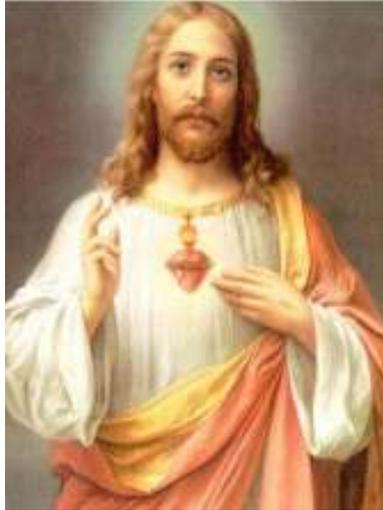


AND WHAT OF RELIGION?



by

Campbell M Gold

CMG Archives

<http://www.campbellmgold.com>

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Introduction

The following is in response to recent client questions about religion.

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Religion

This is an important issue, and one that the parapsychologist must be very clear about in his mind. Religion can hamper man's spiritual development, especially when the religion's god is an absentee landlord who sets laws in opposition by granting man's freedom, then condemning man when freedom is exercised. Unfortunately, all of the "formal" religions that I have ever encountered fall into the above scenario, and because god was absent, man created one in his own image. Xenophane (c. 430-354 BC), ridiculing the traditional views of the gods, said: "If oxen and lions had hands, they would make statues of their gods in their own image."

I look around and I find that the universe is the macrocosm, the child is the microcosm, and the adult is too often the debris after the illusion of religion has supplanted reality. Looking through the eyes of a child, all is seen to be bright, alive, and possible. Looking through the eyes of an adult, all is sterile and acting in obedience. When does the child die into the adult? When they no longer see the magic of life teaming through everything. When does the adult die? When they no longer recognises life. I put my hand into the hand of God, and I was led into a world of darkness, restriction, guilt, sin, pain, and payment for suffering. I put my hand

into the hand of a child, and I was led into a world of light, colour, love, joy, peace, happiness, and freedom.

Religion, with its absolute rules and punishments for disobedience denies life and embraces death. How can the embracing of such nihilism ever engender spiritual growth? The answer is, it cannot. As Jonathan Swift said: "We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another." On the other hand, I think that religion has done love a great service by making it a sin.

On the surface, religion may seem to proffer definitions to spiritual phenomena, and thus disciples are attracted. To create a popular religion, it is only necessary for a superstition to enslave a philosophy (Karl Marx said, "Religion is the opium of the people."). However, when religion is examined closely it is found to be a power-based pyramidal organisation to extract and exploit energy from the adherent membership. Thus, the religions organisational structure elevates the honchos at the expense of the adherents. A typical cry of such organisations is, "only sacrifice will bring forth the blessings of heaven." So only after a life of sacrifice and giving, will the individual be able to enter the kingdom of god. As Menander (C. 342-292 BC) said, "Whom the gods love, dies young."

Does this sound familiar? Do the faithful reach heaven after death? Who cares - nobody has ever come back to complain!

This is good business, and by exploiting the individuals "fear of damnation", a religion can squeeze a fortune out of its membership (in vain have I searched the universe for a self-financing God). Saint Fulgentius (468-533) said, "Hold most firmly, and doubt not that not only all the pagans, but also all Jews, heretics, and schismatics who depart from their present life outside the Catholic Church, are about to go into eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." Fear is indeed the great tool of religion, and only the greater tool of knowledge can resist and overcome it.

Religion claims services and results that they cannot and have no right to deliver. Thus it is that "gods" who are no gods exert influence upon, and take energy from the physical plane, and, in consequence, the human race are demeaned and exploited through ignorance. Unfortunately, it is a sad fact that many wars - too many wars - have been fought to prove that "my God is better than your God". Man has a unique view of religion; he would rid the world of religious bigotry and prejudice, and then passionately defend, unto death, his source religion. Conclusion - in all this, there can be no room for spiritual development.

Hell hath no fury like a churchman whose dogma is questioned. Consequently, each religion jealously guards its god, its dogma, and its assets (especially human assets) and vehemently rejects being questioned. As Pope Leo XIII said: "The equal toleration of all religions is the same thing as atheism."

The question is often asked: "Who is the 'Head' or the 'Chief' of the Gods?" In answer to this question, I simply say: "Of all the names that are found upon the earth, the one that is used, spoken, and publicly written more than any other is the name: 'Coca-Cola'. This then must be the Chief God."

Fortunately, for the enlightened individual, all religions die of one disease, that of being found out. As Lloyd M. Graham said, "(commenting on Pilate's trial of Jesus - (Matt 27:1-24)) In the nineteenth century an eminent scholar, Rabbi Wise, searched the records of Pilate's court, still extant, for evidence of this trial. He (Rabbi Wise) found nothing. And if we were as wise as Pilate, we too would wash our hands of it."

However, be careful, as Euripides (484-406 BC) says: "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad." Thus, man must accept responsibility for himself. There is no meaning to life except the meaning that man gives his life, and that meaning is by the unfolding of man's powers.

Lloyd M. Graham goes on to say, "There were many historians just then (around the time of Christ), and some of them the most illustrious of all time - Tacitus, Plutarch, Livy, the two Plinys, Philo, and Josephus, among others; and besides these, many men of literary note such as Seneca, Martial, Juvenal, Epictetus, Plotinus, and Porphyry. We are all too prone to forget the brilliancy of this period, yet this was the age of Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, the latter living till Christ, if real, would have been twenty-two (Christ would have been 22). These were all men of great intellect, and deeply interested in the doctrines and morals of their day. Why then did they not record this wonder-working Saviour of the race? Because, like all Saviours, he belongs to mythology, not history."

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) said: "I call Christianity the one great curse, the one enormous and innermost perversion, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means are too venomous, too underhand, too underground and too petty - I call it the one immoral blemish of mankind."

The philosophy of religion consists of false knowledge due mainly to misunderstood 'scripture' and loud ranting by ignorant proponents. Right understanding comes from knowing, not just believing. 'The near future (The Aquarian dawn) is bringing with it a metaphysical revolution, not a religious one. This metaphysical revolution will herald the return of the wisdom-knowledge of the cosmos. Already, man is besieging this physically; he must also besiege it mentally and spiritually. This will bring him that new dimension of consciousness, that cosmic personal-identity, and right orientation with 'reality' so long denied him by religion. Religion, as we know, is sacred to millions, but a shock upon our minds is long overdue. This new age whose keynote is self-responsibility, demands that mankind now be given the opportunity of choice and self-determination, even if our new-found knowledge and power prove to be our undoing.

Science has done more for the development of western civilisation in 100 years, than the Christian religion did in 1800 years. The Christian religion (typical of religion) is not only opposed to the scientific spirit; it is opposed to every other form of rational thinking.

Yes, from the above, there is no doubt in my mind that religion can seriously hamper man's spiritual progress.

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A PARABLE

GOD SEARCH

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The industrial revolution had come and gone; the silicon chip had come and gone; the Gallium-A chip had come and gone; the Atomic-Slice chip had come and gone; and then, finally, that which everyone had been waiting for arrived - the Bitronic Chip. Technology had matured to an infinite level by the integration of Bio-Engineering and Sub-Atomic electronics, and the reality was unlimited storage of information in a microscopic matrix of primal ooze.

The new technology was put to work and the JCN computer was born. However, this was no ordinary computer, for within JCN's infinite memory was room for all of man's knowledge; and within JCN's infinite processing power lay the last hope, and the last key - a key to turn man's future back on.

The problem was that man was dying because he thought that knew everything - well almost everything, and there was only one question, the "final question", that man had not yet answered. And as the flickering flame of meaningless existence waned, man reached out his trembling hands to the universe for the answer to the "final question".

Thus it was that mankind's trembling hands had become John's trembling hands as he entered the "final question" into the JCN Computer.

The "final question" was only four words long and it read, "**IS THERE A GOD?**"

John pressed the enter key with finality, and it was done - there was nothing more to do but wait.

Time stopped and lifeless eyes stared at JCN's monitor.

Then it was there; the answer was there; the answer was written on JCN's monitor; and the lifeless eyes began to read...

There were only three words on the monitor, and they read, "**THERE IS NOW!**"

(*The Search for God*, Campbell M Gold, 1994)

End

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<http://www.campbellmgold.com>

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