are things, that are considered contradictory at first, but upon further examination, we realize that they are complimentary, like male and female. The most important paradox of Christianity is that Jesus Christ is the One Creator God eternally and also was fully human, while on earth (at the same time).

5.3.2 Paradox and Faith

The reason why I believe that faith is the most important aspect of understanding the Bible is because paradoxes are best understood with the heart instead of the mind. The Bible is not written, to communicate the exact same thing, to everyone and is designed, so that even the greatest theologians will never find a systematic way to explain it. The Bible was not meant to be argued rationally, but believed by those who are willing to place their hope in God, rather than their own minds and their own abilities. The biggest thing that God hates is an arrogant person and the more we are able to explain the natural world, through rational means, the bigger our egos get and the less we feel the need for God. At the same time, we realize the things we thought that we understood well, we knew less about than we thought.

5.3.3 The Apocalypse and the Environment

Many people have read the prophecy of the Bible and come to the conclusion that God is planning on destroying us, for no good reason. The irony of the situation is that we can see prophecy being fulfilled today and most of the plagues of the Bible are environmental disasters, that we created ourselves. God was not punishing us, but rather letting us feel the consequences, of our own greed and arrogance. We have know for a while what was necessary to make the world livable, for our grandchildren and it has been proven to us in ways that we can understand, but no one cares enough, to give up any of our toys, so that we can save our future. We are so addicted to our gods (our brands), that we cannot cut back on our consumption, even if it would make life better, for all of us.

5.3.4 My Writing and Paradox

Many of my books are based on paradoxes like how: Muslims understand God the Father, Zen Buddhists and Bhakti Hindus understand the Holy Spirit, and African Christians understand Jesus Christ better than any church in North America and Europe does. I then talked about how the body and the mind are as important a component of a person and their relationship with society as the heart and the spirit, and how both eternal salvation and social justice are equally important. I also talked about how we can be encouraged and live in hope and strive to improve ourselves, even as our world is being destroyed, and how we should consider businesses and people to be just as important and how the rights of both Christians and Muslims should be equally respected.

5.4 Central Biblical Paradox

5.4.1 Faith Alone Plus Good Works

One of the major paradoxes, in Christianity, that has split the church, is over salvation being by faith alone and at the same time having proof, for your faith, through your changed attitude and behavior. Scripture states that no one is good but God. Man is born spiritually and morally corrupt, in his core self. Even Christians have this problem too. But at the same time, Christians need to prove their faith, by their good work. A simple way to resolve this paradox is to realize, that when we do good, as Christians, that it is a combination of our choice and God's supernatural intervention, that makes this possible.

5.4.2 How Salvation Works

Just as God is almost entirely responsible for our salvation and all He asks of us to admit we have disobeyed His laws, that we are not deserving of anything, and we accept His authority in our life, the vast length of the separation from God is bridged by God's unconditional grace and forgiveness. God is perfect and cannot tolerate injustice, so He came to earth, in human form (while still remaining God and being perfect in morality), to sacrifice Himself, as Jesus Christ, so that our failures in following His laws and our arrogance, for attempting to try to be good, without God and erecting our own corrupt attempt, at moral standards, in contradiction of God's laws can be overcome (by God's sacrifice of Himself and the taking on the penalty of our misdeeds).

5.4.3 How Both Can Be True

So the way in which we can do good, as Christians, is almost entirely because of God's grace and very little is because of our effort. We can be good, while fallen, because, as Christians, we are submitting ourselves to Jesus Christ and letting him take control of our lives. Christians can be good and at the same time fallen, because we have not given over all of our life to God, and as we grow, we hand over more and more aspects of our lives, to our Lord Jesus Christ. A genuine Christian should grow in this way, so that even though he does good things, who he is is still a sinner and a fallen individual. So Christians are both fallen and should have good deeds at the same time. Both are true and denying either one is not Biblical.

5.5 My Biblical Beliefs

5.5.1 Overview

1. I believe in Evangelical theology but in Liberal ethics
2. I believe that we should be holy yet be kind to all life
3. I believe that there is only one Church but no denomination is completely right
4. I believe that parts of the Bible are meant to be taken literally as well as others are to be taken symbolically and that the Biblical context is the determining factor

5.5.2 Basics

1. I believe in one God
2. I believe the Jesus was fully man and eternally is God
3. I believe that we are saved by faith alone, yet only through works and

sacraments will we know we are saved

4. I believe that we are both predestined for salvation and yet still have a free will
5. I believe that the tribulation has happened 1900 years ago and will also happen in the future at the same 5 dimensional coordinates
6. I believe that we sin after being saved yet we tend towards the good

5.5.3 Specifics

1. I believe that we are responsible for the animals and yet we should treat them equally
2. I believe that we should follow the laws but subvert the lifestyle of the world
3. I believe that only a remnant will be faithful to God and yet the majority of people will be saved.
4. I believe that the Bible explains in great detail what Heaven is like and yet we will never understand until we get there
5. I believe a child can understand the Bible and be saved yet the brightest theologians in the world will never get beyond even the basics of the Bible

5.5.4 So am I Protestant or Catholic, Liberal or Evangelical?

I believe that Evangelicals and Catholics are very similar as far as I can see on the main theology. From what I can see Catholics and Liberal Protestants seem to have different aspects of the ethics of Christianity right. Membership wise I am an Evangelical Quaker and I they are closest to what I believe the Bible says both technically and in spirit, both theologically and ethically. I call what I believe Wholeness or Non-dual Christianity as I

believe in both sides of most divisions of the church. I believe that most divisions of the Church were primarily politically motivated and came out of a view of the world that was shaped by the philosophy of Aristotle and Plato. The Church has continued to move in the direction of "I can believe whatever I want and call myself Christian" attitude. I believe that any kind of leadership over other people is against the concept of equality exemplified by Christ and I have a hard time seeing how the Church leadership is that different amongst rival factions of churches. It hurts me terribly to see people call themselves Christian who start wars with other countries for oil money, who torture and imprison those who don't agree with them, torture animals for cosmetic products and destroy the very little left of God's creation to build fancy homes. I think most people will be very surprised to find out who is in Heaven and who is not when we finally get there. People who are in power are not there because God thought that was ok and just because you hear famous people saying that God says something or they are Christian doesn't make it true.

5.6 What is being "born again? "

This article is more direct, than most of my writing. I have decided to write it, because my dad was afraid people might misunderstand my methods and my intent, in my previous writings. People might think that it was OK with God to practice multiple religions or that we can get salvation, in ways other than, by the Christian God. I have written this to tell my readers directly about what I believe is the ultimate purpose in life and the solution to our problems. But remember that, while this may seem like a spontaneous form of enlightenment, with little work involved, in reality, it is the hardest thing to do, it requires more effort than any other path and is often the longest road.

The majority of my writing centers on the ideas that Western Civilization, over the last 500 years, has been more corrupt, than at any other time, in recorded history. I also wrote about how China, from the beginning of the Han until the end of the Ming dynasty, was much more civilized. I stated, that the source of these differences lies in the philosophy, that each was based on. But the idea was that suffering was increased many times, beyond what it was beforehand, not that China was perfect and the West was completely evil.

But the source of our suffering comes from the bad choices we make and our rebellion against God, which is the reason why we make wrong choices. Sin is the source of all evil in the world and has been around since the beginning of mankind. It is not God's fault that this happened and yes evil spiritual forces make this worse, but ultimately it is our choice. We do not have the power to do this on our own, so Jesus Christ did almost all of the work himself, so we did not have to pay the full penalty, for our rebellion. But this free gift requires that we humble ourselves before God (even emperors have done this, so there is no shame) and ask God to forgive us of our sins.

To be born again is not about labels or buzz words. It is not about being in genuine. It is not politically conservative and it is not in favor of the establishment. It is not all about failure and low self esteem. God wants a real relationship with everyone and never intended to send any person to Hell. (Hell was invented for evil spirits.) There was no other way, because to have a perfect God and a flawed man was incompatible. We doomed ourselves, when we ate from the forbidden tree. So, God took the full punishment, on Himself.

Most people do not understand this, but, since God is not limited by anything including time, a part of God is always on the cross and God is

eternally suffering, for our sins. He made it as easy for us, as possible. God does not want to put us into a guilt trip. He understands that He created man to be in a relationship with God and man cannot deal with life fully, without God.

The reason for studying religions, not based entirely on the Bible, is not to practice them, but to learn things from them. Being the opposite of Islam, in every way, is not what Christianity is about. Sure, Christians worship a different deity, but there are things we have in common and there are beliefs we each have, that are not exclusive to our religion. Also, the Bible does not forbid studying other belief systems, including other religions, and the Apostle Paul set an example, as a scholar, who understood the different beliefs of his time (although the Bible does forbid the study of, or practice of supernatural powers, that don't come from the Christian God). Finally, understanding where someone of another faith is coming from, makes it easier to explain the Gospel, to them, and shows respect, for their faith and their choices.

5.7 Clarity in Conviction, an Epic Poem

I am a rock crushed and beaten to dust

I am a clay jar wet with rot, pried and pulled to disfigurement

I am rushed by in shrieking winds of light

I am filled with void and darkness

I stand at the edge of human thought and reason, quivering
uncontrollably

I am surrounded on each side

To the right, pain

And to the left, despair

Behind me, fear
And death alone stands before me
All was biting flames and smothering fog
Dancing and laughing sadistically
Drowning in this red hot furnace
I was bound and gagged with pure terror and relentless pain
Nothing existed but pain and terror
But for a single ray of light immortal
After eternity passed five times
I passed through the iron doors of night impenetrable
Still choking and burning on the rot and char within
Pain and not pain were all that existed
I am part of nothing
And nothing is part of me
Having rejected everything
And everything having rejected me
I am a man, a soldier
And nothing more
And madness did but all consume me
If not for many a labor of love
So once fully alone and silent still
I did let the sun shine in and heal the rot and char
Within the daily fears and petty tribulations that did haunt me
And in the midst of the multitudes busy
Did He, in the humble summer day breeze,
Find I to be wanting and unworthy
So in the cool of the day
With the entire continuum of time and space shuddering
Did my Savior present Himself
As the only worthy sacrifice
Obedient to even death, He did defeat

That which did seek to torment me most eternally
As God raised Jesus from the dead
From there I venture as a simple pilgrim, asking for directions as I go
Finding in the Word He had left me
A map to discern the directions to be trusted from that which should not
be

At times outrunning my companions
And at other times standing almost completely still
I find clarity in the conviction of this truth

That God raised Jesus from the dead
And so I go ever on

As He walks humbly by my side
The living flame imperishable walking
To the pace of a mortal man

My companion, my Lord, as my real Father
He who created me is not yet finished
He turns the circle of life, the potter's wheel

To mold my empty and disfigured thoughts into the pure and noble
thoughts of His Son

Making me into the likeness of the real Son of Man
From the inside out

I am baptized in His Grace, so

That He can make me a new creation

Making me again with fresh clay and water

And filling the emptiness with His love and His peace

And now my eyes are more fully opened

And I now see the unending power and goodness of Christ within me and
the truth of His Word all around me

I am no longer male or female, white or black, young or old,

But bought at the highest price and no longer my own

I now call myself after my master, Christian

He that I may serve and in so doing be free from my most eternal enemy,
myself

And as the road goes ever on and on,

And I stumble along the way, from time to time

And as I return to the foot of the cross each day

And learn again why I cannot master myself

And I realize each time more and more

How amazing was that grace that saved a wretch like me

5.8 The Kind of Christianity I am Promoting

I do not wish to change the theology of Christianity: I take both sides of most divisions in the church in theology. I believe that Jesus was a man and eternally is God, that salvation is by faith alone and still by faith plus works, that Free Will and Predestination are both true, and that Jesus came at the end of the 1st century AD and will come in the future at the same “time”.

What I do wish to change is everything else. I do wish to change the philosophical, political, artistic, generational, regional, organizational, and perceived opposition aspects of the way Christianity is practiced in America. Philosophically, I wish to bring the church in America to a mystical and existential Christian approach to Scripture. Politically, I wish to bring a fiscally liberal approach to Scripture to the church in America. Artistically, I wish to bring a multi-cultural approach to Scripture to the church in America. Generationally, I wish to move the focus onto the generations succeeding the baby boomers, to the church in America. Regionally, I wish to bring a developing world center of gravity and approach to Scripture to the church in America. Organizationally, I wish to have the church in America organized by network, instead of top down and linear. Finally, I

wish to to move the focus on threats to the church from Atheism to Paganism.

5.9 Another Perspective on Orthodoxy

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. --1 Corinthians 1:17-31

Some would say that I have an more open view of what is acceptable for Christians, but in reality I just have a different view of what is orthodox and Biblical and what is not. I am really hesitant to learn anything about spiritual warfare or the occult especially from non-Christian sources.

One of the reasons why I have studied about Asia so predominantly is because I am interested in other cultures but I didn't want to get involved in or learn too much about Animism which is an important part of many ancient African and Latin American cultures.

I also believe that the Church has been synchronistic in its use of Greek philosophy and religion in the development of Christian doctrines and the the study of Scripture. The warning against that comes from the first part of 1 Corinthians before the Apostle Paul starts to talk about sex and is quoted above.

The Bible is fundamentally Asian and makes more sense and is more accurately interpreted if thought of from a traditional Asian worldview. A good way to get this point of view is by reading classical texts in Asian philosophy, literature, and religion.

I also do my best to avoid learning about mythology other than the specifically Christian-based Tolkien view on English mythology.

5.10 How to Help Our World

5.10.1 Most Problems are Spiritual in Nature

Most of the major problems our country is facing now, including our debt crisis, environmental crisis, energy consumption crisis, and the increasing power of terrorists are all spiritual in nature. The judgements in Revelations are all caused by environmental disasters, the resistance to the West in the Muslim world has been very effective in blocking the growth of Christianity, and the reason for most wars (including the present ones in the Middle East) for the last several hundred years at least are planned by those who spiritually control the world behind the scenes. So to deal with these problems politically is not effective, because they are spiritual in nature.

5.10.2 God's Rules

We have no power directly over the spiritual world, but God places certain rules on what things are allowed by whom in the spiritual world. God wants people to be in control of their own destiny, so He allows us to take part in His plans, by praying for His will to be done. This takes away the limitations God places on Himself and increases His influence throughout the world. Why God has chosen to work this way may not make sense to most people, but I know it does work this way.

5.10.3 God is in Control

We do not need to fear the problems in the world today, because God places special protection on His people. It is true that the spiritual forces

that hate God, what He stands for, and His people have plenty of power to destroy us, and the reason why we have not been defeated from the beginning is because God is in the world with His Spirit and doesn't allow those behind the scenes to directly hurt His people. The forces against God have the most power when they are doing things in secret and they can get people to stop praying and reading the Bible.

5.10.4 What We Can Do

We are in control of our future very directly. We can take up the cause and choose to be a part of God's plan for the future, or we can do it our own way, but either way God will ultimately win and we will serve one master or another. The best that we can do to help improve our world is to: pray for God's will to be done, have the right attitude before God, read the Bible, and show God's love in the way we treat others in everything we do.

5.11 Solutions for Our Addictions

5.11.1 Our Problems are All Addictions

All our problems in America come down to addictions. Our addictions to drugs and alcohol, addictions to fighting the appearance of age, addictions to games and sports, addictions to information and the Internet, addictions to sex and fetishes, addictions to work and networking, addictions to money and investments, addictions to coffee and sugar, addictions to food and weight loss, and all the other ways in which we distract ourselves are caused by our fear of the increasing signs of global catastrophe. The number one reason why our youth pursue distractions is because they seriously believe

they will not live past the age of 30.

5.11.2 Real Solution is Prayer

The real solution to our addictions is to solve our environmental, economic, cultural, and religious divisions, that are increasing in their violent confrontations, because we are at the limits of the oil, water, and soil that we need to survive. There are only 2 solutions: stop our addictions to our distractions in the West or a massive die off of the poorest part of the population in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We already know which solution those in power would prefer. The only way to avoid this solution is to pray.

5.11.3 Rebellion Against God is the Cause

We know that all our problems are rooted in our rebellion against the Christian God and His laws. The way to break the cycle is to submit ourselves to God and pray that His will be done. There is no other way to affect change on a global scale. Only God's intervention will save us and will only come when we are truly sorry for our addictions and stop participating in them. That is the power of consumerism of American corporate culture: that we are addicted to it.

5.11.4 The Weak are Hurt Most

The consequences for our addictions is that the poor, the weak, and the sick are going to be trampled upon by our masters - the corporations. When we sin, we hurt pollute the natural world, the animals and our soil and water. There only defense is God's divine intervention. It is the only way to destroy

the disease of sin, where it breeds. Our only liberation is through our choice to pray that the will of God happens, in our lives, as it does in Heaven.

5.11.5 Our Heads and in our Hearts

If we try our way out by science and technology, we will face the same problem within 50 years. The only way we will last to the next century is for us to turn to God. The underlying problem is not a war in the Heavens or on Earth, but the war in our hearts. We need to defeat our carnal self and empower our spiritual self, and that is the key to our survival on earth. We can only do this, by first submitting to God, in all areas of our lives.

5.12 What is it like Living with Faith?

5.12.1 What is Faith?

The first thing to understand is what faith means. Faith means believing, in something, that you cannot directly perceive, through the senses, like seeing or hearing. This takes out anything learned from Science. Faith is also not the same as reason. Reason can explain the world only so far - we need faith to understand it fully (as the primary word is spiritual, not physical, and God is beyond even that). Make no mistake, God is perfectly rational and we would see it that way, if we were also infinite, but we are not. The the point of faith and mysticism is that we acknowledge that we are not the most powerful, intelligent, or moral beings in reality.

People can have faith, in anything - even absurd things. But faith only brings something helpful to us, by being in something real. If God didn't exist

and we believed he did, we would be fools. The place we start with faith is with feeling sorry for and stopping sinning and believe in the Gospel - literally, that God raised Jesus from the dead. It is written in the beginning of 1st Corinthians that Christianity is equally hard for those who come from an academic and philosophical view of the world and those who see the spiritual world as ultimate reality, because God shows us with what seems absurd to our understanding of either world, that God became a man and died, and that this God is the supreme reality.

5.12.2 God has a Different Point of View

When we think of those in power, in this world, we think of arrogance, corruption, and dishonesty. It is the same with those who engage the spiritual world without God, but God is not only all powerful, but He is perfectly good and even humble enough, to be born a human baby, and then to be very cruelly killed, while being mocked, by His own chosen people. When we see weakness, we see this as a negative and have a hard time understanding how something weak can actually be very powerful.

Ultimately, God had to be all powerful also had to be perfectly good, or else things would not stay together. Not only does God not look down on us, who have committed high treason, with his enemy, by disobeying the one rule, that made it possible, for us to be both free moral agents and still have no suffering. People often ask why didn't God create the world, so that we could both be free to choose, between good and evil and at the same time, to not let evil exist.

5.12.3 God Already Gave us Freedom without Suffering

That was exactly the situation God created for us, originally, by allowing us to choose, but not letting us know what evil was, and all we had to do was stay away, from learning about that. Intuitively, I know that the Christian God is real. It only makes sense, by experiencing a very little amount of the world that there was one, good, all-powerful Creator, that made it and governs it, but it is still hard for me to believe, that God is so humble and patient with us, when suffering and sin are entirely our own fault, because we could not even follow one simple rule. God is obviously truly just, but how then can He choose to be so merciful?

5.12.4 He is Strong

This absurd situation about weakness is only part of who God is and relates directly to his relationship with us as it is the Jesus Christ aspect of God that embodies this trait to the most extreme situations. Having ultimate power does not take away from the reality that He experiences our weakness and has mercy on us. Being kind does not take away from His power or His purity. His estimation of our value is a true mystery, and, since God is perfectly rational, He must be able, to bring something good, out of us, in the end.

The definition of theology is the study of God and that is what the Bible and all creation are about. Not only are we not the center of even our own solar system, we are a small part of reality, and still will be even when we have glorified bodies in Heaven. There is so much more, than even the spiritual world - there is more to God, than anything we can ever learn or

experience, because God is literally bigger, more complex, more interesting, and has more depth, than can be contained, within all of reality. When you reach the edge and out reach power of the spiritual world, you are crossing into God Himself.

5.12.5 We are Weak

But, on our side of our relationship with God, things are very different. We feel pain, at the most trivial wounds and are afraid, of the least little things. One of the things that we start to feel right away, with God is how small and insignificant we are and we are in awe of God, not just for his power, but because of His mercy. We learn through our lives how terrible sin is and when we think to challenge God with the question of why we suffer, we cannot escape the knowledge that all suffering comes from our own personal sin (rebellion against God). We are true cowards when compared to even the worst of Christ's disciples.

When we start out with God, we constantly pray, for what we want, as if God is some divine genie, and realize later that we need, to pray all the time, just to make it through the day, when we see how frail we are and how big, even the physical world is. It was said by a former Russian Special Forces (Spetsnaz) soldier, that when we enter combat, many people think that they will rise to the occasion, but he knows that you will sink down, to the lowest level, of your training. We often think, once we know more about who God is, and after years of experience, we will find it harder, to sin and lose faith, but we can never rise, beyond the frailty, of our flesh, and our original choice to sin.

So, on God's side things must look very foolish, in our world. People hurt other people immeasurably, for what will be nothing more than the paving stones in Heaven. Even though we live very shortly, people spend all that

they have and all the strength they have, to live another year, and they neglect the most important decision, of all eternity. If you are truly a Christian, you have got to be truly humble, at the very least. What have you done, that puts you in the same place, as one of the early Christians, or Christians currently, living their whole lives, in the third world.

5.12.6 Sometimes Close; Sometimes Far

But, although it shows great weakness, to ask for help, God is truly there in a crisis and then you even can feel Him, much more strongly. When I found out what I put myself into, when I joined the Army, I was terrified, for months on end. Even after I left, I feared terrorist attacks (and this was years before 9/11). I also was in crisis, when I had my first paranoid episode, when I landed in the psychiatric ward of a private hospital. Those were times, when I thought I was in Hell, literally, but I felt very close to God, at all those times.

The things that really wear you down are the day in and day out things. The things that scare me most are things that can last for years on end, even if they are much less severe. Depression is scarier and more painful than paranoia, but having both, at the same time is worse, than most people can imagine. As I go longer on my medicine, I kind of wake up more and more, and things that I suffered through, that I could not at the time even verbalize, I have learned how to protect myself from, over a long period of time.

The most disabling part about Schizophrenia is not the not knowing what is real, or having people believe you, but rather the way it makes it almost impossible to hold down a job, or keep a relationship. Most people have a

hard time understanding how painful my mental illness is, because I am high functioning enough, to be able to hide the uglier parts of my mind, out of fear for losing more freedom. Schizophrenia combined with Christianity can make you totally lose touch with reality, but the medicine helps a lot.

5.13 My Ultimate Goal

If I leave you with just one thing, this is it: you should never follow someone else. I don't mean that you shouldn't follow laws, but you should not follow any person's ideology, especially not mine. Everyone knows what is true and what is right and wrong. The best you can do is follow your conscience.

Take a creative approach to your problems. Realize the reality of the things you cannot change and change the things you can. The biggest source of our problems is that we seem to be unable to draw connections and have a lack of imagination. Einstein once said that creativity is more important than intelligence.

I do not want any followers, just as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche both felt. I would be happiest, if you formed your religious and philosophical beliefs, by your own experience and research. I do believe the opinions that I wrote and am not ashamed of having strong opinions and risking being wrong. I want you to have passion for doing what you believe is right. You cannot go wrong by following your heart.

If I was able to change anything about my life, I would try to enjoy life more and not be so serious. Make sure you don't spend all your life thinking: take time to relax and meet new people. It is important to have balance in life and to listen to the advice of other people who care about you. The only way you grow is from learning from forming relationships and taking risks to improve your life. Other people can see things you cannot, so benefit from their experience and differing points of view.

5.14 The Christian Life

5.14.1 Paradoxes

When we talk about salvation, I talk about God doing basically everything. I, then, say we have to do something. And then I say we have to give up everything. Then I say salvation is free. It sounds like contradictions, but they are more like paradoxes, but I think I can explain them fairly rationally.

5.14.2 Human Freedom

When Jesus dies on the cross and rose again, He defeated death and the devil, but that does not just automatically solve all our problems and give everyone eternal life. Jesus is a true believer, in human freedom, and free will, at basically, all costs. He limits, what He does, in the world, according to whether, or not we pray and He doesn't give salvation, to those, who reject Him.

5.14.3 Explanation for Paradoxes

“God does basically everything” does not mean, that we don't put in a tremendous amount of effort, but this just means, that we did not earn it, be being perfectly good. The “doing something” is humbling ourselves, before God and accepting His free gift, which is not much, to brag about, but since we are so evil and selfish, this is a big challenge, for us.

5.14.4 More Explanations for Paradoxes

When I say, “we have to give up everything” I mean, that we have, to choose the spiritual things, over our earthly: possessions, accomplishments, connections, status, opportunities, and the like. I say this is free, because these are not real and lasting things, that will be irrelevant, in a short time (when we die) and we cannot do anything morally good enough, to buy our way there.

5.14.5 Becoming Better People

And these things are just the beginning of the journey. Throughout our lives, as we gradually hand over control, over more and more areas, of our mind, heart, and emotions, God heals us more and more. As Christians, we should tend towards making good choices and we should overcome sins, although we never do so completely.

5.14.6 Being a Role Model

We should find an area of service and become wiser over time. None of this will allow us, to claim we did anything, by ourselves, but will show, as an example, for non-believers. Eventually, we may come, to the point, where other people ask us, for advice.

5.14.7 Struggle Against Pride

The problem, that many people run into, at this point is that they get proud and claim they have not sinned, for 20 years and tell people, that are suffering, just to get over it, without any treatment or understanding, of

mental and physical limitations. Eventually, you may enter leadership roles, in the church, or the community and the temptation, to become proud will only grow and grow. God will likely give you an extreme weakness, to counter your pride.

5.14.8 Find a Role Model

Christianity is a constant battle, against selfish attitudes, that we started, when we were born, but we are not alone, in that we have God and each other. Early on, after you accept Christ, it is good to find an older Christian role model, to give you advice. Don't just pick someone, who is well known, in the church, but rather pick someone, with a quiet grace, who is humble and can follow others.

5.14.9 Christians Should Feel Happy

Christian life is a fine balance, between humbling yourself, before God, but also allowing God, to give you confidence and good self esteem. Being a Christian should not constantly feel, like you are worthless. You may have made many mistakes, but God's grace is sufficient, to wipe them out. God wants you, to feel forgiven, after you repent, as long as you take it seriously.

6

7 Mission Statement

7.1 Turning the Tables

7.1.1 Why Christians Don't Like My Writing

When many Christians read my writing, red flags pop up, because I use the same arguments, that non-Christians use against Christians. This is not your imagination - this is true. What I have found is all the major arguments used against Christians actually apply to non-believers, more so. I have proved that Christianity is more holistic, environmental, multicultural, liberal, progressive, pro-labor, and pro-animal rights. My target group is moral liberals, who find the Bible to be very inspiring and worthy of reading and the Christian God the logical and ideal God to worship, that they have always dreamed of, but never want to go to a Church, or any other "organized religion" (even Bible studies), due to bad experiences.

7.1.2 I am Targeting a Different Social Group

In America, Christianity is holding its own, but not growing (and the part that is is becoming more and more Spanish-speaking). The conservative belief system is well represented, but there is little in place, for those who

hold a liberal belief system. Yes, there are many other conservatives, who do not believe, but some groups of people are both easier to recruit and some also more strategic, than others.

The main reason why a large percentage, of the moral liberal population, of America, is turned off, by Christianity, is that they are indoctrinated, in public universities and in recently written books, in the humanities and social sciences, with the idea that white Christian males caused all the problems, in the world and Christians only evangelize, to help support “Western” imperialism and the subjugation, of people, in third world countries.

As I see little need, to convert already faithful Christians, who are well served and supported, by their communities, I have focused on another demographic. This demographic is willing to embrace similar doctrines, as Evangelicals, but are repelled by their politics, social group, cultural leanings, their means of worship, their organization, their social priorities, and almost anything else, that is not strictly basic theology. This population segment may not be very big, and I do not have the resources, to reach many people, but even if I help make just one person’s life better, it would all be worth it.

7.1.3 I am One of Them

Another important thing, to note, is that I see myself, as part of this demographic, as well. I also have grown up in a public school through high school, served enlisted in the regular US Army, and have attended a public university (in a university town). Where I live is the home town of many people, who would be more interested, in my perspective, on Christianity, than they would of most established churches, especially the Evangelical church.

There is also a very strong New Age movement emphasis, in town, and many people think it is cool, for someone, to practice Witchcraft (Wicca). We also have a number of Buddhist religious centers in town, spanning most of the major sects. I have also seen more and more people around town, who are likely Muslim and or from the Middle East or South Asia, due to dress and language. We have also been a major center for students coming from East Asia, for a long time.

7.1.4 Why We Avoid Established Churches

Another argument, that comes up, is that liberal Christians should go to a mainline Protestant denomination, like the: United Methodists, Church of Christ/Disciples of Christ, Society of Friends (Quaker), or Anglican Church (Church of England). The problems with this idea are: they are still organized the same way, they have unacceptable theology, they do not take a firm enough stand against the New Age movement, and the other important factor is that there is little passion great enough, to push hard, to find new believers. The Catholic church is another perspective, but it has some unacceptable theology, like the veneration of the saints (which opens the door to Paganism/New Age influences), I am not happy with its history (morally), it is again an (very rigidly) organized religion, and finally it has become so dominantly Spanish language based, that I don't feel I fit in.

One of the things, that keeps people, from many Churches, is the attitude, of the leading members. If you go to a Church, by yourself, you get shocked looks and people mainly ignore you. Many of those in the Church have large families, so that they have no time for anyone else. And many Churches are not very interested in finding new members and are especially unwilling, to

make any changes, to accommodate non-theological differences, like: worship style, time of service, letting people know far enough ahead of time of events, a ministry for singles, dis-emphasizing politics, and having opportunities for new members, to help, with Church ministries. Finally, many older members of Churches will give very ungodly ascetic advice, that sounds good, to people, without a very good grasp of scripture, and will drive them, to feel they need, to choose, between being Christian and being happy.

7.2 Reason for Philosophy

7.2.1 Fundamental Change

Philosophy is about asking questions about things we think we already know the answers to. If you really want to change the world, you have to first change the way you think. Our problems are so severe that we need to make a fundamental change. To make this change, we must change our views about the world. Philosophy questions everything, and requires you to give evidence to support everything, so that as you study it more and more, you tend to become more and more skeptical as well as being more and more rational.

The last 500 years has seen the ascent of science, as the fundamental and unchallenged way to think. For science to be effective, it requires people to believe that what they see and hear is more important, than what they feel and what they believe. Most people now accept facts, as the primary support for understanding our world, but it was not always so. Many people think that science has always existed and is unbiased, objective, and inclusive.

7.2.2 Europe vs. India

There is no logical reason to think scientifically. The system only makes sense, when you accept certain assumptions: in essence, it is a cyclical argument. You have to accept, that facts are fundamental truths, by faith. This view of the world is recent and unique to Europe. The reason Europe surpassed Asia, at the time and the reason why they are falling now, and Asia is rising again is that instead of really developing themselves spiritually and culturally Europe took a short cut and just pursued a couple of technologies, that made them powerful militarily.

India was one of the most spiritually and culturally developed region in the world, but it was never a world power politically, as throughout most of history it was dominated, by other regional powers. In Indian philosophy, the most important things are those that are unseen and unheard and belief and feelings are more important than facts. A person can be rational as anyone else and still see the spiritual world as the primary world. The support for these spiritual things can be things like sacred scripture, ritual, tradition, intuition, personal experiences, and faith.

7.2.3 From Materialist Present to Spiritual Past

The key to our salvation is to move the clock backward, to the way the world was, before the year 1500, when Asia dominated the world. Once we accept that the world is fundamentally spiritual and our problems are based on our pursuit of pleasure, at the expense of others, we know that the solution must be spiritual as well. Prayer is the most effective way to fix our world. The reason why we need spiritual solutions is that spiritual things can

only be effected by other spiritual forces.

It is ironic that you seldom see American and European Christian churches challenge the supremacy of the scientific worldview, and that is why the church appears so weak in this part of the world. The only way to convince people of the importance of religion is to first accept that the world is primarily spiritual. Christians in America are often afraid and uncomfortable about talking about spiritual things. There are two types of spiritual things: supernatural forces and ethics. The only thing that Christians need to understand about the supernatural is the primary importance of prayer. Prayer is the best way to enable God's work in the world.

In America, we talk about freedom, when we really mean we want freedom from being moral and following rules to fit in with others. We say freedom and mean belonging. God takes an extreme view on human freedom. He values our human freedom, to have primary control over the world, by taking a very hands off approach. The way we can green light God's intervention in the world is to pray. The reason why we need not be afraid of the supernatural is that God puts very tight limits, on what things are allowed, to be done, by who, in the spiritual world. Also, the easiest to convert groups of people have traditionally been animists/shamans (pagan/new age).

7.3 Intended Audience

And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard it, he

saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. -- Mark 2:15-17

Believe it or not, although my book series and websites are a ministry, they are not intended for people who are saved or born again. If you already go to a Bible believing church, than this book series and my websites are not intended for you either. This book series and my websites do not attempt to evangelize, at least not in any direct or obvious way. If you believe that you are being called by God and your only obstacle to faith is your pride, then my book series and websites are not intended for you either. Also, if you expect me to give a really in your face salvation message and try to get you to say a prayer with me afterwards, then you should look elsewhere. If you expect me to support other people who claim to be Christian and are famous, you will be disappointed too.

My main target geo-politically is in countries where they have freedom of religion guaranteed by law (at least theoretically) and relatively low overt persecution of Christians. If you are being persecuted for your faith overtly, then I don't see the need for apologetics. Please do not put yourself, your family, your friends, fellow believers, or your community at risk by distributing any material I produce illegally.

My audience is for people in post-Christian societies who don't identify with the mainstream and don't fit into any established Christian ministries. I am not trying to reach millions of people but rather a handful of people. If I help even one person with this book series and my websites, then I would be very pleased and count this work a great success. I believe that God cares about each person individually and wants believers to present Christianity to seekers in different ways depending on their background and personality. I believe that there is only a couple steps that all must do to be

saved but most of the journey towards God and in pursuit of His will is different for different people.

The target market for my ministries are people who would never consider going to a physical church. If you have pets, farm animals, or wild animals you would like to be a part of this ministry, I welcome them. My stuffed toy cows are believers too.

To be honest, I do believe in a literal Heaven and Hell and believe in all the miraculous in the Bible. I don't want anyone to go to Hell as I do not believe God intended for any to suffer in it. What I do disagree with the mainstream Evangelicals is that there are many things keeping people from a correct understanding of what the Bible says. I believe that even most people who are born again don't even have the most basic concepts in Christian ethics and theology right. Almost everyone who claims to follow what the Bible says does not even have the faintest idea about what it says.

My proposed solution for these misunderstandings is not to read the Bible more or to follow a plan I have laid out or to endorse a particular sect of Christianity. My method is to teach Biblical theology by way of paradox - a method most often used in teaching Zen Buddhism, although the concepts are all from the Bible and I can show you the verses to back it up. After you can start to think without relying on the Scientific World-view and are willing to believe with faith when you can't reason something out, then you are almost there.

7.4 Logo Explanation

I should explain what the logo is meant to be representing. The guy is a pen, which is me, which comes from my first poem in Philosophy Core, called Creative Process, where I refer to myself as doing Tai Chi, with my pen being my body. The idea is based on "the pen is mightier than the

sword” so I created “the Bible is mightier than the pen”.

The Bible is shooting out flames because in Ephesians it talks about spiritual warfare and the Bible is the only armament that is offensive. (It means offensive instead of defensive. These are common terms used in combat. The sword is the only spiritual weapon. All the other armaments expressed in Ephesians are protective and defensive in nature like a shield, a helmet, a breastplate, etc.)

The flames are meant as in James when it talks about being purified by fire or struggles with temptation in our lives. Isaiah also was purified by a live coal to his lips by a Seraphim. So the usage of fire is not evil or anything violent. Think of it as purifying.

I would ideally like it to show the sword turned inward to his chest, symbolizing like in many fantasy books that when they defeat the great evil force in the world, they are left with the greatest task, which is to defeat the evil within. The Bible is said to be a 2 sided sword, with the ability to cut between bone and marrow, and show the truth. Christ’s tongue is said to be a 2 edged sword in Revelations, to defeat the Devil with. The reason I didn’t show this is it looks like he is committing suicide.

The spiritual warfare is not against people, ideas, or even spirits. It is about fighting for the purity of our own minds. It is an internal thing. Like the Native American proverb “my greatest enemy is myself”. This purity is in regard to our own sins and does not refer to purity in any other sense. But this is a process, not an outcome, as it is not possible for us to live without sin.

This warfare is only spiritual in the sense that it is not militant, social, economic, or political. This is for my own moral and ethical development

and consists of practical qualities I try, with Christ's help, to cultivate like humility, compassion, kindness, and seriousness and do not correspond to anything supernatural.

7.5 My Creative Process

My pen is not my sword
The Bible is
My pen is my body
I move in slow smooth motions
Every motion is an arc
Each joining and turning
At every meeting point
I place my feet carefully
As in learning a new dance
I feel the warmth flow
From my kidneys
But I am still cool
And goose bumps raise
Off my skin
I stop to think in the middle
I sit down in a lotus position
I open the book
That I am currently absorbing
And leave it in mid sentence
As understanding comes
I make another connection
Another piece of the puzzle
Falls into place
My methods is deliberate
My routine is spontaneous

Where will I go today?
I have some ideas
Where will I go tomorrow?
I have no idea
No other plans than the immediate
I rush to finish it
The project is everything
If there is no record
Then I only benefit
I must provide stepping stones
For others following
I think there is only one person behind me
But he is panting like a hot dog
Who smells a hot dog
And does not want to wait
It must just be my shadow

7.6 Two Choices

I have had two choices in my approach to Christian theology. The first was to do what almost every other Christian does, namely: continue to repeat over and over again about sin and salvation, until my readers could repeat everything from memory, and continue to rebuke people for lusting and committing a variety of sexual sins. Since almost every other Christian is saying that, I think people understand well that Christians don't believe in sex, outside marriage, and that salvation is by faith. I don't feel the need to repeat it and I have never denied it. And most Christians have used the method of repetition, to convince people of this. I cannot add anything more or useful to this approach and it would be a great waste, to go for this goal, because of that. Also, these are the problems of my parent's generation, not mine.

The more logical choice for me, was to focus on my generation and the future. I am not worried about people being confused over Christian doctrines. I am worried about the relevance of the theological debates we have. My generation is very eager to give up on the ways of the past. We have been handed down more problems than any other generation has been given by the previous one. We are interested in the supernatural, but don't want to do the same things our parents have done in religion, either. We see that the Bible has a lot of good ideas in it, but that there is little passion or creativity in the Church. We see a big difference between the main ideas of the Bible and the Church, but we aren't going to give up easily. We are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to solve this problem, namely: there needs to be a difference in the way Christians behave than the way non-Christians behave. We are not interested in how good a theologian can argue. We want to have theologians who can tolerate a diversity in points of view. We are tired of fighting and want to include anyone we can.

7.7 What is the Foolishness of God?

7.7.1 Science vs. Magic

In 1 Corinthians, it talks about how Christ's death and resurrection, as the foolishness of God, that is greater than man's understanding, that is a foolishness, to the Greeks, who seek after wisdom and a stumbling block, for the Jewish people, who expect miracles. I see the Greek wisdom, as man's knowledge, which can also mean Science, where people try, to take the place of God, and then problem with miracles is that we don't take responsibility, for our own actions. So God neither wants us to ignore our existential problem of sin, or to expect God, to bail us out, without us even

trying.

7.7.2 Paganism=Atheism

Also, interesting enough, Paganism and Atheism have many connections, especially starting, with the Secret Societies, started in the Enlightenment, based on occult practices, of the near east, via the Knights Templar (think American founding fathers). On the outside, the official statement is to embrace diversity and give every viewpoint a voice, but the ultimate goal is to sideline Christianity and eventually shut out alternative viewpoints, in favor of Paganism/New Age. The New Age movement then got traction, via that Theosophy society, and found popular status in the Hippie Movement, of the 60s and 70s (ironically also funded by the Soviet Union).

7.7.3 Russia and the Soviet Union

When the Soviet Union fell, the next day the KGB just renamed itself the FSB and continued the same mission, as before. If they were not promoting Communism, then what were they promoting? It is said by those who have read some of Marx's books, that have not been translated into English, that he was a Satanist. Marxism is very negative on religion, although ironically many previous communists were Christian and when US spies were captured, by the Soviets, they tortured many agents, to renounce Christianity, before they killed them. Pre-Soviet Russia was a big center, of the other major branch of Christianity - the Eastern (or Russian) Orthodox Church. It was called the 3rd Rome, after Rome and then Constantinople (the capitol of the Byzantine/Eastern Roman Empire, until the Muslim Ottoman Turks took it over).

7.7.4 Hard to Accept - Hard to Do

This struggle between trying, to do things, with our own power, and letting God do everything is a struggle over our wills and our desire, to pursue evil, in opposition, to our Lord. It is very hard, to accept, that and even harder, to explain the concept of that we need, to try our best, even though, that will never be good enough. We should not sin, as Christians, but the reality is we do. Paul talked in Romans, after being not just a Christian, but a preacher and even writer of Scripture, that he still broke God's laws. In our thinking, we want to resolve this situation, because it is not easy, to continue, to admit you are wrong, while still reusing, to give up.

7.7.5 Maturing in Faith

Christianity does not stop, at being born again. We need to continue, to repent, and give more and more, of our mind and heart, to God, over time, so that we can become more mature Christians. Many atheists think that God is weak, because all He asks is that we be sorry, for what we did, and promise not to do it again, but saving faith requires you give up everything, to God, even though He has done almost the entire process, by Himself. We can try one of the easy routes: ignore our corruption or accept God's grace, without any effort, on our part, but this way leads to suffering and is not characteristic, of a faith, that will save you, from Hell.

7.7.6 Escaping Sin to Escape Suffering

God wants us, to do more, in our lives, than just repent, before we die. It is for our benefit, that He wants to help us, by his grace, to live better lives. God is an entirely rational God and the only reason why we approach Him,

from a faith (non-rational) point of view is that He is beyond our understanding, because he is all-powerful. God did not just come up, with a nice sounding list, in the ten commandments and they are not poetic or figurative - these are the things, that we do, that break apart our families, bring our societies down, and cause suffering, in our lives.

7.7.7 Path of Grace

To God, the path is not one of knowledge, or one of supernatural intervention, but rather a path based, on our choices, and gaining mastery, over our desire, to break God's laws, and end up, in greater pain, than we need. Rebellion against God is the entire reason, for all suffering, in our world and so its also works, on an individual person's level, as well. The way past suffering is not an ethical road, but a real journey, through real life, learning, to make better decisions. Unlike an ethical path, we cannot claim credit for this, as we do everything, by God's grace.

7.8 Creativity and the Analytical Worldview

When someone proves their point, and makes it seem as if what you believe is in error, does this inspire you to adopt the new view, with any passion or commitment? Is it better to be right on every bullet point of Christianity, or is it better to have Christ's love? If going to church makes you angry and bitter, is it better for you to not come at all? If people are so easily confused, that you need to simplify your beliefs down to the same wording, as everyone else in your church, isn't it likely that people will still be confused of their doctrine, and basically be following out of fear, or out of a lack of trust in themselves and their own judgment? How can your faith be your own, if you do not allow yourself the freedom, to choose your own

words and your own expressions of your beliefs?

There is a usefulness of clarity, up to a point, and that at that unnamed point, being direct turns into being hostile. Being sure of some things is good, but being sure of everything leads to folly. It is good to be accurate, but you should not use precise language when the meaning is not easily determined. When you plan your doctrine down to the finest detail, you have already lost the joy in your faith. It may suit some people, to only make well-planned choices, in every situation, and then they will likely stay out of trouble, but there will be no sense of freedom or adventure. It is great to give direction to an artist, but if you micro manage all his choices, then you have stolen his ability to be creative. With purity of language and with taking steps that are always deliberate, you maintain your doctrine, but is it worth it, at the cost of losing your fellow believers?

You may prove me wrong, on every point, and yet I am still going to believe what I believe. You can split hairs over wording, but I understand all the main ideas. I may not comprehend your doctrines, or be able to pass a theology exam, but I know who Jesus is, because I have experienced His compassion and humility. You may have trouble defining how Christ fits into your theology, but I know He is real, because I can hear His voice. I know you think little of me and that I am flirting with evil, because I don't agree with you on all your fine points, but I follow Christ, not the doctrines of man. I may not be able to explain it to your satisfaction, but God is pleased, so I think I will take His opinion, over yours. I have chosen a different way and it serves God's purpose, but by all means choose which way you want, but just don't expect me, to follow you.

7.9 Future World Religion Trends

By the year 2050, the term White Christian will be an oxymoron. If you take into account the actual faithfulness of people calling themselves Christian, the Christian world has already shifted to the Southern Hemisphere. In many of the countries throughout the world, they are not as honest at doing statistics as in the United States, where predominantly Muslim countries are going to severely undercount the number of Christians and the same will happen in the predominantly Hindu country of India.

Europe had not entirely converted to Christianity until the 14th century and there were more Christians in Asia than in Europe, until the years 1000. Most of the reduction of Christians in the Middle East happened in the late 19th and 20th century. The first big reduction of Christians in the Middle East came, after they supported the Mongol Empire. The conversion of non-Muslims to Islam was largely brought about by the missionary efforts of the Sufis. 10 percent of the populations of Egypt and Syria are still Christian. Islam is now experiencing a major fundamentalist revival and many more nations are going to be governed under Islamic law.

Many of the most populous African nations have a mixture of Christians and Muslims and there is not the same idea of separation between church and state in Africa than there is as in the West. When a predominantly Christian nation, with a large Muslim minority, declares itself to be a Christian nation or the exact opposite situation occurs, we are going to continue to have major wars in Africa. And now we have nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons on the open black market.

At the same time, Europe is going to have more and more immigrants

from Africa, for there to be enough labor pool to keep Europe's economy going. America is going to continue to have a strong Christian minority, reinforced from a strong influx of Christian immigrants from all over the world, especially Latin America. The Pentecostal movement is very strong in Latin America. Europe and the United States are going to be dependent on oil for a long time and this will dramatically affect our alliances. We will continue to be afraid of angering the Muslim nations and will continue to bend over backwards, to keep our supply of oil coming.

Some of the biggest world religions by 2050 will be Pentecostalism, Catholicism and Islam, just counting in the population increase and not on any new converts. Buddhism, which not long ago had 20 percent of the population of Asia, now has shrunk to 5 percent, due to the spread of Communism in traditionally Buddhist countries. Whenever China allows more freedom of religion, it will not be surprising if we find out 10 percent of China is Christian already, even under extreme persecution.

The Christian South tends to be: much more conservative in sexual morality, supernaturally and community oriented, and by all evidence much more biblically based. The most popular book in the Bible in Christian Africa is Revelations. Much of this is due to cultural backgrounds of those in the Southern hemisphere, where: they are coming from animist religions and are in extreme poverty, they experience persecution regularly and have large refugee populations, all of which reinforce the relevance of the Biblical narrative of God's work with Israel, in the Law and in the Prophets.

7.10 The Case for Liberal Christianity

If we follow the example of the early Church, as recorded in Acts, we see the early Christians as members of a ideal collective community like an

Ashram, Kibbutz, or Monastery. If we follow Jesus example, we would carry out the Gospel, while doing good works, especially in service of those rejected by society. Convincing people to be born again was originally linked with helping out those in need in practical situations. Christianity is inherently liberal in its social aspects.

Now we see famous people, like the American president claim that they are born again Christians, the word Christianity loses all meaning. Voting conservative counters all the money sent to help starving people in Africa. Conservatives (in other word, people following atheistic convictions) voting either Republican or the very similar Democrat, in the United States, just perpetuate the establishment, which is referred to in the Bible as the world and Christ told us to be no part of. In fact, Jesus was most critical of the equivalent of the Church establishment, which at that time was in the form of the Jewish establishment - these are the people referred to as the Pharisees and Saducees.

Although I believe that Christianity is socially liberal, I hold to what the Bible says on salvation and eternity. I see helping others out who are in need, as another note in the same song on the same instrument.

I believe that our American society is pluralistic and that holding people to Biblical standards who aren't born again doesn't make any sense, if you believe in eternal salvation and a literal interpretation of the miraculous of the Bible. The Bible is not about a set of rules, but about a relationship with God. According to Jesus, following the Ten Commandments alone not only doesn't get you to Heaven, but is impossible. And according to Paul, the only way we can keep from sin is by the direct divine intervention of our savior, Christ.

Not only is it non-sensical to expect people to follow the laws of the Bible, without becoming born again first, it actually goes against an orthodox

interpretation of the Bible. Furthermore, if I had the choice of living in an idealistic society with conservative "Christians" as leaders and live in a predominantly atheistic society, I would definitely choose the later. The only kind of Christian dominated society I would want to live under would be directly under the authority of Christ, in the flesh.

The thing on the mind of most conservatives to change about society is to persecute or severely limit the rights of people who are homosexual. Although I believe that homosexuality is a sin, I believe divorce is also, but I don't see many conservatives giving up sexual relations with their previously divorced spouse. And these are the same kinds of people with the same reasons for discriminating against people of color and women in previous generations.

Instead of targeting people, because I don't agree with their values, I seek to help those out who society has rejected. The most rejected by society are animals. Cute little furry animals are kept as prisoners and tortured, so that the chemical and meat industries can collect more cash from unsafe products. Their habitat is destroyed all over the world, in a senseless rush to use up all the world's potentially renewable resources in a couple generations. Also, prisoners are discriminated against. We often see them as the enemy in our society, but we all have sinned and are to forgive our neighbors. So we should help people who have made mistakes to get back a productive place in society and find a way to keep from getting sent back to jail.

7.11 A Unique Approach to Asian Philosophy, Religion, and Literature

There seems to be a tendency among those in the West to go to extremes

in their approach to studying the Asian classics. Many Christians see any other ideas that don't come directly from the Bible as either not important to study or that lump all non-Christian books together as New Age and therefore see them as forbidden. Many non-Christians think that anything that is not the Bible or is not an Abrahamic religion to be legitimate for study. I have chosen a third option. Not every belief system should be totally rejected or totally embraced.

I think that there are many things that a number of Asian classics can teach people that have ideas that can be compatible with the Bible. I think what Christians don't understand is that there were centuries of time and billions of people who never heard of the Gospel and did their best to find the truth as they knew it. Many traditional cultures in Africa and the former communist countries in Asia are very open to the Gospel and did not intend to worship anything the Bible would describe as forbidden or evil.

I think that many non-Christians are ignorant about the dangers of just embracing any belief system without being a critical thinker. Not everything is as it appears at first. Ironically, many things that turn non-Christians away from Christian beliefs and the Bible, are actually forbidden by the Bible. Many of the things that bother non-Christians about the Bible are true about other belief systems as well. There are also negatives about belief systems other than Christianity that Christians don't have to deal with.

Another thing to realize is that it is considered perfectly acceptable to mix and match different aspects of different Asian belief systems other than the Abrahamic religions, while the Bible forbids just taking select aspects of Christianity that they prefer. So, for a Christian to bridge this gap, they should embrace all Biblical doctrines but only select the elements of the other Eastern belief systems that are compatible with Christianity, or, in other words, say something similar.

Another thing to realize is that although you may find similar meanings in Asian classics other than the Bible, that they don't necessarily mean the same thing the Bible does and almost definitely are not meant to be understood in the same context. Taoists were not all trying to find Christ and in Hinduism, the 3 major gods are not equivalent to the Christian Trinity. Another consequence of this principle is that there is not the same perspective on what is forbidden, so although some philosophies and religions may be useful to Christians while some of the combinations of those beliefs, could likely be forbidden by the Bible. What the Bible forbids are the things that people keep hidden or do in secret. Some of the terms for this are esoteric or mysteries.

What is the point of Christians reading about other belief systems? One of the reasons is that Biblical doctrines have already been compromised and changed in order to mix better with Greek philosophy and paganism. Some of the things that has been compromised is that many Christians think it is ok to study Greek mythology and the Church has tried to ignore the supernatural aspects of the Bible and its implications. Another corruption of Christian doctrine caused by the Greek pagan and philosophical influence is that the paradoxical doctrines of the Bible have been altered to a divisive theology where people think they can pick one or the other when the Bible clearly specifies both.

Studying Asian philosophies helps a Christian to see the Bible more closely to what it really is - an Asian religion. Another reason is to study non-White cultures and understand why many non-Europeans believe different than Christians and how this affects world history and politics. If you understand what people believe and elements of their culture, it is easier to share Christian beliefs with them. Another reason is that Paul was an intellectual and understood the belief systems of his time and showed us

by his example that we should do the same.

So, where do you start? To find some great books written by Asians, look at my Book of Books, which has 78 Asian classics, other than Bible books. You will find all the information about how to obtain them and which ones to choose, based on your interests. I promise that if you stick to the list, you won't find anything that is forbidden by the Bible.

7.12 A True Alternative Worldview

For hundreds of years, Christians have fought for their cause, by using the tools of reason and logic, to reclaim a mainstream following and dominate the academic debate, but this is not the approach of Christ's ministry. We need to re-examine the role Christianity should play in the world. Instead of focusing on getting political leaders, to champion our causes, fighting to be the establishment, and holding to the ideals of an imagined perfect past, we should accept the role of the outcast and the victim.

Throughout most of Christian history, we have not been the establishment, but rather a counter-culture movement. The Bible does not represent itself as the champion of the rich and the powerful, but as an Asian mystery religion, of passionate mystics, in opposition to religious scholars. Christianity is the underdog and the alternative to the way society is evolving.

Instead of clinging to our grandparent's generation, we need to go far in the past and embrace the future at the same time. We need to see the battle for Christianity and the problems in the world today as essentially spiritual. We need to take back the ecological movement from unbelievers and abandon the wealth and power, that believers have given up their first

love for.

We need to re-imagine the lines of contention, giving up our worldly status and human support, for a model focused more on who Christ was, rather than what theology and religious traditions we were taught in schools. We need to embrace reality and the way the world is and take our stand, on the most essential battle. Christianity needs to return, to champion the cause of the rejected and the persecuted and stop using wealth and power, to destroy those who deny our theology, but embrace the life of Christ.

Christians should be on the right side of history. There is a clear right and wrong. There are clear positions to take. But we have collectively chosen the wrong path. We need to stop trying to explain ourselves to unbelievers and choose instead to win them, by our actions. Yes, I embrace an evangelical Christianity, not in terms of traditional theology, but in terms of objective.

The problem with Christianity today is not that we embrace the mainstream worldview, but that we reject the wrong things about it. We need to start doing what we know is right and stop arguing about theology and explanations, for things that we cannot comprehend. Essentially we need to live a life of faith, in rejection to a secular life, which is based on the authority of reason.

The authority we need to answer to is Christ and He too is Who we should emulate. Simply, we need to be like the disciples of Christ, instead of being like those religious scholars, who rejected Him. If most people see Christians as the contemporary Pharisees, we need to learn from this and follow the spirit of the law and not just in outward displays of moral superiority.

7.13 Who Do You Believe?

It is commonly believed that if someone can prove something Scientifically that it is true, but that which cannot be explained, no one can be sure of. But how does a person know if: the data collected by the Scientist is valid, that their math is correct, and that their methodology is of the highest standards. The reality is that most people do not have enough education in the right area, to prove whether an expert is even trying to be objective.

With the advent of the Internet, we have more information available than ever before, but how do we determine the validity of statements? Even before we had the Internet, we often believed people by: their reputation, their education, their experiences, and their job. We have relied on experts for a long time, but what objective qualitative or quantitative method do we measure their expertise? If you are not already an expert in a particular field, how do you protect yourself from urban legends?

Now that anyone can write anything, how do you know what to believe? Definitely don't believe those, who have a financial interest in a certain field. And then who does that leave you with? Then all you have is people who are trying to push a certain ideology, or are good at making up things that are believable. The reality is that no one is objective and there is no way to conclusively prove anything. Reason will not save us, because of our corruption.

Who do you believe now? Why not believe He who created the entire multiverse? Why not believe what has helped people, for thousands of years, before we had Science? If you are going to never know for sure about anything, why not try having faith in something real. If you cannot

rely on your own judgement or that of so called experts, than why not believe what your Creator says?

7.14 Why Believe in God?

How do you know you can believe God and take Him at His word? If you want a reason, there are many: other people's testimony, sacred scripture, and your experiences. Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in the world, outnumbering Islam 2 to 1, with Islam having over a thousand year head start.

Do an experiment in your own life. Read through the entire Christian Bible in a year. This is not hard to do. There are many plans you can find that tell you just what to read each day and it only takes a matter of minutes.

Then focus on doing the obvious things, that you realize right away, that the Bible asks of you. Then keep at it, for a whole year. If your life is better or you like yourself or other people better, than you have a good reason to become a Christian. If you honestly try to do this, the Christian God will back you up.

7.15 How I Can Both be a Free Thinker and a Christian

7.15.1 Christianity is about Free Choice

Many people associate free thought with Atheism and Science. But the most real part of the world is the spiritual world and the thing that defines humanity is our free choice. Although Science is not rejected by specific Biblical Scriptures, a worldview that sees things only from a material perspective misses out on so much.

7.15.2 Christianity is Multicultural

Many colonial powers tried to use Christianity, to control people in the third world and in their own countries. But, if you read the Bible and talk to most people in the world who call themselves Christians, you will realize that they come mostly from the third world and are very often very anti-western. Christianity is the world's most popular and culturally diverse belief system and it did not get to the point it is today, by advocating the domination of people.

7.15.3 Christianity is Misunderstood in the West

The reason why Christianity has been used to support the establishment is because it is a poor person's religion, but all the negative ideas people

have tried to make the Bible say are not in there. People in the West need to read the other books of the Bible that you don't here often in Western churches, like the Prophets and they need to re-read the Letters of Paul in a totally different context, to really understand what the Bible is all about.

7.15.4 The Church is not the Problem

The Church dominated Western Civilization, in Medieval Times, but the basis for Democracy and Capitalism has nothing to do with the Bible. The basis for modern ideas of toleration are often thought of as a result of the Enlightenment. But, if you read John Locke's Letter Concerning Toleration, you will realize that the basis for not pressuring someone into believing in something comes from Biblical concepts.

7.15.5 Why Christianity is the Best Religion

Christianity is the best belief system, because it effectively deals with our spiritual selves, in a way that no other belief system does. The Bible explains the way to freedom and dignity, for all those suffering. Christ is a loving God, who saves us from destroying ourselves and we are now seeing the destruction of Revelations taking place before us. We are beginning to realize that our Apocalypse is self induced and the environmental disasters, that we will be experiencing, are all the direct result of sin and greed. Our problems are not a matter of us not being smart enough or things that can be avoided through technological advancement.

7.15.6 Solving our Problems

Our true enemy is not the devil, but our own selfishness. God wants us to

be creative and happy in life, but He knows, as He has lived as one of us, that we need Him in our lives, to find fulfillment and joy. We need to embrace the spiritual side of life and live as God intended us to, or else we will destroy ourselves, not just economically, but morally and emotionally. But God wants us to make this choice of our own free will. And God has different paths for all of us, but they start with a simple prayer.

7.16 Truth vs. Facts

7.16.1 Unreliable Sources

The two major themes, in most Asian religion and philosophy, are suffering and uncertainty. I have talked a lot about suffering, but less about uncertainty. According to my parents, during their generation, people told the truth and the media could be relied on, to be accurate and fair. During my generation, I have found that the educational system and the media basically report what the big corporations want them to. This is one of the big reasons, for the decline, of traditional media: if you aren't going to hear accurate and fair news, you might as well just get the news source, that reflects your beliefs.

7.16.2 Truth Better than Facts

This brings us, to another big assumption, of our age: that facts are more important, than truth. Even the church has largely given up, on truth, by itself and resorted to trying, to prove Christianity, by fact. If you study Indian philosophy and religion you will see non-Christian support, for truth not needing, to have a factual basis. There are no real reasons, for believing the physical world, as being primary world and being skeptical, of everything supernatural. We just assume that because we don't question it,

as it is socially unacceptable.

7.16.3 Beyond Factual Support

Some of the other supports, for beliefs include: scripture, tradition, personality/nature of God, divine commands, contract with God, grace of God (free gift), religious law, history and prophecy, human morality and nature, your personality and family history, human relationships, natural order, animal behavior, verbal testimony, sensitivity to spiritual things, mystical experience, dreams and visions, intuition, life experience, argument, paradoxical relationships, inference, comparison, analogy, skepticism, and direct perception of physical senses.

7.16.4 Anti-Spiritual Bias

Several of the things, that I constantly find myself, in opposition to, are the philosophical basis, for our entire modern civilization. The opposition, to anything spiritual, the unreasonable aversion and fear of death, and life at all costs, and complete rejection, of anything not supported, by Science, and reducible, to numbers, or statistics. There is so little tolerance, for anyone basing their decisions, on anything, that comes from spiritual insights, or points of view. Other assumptions, include that bigger, better, faster technologies will solve all our problems and the systemic dismantlement, of all government services regulations, laws, and the erosion of basic morality, with the focus on the educational system.

7.16.5 Existentialism and Objectivity

This is where Existentialism comes in. Many people think of Existentialism, as Nihilism, because Nietzsche was a proponent of both. But the first Existentialist, Kierkegaard, believed that Existentialism required a great deal

of moral responsibility. Existentialism simply mean human being - it is what defines the unique qualities, that make us human - in other word, sentience. Many people mistake Existentialism, with moral relativism, but the reason why Kierkegaard says we should not claim objectivity, comes out of a respect, for God.

7.16.6 Clear Moral Standard

There is an objective moral standard, but claiming to be objective is like claiming to be perfect, because only God can be perfect. He talks a lot about paradox - how our relationship with God is based on a seemingly absurd, although true idea, that Jesus was both God and man, at the same time. Faith is based on the paradoxical way, that we understand God, and so moral reasoning does not require rational analysis, but choosing to obey Him is an exercise, of the will.

7.16.7 Deeper Relationship with God

Kierkegaard promotes free thinking, not out of rebellion, against God, but rather, in hope, for true faith, as he believes, that if your faith is not real, then it does not guarantee your salvation. Kierkegaard wanted reforms, in the way we practice Christianity, so that we were motivated, not out of trying, to fit in or legalistically following Gods commands, but really seeing God, as the Lover of our souls. He wanted people to love Christ, like Mary Magdalene and in the way we love our families and close friends - that we would do anything, for God, with their life's focus entirely, upon Him.

7.16.8 Death Leads to Re-Birth

The problem, with reducing life, to facts is that it takes out all the passion and responsibility, that makes life worth living. Not only are we spiritually

dead, as a nation - we are emotionally and intellectually dead, as well. Without being directed, by God, we descend into depravity. We will continue this downward spiral, until our young people reach out, to God, and understand their desperate need, for Him. They will pursue truth, no matter how we try, to hide it, from them and steer them away from it. Just as young people reject their parents advice and authority, as they become adults, they will eventually seek a relationship, with God and find that this is the only way, to really live.

7.17 Details of My Methods

7.17.1 Think, Don't Memorize

When you read a history book or a self help book, you will likely get more from it by taking notes than by just reading. My books are all based around the same concepts to the point that they are all philosophically consistent - my unique combination of Philosophical Taoism and Christian Existentialism. With philosophy, the point is not to memorize but to think. My books are easily read as they are written using simple and plain English, but they take a long time to read, because they force you to think.

7.17.2 Make Up Your Own Mind

The beauty of this style is that you really learn how to think in a certain way, so that you can figure out what I would say about other things I have not written about. But my ultimate goal for my readers is for you to make your own decisions and choose your own values, so that you will not be fooled by anyone. Don't even trust me. You have to live your life and deal with the consequences of your actions, so you very well must make up your own mind about religion and politics.

7.17.3 Other Considerations

You will realize that my writings are concise like an encyclopedia, but they are also creative and poetic in organization, so that certain themes are repeated in different articles. I see all the major topics I write about as interrelated. Other important considerations that help define what I right include Biblically sound theology, dealing with the way things really are now, specific actions to take, and a positive response/advice. I have struggled with depression for a long time and I find it very depressing and useless to bring up problems without giving solutions. What I write about is serious, but I hope it will inspire more than it will scare you.

7.18 Think for Yourself

7.18.1 Getting the Message Wrong

It is unusual, for a Christian, to have his greatest goal, for people, to simply think, for themselves. Most thinkers want others, to follow their ideology. I have realized fairly early on, that this is a dangerous path. One of the biggest reasons to go this route is that many people get the message wrong. Islam owes much, to misunderstandings, about Christianity, in the time, of the early Church.

7.18.2 Existentialist Perspective

Neither Kierkegaard, nor Nietzsche wanted followers. It was true, that Kierkegaard was a committed Christian and Nietzsche a committed atheist/pagan (at least in terms of philosophy). But both wanted people to really stand up, for what they believed and only wanted them, to follow their beliefs, if they truly believed, in them.

7.18.3 Nietzsche's Situation

Nietzsche's sister was a NAZI sympathizer and so actually re-wrote some of Nietzsche's work and claimed he was for white supremacy, which is ridiculous, for anyone, who read any of his work, because the men from the north, that he admired were the Inuits and he had contempt for the Germans, even though he was one himself. He actually liked the Old Testament and hated the New Testament. He would have fought, with all his being, people going out, to war, for some ridiculous ideology, like that, of the NAZIs - that was one, of the things, he criticized Christians, for doing.

7.18.4 Nietzsche's Values

His concept of strength was strength in conviction and would never have promoted strength, to be used, to quell free thinking. The weakness he hated was people being slaves, to a leader. It is funny how Nietzsche actually seems to link together the ideas of modernism and Christianity and it must have been a bizarre leader, that would promote that combination. Of course, you could argue, that much of the mainstream church is still beating that same drum.

7.18.5 Other Thinkers are Wrong

But, another problem with trying, to get a following, is that, for me, I don't want to gamble, on how my ideas might manifest themselves, in different people, even if they do understand them and correctly follow them, because if I can find serious faults and thinking errors, in some of the greatest thinkers, of all time, so why would I be able to escape the same fate? I also think that there is too little diversity, of opinion, in America. Both major political parties have assumed many things, that should be questioned. Those unquestioned assumptions are what I think needs to change.

7.18.6 Any Social Movement will Fail

I think that trying to bring about any kind of human social movement is bound to fail, because it is not just our leaders, who are corrupt, to the core, the evil is even greater, within each, of us. I, also, have no desire, to be a leader, nor do I desire, to have power, over anyone else. I really believe, that God is proactively drawing people, to Himself and anyone who truly seeks Him will find Him. What I truly want for everyone is complete freedom from suffering and eternal life with Jesus Christ.

7.18.7 Be Who You Are and Where You Are

But, that can only happen, once a person decides, to find the truth, for themselves. With God, you have, to start, with honesty, and we all are in different places and, even, as Christians, our journeys will take us, to many different places and some people are honestly mad, at God, many because, of suffering. You can only be who you are and commit yourself, to do the best you can, with what you currently know. You have to believe, that you will find the correct way, eventually, if there truly is a really wonderful all-powerful God, like Jesus Christ.

7.18.8 No Need to Worry

Most of all God is fair with everyone and will never require you, to do something you know is wrong and will always give you the strength, to do what you believe is right. It does not matter, if you call yourself a Christian or not - early believers called themselves followers of the Way, but I truly believe, that the Christian God is the best God I could imagine. But you don't need to decide all this right now.

7.18.9 Only Responsible for What You Understand

Just take each day and learn all you can and you will find faith, in your own way. Furthermore, I don't expect anyone, to be convinced, by any arguments, I have come up with - when have you ever changed someone's mind, on anything? You can only believe based on what you know and what you have experienced - it cannot be real faith until your understanding is real. And it cannot be real faith, if you just choose to follow something, because someone else told you so, no matter how much you might think of this person.

7.19 Bible on Social Issues

7.19.1 Christianity Promotes Equality and Justice

Traditionally, Christians, all over the world, have advocated for equal and just treatment of all people. The Bible is in agreement with these aims. Most of the time, a political or social route is followed. This is where the Bible disagrees. Remember, Jesus said He can heal the body, but He can do even greater: forgive sins. Being Christians does not mean giving up our liberal values - and most other religions have a similar moral code. But the Biblical way is a spiritual route, rather than a human route.

7.19.2 Reason for Spiritual Approach

The reason for this is very practical. The spiritual world is the primary world and so can affect the physical world, but not the other way around. The Bible says that sin is the source of human suffering and faith the route to joy. This is very counter-intuitive, because everything human we see around us works, by the powerful victimizing the weak. The spiritual world doesn't work this way - God allows humans a lot of room, to govern the physical world, as He is a true believer in real human freedom, but the spiritual forces are prevented, from gaining the same power, over people.

7.19.3 Disadvantages of Human Solutions

The human route always brings death and destruction. We can see this, in our own lives. It does not matter, so much, what laws are past. People do evil, anyway, and often get away with it. This is because all governments are corrupt, like businesses, and so they allow these things, to happen. A common human argument is that the end justifies the means. Many evil things have been done, throughout history, for good reasons. Slavery was said to help the economy.

7.19.4 The Affect of One Believer Praying

This corruption we find, in any large organization, is the manifestation of individual people's desire for money, power, and pleasure, at the expense of someone else. Many of the Bible's commands are rejected, by society, for a variety of reasons, many because they don't see as hurting anyone else. But

this is not how the spiritual world works. While we need a whole army, to take down a ruthless dictator, like Adolf Hitler, one believer praying and living a moral life has much more significance, spiritually.

7.19.5 God Fixed Our Mess

Many people hold God responsible, for the fate of our world, and its corruption, that causes human suffering, but things were set up, by God, to work very differently. The reason why He came to this earth as Jesus Christ and was fully human was that He realized, that our fundamental problems are our own individual choices and we have become incapable, of totally avoiding corruption. God did the entire thing for us.

7.19.6 God is Paradoxical

These spiritual laws don't make human sense, but God is seen by us as series of a paradoxes. God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are as much one God as our body, soul, and brain are all part of one human. God the Father is not a ruthless dictator, as many non-Christians will tell you. All parts of God are merciful and the Old Testament and New Testament God is one in the same.

7.19.7 God is Your Superior

The part that modern believers and non-believers alike have a hard time understanding is that all parts of God are approachable by us, but the personal relationship with God is akin to a benevolent Father or Judge - He is not your drinking buddy. God is also a perfectly just God and cannot just let evil happen, without consequences, but He was so loving, that He took the punishment on Himself. As God is eternal, it is likely He constantly feels the pain, of his death on the cross.

7.19.8 Learning from Islam

This is one of the things, that Christians need to learn, from Muslims: that God is their superior and must be obeyed, even when we don't want, to follow His lead. Islam is, in many ways, a much harder religion to live under, and not just for women. Christianity, once, was very similar, in many ways, but a lot of modern Protestant dominations seem to portray God, as a close friend, that owes them something. Many people think that our corrupt actions don't matter, as believers, but this is not only disrespectful and inappropriate, but it is also a way, to give suffering a way, into your life.

7.19.9 Why Pray for God's Help?

Another thing that is hard for present day believers and non-believers alike is understanding, that we need to pray for God, to release His power into the world, even though He is all powerful and has no need for our help, to have the strength to intervene. Even though God is all powerful, He is a rational and just God and follows certain rules, inherent to His nature and personality. An analogy is that most animals can tell, if a human will be kind to them, and this person would never hurt and animal, for any reason, not because they are morally superior, but that it is just not in their nature. So God has chosen to hold back His power, until we request it, because He wants us to have control over our world. It is simply God's choice to work this way.

7.20 Why Pray for God's Will?

7.20.1 Hard Choices

As we live, in a age of uncertainty, we often have to make decision,

without having enough information, to choose the right path. We often see ourselves, as ordinary citizens, as responsible for making decisions, on how to the government should be run. We also are faced, with complex and difficult issues, in giving to charities and deciding where to volunteer. Many people just give up, as they feel they have no power, to really effect change and others get so motivated, but without any common sense, that they actually get enough power, to make changes, but their changes only make things worse.

7.20.2 Political Strategies

Many people have tried other approaches, throughout history. The British and American empires tried to improve the world through military, economic and political power and now everyone hates us and none of the problems are solved. The Russians tried a similar approach, but with different aims and their entire society collapsed. China is trying a hybrid approach, but is almost split into two, with most citizens literate, but barely surviving.

7.20.3 Social Strategies

The American president Jimmy Carter had some great ideas, like starting programs for alternative energy, but he weakened America greatly, because he was too trusting, of his enemies. The United Nations was a grand idea, but has no real power, to affect change and is too corrupt, to actually get the money, to the people, that need it. The labor unions helped stop many abusive practices, that came about, because of the industrial revolution, but have decided, that, instead, of going, into new industries, to help bring them up, to reasonable standards, they keep on pushing, for so much, that they jeopardize their public support.

7.20.4 European Religious Strategies

The Catholic church has immense global power economically, politically, and socially and has used it in standing against communism and secularism, providing some of the best medical and educational services in the world, is one of the biggest non-profit groups to help those in need worldwide, and keep to the fundamentals of Christianity. On the other hand, they forced the exclusive use, of a extinct language, no one understood, for most their history; much of South America is worshipping Christ in name alone (really practicing the original animism); their behavior was so unBiblical, that an entire major branch, of the Church, was formed, in opposition to them; they persecuted believers, who withstood immense persecution, because they were part of a different regional Church (with almost identical beliefs and considered, to be an equal, when they were first formed).

7.20.5 Asian Religious Strategies

Confucianism brought reform into official government policy, but the Chinese Emperors were often brutal. Muhammed joined the Arab tribes into an politically, militarily, and economically successful civilization, but effectively wiped out the indigenous groups, in the Middle East, and had little interest, in preserving the great ancient history, of the region. Buddhism brought about great reforms, in Indian society, including philosophy and government and was critical, to the documentation, of the history, of the region, but has faded as it becomes less and less relevant, to its heartlands and has only gained a small portion, of those, in Europe and America.

7.20.6 Real Solution

The source of these dilemmas is that we are trying, to solve spiritual problems, intellectually, economically, politically, and socially. We are not going to find a perfect world and we cannot change things all by ourselves, no matter what approach we try. We need to focus, on the source of the problems, by praying for God's help. And, if we pray for God's will, to be done, we don't even need a plan. The problems are within all of us and are the result of the choices we make everyday. Only by requesting God's involvement, in our world and in our lives will anything ever really change.

7.21 Lessons from Asian and African Christianity

7.21.1 Ritual

The Bible mentions numerous rituals for Christians, like: weekly worship service, the Lord's prayer, baptism, dedication, confirmation, devotions, repentance, speaking in tongues, communion, fasting, Easter, Christmas, Pentecost. One of the major differences between an Evangelical and most Churches throughout history is the lack of ritual in the Evangelical world. Some rituals almost all Churches agree upon, but the major Churches throughout history do additional things, like: veneration of the Bible, use real wine in communion, incense, wear colorful robes, have ritual objects like crosses and goblets in precious metals and adorned with precious jewels, have remnants of the saints in the church itself, have richly decorated churches with scenes from the Bible painted or put in glass, have confession booths, and have holy water.

Although these things are not directly required Biblically, they help make the services, like celebrations and help Church members to remember that the Church, the services, and the clergy should be respected and not taken lightly. They also serve a similar role, as multimedia often does, in modern learning environments, which is to better immerse the layperson, into the experience of the service, so that they remember it better and bond with it, so that it becomes more a part of life, than just a meeting. A church service should go above and beyond just being a meeting place and people are more, than just intellectual persons, and worship God, in many more ways, than what the pure academic study of theology alone allows.

7.21.2 Tradition

Evangelical churches are usually proud to say they believe in nothing but the Bible, but the problem with that is that every other sect claims this as well. Through experience, most Churches, throughout history, have developed not only rituals, but also theology (statements of faith), that help explain Bible passages, that are difficult, to understand, which keeps the interpretation consistent, from the Apostles, up until the present time. Keeping the same interpretation of theology throughout history means being Orthodox.

Many Christians believe that early Christians had a better idea of what Jesus said, because many were much closer culturally and in time and space. Just as we often take the word of an Apostle, like Paul, on how to interpret the Old Testament law, prophecy, and doctrine, so it makes sense to keep with the secondary writings of prominent Christian theologians and Church leaders, from the past. Another reason for this classical training, learned from Church history, is that false prophets and corrupted doctrine often repeat themselves, later in history, closely enough, so that if we know how

the early Church dealt with a similar situation, we can be confident, that we are keeping our doctrine and decisions Orthodox.

Some of these ideas I think are problematic, especially a lot of the theology and emphasis on the saints, which has led to a mere renaming of gods, in some well known cultures and confuses many people, coming from new age/pagan religions.

7.21.3 Supernatural

We often see in Evangelical churches a fear of the supernatural, which comes from lack of understanding. God puts severe restrictions, on what can be done by spiritual forces, to a much greater extent, than he does with the human world. There is no reason to be afraid of faith healing, casting out of evil spirits, and being generally aware of the importance and the primacy of the spiritual world. The important thing to do is to keep, from introducing non-Biblical methods, and make sure any ritual performed is described, as correct in the Bible. Most the Christian rituals seem kind of lackluster, like the Lord's prayer or baptism, but there is real significance and power, in these simple acts.

You should never need to do any ritual, to contact Christ. One of the things, that really concerns me is the similarity between who the major historical Churches consider saints and the pagan gods they have succeeded. You should never pray to or worship anything but God. Never do any rituals, from any other religion or any other book. Every spirit from God will keep you from worshiping it. If you are not sure it is of God, then it is not. Although God protects us from these supernatural forces, make sure you always say in the name of Jesus Christ or start with Jesus Christ and then follow with "rebukes thee" or "sends thee away". Never talk to any

spirit, in your own name.

7.21.4 Social Gospel

When Jesus was preaching the Gospel, he also healed sick people and gave to the poor. A Church that does not contribute, to the welfare, of those rejected by society, is not following Scripture and is empty of any ability, to change the community. You are not responsible, for healing or providing food, to every single person, who asks for help.

Many people will ask for money, that do not need it, and often it can actually do harm. Many people are poor, for different reasons. Often times the lack of money comes, from the lack of understanding, how to manage money and prioritizing, and the other big reason for lack of money is due to addiction (to alcohol, drugs, prescription medication, sex, gambling, eating, shopping, gaming, Internet or most any other addiction).

There is no need to duplicate efforts and most strategies and institutions don't require any fancy reorganization nor do they need to change methods. Most of them work well, but need more help. This is a good way, to reach out to other denominations, religions, non-profits, government agencies, businesses, and anyone else legitimately wanting to help.

There seems to be a real desire, to go overseas, to help as missionaries, but most of the poor places, in the world, already have a strong Church presence and the biggest reason, for not going to Church is that it is claimed to be a method of European imperialism. More Americans coming over and trying to help has as many downsides as upsides. The logical place, to go, to spread the Church is, in America or in Europe. Which means you can help just as much, just where you are.

The reason why the situation is so bad, in Africa, is because whenever a new person gets elected president, they promise to fix up the country and bring an end, to all the corruption and persecution, while rebuilding the economy, to help the average joe. When they get into power, they spend all the money on building palaces for themselves, partying, and buying weapons, to keep themselves in power. When food or medical supplies are brought in, then the dictators come out and take them, before the poor people can get them, or else the dictators threaten the poor people's lives, if they take the supplies. Then the dictator sells the food and medicine, to make money for himself.

Just like the US military knows, you cannot rebuild a place, until you have security, on the ground. The only way for that to happen would be, to send in US troops, but our contractors already are very corrupt, we cannot afford it, and it would be labelled as Western Imperialism. That brings up another group to send aid to: US soldiers, Marines, sailors, and airmen. Many enlisted, even with college degrees have a wife and children and are on food stamps and many come back with severe injuries.

7.21.5 Meditation

Mediation means different things, in different belief systems. In Buddhism, meditation means thinking about nothing, in silence and ignoring everything around you, in order to strengthen your mind. In Christianity, meditation means thinking about a Bible passage. The Buddhist concept of meditation is called "contemplative prayer" in Christianity.

Contemplative prayer is good for Christians, because it gets them alone, with God, without distractions. Our lives are more filled with things, to see and hear, as time goes on. We get information overload. The biggest reasons why people are unwilling to practice Christianity is either that they lack

discipline or that they are too distracted, by modern technology. Contemplative prayer allows us to hear what God wants us to hear and helps us build discipline, to focus on what he says, during our busy days.

Mediation can also strengthen the mind's defenses against addictive behavior or inability to concentrate (ADHD). Meditation is used in many religions, but it works, as Christian and Biblical practice, as well. There are other types of meditation, that can help with these things, too. Yoga and Tai Chi are popular ways to meditate, but I find Yoga too tied to Hindu religion (actually it is the basic part of it, but that is not the form practiced, as exercise) and I find Tai Chi to be too complex and I can't learn it fast enough.

There is a lesser known meditation (using the same principles as Tai Chi) called Qi Gong. If you have done Tai Chi, or another martial art (Tai Chi was originally designed, for sword fighting), you know this as the warmup Chi exercises. I would be careful of any mediation now, because things are often mixed together, so that you might think you are doing relaxation or meditation, when you are being introduced to New Age/Pagan practices. Guided meditation is also known as hypnosis and should be avoided entirely, at all costs.

Qi Gong uses the Chinese principle of Qi and it is more physical than mental, but this is not the energy of the New Age movement. Qi is the fundamental component of all matter and energy, and as far as I can tell, it is the Holy Spirit.

7.21.6 Unity

Another aspect of the Asian and African Christianity is that the way it is practiced it is very similar, no matter which of the traditional and historic

Churches you belong too. There is much more similarity between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodox than between most Protestant denominations. We often hear that the Evangelical churches are the closest to the early Church, but this is not true. The earliest Churches have the same liturgy they started back in the first century, hundreds of years before the Roman Empire made Christianity the official religion.

These earliest churches are called the Oriental Orthodox churches and, as the Gospel was presented to the Jewish people first, it was taken to the Persian empire first, as they had the largest community of Jewish people, to Egypt, which had many Jewish communities as well, and even to part of India, where there was a community of Jewish people, who came there hundreds of years, before that. In the Persian Empire, the Church was much more successful amongst the Jewish population, than in the Roman Empire.

If you see an Oriental Orthodox church, in the Middle East, due to the architecture, traditional dress, and sound of the language, you might think that it was a mosque (Islamic Cultural Center). But other than the visual part and the language (which was either very close to the one spoken by Jesus, or the exact one, depending on whether you are in Egypt, or Syria) Catholics and Orthodox Christians would find it very familiar.

7.22 Zen and Philosophy

7.22.1 What is Zen?

Zen is faith, plus grace. Zen is our connection, to God and our relationship, with God. Zen is the Holy Spirit. Zen is the stuff everything is made of, including spiritual and physical things. Zen is your subconscious and where dreams exist. Zen is the process, not the outcome.

Zen is the eternal moment. Zen is not limited by time. Zen is what gives us the strength, to finish what we must, when we have no energy left. Zen is your will and comes from your spirit. Zen is sentience; it is what makes animals and people self aware.

7.22.2 Philosophy vs. Religion

When Christians hear qi described they immediately think of New Age ideas. The Chinese ideas and also Buddhism in general are philosophy, not religion. In fact, what is now called Taoism was formed by taking the philosophy of the I Ching and removing the religious aspects. What exactly Taoism originally came from, its is by definition a philosophy and not a religion.

What this means is that while, as Christians, we can only worship the Christian God and stay in the faith of Christ and the Christian religion exclusively, there are many acceptable philosophies, that Christians can use, as tools, to both understand Biblical theology and use for things the Bible doesn't talk about, or is as clear as mud about. I know that it often scares Christians, to question the basics of our society, but having faith in God, should leave us as skeptics, of the world, and its approach, to the itself and us.

7.22.3 What to Use Philosophy For

Use philosophy, to pull the supremacy of Science and the physical world, from our minds and hearts, and let it inspire you, to find all your dreams fulfilled, in your faith, with Jesus Christ. Many Christians think of skepticism as a way to distance yourself, from the authority of Scripture, but, as no one is actually skeptical about everything, as Christians we can and should be

skeptical, about anything the Bible is not clear about.

The best way, to keep our focus on Christ and His plan for us is to remove all the other influences, in our lives, vying for our attention, and desiring, to take the place, of Christ. This is best done with a healthy mix of both rationalism and skepticism, which are both built up, by the study of philosophy. Many Christians fear anything, that challenges their faith, but if you truly believe, you will find your answers in Scripture and you will actually end up having greater faith, than before.

7.22.4 Why We Need Philosophy

Almost everything we are confronted with, in our vision, hearing, and whatnot is there to distract us, from God and to target our subconscious, so that by just living in this world, we are having everything we believe challenged. I always think of how little the world both understands, or even can imagine what Christians are like and believe, as we often see people who claim to be Christians, on TV do things like say-onces, wedgie boards, or paranormal investigations. Many advertisers think that referring to mother nature or Science, in the place of God, is somehow neutral, in the minds of Christians.

Since you cannot escape having your faith challenged, embrace it and so be a better example for unbelievers and fellow Christians alike. To ever successfully challenge the beliefs of another person, you first must both understand your own beliefs and give proof for them, but also understand what the other person believes, as well. Just remember, that being trained in argument should not give you the impression, that people are convinced, by argument.

7.22.5 Accept God's Will

When was the last time you changed someone else's beliefs on anything? The way, to challenge someone else's beliefs is through similar life experiences and through repetition. But you don't need to worry about messing this up, as God is the one, Who brings people to Himself. All you have to do is make an effort and show you care. God will take care of the rest.

And do not get discouraged, if you never help convert anyone, because it usually takes many years and many different people witnessing, to someone before they convert. If someone does convert, after you profess your faith to them, you should really be thanking God first and then all the other believers, who were faithful and productive in their interaction, with the new convert.

7.23 Traditional Chinese Philosophy and Practices

7.23.1 That Sounds New Age

As a Christian, I am very wary of anything that sounds new age or pagan. When I first that heard that invisible energy forces were the basis for Traditional Chinese Medicine, red flags started popping up. But I had learned from my Chinese Literature class that Chinese philosophy was not religious at all. The I found out that some Traditional Chinese Medicine and Feng Shui practices included things like astrology and use pagan concepts like good luck and the five elements.

7.23.2 Tai Chi vs. Chinese Medicine

The funny thing, about how Christians often responded to this, is to embrace things like Tai Chi and Martial Arts, but reject these other Traditional Chinese practices, like Chinese Medicine, although they all use the same concepts. Another thing, that complicates this situation, is that many modern practitioners of Chinese Medicine combine it with many other techniques, that use totally unrelated concepts, so that things are often mixed together, without the practitioner really understanding what exactly they are doing.

7.23.3 Basic Concepts

There are some basic things a Christian must know about Chinese philosophy, to make a good decision, as to whether they believe it is ok, to use these practices and hold these beliefs. One of the earliest Chinese writings was the I Ching, which was a combination of a the philosophy of the Yin Yang and a certain kind of astrology and divination. Centuries later, Lao Tzu started the philosophy of Taoism, by taking the philosophy of I Ching and rejecting the religious aspects.

7.23.4 Chinese Perspective

Chinese philosophy has different traditions and world views, that are foreign to many educated in European philosophy or theology. One of the things that Chinese philosophy lacks is a well defined metaphysics, so that, while Chinese philosophy has an elaborate ethical system, it lacks any rational or mystical explanation, of why these things work. The Chinese were not interested in why things worked, but rather that they worked. Another thing difficult for Christians, to grasp, about oriental philosophy and religion, in general, is that it is very common and considered respectful

and appropriate, to embrace only part, of a certain philosophy, or other belief system and this has resulted in many hybrid religions and philosophies like Zen Buddhism, Esoteric/Religious Taoism and the Sikh Faith.

7.23.5 Christianity and Philosophy

Christians also seem to have a certain disdain, for philosophy, in general and think that you have to choose between a philosophy and a religion, but actually theology combines both these ideas. While Christians are only to worship one God, they can practice a variety of different philosophies and still have Biblically based beliefs, consistent with Scripture. Also, many of the practices of Islam and Christianity are actually pagan, in origin, and so it is very important to study philosophy and theology, to find and root out these corruptions, contained in most major churches. Christianity has very specific and clear guidelines, on what spiritual practices should not be practiced, by Christians, but Chinese philosophy does not have these prohibitions, but, on the other hand, the Chinese (especially the scholars) made a clear distinction, between religious and philosophical texts, probably because these religious elements were considered, of the lower classes.

7.23.6 Definition of Qi

This energy, of Chinese philosophy, is not spiritual, but rather God himself. There are often thought to be two major worlds: one spiritual, and the other one physical, but there is actually a third - God, or the Holy Spirit. This Chinese energy is called qi and it is what "makes up this foundation" for spiritual and physical realities; essentially qi is the Holy Spirit. It works like this: the entire physical world is a subset of the spiritual world and the spiritual world is a subset of God's Spirit, so that God can effect himself, the spiritual and physical world; spirits can effects the spiritual and physical worlds, but not the Holy Spirit; while humans can only effect the physical

world.

7.23.7 Putting it all Together

It is not surprising, that, if Traditional Chinese philosophy does not concern itself about why things work, but just if they do work; doesn't have any prohibition against any spiritual practices; and has little problem with combining different belief systems; it would be easy for them to mistake some spiritual practice as a originating from qi or the Holy Spirit.

7.23.8 Biblically Acceptable

I would recommend that Christians stay away, from any of this alternative medicine, because of how things are easily mixed together, but would consider most Tai Chi, Qi Gong, and other martial arts, as generally consistent with Christianity. I would also say that studying most any philosophy generally does not violate any Biblical command, but I would research each book or consult my Book of Lists, before reading any of them, especially the Indian ones (India).

7.23.9 Be Wary Of

As far as Chinese medicine is concerned, there is just too much cross pollination, for me to feel ok about practicing it, although theoretically it should be fine, provided you were doing it all yourself and had researched it very well and understood very well what practices the Bible prohibits. The other thing that killed my interest in Chinese medicine is that it supports many of the most cruel animal treatment practices. Meditation is good and fine, although I would be careful of much of those non-Christian traditions, like Buddhism, as they often mix in various kinds of paganism/ new age, plus whatever your local group decides to add to the mix, but there are already

well developed Christian traditions in this area, especially, with the Eastern Orthodox Church.

7.24 Explaining Qi to Christians

7.24.1 Confusing Qi with New Age Concepts

The New Age movement has taken advantage of Christian misunderstandings of Asian philosophy to push a Pagan worldview. This has made many Christians skeptical about Chinese philosophy. All of Chinese philosophy is based on the concept of qi, which is the substance that makes up both the physical world and the spiritual world. But, when Christians hear about non-physical energy forces, they suspect it is a ploy, to manipulate them, into some New Age worldview. Christians often say, that, if God is somehow everywhere at once and connected with the world, that people will think that worshipping God is the same, as worshipping nature.

7.24.2 Nature of Chinese Philosophy

Remember, as I said before, qi and all of traditional Chinese philosophy is philosophical, but not religious. Any works with a religious elements in them are clearly marked as so and are not uniquely Chinese, nor necessary, for understanding, or working with traditional Chinese concepts. What we know as traditional China is based on both Confucianism, which does not deal with anything supernatural, and Taoism, which was designed, by taking out, all the religious elements, of the I Ching. Buddhism has a Chinese adaptation, but is not really Chinese and is agnostic, about the spiritual world.

7.24.3 Holy Spirit is Not Prayed to

There are some good reasons why this fear of New Age influence is all ill founded. If the world, although I am not saying that, is the Holy Spirit, then according to Biblical theology, you would still not worship it, because we are to pray to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is actually God's spirit and so we would not talk to His spirit anymore than people would talk to other people's spirits or are forbidden to pray to saints (the dead). But, another overlooked aspect, of this, is that I don't say that the Holy Spirit is the same as either the spiritual, or the physical world, but rather the substance, upon which both are made.

7.24.4 Abstractions of the Body

In our world, we can understand how our bodies work are based, on the same concepts, of abstraction, where one underlying component is not directly related, to the functioning, of the entire person. By this, I mean, that the body is made up of cells, which we don't refer to, as even a living organism, much less a person and that, at and even lower level, the cells are made of atoms and there is little direct relationship between even the cell and the atoms, and even less between the person and the atoms.

7.24.5 Abstractions of Computers

The same concepts apply to computers, as well. For the user, there should be little, to no need, to understand the way a web page is made, in order to use it. The person who makes the web page should not have, to understand how, to program a web browser. And then the person making the web browser has little need, to understand everything about your unique hardware and the software that works it.

7.24.6 Less Confusing than Trinity Concept

When we praise the beauty of the natural world and give God credit, the same thing can be so for the spiritual world, and its very foundations. In order for us to theologically explain, that God is all powerful and everywhere at once, the resulting conclusion has to come, at least very close, to this same idea. This may be hard for people to understand, but most people don't understand anything basic, about the paradoxes, that explain most Biblical theology. And it may seem to easily mislead people, who have little ability, to understand abstract concepts, to confuse qi with the spiritual world, but the concept of the Trinity has inspired whole separate religions like Gnosticism, Islam, and Mormonism and we are not likely to get rid of that concept. Remember that concept of the Trinity is never mentioned in Scripture.

7.24.7 What Else Could it Be?

The reality is that Christianity is true and definitely Chinese philosophy and medicine works too. The best way to reconcile, the entirely philosophical Chinese beliefs and the entirely religious Christian beliefs, without changing, or being counter, to anything that the Bible says, seem to be through the Holy Spirit. If qi is not physical, spiritual, or part of God, then what is it? How can anything else but God be the foundation, of our entire reality? If God is really bigger, than all of reality, wouldn't it make sense, that the spiritual world, is a subset of God, just as our physical world, is the subset of the spiritual world. This is the best way to illustrate God's infinite power and control, that goes beyond His entire creation.

7.24.8 New Age Movement Includes Christian Concepts

Furthermore, we need, to formulate our beliefs, to not just be the opposite, of the New Age beliefs, but to simply embrace the reality of Christ and what the Bible says. The New Age movement is like the Animism, of the ancient world and the aboriginal peoples of the world, but it takes concepts, from every major belief system and so it would be impossible, to be the exact opposite, of everything New Age. In fact, the reason, for the popularity of the New Age movement draws extensively, on the addition of Christian values and concepts, more so than it picks and chooses, from Asian philosophy.

7.24.9 Rejection Because Not European

And strange and difficult concepts, that are poorly understood have divided the Church throughout history, especially in Europe, due to our insistence, that it must make sense, within an Ancient Greek philosophical or Scientific worldview. Do you also realize, that the Greek philosophy, embraced by the early Church is a product of Middle Eastern Paganism and that contemporary Science is embracing many New Age worldviews? Is it not possible, that there is another way, of discovery, that is not spiritual or scientific. If what makes Asia unique is not accepted by the Church, doesn't that mean that our allegiance is greater to our ethnic and intellectual heritage, than to reality, and what the Bible says? Why is the church unwilling to be critical of the Scientific worldview?

7.25 Evangelicals and Me

7.25.1 Evangelicals Defined

I had been raised, in mostly Evangelical churches, and both my parents are Evangelicals, as well, so I am familiar, with most their beliefs and points of view. The Evangelical movement is a reaction against the “liberalization” of the church. At one point in time, there seemed to be a major shift, in the Protestant Church, against established doctrines and a general unwillingness, to accept the miraculous aspects, of Scripture. Another major aspect, of the Evangelical movement, comes from the name, itself - spreading the Gospel.

7.25.2 Why I am Not an Evangelical

Personally, while I have a hard time seeing things, in the exact and narrow way, that Evangelical doctrine requires, I still see the value, of the movement. I think that the Evangelical movement has great spiritual significance - it is designed, to provide an effective barrier, to the spread, of the New Age movement and modern Paganism. The problem, with the Evangelical point of view, is that many people see more, to God, than is allowed, in the Evangelical community.

7.25.3 Evangelicals vs. Pentecostals

There are some similarities, between the Pentecostal movement and the Evangelical movement theologically, but the Evangelicals tend to be more focused, on the rational, while the Pentecostal movement provides an outlet, for people’s emotions. Although they both believe, in the supernatural aspects of God, Pentecostals seem to have an easier time

accepting supernatural things, in practice. While the Evangelical movement seems, to have found a place, in American culture, Pentecostalism is a very worldwide movement - as large, as Islam, by itself. Besides Jazz, Pentecostalism is one of the greatest things America has contributed, to world culture.

7.25.4 Not the Only Way

Evangelicals often say that they believe what the Bible says, literally. Obviously, they don't know how literal I am, but there are also many other ways, to interpret scripture, than the ideas, which Evangelicals have decided, that Scripture teaches. This isn't to say that Evangelicals are more or less wrong, than other branch, of Christianity - it is just, that they have their own unique place, in the milieu. Some Evangelicals go so far, as to say, that only Evangelicals will go to heaven, which is really just plain contradictory, to what the Bible says.

7.25.5 Syncretism

While I believe what I write is Biblically sound doctrinally, many Evangelicals would disagree. When I was in the church and did not use terms, like Existentialism or Taoism, I was just thought to be a little creative, but when they hear those terms, they think of Syncretism. Syncretism is when you take 2 different belief systems, and add and take away, from each, until you find a consistent combination, that doesn't contradict itself.

7.25.6 Why I am Not Syncretistic

The reason why what I write is Biblical and not Synchronistic is that I never change what the Bible says - I have just found similar ideas, in other traditions, that are the same, as those in the Bible. I change the Taoist and

Existential ideas, to fit the Bible, but not the other way around.

7.25.7 Attending Church

I personally have not attended church, for some time. When I go to Evangelical churches, I get a barrage of Conservative political ideas and so have a hard time seeing God, in that mix. When I go to Mainline Protestant churches, I feel more comfortable politically, but am always weary, that they are not critical enough, of New Age ideas. Either way, it is hard to meet people there.

7.25.8 Meeting People

Most people already belong, to big families, that have been, in the that church, for many years and are not really open, to meeting new people. The church also has few programs, for young singles, to meet people. The final reason why I do not attend Church is that I get too obsessed, with the theological ideas, and so my mind keeps working, on them, for days afterwards and so it stresses me out greatly. I am already too obsessed with religion - I need to be less serious, not more.

7.26 Problems with Church Unity

7.26.1 Historical Background

Major Divisions

Many Christian seek to unite the entire Christian church and get rid of all the divisions and denominations. Some are closer than others and some Christian churches are more interested in joining together than others. One

of the biggest divides in the church in America is the Evangelical branches and Liberal or Mainline Protestant branches of major American denominations like in the Methodist and Presbyterian churches. There are a number of theological, historical, and political reasons or a mixture of both in the divisions of the churches, especially the Protestant churches, over time.

The Halloween Coalition

There are good reasons why the Evangelical and Mainline Protestant branches would have trouble uniting. If God worked a miracle and both groups were willing to make major changes one in politics and the other in theology, it could work, but the scenario is as likely as what is referred to as the Halloween coalition, in American politics, where extreme conservatives and extreme liberals find commonality enough, to launch a third party, capable of defeating the American 2 party system. There must be some fear of this, because during the last few presidential campaigns (probably after seeing the success of Ross Perot) local police have been used to keep secondary candidates, like Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan, from showing up at the presidential debates.

Minor Attempts at Unity

For most Evangelical denomination branches in the US, it is probably hard for most members to tell the difference in the theology, if they joined another Evangelical church. Definitely Churches work together, for things like homeless shelters and for disaster relief. There was an Evangelical cross-denomination movement for men, called Promise Keepers. I don't know if it is still going though. I don't find an easy fit in either the Evangelical or Mainline Protestant churches, the first due to the politics and the second due to theology, but I am very unusual and ahead of my time.

7.26.2 Challenges

Roman Catholic Church Problem

The Roman Catholic church combines those two aspects, but not very neatly, and I also have a low opinion of the Roman Catholic church, for its arrogance and inaccuracy in telling everyone that they are the original and only true Christian church and that they have been responsible for most the big persecutions in Church history. The Catholic church was responsible for everything from: the Crusades, the Inquisition, the safe passage of NAZI war criminals, and the mixing of Christianity with Animism in Latin America. And my biggest complaint: the persecution of churches, not affiliated with the Roman Catholic church, when they sent missionaries to parts of the world cut off from other Christian, for centuries (who were Christians before anyone in the West was a Christian).

Chance for Failure

For any churches to be brought together successfully, every member must be onboard, because if anyone splits, we would then have even more divisions, than ever before. And in some parts of the world, the indigenous Christian churches would do more for Christianity, to stay separate, from European originated churches. I can appreciate why the Evangelical and Mainline Protestant churches had to split. I think the Evangelicals started more as a theological-based split, with the focus on Evangelism (recruiting new members) and keeping to a rigid theology, to keep from having Christianity losing essential theology, which would have transformed the church into something that didn't follow what the Bible said.

7.26.3 Points of View

Evangelical Perspective

Certainly, from many of the strange opinions on the Internet, including things like: outright cults, combinations of Paganism and Christianity, Gnosticism, and other obvious perversions of Biblical doctrine, all claiming the title Christian, I can see that there reasoning is relevant today as it was when they started. There are obvious others, but I think most Evangelical Christians are aware of those. I think a lot of this comes from the Church rejecting education and people not understanding what the Bible actually says, by not reading the Bible, church leaders not being thorough in explaining theology, and people deliberately trying to push certain political agendas, very similar to and would help prove many of the popular conspiracy theories.

Mainline Protestant Perspective

I also similarly feel the pain of the Mainline Protestant churches, from a political point of view. We have Christians trying to justify torture of people not even proved to be enemies, the forfeiture of several very important constitutional rights, the creation of organizations whose purpose and structure are very similar to those set up in NAZI Germany and Soviet Russia, the removal of every law that prevented the Great Depression from reoccurring and another Great Depression following, the removal of almost all environmental laws, the invasion of a nation that had not attacked us, was a former ally, the occupation of done by volunteers, because of the cowardice of Congress not issuing a draft, and the situation made worse for everyone involved, the same failure that caused 9/11 happened less than 10 years later, the complete failure of our disaster management agencies to

deal with an inevitable hurricane, and on and on.

7.26.4 Chance of Success

Making the Situation Worse

One big lesson, from history, as to the possible outcome, of even a very obvious and popular movement, with groups very similar in both theology and politics, is that it can easily backfire and make inter church relations much worse. If there is a defection or suspicion of the process, things could end up like, when the leaders of the political regimes supporting the Ethiopian church and the Eastern Orthodox church, both, at different times and places, asked for help from the Catholic church. In both cases, the political situation and the survival of the church in that part of the world was dire and it seemed like the differences were more political than theological, but when those leaders renounced their versions of Christianity and accepted the Roman Catholic church, the people who also were the members of those churches revolted.

Don't Try this at Home

To sum up, this is a good idea ideally, but it would never work in practice. The best and only way, for this to happen, without making the situation worse, would be to pray for it. But never bring up the idea to Evangelicals and by no means use my name, as many Evangelicals think I am New Age, even though they don't have the knowledge to make that judgement and I do.

7.27 The Church and Education

7.27.1 History of Scholarship

The Church in its various flavors has traditionally been at the forefront of education: the Renaissance and the Cyrillic family of Slavic languages were started by Eastern Orthodox monks, the golden age of the Islamic world was started by Jacobite and Nestorian Christians, and the Catholic church helped preserve and advance the written works of the pagan and Christian worlds for centuries. When Protestant Christians went overseas as missionaries, they translated the Bible into the native language of the local people and even created written languages, if there was none to start with, and founded some of the best educational systems, in the countries they had missions and they are still alive today.

7.27.2 Why Christians have Rejected Academia

The rise of the Evangelical branch of Christianity seems to not place the same emphasis on education. Some of the major reasons may be that: a lot of the academic world is trying to push the idea that white Christian males caused all the world's problems, many Christians in the academic community are trying to push a Christianity that is not Biblical in its theology, academia constantly argues against all of the miracles in the Bible by trying to explain them scientifically, and academia seems to have accepted Darwinian evolution, life being formed by chance, and an old Earth theory as a gospel truth.

7.27.3 Christians Should do What is Right

But my belief is that we should only oppose things that are wrong morally or contrary to the Bible, so I think the push for Christians should be to do what is right, instead of just doing the opposite of the unbelievers. Just because many pagans are trying to help the environment doesn't mean that Christians shouldn't do so as well. Just because atheists dominate Science doesn't mean that we should give up on creationism. Just because many in academia have argued against imperialism and colonialism doesn't mean that Christians cannot embrace this idea as well, but explain how it is rationalism and a lack of spiritual values that caused this problem to get exponentially worse.

7.27.4 Christians Need to Take a Stand

Christians need to bring Biblical values back into the educational system and fight for the future of our culture. Christians should not be afraid to challenge secular beliefs, just because they are popular and assumed to be true by the majority. Christians need to show how academia's beliefs in things that contradict the Bible are not the result of letting the evidence lead to the truth, but rather that much of academia just assumes things to be true, because they don't have the moral fiber, to stand up for the truth. Christians should not be afraid to have an opinion or to use Scripture to support their views, in the non-Christian world.

7.27.5 The Battle is Spiritual

Christians need not fear that they will be rejected or lose funding, because God will back them up. Christians need to realize that the future of education of young people is a spiritual battle and when they find opposition to realize that there are spiritual forces behind this. The best thing Christians can do is keep the right attitude before God, pray for God's will to be done, live as moral a life as possible, and keep reading Scripture for answers to our problems. The only thing Christians should be afraid of as being able to defeat them is their own addiction to sin and unwillingness to submit their lives to God. The real battle is in our minds and our greatest enemy is our carnal self.

7.28 Heaven, Eternity, and God

7.28.1 Eternal Perspective

I have thought about what Heaven might be like, for a long time. Time would obviously be different, if we are to live forever, so that we don't need to have an endless list of things to do. I think we see part of this in Taoist writings, and when we get very good at something, we are in the process of performing the action, and we are in the moment or in the flow, time goes by at a different rate. Compare kissing your girlfriend or wife with getting your hand burned: in one situation, time goes by faster than in the other situation. I think one of the reasons why God still sees us as sinners, even if we have repented many years ago, is because for God, everything happens at once (this is really a vast oversimplification), so God sees everything we have ever done as the real us, instead of what we are at an given time.

7.28.2 Roses and Heaven

I took some close-up pictures of some roses, while visiting my parents, and they were so perfect and beautiful that they gave me a feeling of peace, joy, and awe. The roses remind me of how I imagine Heaven. At the end of the Book of Revelations, Heaven is described as a golden city, with precious jewels and a garden. I used to think that this seemed inconsistent with how God speaks in support of values, instead of material wealth, throughout the rest of the Bible.

7.28.3 Indian Mystic Poets

But I remember reading some of the writings of South Indian Mystic Poets and how there is a branch of the Bahkti Hindu movement (this is a movement based on the devotional path of Hinduism) that believes God cannot be explained and so can only be talked about in mystical terms. This school believes similarly to how Moses Maimonides talked about how God can only be described in terms of what He is not, instead of what He is. God is not finite, He is not mortal, He is not defeatable, God was not created, and He is not limited by anything. The Indian mystic poets that believe this way, include some of the most famous: Kabir, Guru Nanak, and Meera. But this other school of the Bhakti movement understands God as a celebration and that living a spiritual life is one of splendor and rich in spiritual qualities.

7.28.4 Understanding Revelations

Revelations starts out as a very scary horror film or nightmare scenario. We read this book of the Bible and are terrified of ever having to live through this, but throughout most of the history of the Church, Christians have found comfort in reading Revelations, because it gives them hope. Have you ever gone on a camping trip? How did you feel when you came

home, took a shower and then slept in your own bed? Have you ever had a hard workout on a very hot day? What did you feel when you got to drink a cold drink? That is what Heaven is like. Heaven is about comforting us after all we have suffered in our lives. We will truly appreciate it, after all we have been through in our lives.

7.29 Advantages and Dangers of Mysticism

7.29.1 Different Types of Mysticism

Mysticism is often used very vaguely and has many different meanings for different people. The essential meaning of mysticism that almost everyone can agree upon is mystery. Mysticism can be as different as Evangelical Christianity is from occult religions (occult means hidden and the Bible refers to those who do things ungodly as doing so in a secret way, because they are ashamed of it). There is nothing orthodox or unorthodox about mysticism in Christianity. Modern Christian mysticism seems to be most common in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, although modern Evangelical theology can be seen as very mystical as well.

7.29.2 Roman Catholic Approach

One of the big things that has kept me from becoming Roman Catholic, besides the year long commitment to the process of joining, is that it is common for Roman Catholics to pray to “saints” and there is special reverence for Mary, Mother of Jesus that I cannot find Biblical support for. In Latin America, names of Christian “Saints” are often used in the practice of pre-Christian animism and have confused many people as to what

Christianity is all about. Christianity is not like the ancient Roman practice of just renaming all the Greek gods. The Christian God is totally different in values/morality, position of authority, attributes, relationship to people, and almost everything else that constitutes a given spirit or person.

7.29.3 Eastern Orthodox Approach

I like the importance placed in the Eastern Orthodox church on the Jesus Prayer and on the mystical instead of rational approach to Scripture. The idea that one can experience a spiritual connection with God, beyond what is described in the Bible, of how we are instructed how to relate to God, is hard for me to reconcile with scripture. I know that this practice is not the same as a person becoming one with God, in the sense that they achieve the same level spiritually, but I think it is problematic and I think that it requires too elaborate an explanation, that could so easily cause confusion, to people who are spiritually immature.

7.29.4 Paradox and Faith

Paradox is one of the major philosophical concepts of mysticism. The way in which I see the Bible as mystical relates more to how Kierkegaard sees the paradox of Jesus Christ's existence and our relationship with Him as was described in the new Testament, especially in the Apostle Paul's letters to the various early Christian churches. The belief that Jesus was both man and God is a paradox and must be accepted by faith, not reason and in our relationship with God should be one of humility, in reverence to the reality, of who God is and our proper response to who He is.

7.29.5 Christ and Salvation

So important is humility, that I agree with Kierkegaard, that when we are

farthest from God, because of sin, we are actually closer, by way of grace. The most important thing in faith is humility, as that is what God wants most of us, because that is essentially what the process of repentance and salvation is about. God realized that no one of us could ever be anywhere good enough to earn our way to God, so Jesus decided to save us by grace and to forgive our sins by his own sacrifice. In salvation, God's grace and sacrifice reach out to us and all we do is accept his offer with the appropriate respect.

7.29.6 Our Relationship with God

This isn't to say that sin is preferable, but only that our obvious failure increases our realization of how much we rely upon God's grace. And humility before God is not a matter of debasement, but really just an acceptance of a reality we can only partially imagine and understand more fully by faith and through God's grace. Think about it this way: even though every human is equal in worth, because God both created and redeemed all of us on His own; any number compared to infinity is zero. No matter how great we are or how moral we are, we are nothing in comparison to the Christian God. God is not a mere spirit, but rather is infinitely greater than anything that could possibly be created or imagined by Him or anyone else over all of eternity.

7.30 Limits in Reading

7.30.1 My Focus of Study

I have studied world religions and philosophies for the greater part of 12 years. I have studied all the major belief systems of the world including Chinese, Indian, and Middle Eastern Belief systems as well as the

Enlightenment, Existentialism, Nietzsche (based on the Pre-Socratics), Epicureanism, and Stoicism. I also studied about the major events in history focusing on the between the 4th and 14th Centuries and focusing mainly on the Asian region.

7.30.2 Polytheism

There were a number of different religious texts which I did not read. Christians would call these occult, but I have been searching for a word that would explain the same things to non-believers. I have just recently thought of the basic differentiator that separates the occult religions from the major world belief systems (revealed religions) is that the occult religions all worship more than one god. Sometimes people refer to this as Polytheism.

7.30.3 What the Bible Forbids

Some belief systems like Animism or Neo-Paganism I would not read any primary texts, while with Middle Eastern, Indian and Chinese belief systems I have avoided the ones that talk about worship of other gods. The main thing the Bible forbids Christians to take part in are supernatural practices not done by the one Creator God, and not done how it is prescribed to do in the Bible. Christians do have rituals but they are not the same as the ones used to worship other gods.

7.31 Limits in Worship

7.31.1 Christian Rituals

Some of the more well known and widely practiced Christian rituals described in the Bible include: The Lord's Prayer, baptism, communion,

Pentecost (also known as “speaking in tongues”), laying on of hands, anointing with oil, fasting, testimony, reading scriptures in public, the Sabbath, Easter/Passover, and other various festivals talked about in the Old Testament. Other ones were added later like Christmas, weddings, funerals, dedication of young children to the Christ and His Church, and others, some with less scriptural basis.

7.31.2 Places of Worship

I also do not practice any other religion other than Christianity nor would I attend worship services of a number of religions or go into their places of worship like: Hindu Temples, Tibetan Buddhist gatherings, Religious (or Esoteric) Taoist gatherings. I have attended a zendo meditation and visited a mosque. I would also like to visit a Sikh temple and a Jewish temple. The only one I would worship in other than a Christian church would be a Jewish temple.

7.32 What About Sexual Morality?

7.32.1 Why Avoid It?

I do not talk about sexual morality, as it is explained in the Bible, because I believe that that is one of the things other Christians have explained well. I have nothing to add to that. I like to write about things I know and things that are poorly understood as I have limited resources and don't feel the need to cover something, when I could not do any better myself at it. I am not going to cover every issue in the Bible, but I do believe that Biblical sexual ethics are important and should be followed.

7.32.2 What I Do Cover

I focus mainly on economic and environmental ethics and discipline, because I believe that these are not explained well or understood well from a Biblical point of view. I also focus on parts of the Bible that are not talked about as much and are not understood as well like the Prophets. I am confident that when people read the Bible, they will notice all the other issues described in the Bible, that I have not covered, and I don't think people will miss or have trouble interpreting Scripture related to sexual ethics.

7.33 Why Don't I Work with Others?

7.33.1 I Appeal to a Small Group

My experiences working in a team is that I do all the work and everyone else gets credit for it. The Humanities approach has fallen out of favor in the 20th century and Science and Social Science have dominated the field, in my lifetime. I also have a unique perspective on my study of religion, which would make it hard to find someone doing something compatible. Christians don't like what I do, because I am liberal in my politics and am willing to study other religions and points of view. And non-Christians don't like my adherence to Christian morals and my unwillingness to include pagan, animistic, and occult writings and practices.

7.33.2 Few Would Respond

I would love to inspire someone else to be a philosopher, but I wouldn't

want consider them as a successor if they adopted my philosophy or mainstream views and I would not consider anyone to be inspired by me who takes part in occult practices or study occult writings. I truly do walk the path less traveled and few people are interested in the study of philosophy or even are willing to read about anything, even things they agree with. I do still want more people to becomes Christians, even though I don't want anyone to feel pressured into it, because I believe that Christianity is a superior religion, but I believe that the Bible speak for itself and does not need to be defended.

7.34 Philosophy Inspired Solutions to World Problems

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

8 Nature of God

Breakthroughs in my understanding of the nature of God.

8.1 Jesus Poetry

8.1.1 The One

The words jump out at you
They dance on the page
A steady light to pierce through the mist and shadows
A light that gravity cannot bend
A power that surpasses that of the undead
Like a quark compared to a strand of DNA
A book of the highest magic
A chill like that of a winter storm
As soothing as a glass of tea for a sore throat
A written record that proves history as we know it is a lie
Balrogs and Orcs ambush us at every turn
The road goes ever on and on
He stands taller than an Elven King
With strength greater than that of a ring

The battle is fought even in the Shire
Little Hobbits pass by without notice
The evil within is greater than that of the Dark Lord
We must struggle each year with the pain of our youth
Stepping out on the first day of the Fellowship
Knowing terror lurks under every darkened forest
But that One older than the forest is singing merrily
And in the havens the Immortals sing songs higher than we can sing
We are inseparable with the One even when at the farthest reaches of
the universe

Our brothers and sisters move in concert with our every twitch
The words spoken by the Hebrew prophets thousands of years ago
Are a postmodern deconstruction of our present situation
What broke the symmetry of the emptiness?
Is it the same force that has slowed down the explosion of new life forms?
That disharmony increases with every day
That we fly apart faster every second

8.1.2 The Majestic Down to Earth

A comet down to a meteor pebble
A red giant star to a black hole
The One now just a grain of sand in a mile long stretch of beach
The One now a snowflake in a winter snowstorm
How much greater was His descent to earth?
With the authority to bend the laws of physics and chemistry
With the ability to create life out of nothing
The eternal now confines Himself to a human life span
That which all creation cannot contain is born a helpless child
His head turned down in respect for others
His eyes wide so that He does not harm anything

His feet dirty because He does not think of himself
His hands calloused from His devotion to his family business in His youth
His understanding is brilliant as diamonds
His words are as clear as glass
His insight is like polished bronze
He delicacy in speech is like that of a potter
We are weighed down with worry about how those who hate us will
retaliate
The government is turning on those who are trying to save us
Our time is spent working for multinational corporations dreams
Our investments are lost because they were based on deceitful schemes
His message is for our time
Humility and compassion are the keys to restoring our lives

8.1.3 Jesus

Is the universe in constant struggle
Between good and evil?
Does not nature possess more order?
Do we not have breaks between calamities?
Do basic structures break down
Most of the time or infrequently?
Both merciful and just
All-powerful and humble
All-wise yet foolish by our standards
A joke more serious than a tragedy
Is He both opposites at once
Or merely a mixture of equal parts
He is everything
He is my whole world
Yet He is not contained by His creation

Is He merely first order infinity?

Greater than someone could write down

Powers of infinity in an infinite time period

If He were just a Greek god

Or the heavenly ruler of China

He would not even bow Himself down

To visit earth

But He is infinitely greater than everything He could create in all of eternity

Stretching in an infinite number of dimensions if He never ceased

God does not struggle against evil

He beat all the powers of evil that ever will be or have been

With just a sentence

God is God enough to live as a man

Secure enough in His holiness to save all of mankind in a single night

Not afraid to descend into the pit of Hell

And powerful enough to rebuke the Devil himself, in His own name

When we look to God

To shuffle blame to Someone we don't think will respond

We have to calm ourselves and be rational

God is not a man and does not make mistakes

Our problems are caused by our own bad choices

And the bad choices of others

But He already has answered our prayer

He has shortened the time of the tribulation

And as we pray more and more

It comes nearer and nearer

So we won't have it hanging over our grand children's heads

8.2 Self Poetry

8.2.1 With one material, many souls

What is our true self?
What is our true identity?
Are we one with God
Is God in us or is He our true identity?
Is the individual soul an illusion?
Do we only exist as One?
Truly there is something
That unites the universe
Not only is there something
That unites body and mind
But also the same thing
Is the foundation of everything
And there is something else
The same moral purpose in everything
But we also have a soul that exists
And although it may be made of the same
As that of matter and energy and of other souls
The composition is unique
In each one of us
Just as each snowflake is made of the same molecule
There are ten thousand different kinds
Each one is an individual creation
With its own shape, size, and texture
So does our soul have a unique identity
And we have our own special characteristics

So we can share a common God
And we can empathize with each other
We can understand what it is to be human
And have the same desire to know our Creator
But we each have our own will
And we are directed by a different facet
Of the same moral purpose
To the extent that we have cultivated it
To the extent that we desire to know God

8.2.2 Directions

We are all moving in different directions
But our makeup is aligned at the same slope
We can move a mountain
If we have the faith of a mustard seed
If we seek God with all our heart
We can have eternal life
With even the effort of our own will
We can effect great change
As long as we are in sync
With the Greater Moral Purpose
As long as we act
In concert with God's will
We share the same substance
But we each have a different mind
A different will and heart
We can share in general moral purpose
But each is going toward a different direction
It is where these lines of purpose intersect
That we are linked in a bigger task

Like each cell we live and die in our own timing
We have our own body and our own director
As an organ we are working towards a larger purpose
And in this way we can act as one
Many wills, with the same thing in their minds and on their hearts
With one Leader
We follow with a mind that thinks its own thoughts
Just because we are not the same spirit
Does not mean we cannot work as one in the Spirit of God
We do not need to be God
To know that we are interlinked in relationships
And connected in Greater Purpose

8.2.3 Holy Spirit

These contours upon which we travel
Are the straightest path to the nearest soul
We can know we are in agreement
And work as with one body
Because we understand
We are each separate members
That have wills working together
While we keep our hearts and minds focused
But what is this road upon
Which the mind is linked to its vessel
How does the distinct mind of one being
Understand what the mind of the other is doing
Without asking and without explanation
Without external signal of any kind?
It is like the cool current of wind
In the penetrating heat of our yellow sun

It is a subtlety that unites our thinking
And brings us together for greater purpose
Donning the protective mask
In one fluid motion
Or knowing what line of code is wrong
Just by seeing how the web page looks
There is another level
In which we understand
Another way in which things happen
Than the official regulations
It is how someone writes without an outline
And still puts together a coherent argument
It is in a way that cannot be pinned down
It has no universal name
In the Bible we know it
As the Holy Spirit
Or God in the world
Who brings together His flock

8.3 Heavenly Father Poetry

8.3.1 The Perfect Programmer

God is the perfect programmer
We are all his programs
I am a flawed program
How can this be?
My source code was perfect
In every respect
But I let others add code

I started out stable and efficient
I was useful to my Creator
But the other code was sloppy
And my executable became corrupted
I kept on throwing up error messages
I blamed the kernel and other software
Everyone was wrong but me
My file formats were universally compatible
But I decided not to publish my new source code
Or even document my APIs
I would only release a software development kit
If people purchased a service plan
I used other peoples programs
I downloaded illegally off the Internet
I began to see nothing wrong
With being infested with viruses
I was getting more bloated by the day
And my features grew so great in number
That I became too complex to compile without errors
I began to seek other business models
I released some source code but not all
No one will develop me anymore
I rely on my my public relations staff
To buy my way into your computer
I claim no responsibility for damage
I would be recalled
But people don't expect computers to work

8.3.2 Praise and Criticism

I have a memory problem

And a vision problem
My eyes are fine
And my mind works great
But I have huge blind spots
I constantly pray for protection
And I have a great memory
For how people have hurt me
But it is only when I stop and rest
That I remember to give thanks
For all God has protected me from
My greatest problem is fear
And I have struggled with chronic
Physical and mental suffering
And my life has not been easy
For a middle class American's standard
But what I was saved from
Is greater than I could have imagined
I lost my mind due to my service in the Army
But I still have all my limbs and organs intact
I was able to get out of the military
When my mental illness interfered with my job
And my peace of mind
I had allergic pink eye for 3-1/2 years
But it ended with my first anti-psychotic medicine
When we watch the news
It is mostly negative
And people are quick to point out problems
But rarely offer solutions
It is easy to criticize others actions
When they do not act heroic
But how do we know what we will due

When we are in a crisis

8.3.3 Praise God for Everything

Praise God for everything good
We know of or have experienced
Praise God for everything good
We have yet to or may never discover
Praise God for everything good
We have labeled as a coincidence
Praise God for what we have learned
Jesus is the best teacher
Praise God for what we have learned
Sins to avoid and the way to salvation
Praise God for when we have peace
Spiritual as well as physical
Praise God for when we have plenty
God provides for His creation
Praise God for when we have stability
In our jobs and in the universe
Praise God for His forgiveness
For when we treat each other bad
Praise God for healing us
From bad decisions and from injuries
Praise God for everlasting life
If we only submit to God
Praise God for His suffering
For our bad choices
Praise God for our freedom
We can choose good or bad
Praise God for being who He is

Supreme in character, wisdom, and power
Praise God for loving us
Even when we don't return His love

8.3.4 Awesome God

God is not your little sister
Who you need to protect
God is not in debt
You don't need to finance Him
God does not need an advocate
He is God whether He is worshiped or not
God is not pressed for time
He has plenty of time for you
You do not need to argue God's case
Creation speaks out His name
God doesn't need you to fulfill his plans
God is in control of history
If you can travel back and forth in time
God is already there and everywhere else
If we travel to another planet
God is just as much in control
If we have a multi verse and parallel realities
It is there because God created it
God is not limited by having poor followers
God is all powerful in and of Himself
God doesn't just watch you in church
God sees all
God doesn't like Christians better than unbelievers
God loves us because He chooses to
God will not do evil

This does not mean His power is limited in any way
God does not play favorites
You don't get points for good deeds
God will judge everyone
And none of us will pass without Christ
God does not struggle to defeat evil
He destroys it in His timing and with His methods
God doesn't care what we think is immoral
He invented morality
God is not fooled like people are
God knows your heart

8.3.5 Family Appreciation

Thanks God for my family
Thank God for my mom
Whose encouragement uplifts
And who continually advocates for me
Thanks God for my dad
Whose advice has saved me from harm
His prayers give me hope
Thank God for my sister
Who listens carefully to what I say
Whose visits cheer me up
Thank God for my Uncle Clive
Who faithfully looks through my work
Whose careful words brighten my day
Thanks God for my stuffed cows
Who are always near by
Whose humor and thoughts keep my company
Thank God for giving my a family

That is always near in spirit
And who put my needs ahead of theirs
Who are anxious to hear what I have learned
And who consider what I say
With open minds and careful consideration
Who care enough to consider my feelings
And adjust their words and tone
Who I can consider colleagues
And who understand what I am doing
Better than anyone else
Thanks for your inspiration
And your love

8.3.6 Tolerance

Is it better that we not offend
The pride of those doomed to eternal death
Or better that more have eternal life?
Is the preservation of one more year of life
Of significance when we count in eternity?
Is it so important that we have personal transportation
That we sacrifice our young men's lives?
Do we seek to be so tolerant of the wealthy
That we let the poor suffer violence?
Are we so addicted to popular culture
That we no longer care what is right and wrong?
Are we so far devolved morally
That we throw away our future?
Because some people used Christ's name for evil
Does that mean that there is no truth in the Bible?
Why do we give to charity

When we vote against those in need?
Why speak out for what is wrong
When we don't even try to live morally?
Do we need to rewrite history
To prove what we are doing is right?
Isn't it a bad sign that we have no faith?
There is more to the world than white America
God values those in the Asia and Africa
Even if we won't even help feed them
When the rest of the world hates you
You might think you did something wrong
When you read the Bible and get offended
Do you think you are you better than God?
Who are we to judge the world
From our Postmodern point of view?
Atheism is a blip in world history
And the future is more Christian than pagan
And there are more Muslims than atheists
Do we only tolerate those with big lobbies?
Do we only look after those who can speak for themselves?
When we choose to give some rights and not others
What is the basis for this decision?
Why do we put women and children
Above the lives of our soldiers?
Why do we disregard the lives of animals
When our society is built on their labor?
There is more to life than American football
And there is more going on in the world
Outside Hollywood and Wall Street

8.3.7 God, Help!

We look around us
And we hear rumors
All point to our destruction
Our imminent demise
Our fresh water is infected
Garbage drifts in the sea
Our forests are destroyed
Daily more are burned down
Our food make us sick
And we eat ourselves to death
We generate dangerous waste
For ten thousand years
Deadly incurable diseases
Spread like wildfire
Our rich steal from the poor
And conduct scams without penalty
Our president is a dictator
He starts wars out of revenge
Our politicians don't care about us
They follow the largest sum of money
Our religious leaders
Preach hate and prejudice
The people don't seem to care
As long as they can see the football game
And there is plenty of beer
They will sell their souls
To not have to get up off the couch
God, we repent of our sin

Please have mercy on us
We take full responsibility
And are willing to pay the penalties
Please forget our sin
And be our God
And we will be Your servants
We will put the poor and the rejected
Above our own desires
We will honor You
With our actions and not just our words

8.3.8 Walking Forward

With back straight
And eyes level
A relaxed walk
With long strides
Brilliant blue sky
And radiant sun
Long rows of books
Quick glances
And moving on
With each turn
And a rapid survey
Passing by numerous sections
Already absorbed
With each step
I pass walls of books
And with each shelf
Years of study
I am beginning to feel

More relaxed
And sure of my ideas
There is a subtlety
That exists in the mind
And a slight change in pace
That signals growth
And increasing certitude
The times of clarity
Multiply in number
I still don't have plans
For tomorrow
But there is a stillness
And a gentle attitude
Overflowing from my heart
And my head is a little lighter
On my shoulders
The weight is slowly receding
And I get glimpses of peace
And times of conviction
That experience exponential growth
And continued enthusiasm

8.3.9 Morning Sunshine

In the cool of the day
Darkness fades gently
And the sun rises confidently
Over the distant horizon
At what point does it become day?
Where exactly is the horizon?
I learn sometimes in leaps

Sometimes at a slow walk
God continues to rise in my heart
I do not know when I will fade
But I know God will continue
To outshine the darkness of my soul
We bow to God's brilliance
And are blinded by His Presence
We are dark and low
Not worthy to be the dirt
On which He treads
We live most our life in the shadows
It is hard to watch the sun
We hide from the intense light
But are afraid when it leaves
We scatter far and wide
To our own devices
When night falls
But we need to return
To the radiance of our Lord
Before we start our day
Under the direct light of the sun

8.4 Son of God Poetry

8.4.1 The Missionaries

God does not love America
More than any other country
God does not condone wars
Over natural resources

God is not Republican

He does not support the Religious "Right"

Bush is not following the Bible

America was never a Christian nation

The Bible does not promote capitalism

Christians should speak out against corporations

TV evangelists are seldom

Preaching from the Bible correctly

The Bible is incompatible with Science

The way it is taught in schools

The Bible is more Scientifically sound

Than the theory of evolution

God is not in danger of being outdated

America is regressing

God is worshiped in the Third World

Only Europe has no faith

Religion is not a competition

The Bible has no equal

We don't need to denigrate others

To support our beliefs

God is not White

God loves all races

God is not a God of hate

God loves all people

No matter what they have done

And no matter who they are

8.4.2 God Speaks

God speaks all languages

He speaks to us in our language

Arabic and Chinese
Spanish and Pali
Hebrew and Russian
Croatian and Pigeon
Farsi and French
There is a word for Christ
In every language
There is a word for suffering
There is a word for submission
There is a word for sacrifice
There is a word for humanity
There is a word for hope
There is a word for joy
There is a word for peace
There is a word for life
There is a word for eternal
There is a word for forgiven
There is a word for repentance
There is a word for belief
There is a word for sin
There is a word for good
There is a word for heaven
There is a word for love
There is a word for victory
There is a word for change
There is a word for compassion
There is a word for service

8.4.3 Religion Means Education

The Bible is not just words

For memorization and quotation
It is not a means to control
Or a way to win arguments
The Bible is not a set of rules
To conform to
The Bible is not a goal to achieve
Or a means to a higher consciousness
Christians do not ascend
And God is not trying
To advance us technologically
God does not make you rich
If you are devout
God is not a reason for bad behavior
Or an excuse to give up
God does not want us
To be workaholics
The Bible is a weapon
Against our own selfishness
And our pride and stubbornness
But we must plunge the sword
Into ourselves
God wants us to learn
He wants us to grow
Not to be wealthy or more advanced
But to be moral and healthy
We do not grow by secret knowledge
Or by special powers
We learn who God is
And learn how to submit to Him
We learn the source of our problems
Is our own poor choices

And we get deliverance from them
To the extent that we give God control
Of our minds, our hearts, and our souls

8.4.4 Campus Community

Under the cover
Of strong oak branches
And on the carpet of
Carefully manicured grass
The entire campus
Is overflowing with deep green
And on these memorial benches
Of weathered cedar and black iron
I watch with fading eyelids
As people pass the Frisbee by
Which dogs catch in mid air
And students cover the lawn
Leading up to the ornate marble library
Ivy is digesting the brick halls
And the sounds of construction
Permeates the adjacent buildings
All the vertical wood surfaces
Are covered in propaganda
A gray bearded man
Plays the guitar
And sings songs
Only fully understood by him
Softly a block away
What a community
What an idyllic atmosphere

I like to think that
Maybe some are believers

8.4.5 Open Market

You can smell the incense a mile away
And you can see everyone's toes
It is Saturday again downtown
The booths are all assembled
And manned with merchants
There are pamphlets and stickers
Posters and pens
All carrying the logo
Of a charity or small business
This is how capitalism was envisioned
This is a diverse gathering
Fresh picked produce
And organic baked goods
Hemp clothing and more
Everything is produced locally
Or a product of fair trade
There is silver jewelry galore
And every kind of clothing tie dyed
The local charities are out in
Solid numbers and well stocked
With sign up sheets
And passionate volunteers
There are dozens of groups
Fighting to save the forests
And dozens of groups
For equality and justice

Globally and locally
There is continual music
And the aisles are crowded
The lines slowly shift forward
And the restrooms are portable
A Christian group lurks in the distance
If you squint real hard

8.4.6 Epic Hero

Christ is the greatest epic hero
The most powerful and the strongest
But His goal was not war
And He did not kill
His message was second
To His example
And greatest of all
Was His humility joined
With His divinity
Conquering the spirit world
Or starting an empire
Was not His way
He conquered the greatest enemy
The most entrenched traitor
Our heart and our minds
And our sins and bad attitudes
He healed and He prophesied
He was merciful and had authority
He was a descendant of the Jewish people
And He was the One who created all
Because of my Hero, Jesus

I have eternal life
He did the hardest thing anyone has done
To make it as easy as possible for me
I do not have the energy to do yoga
Or the leadership to start an ashram
I don't have the discipline to pray 5 times a day
Or the money to journey to Mecca
Christ has provided the only way
For my salvation
And He has invited everyone to join
And the cost is free as in freedom

8.4.7 Ancestor

Born as a descendant
Of the Scottish monarchy
And with many castles to
Our family name
If we could prove it
Starting out to free Scotland
From the brutal English
I later gave up
The quest for nationalism
Not only did the Stewards
Inherit the throne of England
But I have a greater legacy
Which I have given up on
The previous ancestry for
I am born again
And grafted into
The lineage of Israel

And am part of the inheritance
Of the Son Of God
The second Adam
Christ, the Creator of All
Has chosen me
Before the beginning of time
To be one of His children
And any who will believe
Are all God's chosen people
Whether Asian or European
African or North American
Latin American or Australian

8.4.8 Center of Gravity

Night has fallen on Europe
And it is late afternoon in America
But the sun is just rising in Africa
And it is still morning in Latin America
And it is a few hours before dawn in Asia
Christ is universally understood
And is available to all believers
In Europe and North America
The white man is diminishing in numbers
And his power does not extend
Beyond his own continent
Even at home, foreigners from the south
Are overwhelming the West
But Christ loves the South
Just as much as the North
But the white man has lost his religion

And those from Africa and Asia
Are embracing and comprehending God
In ways that the West never could
Christ is not just a moral teacher
He is a living God
Christ loves the poor
And identifies with the losers of war
The spiritual world is real
Even more than Science could theorize
Christ is not an abstract concept
But a real force in everyday life
God is not just our Creator
He is our Ancestor
He wants to adopt us
To be a part of His lineage
And to share His inheritance
God shapes history
In ways we could never imagine
And God has a special plan
For those in the Africa and Asia
For the persecuted and the fatherless
From those rich in Spirit

8.4.9 Crossroads

We are at a turning point
As believers worldwide
We have passed on the torch
To our friends in the South
What does God have planned
For those who understand Christ better?

What more will God reveal
In the 21st century?
There is no need
To spread the Gospel southward
We need missionaries in the North
There is nothing we can teach the South
Now we need to learn from them
Africa is becoming the leader
The younger child that God loves
And we have become wealthy
We have given up our inheritance
For things of this world
We can no longer see the truth
Of God's divine intervention
And the miracles available
For those who truly believe
We look down on the humble
And reject those with problems
We blame the sick
The physically and mentally weak
For our declining power in the world
We don't realize
Our lack of character
And are unable to comprehend
What sacrifice means
We are an empire on decline
Will those in the South pray for us?

9

10 Response to Opposition

10.1 Striking Back

10.1.1 What is Rational?

What is the definition of rational?

Believing that man is the highest good

Or that his intellect can grasp everything

Do you think you can disprove God

By quoting a famous atheist?

You win an argument

But just show your own limitations

And your own weak intellect

Not everything is meant to be

Analyzed in the Scientific method

What cannot be disproved

Is greater than that which can be proven

Guess and check can only go so far

And scientists are as bigoted

And resistant to change and new ideas

Than as are any other bureaucrats

The ideas of Science may have

At one time been an area for non-conformists

But it is no longer

Everyone believes in Science

And that is a great weakness
The masses can be convinced of anything
Scientists fail to realize
That it was their community that
Made a fool of Galileo
The first scientist was a smart ass
When your belief system
Can only understand matter-energy
Aren't you smart enough
To realize that it cannot explain
Anything important
It is not wrong to have a theory
To explain something
But when you use it as an excuse
To hide from spiritual realities
Who is the greater fool?
It doesn't matter how good you are at debate
Or how many facts you have on your side
Some things just don't make sense
Just because the entire Scientific establishment
Believes in one thing, the masses think it is true
No matter how many times
Society confuses facts with truth
The number of believers is growing worldwide
It is interesting that those who think
They are so enlightened
As to be better informed than God
And think that they are the enemy of the establishment
That their ideas resonate best with
The people who create the problems
They are trying to fix

If the same system that said the world is flat
Now even admits they cannot observe
95% of the mass of the universe
Why should I believe them about evolution?
For a community that shuns innovators
And anything unusual or different
And is mainly motivated by prestige
Why would I believe anything
They print in numbers
And collect evidence for?
If scientists would study other philosophies
They would start to realize that the world
Is much bigger than Science
And that the real problems in life
Are not going to be solved by more technology
That we are never going to resolve
The true cause of suffering through education
That the innovation that will bring solutions
Is something that was written down 2,000 years ago
That the most unusual ideas were some of the oldest
That we are just re-inventing what China
Designed thousands of years ago
Without the Scientific method
If the Chinese were not smart enough
To keep the empire going
How are we going to be able to survive
A few more generations of Science?
One of the big problems with Science
Is it has no ethical foundation
Just as you cannot add security onto technology
Not designed with a firm foundation

Ethics are not just an add on
People do not become ethical by
Attending a one semester course
Or even after earning a Ph.D. in philosophy
It is not that we do not know enough
To do find a solution to our problems
But that we need a way to stop
Ourselves from creating more problems
Self control is the key to our survival
But the solution is not an invention
But supernatural intervention

10.1.2 Where Blame is Due

If Christianity is to blame for everything
People claim it is
Then why is there so much more evil
Done by countries which are primarily atheist?
Before jumping on the bandwagon
And blaming every problem on Christianity
People should actually read what the Bible says
The Bible never says it is ok to mistreat animals
Augustine and Thomas Aquinas hated animals
But their theology is based more on Greek paganism
Than it is on any possible interpretation
Of the Bible come up with by the biggest idiot
The Bible holds humans responsible for taking care
Of the entire ecosystem
Not only are we responsible for what we have done
But we must correct any problems no matter
How they were caused

Unlike what the religious wrong say
The Bible states very clearly in several places
That there is no distinction between man and woman
Or peoples of any race or any other background
Contrary to popular belief, the Bible does not say
That corporations should control the government
Or that the wealthy got that way because
They were following God's laws
The Bible says over and over and gives many examples
Of moral people who loved God and suffered terribly
Many times exactly because of it
Contrary to popular belief, claiming to be born again
Does not get you to Heaven according to the Bible
You have to humble yourself before God
And believe you are equal to your fellow man
Before you can be saved
According to the Bible, environmental destruction
And stealing from people's retirements are sins
And are greater than that of committing adultery one time
Unlike what many people think
The Bible does not tell you everything to do
And is designed for there to be different interpretations
Of many ideas in theology
Similar to Taoism, the theology of the Bible is no-dualistic
Even though many Christians treat Paul's letters
Like analytical arguments, they are really mystical
Unlike what many Christians believe
The Bible encourages study of other religions and
Being intellectual by Paul's example alone
The religious ideas the Bible disparages come from
Occult religions like Greek Paganism

Which has been synchronized with Christianity
By Augustine and Thomas Aquinas

10.1.3 God and Country

The religious wrong have long believed
That America was a Christian nation
What America really was and this includes
The religious wrong
Is founded on the idea of
Not wanting to pay taxes
The founding fathers were anarchists
So to follow in their foot steps
Would be to overthrow the current government
The United States has always been
An aggressive and violent nation
Something we inherited from the English
We thought we were better than
The rest of the world
It was our duty to spread our power
No matter what the cost
Following in the footsteps of the English
We held people as slaves even though
We claimed to be a democracy
We used biological weapons on the
Native Americans and dishonored treaties
These are not things a Christian nation would do
They do not honor God
And they do not promote human dignity
Now the religious wrong want us to protect
Humans that are not even born

But thinks it is ok to torture baby animals
In their use for food and experiments
Both of which are unnecessary
They believe that monopolies/dictatorships are good
And that our bill of rights is unimportant
They are against giving to charities
They instead want to tax the poor
And give it to the rich to make bigger weapons with
They are using a couple of attacks worldwide
As an excuse to invade another nation
When it had no intention of attacking anyone
So our dictator could settle an old score
The American House of Bush
Loves to redefine worlds until they have no meaning
They have over written every law against pollution
So a couple rich white men can get even richer
He has held teachers responsible for how
Prepared the kids are for school without
Factoring in different socioeconomic conditions
Which will ultimately destroy the school system
After doing all this our dictator has the audacity
To claim he is a born again Christian
There is absolutely nothing Christian
About the way this creep acts

10.1.4 Medieval Morality

Enlightenment writers love to denigrate
The European Medieval period
By referring to it as the Dark Ages
Because they hated God so much

And they were enamored by material wealth
And advanced technology used in warfare
They blamed all their problems on God
Modern authors refer to the time
As being backwards and violent
What they really hate is that it was
A relative time of material poverty for Europe
After the fall of the Roman Empire
The entirety of Europe struggled to survive
But people don't see the bright side
Without the wealth to destroy others
And depending on the harvest for their food
People began to rely upon God
And had respect for God and nature
People still had evil in their hearts
But the scale of destruction was
Exponentially less than in "enlightened times"
In fact, although historians love to blame
Christianity for the big wars of the next 500 years
The Church was losing more and more power
As things began to be more and more violent
People saw Science as a way they could
One up God and avoid those inconvenient
Sexual and financial morals
See the main problem with Science is
That it has no formal ethics as part
Of its system of discovery
The superiority of philosophy
Is that it has an ethics
The superiority of religion
Is that it also has a reason

The superiority of Christianity
Is that is also gives a way

10.1.5 A Matter of Faith

Many people believe
That evolution should be
Accepted because
Most scientists believe it
They say it should just be
A matter of evidence
I believe it as a matter of faith
First of all, Science did not
Just arrive out of nowhere
And was not always
The way everything was decided
Neither are we more advanced
For relying on it for everything
Science was invented and came out
Of a particular western philosophical
School called the Enlightenment
Contrary to popular belief
Most technologies of the modern world
Were not invented by Europeans or
By their precious Science
They were dreamed up and produced
First by the Chinese
In fact, the Industrial Revolution
Came about from our discovery
Of Chinese technologies
Invented hundreds or even thousands

Of years earlier

There are many other methods

Of discovery and verification

Jainism has a number all by itself

The five senses, testimony, ESP,

telepathy, and an all knowing ascended being

Mystics have a number as well

Faith, intuition, and prophetic visions

Most schools of Hinduism

Verify knowledge by

Perception, inference, comparison, and testimony

So we see that Science is only

One school out of many

In the panorama of philosophy

Even if I would be convinced

If provided the evidence

In the Scientific form

It would not be possible

For me to accept evolution

Except by blind faith

Because it requires a Ph.D.

In Science to have the background

To make an informed position

Otherwise it is just oversimplified

And I have seen this done

In philosophy and religion

So I would only trust my own

Research into the theory of evolution

10.1.6 Circular Argument

Most people believe anything
Someone with a Scientific education says
How do they prove things?
By facts, of course
How have they proven
That facts are truth?
Because that is Scientific
Facts determine details about
Specific events and measurements
But how does one prove Love?
How does one disprove it?
Many people believe if there
Are no facts for proving something
Than it must not be true
But facts are less important
Than things determined by faith
Things determined by experience
Things determined by reflection
Things determined by immersion
In a particular field of work
Things determined by scripture
Things determined by miraculous
Answers to prayer
If there is nothing to prove
That facts are true
Other than a circular argument
Then why do we base our society
On this shaky ground

And why do we force
This viewpoint on young children?
Our world is getting worse and worse
The more we use facts
To determine policy and direction
Shouldn't we base our ideas
By what works and what doesn't
In the real world
With cold, hard truth
Not by just flimsy facts
After all, it's not like it's hard
To present lies as facts

10.1.7 Only One Answer

There are few things in life
That only have one answer
This is one of the things
People like so much about Science
But this a false premise
As Science is only one way
Of discovery
And is only applicable
To one way of thinking
Coming from the culture of
One part of the world
Having multiple answers
Is the great thing about art,
Philosophy, and religion
The humanities are the only
Fields that treat other cultures

With dignity and respect
They are the only ones
That explain what being
Sentient is like
They answer the most
Important questions
Better because they can
Have multiple answers
Most things in life are paradoxes
Which aren't very compatible
With Science and math
How can you reduce
Most fundamental problems
Down to one solution?
How can you explain
Feelings in numbers and attributes?
How do you express mystery
With a system that is designed
To explain everything?
Ever wonder why economists
Can't predict the future
With mathematical models
Or why it is so hard to
Communicate with psychologists?
Ever wonder why scientists
Are surprised when they
Discover animals are sentient
Or can have mental disorders?
We have an ancient heritage
Of wisdom and understanding
That is aware of things

Science can only dream of
To rely on a system that
Ignores questions of the spirit
Or things that cannot be tested
Under controlled conditions
To guide society into a better world
Shows that our world no longer
Values the truth and is only looking
For easy solutions and doesn't care
About how bad the consequences are

10.2 Do Atheists Have Values?

10.2.1 Definition of Atheism

Atheism basically mean not theistic or not believing in a God or other deities. Most of the people that do not believe in God in the West probably are doing so, because they don't want to follow rules. You could call that a value too, because values or ethics can be any system that is consistent. For instance, Christianity by the example of Christ has the values of humility and compassion.

10.2.2 Nietzsche

Nietzsche has a very different set of ethics. Nietzschean ethics are based on the pre-Socratic philosophers (the Greek philosophers before Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle) and Greek paganism. Nietzsche values strength and beauty primarily and he is very passionate and committed to his beliefs. If the majority of Christians had the same passion for their beliefs, then there would be much less to criticize in how Christianity is commonly practiced

today. I share with Nietzsche the idea that I do not want any followers.

10.2.3 Anarchy

For people that do not want to follow any rules are often categorized as Anarchists, but I think the real issue that defines Anarchists, from others who reject the establishment, is that Anarchists do not respect private property, because they feel it was gained through deception and violence. I am not an Anarchist, because I am Christian and the Bible has rules against destruction of private property, even if it is gained dishonestly.

10.2.4 Major Atheistic Philosophies

There are many other Atheistic codes of ethics or complete philosophies including: Existentialism, Postmodernism, and the most famous of all - the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was based on the ideas of the major Greek and Roman philosophers and culture and was about the free exchange of ideas and the idea of a culture and a government founded on reason and the rule of law, instead of on faith and obedience. Rousseau believed that people were good naturally and that evil was a learned behavior. The biggest new ideas of the Enlightenment were Science and the Social Sciences.

10.2.5 The Enlightenment

Hegel was famous for uniting the two major schools of the Enlightenment, called British Empiricism and Continental Rationalism. Empiricism was based on using empirical evidence to find truth and Rationalism was based on the idea that there is an "a priori" statement that everything else is discovered from. Descartes' a priori was "I think therefore I am". Hegel based his ideas on an elaborate system that made extensive use of the

concept of paradox. Hegel's philosophy was part of a school called phenomenology, which is very hard to explain or understand.

Existentialism

Kierkegaard and later Existentialists usually agreed that they were against any kind of system used to explain the unique qualities of human being (or existence). Existentialism started out Christian, but some of the most famous Existentialists like Sartre and Heidegger were Atheists. Postmodernism is a reaction against the Enlightenment's belief in absolute values, but still embraces Science and reason, as the source of truth.

10.2.6 Variations of Atheism

Atheism is also a very general category, that involves many variations on the lack of belief in a God (a belief in a God or gods is also known as religion). There are at least dozens of variations and the most common is the Agnostic variation, which people claim, who have not decided whether or not they believe in God. Science is the best known philosophy which is designed on a kind of Agnosticism towards evidence and reason.

10.3 Philosophy of Life and Death

Many Christians see salvation as an end and not just a beginning. They absolve themselves of doing any help in the world, because they see the world as corrupt and take the easy answer of letting the world fall apart. They look knowingly at each other and think they are so much better, because they are saved.

This is based on the theology of saved by faith alone, but it is not consistent, even within its own system. If God saved us, because we repent of our sins, then why do we think we are better than others? We are all equally bad and God's criteria for reaching out to us is just that we humble

ourselves before God and consider ourselves equal to unbelievers. If we can't even do that, how can we consider ourselves to be born again or followers of Christ?

If Christ, who is God Himself, did not even consider Himself equal to God and submitted Himself to the authority of men, then where do we get off thinking that we are better than unbelievers. Often, theologians compare Christ's descent to being human as equivalent to us descending to being a bug, but this is a gross exaggeration of our worth and gross simplification of God's glory above man. Christ being born as a human is more equivalent to us giving up our existence permanently.

God is not limited by any thing and He is so far above us that we amount to a grand total of zero in comparison to God. It is a miracle that any of us is actually saved and the effort is almost entirely on God's side. It is not that our submission to God means anything, but just a rightful understanding of our place in the universe; it is the grace of God that does the work.

It is important that we make a choice, to submit ourselves before God, but this is just the beginning of the path. Just because we can't get beyond grace, salvation, and faith, does not mean that we do not make the effort to grow. Just because the world is going to end soon is no reason to let everybody suffer, without attempting any way, to help reduce the suffering.

The majority of the Bible tells about how we should live our lives, while on earth. If we really want mass conversions to the Christianity of the Bible, we are going to have to show unbelievers that we truly value life.

For a person to choose a philosophy of death and to totally give up on improving the world is a defeatist mentality. How can we expect to have victory in Christ if it doesn't start by reaching out to our own communities in Christ reflected love?

10.4 The Protestant Ethic

Have you ever wondered why so many Republicans are Evangelicals and why so many Evangelicals are Republicans? Because many are both interested in making money. But many are moral because they never spend it - that would be pagan. You too can get rich if you join our church. Our theologians have found the secret to creating wealth - having lots of money to start with.

10.4.1 Hard Work

My neighbor says
He wants a website
You do websites?
What is it for?
To sell things
I am not your man
I know how to write
How to design
How to think
How to create
How the technology works
I have 9 years of experience
And am hard working
I can do it for free
By I don't know how
To convince people
To buy something
It is a common misconception
That people are poor

Because they are lazy
In America we equate
Hard work with money
But there are millions
Who would beg to differ
Proverbs says we should
Work hard
But God never promises
To make us rich
Even if we follow
All His commandments
If godliness equated money
Or money was to be valued
Then Jesus would have been rich
Paul was poor and in prison
And he was happier then
Than any time of his life
Solomon was rich but depressed
When he had the wealth
Of the entire world
He wrote the most
Nihilistic book of the Bible

10.4.2 American Philosophy

You thought philosophy
Was the love of knowledge
But why does it matter
If it can't make you rich?
If working 40 hours a week
Gives you enough money

To live on
Then working 80 hours a week
Will give you money to invest
If you invest all that money
You will be rich
And then you can start
Your own business
So you can be a proprietor
Then you can sell
Your business
To make more money
Don't worry about
Studying the classics
It only matters
If you have money
The more money you have
The more you can make
The more time you spend
The more money you make
This is all you need to know
The rest is luck and marketing
What else is there to life?

10.4.3 Faith and Work

You are a technical writer
Your job is to write
About new technology
Your audience is affluent
You publish for your advertisers
You publish facts

But they seem to always
Be in favor of whoever
Pays you the most money
When you are discovered
You lash out angrily
With weakly worded insults
You get angry comments
You lose more readers
Do you think
You did something wrong?
Was that you at church
On Sunday
In the front row?
Was it you who ranted on
About those liberal rascals
In the church parking lot?
Do you think you were
Acting Christian?
What has that
Got to do with it?

10.4.4 Bad Monk

He wears a coarse robe
Of brown burlap
His head is shaved
And he is silent
He works in the fields
In the heat of the day
He picks oranges
Atop high ladders

And makes marmalade
The following morning
To give to the
Orphans and widows
To bring a smile
To their little faces
He kneels down
For the midnight prayers
This is how he spends
Most of his days
What a waste
He could be pulling
A 6 figure salary
As a professional gambler
If he would just
Jump the border
And steal someone's identity
No questions would be asked
He would only be taking
A job Americans
Are unwilling to do

10.4.5 Religion of Isolation

God loves me
And my family
He doesn't like you
He chose to save me
No matter what I do
I am one of the few
Who get to go

To Heaven
God didn't choose you
So you got to Hell
I cannot explain
Why God makes
Those decisions
But we have no right
To contest it
I don't have to care
That all my friends
And coworkers
Are unbelievers
I believe they
Have been specifically
Chosen to suffer
For all eternity
It is all set in stone
And it doesn't matter
How you or I act
You are one of those
Who haven't been chosen
I will not associate with you
Because I am better
We have exclusive clubs
And we make more money
Our kids will be
Your kids bosses
God has blessed us
For His reasons
We have enough members
We are not interested

In your salvation
We will try to punish you
By creating laws
That are based on our
Odd view of life
We think everyone
Should follow our beliefs
No matter if they believe
Or not

10.4.6 Worldly

The whole world
Is Going to Hell
Except the members
Of my church
If you don't believe
Just like us
In our warped
View of Scripture
There is no hope
For you
Those who are
Not among us
Die their hair
Bright colors
They paint their fingernails
All solid black
They have piercing
And they have tattoos
They read Harry Potter

And listen to
Liberal radio broadcasts
And non Christian music
They have parties
And watch movies
They watch TV
And use the Internet
They drink alcohol
Outside of communion
No one like that
Would dare come to
Our church

10.4.7 Who Can Help Themselves

God will only help you
If you can help yourself
You are only saved
If you are rich
God always blesses you
In a purely financial way
Christian charity
Means having a job
That pays a lot of money
If you can do this
By your own skills
Then God will help you
God looks down on
Those who are lazy
Who we can determine
By those who make

Only a little money
Money follows grace
The point of following
All of God's commands
Is to get rich
If you weren't gaining anything
Then why would you
Go to all the effort
Of going to church
And raising money
To send your kids
To camp in the summer?

10.5 Capitalism and Atheism

10.5.1 Un American

Conservatives say that
It is un American
To challenge the power
Of multinational corporations
But how American
Are these companies?
They don't pay any taxes
To the American government
They don't employ US workers
They are invested in by
Unstable dictatorships
Countries in the Middle East
Their bank accounts are in

Offshore islands
Or Swiss banks

10.5.2 Democracy vs. Capitalism

Our enemy during the cold war
Was communism
And millions died for this cause
But what were we fighting for?
Democracy isn't the opposite of communism
Anymore than medicine
Is the opposite of sociology
How could people be against communism?
A more equitable distribution of wealth
Should fit in comfortably
In a country with a distribution of power
What we were really fighting was dictatorship
But we supported other dictators
The only thing that differentiated
Our "communist" enemies from
Our dictator friends
Was who would open their markets
Their raw materials and cheap labor
To multi-national corporations
To sap every drop of possible profit from
The reality is that no one has ever
Or would ever give up power willingly
The only reason why we can speak freely
In America is because our souls
Are bought and paid for in full
The only way the government would allow

Government that is voted in office
Is if they had absolute control over the media
We can say whatever we want in America
So long as no one hears it or doesn't act on it

10.5.3 Freedom and Terror

We are afraid of being attacked without warning
We lost 3,000 of our people
Those in the Middle East are tired of being victims
Of American violence
We have killed off hundreds of thousands of them
And we are fighting the wrong nation
It is just like how the police in America
Don't bother to solve crimes
But rather find the nearest person of color
To be a scapegoat to appease the grieving
Who is really a threat to who?
A few thousand poor people
With improvised weapons living in tents
Or the most wealthy nation in the world
Which has the capability to fight the entire
Rest of the world together and win
We spend more in a day on war
Than our entire annual budget for education
The president thinks it is a waste of money
To offer free medical care for the poor
But keeps on donating money to the rich
Who have drove their companies into the ground
We spend more on software
That we could get a better version for free

Than the annual salary of the person
Operating the computer
In a third world country
Our kids take drugs to escape from reality
And that finances the Middle Eastern terrorists
We invade their country but won't
Destroy the crops that it comes from
For fear of alienating ourselves from the locals
There is an easy solution
It is against the religious beliefs of those
Who are growing the drugs to continue with it
So all we need to do is guarantee them the same money
From selling something that is not a drug
But our government is really afraid of
Alienating the multi-national corporations
That got the government elected

10.5.4 More than Bread

Man does not live on bread alone
What is best for man
Is not limited to what is best
For his taste-buds
And for his sensual enjoyment
A person has more needs
Than food clothing and shelter
Man needs a good relationship
With God with other people
And with the animals and plants
And his entire ecosystem
Which is primarily spiritual

What we see is not all there is
What we can sense is not eternal
Satisfying our feelings
And maintaining physical health
Is not the entire picture
People have hearts and souls
They need to help others
They need to give of themselves
This may not be a balanced accounting
In the realm of money
But the heart and the soul
Have needs as well
What the body craves can actually
Destroy the mind
What the mind craves can
Destroy the heart
We need to know there is more
To life than eating and sleeping
What we need to be satisfied
Is in the giving of ourselves
To our Heavenly Father first
In humility and reverence
And to those who are in need
Who are physically, emotionally, or spiritually
Hungry and malnourished
We need to sacrifice our own needs
So that we both may live better lives
It is bad to be a slave to work
But it is worse to be a slave to your belly
This is the problem
With solutions to problems

That are only economic
This is why communism and capitalism
Both fail at improving lives
Like treating medical problems
Without awareness of the patients minds
Does not guarantee good health
It does not matter how much money
You have or how protected you are
If you cannot make the lives
Of anyone else better
Than how can you call yourself human?
Even animals help other animals in need
Even plants provide for life
Giving of themselves
And returning the resources back
When they part with life
The point of a business is to make money
At least theoretically
And a corporation only has a responsibility
To its shareholders
There is nothing to be gained
By society as a whole
Even if the business advances technology
Or extends our lives
Because it is doing it at the cost
Of other people and animal's welfare
To live happy and fulfilling lives
We do not need cell phones
Or computer games
Having a more powerful military
Does not guarantee we will win wars

Having the best education system
Does not mean there will be no crime
Immunizing people against diseases
Does not guarantee a long life
Man does not live on bread alone

10.5.5 Conscience

Some people say we need
Objective standards to live by
So that we can all agree
On what is right and wrong
We make all these turns of logic
And people are then
Afraid to make choices
Or more likely turned off by
Ethics in particular
Or philosophy in general
We do not need to understand
The phenomenology of Hegel
To know what is right
Is it surprising that basic laws
Are similar across belief systems
And that people still find
The Bible is relevant to them?
Is it a wonder that atheists
Are much more likely
To be afraid of death?
There are absolutes
And this does not mean
That we can be objective

But rather that the Creator
Of the multi-verses
Actually exists
That we are responsible
For our own actions
Whether or not we claim
We didn't understand
Do businessmen really
Believe if being honest
That killing off an entire species
Or leveling an entire forest
Or experimenting on animals
Or wiping out an entire civilization
Is not wrong?
People lie and rationalize
God doesn't

10.5.6 Logic and Religion

Why do we need rules?
Why can we just live
By doing what helps ourselves?
How do we define
What helps ourselves?
Is there no such thing as generosity?
Do we think that all our desires
Could be satisfied on our own?
Could we have a society
Where everyone did whatever
Gained him the most
And ignored the spiritual dimension?

Spiritual forces are at play
And are involved in every thought
And action we make
Denying that there is a God
Does not make it so
And getting rid of religion
Because some people abused it
Does not solve the real problem
The real problem is that
When we seek to satisfy
Our own desires
And do not keep our focus on God
And on those in need
Our desires escalate
First, we are fed with bread
Then, all we want is cake
Then all we want to have is a job
Then all we want is to be middle class
Then all we want is a car
Then all we want is a house
Then all we want is a wife
Then all we want is a family
But seeking all these
For the benefit of just yourself
Adds up to a very sad world
That no one would want to live in
Do you ever wonder what
Car companies would do
If wheel technology was patented?
How would we communicate
If the English language was copyrighted?

What if libraries were illegal?
How could people afford to do research?
What if we didn't have free education?
What if there were no scholarships?
The point is that even the universe
Did not come out of a vacuum
We are all interrelated to each other
And we all have had help
No one is a self made man
Businesses get more government money
Than those on welfare
We need to see to our whole
Community and its welfare
If we are to live in peace with each other

10.5.7 On Marx and Engels

Communism has failed
And yet it has never actually been tried
We associate freedom
With domination by monopolies
And morality with corruption
The whole world is oriented
Around how to make a few people
Even richer than they are now
The only developments we see
Are first applied to warfare
Or they receive no funds
We want to minimize our losses
But if they are not Americans
We don't care how many suffer

Even those who are our allies
Unless they are white
We are only limited in
The deployment of violence
By our fear of retaliation
But that is not great
In a world we dominate
In every sense of the word
We can afford to launch
Preventative wars against countries
Who are driven by morality
Just because we have no values
We think freedom is about money
And the only sin is enjoying sex
We think that people's behavior
In their bedrooms
Is more important than what
Others do in boardrooms
We think we are so different
Than our greatest enemies
But we really see life the same way
They only hate us because we are rich
And we only persecute them
Because we use different vocabulary
Giving money to those in need
Is considered corruption
And our only values
Are about saving money
Because their may be inefficiency
In the government running welfare
We get rid of it entirely

There is less and less of a middle class
And people only think they are
Because they keep changing
The meaning of the word
We are continuing to get poorer
More in spirit than money
But we keep on voting
For those who created our problems
The word liberal is so vilified
That the average American
Thinks the poor should be punished
We keep on taxing alcohol and tobacco
With no restraint
And no one speaks out for the poor
But even our poor
Are rich by the world's standards
But no one considers Africa
Or anywhere there isn't oil
We only treat those in the
Middle East as people
To the extent that we
Are addicted to oil
We know we are running out
But it is considered un-American
To use alternatives or to conserve
American values consumerism
Most our economy is based on spending
The only thing our government
Asks of us is to get ourselves into debt
For things we don't need
Or even care much about

The ideas of Marx and Engels
Are very much alive
Their solution would never work
But their statement of the problem
Is as relevant today as when
They first wrote it
The difference is that the proletariat
Is in the Third World
But anyone who isn't white
We really have no time for

10.5.8 Marxism is Defeated

We have long since defeated
What we call communism
And yet we still think it alive
And fear it alone
Basically we equate any idea
Of justice or peace
As a ruse to a dictatorship
The only people we trust
Are the cowards that send
Our children to war
And spend their time in office
Finding ways to make themselves richer
With no thought as to the consequences
We think that war means peace
And that evil is good
We claim to be a Christian nation
And yet our values
Are whatever makes the most money

We don't care if the corporations
Control the government
We call this democracy
And claim that is what we fight for
But the only people that win
Are those supplying the weapons
Our heads of state are capitalists
And the only thing that motivates them
Is the interests of those with
The most money
Because they never spend any of it
But on charities that get them more money
They are considered good and moral
We think that every rich man
Got his wealth by his work alone
And the only way God blesses us
Is by making us materially rich
Christ would be a liberal
And that makes Christians mad
Because that means they are in the wrong
They are too busy persecuting
Those who look Middle Eastern to them
Than to think about compassion or humility
They see Christ as a conqueror
Basically Rome is their God
They only pray to God
Because they think that will help them
Win more wars
Like a superstition they pick and choose
Obscure references and equate them
With invented meanings

They are right on every detail
Of every subtlety of cultural meaning
And yet miss the main ideas

10.6 What Faith Means to Genuine Devotees

10.6.1 Types of Religious People

Reasons for Conversion

One of the downsides, to the dominance of historians, who have an anti-supernatural bias, is that much of the world, throughout history and most of the world today is religious and they usually underestimate the significance of religion. Many people choose different religions, for different reasons. Some people convert to a religion, because they are opportunists and they believe that they will do better financially and/or politically. This can be because they believe in the supernatural, and they think that one God is more powerful than another.

Another reason would be that they believe that the religion will serve the purpose of their career advancement by means of a socially powerful force. Some people, though, actually believe the religion to be true and to be either the only way to God or a much better faith, because it makes their life better, or it makes other people's lives better. Often times, either way, that political loyalty and religious loyalty imply ones loyalty to one as loyalty to both.

When Faith is Ultimate Loyalty

But, oftentimes, if the person is genuinely devoted to the religion and not just, to what it gets them, or their country, then the religion is more important to them and their loyalties will be religious, at the cost of

patriotism, family ties, or fame/money. I, for instance consider myself to be loyal to the Christian God, and that even my family comes after that.

This often scares non-religious and religious people alike, because a lot of people, with supreme loyalty to their faith will do whatever they think their religion tells them to do, even if this can result in irrational and unpredictable behaviors. For most people, who really understand their religion, as a consistent worldview and have enough common sense, not to do what one particular scripture says, without factoring in the main concepts of their faith, (which are generally moral and productive to stable societies) there is little to worry about, especially in the unpredictability factor.

10.6.2 Characteristics of Genuine Devotee

Predictability

There is always going to be a certain instability, when you start factoring in faith, because part of faith is going beyond the rational, into things that cannot be proved, as that is what the word faith literally means. But to people, who follow a major branch of their faith, are not creative in a dangerous way, and not person that likes taking unnecessary risks, people of faith can, at the very least, be predictable. Really, the same kind of person, who you would not trust, if they were a person motivated by prestige or money is the same kind of person you wouldn't trust, who is motivated by faith.

Some people will be irrational, regardless of motivation and having someone of faith on your side means, at least, there is some kind of a moral angle in the motivation, which makes their loyalty much more predictable and also makes them more worthy of trust. A person motivated by just money or what they think is good for a group of people can be just as

irrational and divided in loyalty, as someone of faith, who is not in their right mind and is unreasonable, in the logic, used in defense of their doctrines.

Any belief system that is moral will have good reasons for their doctrines, that can be understood, by others, who don't believe. Someone, who is open with their beliefs, is very likely to be extremely honest and public in their practice, if they really believe that their faith is legitimate. Fundamentally, a genuine person of faith is much more transparent and consistent, if not more moral, than those motivated by nationalistic or career advancement reasons.

More Willing to Follow

People easily find other ways, to get what they want, for them or their group, when their motivation goes no higher and they meet an impasse. But a person of genuine, rational, and open faith is someone who puts socially useful limits, on what they will do, to push an agenda. The only situation, in which you wouldn't want to trust a person of faith is when you are both doing things that are immoral and you pressure the person of faith to take part in this. As far as Christianity is concerned, the Bible very clearly says for us to follow all laws, unless we cannot do what the Bible commands.

The bottom line is that a person of faith is the kind of person that follows rules, that are given by others, even if they don't want to follow them. They are willing to sacrifice their immediate desires, for what they believe is more important morally, in the long run. The only way you can get an opportunist to do so, is by convincing them, that following laws, gets them their objective or that their objective would be undermined, by their breaking the rules.