

Forcing Change



I Promise... To Be Politically Correct

- The Great Commission and Religious Pluralism -

By Carl Teichrib (www.forcingchange.org)

“We believe that the churches have not yet grasped the full implication of this decisive ‘ecumenical dimension.’ They have not fully realized that a *costly unity* requires a *costly commitment* to one another.”

- World Council of Churches, *Costly Commitment*, par. 17. [italics in original]

“...after intra-Protestant and intra-Christian ecumenism we have irrevocably reached the third ecumenical dimension, ecumenism of the world religions!” - Hans Kung, Preface to *The Meaning of Other Faiths*, p.10.

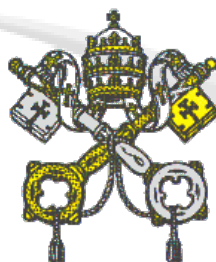
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Carl Teichrib, Editor.



**World Council
of Churches**



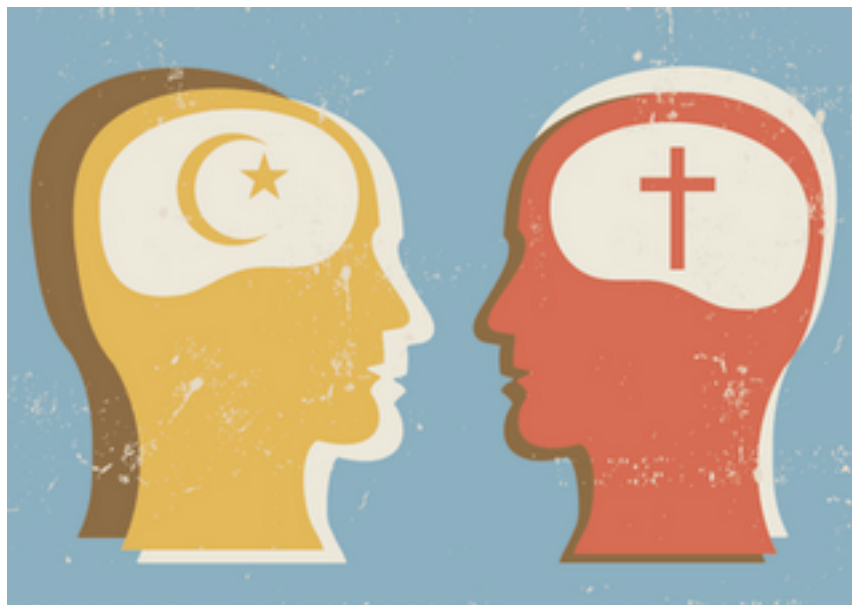
WEA
WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

Christian missions is poised to change. Indeed, social forces on many fronts have already impacted missions at various levels. However, if three main bodies in Christendom have their way, Christian missions will shift even more: It will become “politically correct” for a multi-faith, global society.

On July 14th, 2010, I gave a presentation at the Harbour Shores Worldview Bootcamp in Cicero, Indiana. The title of my talk was “Truth Challenge,” and the presentation swirled around an interlocking array of cultural trends, the impact of Masonic and Theosophical philosophies, and socio-religious changes taking place in the Western world – and how these challenges collide with the Great Commission: The proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the making of disciples (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8).

During this talk I spent some time on the anticipated Code of Conduct for Conversion (CCC), a project initially sponsored by the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the World Council of Churches. The purpose of the CCC was to develop an agreed-upon ethical code for Christian missions in a multi-faith world. Not surprisingly, the meeting that initiated the CCC project was interfaith in actuality and intent. Here is an excerpt from an early press release,

“We, the participants in the inter-faith reflection on ‘Conversion: Assessing the Reality’, met at Lariano (Italy) on May 12-16, 2006. We, 27 of us, belong to Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Yoruba religion. We shared our views and experiences on this important subject over five days of co-living in the peaceful, idyllic and spiritually vibrant surroundings of Villa Mater Dei – a kind of inter-faith pilgrimage, brief but fulfilling. Our deliberations were intense, and took place in an atmosphere of cordiality, mutual respect and commitment to learn from one another’s spiritual heritage, which together constitute the common inheritance of the entire humankind.” [1]



A series of background recommendations flowed from this initial meeting. These points expressed the heartbeat of a longed-for guideline on doing Christian-missions, one that was more in-tune with a multi-religious global society. Recommendations 1, 3, 4, and 10 are reprinted below.

- 1) "All of us believe that religions should be a source of uniting and ennobling of humans. Religion, understood and practiced in the light of the core principles and ideals of each of our faiths, can be a reliable guide to meeting the many challenges before humankind."
- 3) "We affirm that while everyone has a right to invite others to an understanding of their faith, it should not be exercised by violating other's rights and religious sensibilities. At the same time, all should heal themselves from the obsession of converting others."
- 4) "Freedom of religion enjoins upon all of us the equally non-negotiable responsibility to respect faiths other than our own, and never to denigrate, vilify or misrepresent them for the purpose of affirming superiority of our faith."
- 10) "We see the need for and usefulness of a continuing exercise to collectively evolve a 'code of conduct' on conversion, which all faiths should follow. We therefore feel that inter-religious dialogues on the issue of conversion should continue at various levels." [2]

Sadly, Christian missions has had, and continues to have, examples of misconduct and unethical behavior – both when measured against the Biblical standard, and in the eyes of the world [3]. Christian missions, like all endeavors, is touched by human hands. Generally speaking this means that goodness and truth are evident, but sinful actions will also be realized. This is the unfortunate reality of human nature. However, according to our multi-faith culture, the notion of "sin" now includes those actions that cause division and dissension in a politically correct environment. Proclaiming the exclusive message of Jesus Christ, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me," is an example of "sin" within the context of our "new world civilization."

This brings us back to the CCC idea. Essentially, what is being said is this: Christian missions must act according to politically correct standards in a multi-faith context. Fifteen months after the Vatican and the World Council on Churches held their first interfaith meeting on "Conduct," the World Evangelical Alliance gave notification that it would officially involve itself with the program. WEA General Secretary, Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe, "gave his full approval." [4]

Involvement by the WEA is significant as the organization represents some 600 million people around the globe. This representation comes through national and regional Evangelical bodies, such as the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada – the national arm of the WEA in Canada, and an umbrella group for hundreds of evangelical churches in my country. The National Association of Evangelicals is the WEA arm in the United States. Furthermore, the WEA is affiliated and partnered to a multitude of para-church groups and missionary agencies.

With the WEA on board, the bulk of "Christendom" was now represented through these three Code of Conversion partners; Roman Catholicism through the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the World Council of Churches (which takes in a huge swath of Orthodox, Protestant, and Anabaptist denominations), and the World Evangelical Alliance - entailing the majority of the Evan-

gelical community. According to a *Christian Today Australia* article, this tripartite partnership represents “more than 90 per cent of the world’s total Christian population.” [5]

Christian Witness

During my presentation at the Worldview Bootcamp, I noted that the final Code of Conduct was to be released during 2010, according to the documentation available at the time. I was wrong. The final report was announced in late June of this year, and was hailed as an “historic” development.

Titled, *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World*, this short document lays out a framework for “missions” in a pluralistic society.

Upon examining the first section of the report, the text affirms the basis of Christian witness in the context of Jesus Christ – “the supreme witness” – and the sharing of the “good news of God’s Kingdom.” It also contends that, “The example and teaching of Jesus Christ and of the early church must be the guides for Christian mission. For two millennia Christians have sought to follow Christ’s way by sharing the good news of God’s Kingdom.”

Much of the rest of the document then tries to connect this Biblical platform with an interfaith mindset. As point four of the Preamble reads; “Christian witness in a pluralistic world includes engaging in dialogue with people of different religions and cultures.” The Scripture passage used to back-up the statement was Acts 17:22-28, the experience of Paul in Athens.

However, what Paul did in Athens *doesn’t reflect today’s pluralistic dialogue*. Yes, Paul recognized the spiritual condition of the city, he engaged people in the marketplace and at the Areopagus, and he used the Athenian religious worldview – not to enter into multi-faith “dialogue,” which intentionally refrains from acts of conversion – but as a springboard to present the unpopular gospel message; The

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character of the true God, repentance, judgment, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This wasn't "engaging in dialogue with people of different religions," but proclaiming the message of the true Redeemer. However, how Paul handled this multi-religious Athenian setting was exemplary. He tactfully used his knowledge of the cultural and religious mindset as leverage to present a message that many rejected, and few accepted. There was nothing in this encounter that remotely comes close to our modern, interfaith idea of "dialogue," where the proclamation of personal repentance and judgment is considered *politically incorrect*.



While parts of the Preamble sound appropriate, its overall weakness demonstrates that the authors of *Christian Witness* had a hard time capturing theologically solid points. This was further evident in the Principles section. Here, the wording spoke of "acting in God's love" and to "love... neighbour as themselves," and sharing the love of Jesus Christ and "giving glory and honour to God."

All of this is fine, but missing from the text was a definitive declaration of Christian missions: To make disciples (Matthew 28:19), and to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8) – acts that involve more than factually correct, yet nebulous phrases. Rather, the heart of Christian missions was demonstrated in Acts 2, a direct fulfillment of Christ's command in Acts 1 to "be witnesses to Me." In Acts 2, Peter boldly lays out the truth of Jesus' death (at the hands of those in the audience!), and His resurrection and unsurpassed exaltation. Cut to the heart, the people responded with a question: What should we do? Peter's answer wasn't couched in political sidestepping, rather it was bold and straight to the point: *Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins* (Acts 2:38). Peter then exhorted them, "Be saved from this perverse generation." (Acts 2:40).

Obviously, Peter and Paul never read *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World*, for if they had, they would have realized the intolerance of their approach, as Point 10 in the Principles section tells us "to acknowledge and appreciate what is true and good" in other religions, and to seek understanding of other's beliefs and practices. Principle 12 further explains:

"Christians should continue to build relationships of respect and trust with people of different religions so as to facilitate deeper mutual understanding, reconciliation and cooperation for the common good."

Respect is important, as is an understanding of other faiths. Paul provided a good example of this in Athens. But Paul wasn't involved in missions "to facilitate deeper mutual understanding" or for "the common good." It was to bring the knowledge of Jesus Christ and a call to repentance.

This brings up an important point. Although the *Christian Witness* document doesn't bridge the issue of repentance, except where Christians have employed "deception and coercive means," it does place a strong emphasis on *social activism* as "an integral part of witnessing to the gospel." In other

words, the Christian witness in our multi-faith world is primarily about a social platform. Principle 8 tells us,

“Christians are called to commit themselves to work with all people in mutual respect, promoting together justice, peace and the common good. Interreligious cooperation is an essential dimension of such commitment.”

Of course, you don't have to be a Christian to commit yourself to the above social platform. And that's the point. This is not the “Great Commission.” It is a broad call for political and social activism within an inter-religious context.

Similarly, the treatment of other religions is couched in a politically correct mindset. Principle 10 tells us,

“Christians are to speak sincerely and respectfully; they are to listen in order to learn about and understand others' beliefs and practices, and are encouraged to acknowledge and appreciate what is true and good in them. Any comment or critical approach should be made in a spirit of mutual respect, making sure not to bear false witness concerning other religions.”

Christians should “speak sincerely and respectfully,” and we should listen and work to understand other religions. Personally, my study of other religions, spiritual traditions, and philosophies has been beneficial. I can better understand the worldview of those whom I encounter, what drives them to act in certain ways, and what is meant when they say certain things. Thankfully, there are many helpful, Biblically-based tools you can use to better grasp world religions (one apologetic classic is Walter Martin's *Kingdom of the Cults*).

However, the basis of Principle 10 is fallacious. In a “religiously correct” manner, it assumes a measure of validity across the spectrum of beliefs. Are all religions and spiritual paths pure in motive? Are all good? Do all present truth? While all may contain a premises based on a *truth claim*, this doesn't mean truth exists in them. In fact, some religions include purposeful inversions. Here's one example; “Hate your enemies with a whole heart, and if a man smite you on the cheek, SMASH him on the other!; smite him hip and thigh, for self-preservation is the highest law!” (capitals in original, *The Satanic Bible*, p.33). Yes, the Church of Satan is a body of *religion* complete with worship and rites, and its message constitutes a theological position - “I am mine own redeemer.”

And what about “a spirit of mutual respect, making sure not to bear false witness concerning other religions”? At its core this revels in mushiness. Essentially, no one is to rock the boat by testing the underlying truth claims of other faiths, which is typical of the interfaith movement. Therefore, do not contest my conviction that Jesus Christ is “the way, the truth and the life,” and I will refrain from testing the truth claims of Joseph Smith, Mohammed, Bahá'u'lláh, or Elizabeth Claire Prophet. What matters is that we refrained from any conversation that might cause tension, and we can walk away feeling good about our mutual “faith encounter.”

The words of Jesus Christ comes to mind when He spoke with the religious leaders of his day; “*Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?*” (Matthew 23:33). And Elijah, one of many examples in the Old Testament, demonstrated the antithesis of Principle 10, for in his showdown with the prophets of Baal, Elijah openly *mocked* them and their deity (1 Kings 18:27). Then, after Baal failed to come through, Elijah had the the prophets seized and executed.

Harsh? Certainly - and I don’t suggest you mimic Elijah’s physical actions as a witnessing model! Don’t forget, Elijah’s showdown was a specific event dramatically authenticated by God as a demonstration to the people of Israel regarding the *seriousness* of their spiritual situation. But there is a contextual lesson for us: Elihah’s showdown was directly correlated to the question of *who is the true God within a multi-faith context*. “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” (1 Kings 18:21). A New Testament passage comes to mind,

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?” (1 Corinthians 6:14-16).

All of this brings us back to the document, *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World*. Starting with a relatively weak Preamble, the report moves to a set of Principles that sound good yet raise troubling questions regarding the motives of the CCC project. It then concludes with six recommendations that advocate the new and globally accepted direction for “Christian witness.” Each of the six points are reprinted below (bold in original).

1) **study** the issues set out in this document and where appropriate formulate guidelines for conduct regarding Christian witness applicable to their particular contexts. Where possible this should be done ecumenically, and in consultation with representatives of other religions.

2) **build** relationships of respect and trust with people of all religions, in particular at institutional levels between churches and other religious communities, engaging in ongoing interreligious dialogue as part of their Christian commitment. In certain contexts, where years of tension and conflict have created deep suspicions and breaches of trust between and among communities, interreligious dialogue can provide new opportunities for resolving conflicts, restoring justice, healing of memories, reconciliation and peace-building.

3) **encourage** Christians to strengthen their own religious identity and faith while deepening their knowledge and understanding of different religions, and to do so also taking into account the perspectives of the adherents of those religions. Christians should avoid misrepresenting the beliefs and practices of people of different religions.

4) **cooperate** with other religious communities engaging in interreligious advocacy towards justice and the common good and, wherever possible, standing together in solidarity with people who are in situations of conflict.

5) **call** on their governments to ensure that freedom of religion is properly and comprehensively respected, recognizing that in many countries religious institutions and persons are inhibited from exercising their mission.

6) **pray** for their neighbours and their well-being, recognizing that prayer is integral to who we are and what we do, as well as to Christ's mission. [6]

Does this sound like the Great Commission? To make disciples and baptize (Matthew 28:19)? To be a witness to Jesus Christ as exemplified in the book of Acts? To acknowledge the true and living God, as expressed in the Book of Isaiah?

“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; Besides Me *there is* no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared *it*? You *are* My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed *there is* no other Rock; I know not *one*.’” (Isaiah 44:6-8).

The Christian mission should be done in a way that is discerning, tactful, and with sensitivity to the people – including knowledge of the culture and religious context of the community, like Paul in Athens. But it shouldn't be done in a manner that minimizes the character of the true God, the sinful nature of Man, and the act of redemption through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, the new direction of missions as envisaged by this tripartite project, appears to do just that.

Today's *Christian Witness*, as propagated by the Vatican, the World Council of Churches and the World Evangelical Alliance, is not a “new way” of doing missions – it's simply a politically correct way of walking with the world. **FC**

Endnotes:

1. *Report from inter-religious consultation on “Conversion – assessing the reality,”* World Council of Churches, May 16, 2006.

2. Ibid.

3. A general example of this duality would be corruption: Corruption breaks the Biblical standard, but it's also recognized by the world as unethical, even as the world employs corrupt practices. This is not to say that Christian missions is corrupt in a general sense, but when specific allegations of corruption come to light, it is viewed by both camps – Christian and non-Christian – as repugnant.

4. “Christian code of conduct on religious conversion wins broader backing,” World Council of Churches, press release, August 15, 2008.

5. Maria Mackay, “Evangelicals, ecumenists and Vatican launch historic joint document on mission,” *Christian Today Australia*, 29 June 2011.

6. *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct* (World Council of Churches, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and the World Evangelical Alliance, 2011), p.6.

REDEFINING JESUS CHRIST:

The Biblical Jesus Versus The Counterfeits

Editor's Note: Chris Lawson has done an excellent job comparing the counterfeit Christ's to the Biblical Jesus in this article. Such an essay, which highlights the basic tenants of faith in Christ, is a good reminder to re-examine our own beliefs - this is especially true when Christendom itself is confused over who Jesus Christ is.

By Christopher Lawson (www.spiritual-research-network.com)

*And Jesus answered and said to them:
"Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name,
saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.
(Matthew 24:4-5)*

More than any other time in history, the world today is filled with false ideas and concepts of who Jesus Christ really is. What Paul the Apostle called "another Jesus, a different spirit, and different gospel" has plagued the world. The purpose of this article is to point us back to the Bible and back to the Biblical Jesus!

FALSE IDEAS ABOUT JESUS

With full force, people on all six continents and from every walk of life have defined anew the biblical Jesus Christ.

For example, the polytheistic cult of Mormonism has 'another Jesus' that is supposedly 'the spirit brother of Lucifer' and one who 'attained godhood.' The Mormon Church teaches that all male Mormons can become gods, just like the Mormon Jesus purportedly did. Every Mormon missionary we have asked in the last 15 years has agreed to this. Hinduism, a runner-up to Mormonism's pantheon of little gods, apparently has some 330 million gods. The Jesus of Hinduism is just one more 'avatar' among many. Countless variations of the Hindu Jesus are becoming more popular than ever in Western nations. The mystical Hindu Jesus even promotes "Christian Hinduism," "Christian Yoga" and "Christian visualization."

Talk show host and promoter of New Age authors and books, Oprah Winfrey, also has her take on re-defining Jesus. However, Oprah televises it publicly for millions upon millions of viewers. Oprah has boldly declared on national television, "There couldn't possibly be just one way [to God]." In direct defiance of Scripture, Oprah claims that Jesus Christ "cannot be the only way to God." Oprah's own words are diametrically opposed to the Christ of Scripture who claimed, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6)

The New Testament declares that salvation is through the Biblical Jesus Christ alone, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The Apostles of Scripture not only followed Jesus, they bowed down and worshipped Him, and Jesus did not stop them from doing so. The Apostles testified that this Jesus was *the Christ*, the one that the Scriptures foretold would come — the Jewish Messiah whom Moses spoke of (Deuteronomy 18:15-19). As we shall see, there is only one real Savior of mankind, the historical *Jesus of Nazareth* who is called [the] *Christ* (Heb. *Messiah*). According to the Scriptures He is the LORD God of the universe.

WORSHIPPING FALSE IDEAS ABOUT JESUS

Far too many people today ignorantly receive and worship ‘another Jesus’ — a counterfeit Christ who cannot save sinners from sin, the power of Satan, or hell. Preferring to recognize Jesus as ‘just another prophet for our own age,’ people everywhere are saying the wrong things about Jesus. In fact, the late Palestinian leader Yassar Arafat considered Jesus to be a non-Jewish Palestinian. This lie has now grown into Jesus being a “Palestinian Messiah.”

Many people involved with Witchcraft will tell you that Jesus was ‘a super witch.’ Eastern gurus and countless yoga instructors say that Jesus is a master guru who was ‘enlightened,’ or who realized the God-Self. Christian Science, a metaphysical mind science cult that employs a conglomeration of redefined Christian terminology and Hindu philosophy, teaches that Jesus was a man in tune with the *Divine Consciousness* - that He was not *the Christ*, but a *Divine idea*.

Jehovah’s Witnesses go so far as to teach that Michael the Archangel *became* Jesus and that “The man Jesus is dead, forever dead” [Charles T. Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 5, p. 454]. According to the Roman Catholic Church, ‘Jesus’ has been mystically transformed countless millions of times through transubstantiation. In the *Sacrifice of the Mass*, Roman Catholicism’s unbiblical version of Communion, Jesus literally, body, soul and spirit becomes a tiny bread wafer to be adored, eaten and ingested.

According to Islam and the *Quran*, Jesus of Nazareth was a ‘Prophet’ but not God’s Son, not the Savior of the world, and not God manifest in human flesh [God Incarnate]. This is completely contrary to what the bible teaches (John 1:1-5, 14; Hebrews 1).

To spirit mediums [necromancers, channelers, diviners, etc.], Jesus is ‘an advanced medium in the sixth sphere.’ The list goes on and on. Even Dan Brown, author of the fiction-called-fact *DaVinci Code* thriller blasphemously cast Jesus of Nazareth as one who had sexual relations with Mary Magdalene. Dan Brown’s ‘*DaVinci Code Jesus*’ is clearly not the New Testament Jesus of Nazareth but a Gnostic cult counterfeit — a fantasy ‘Jesus’ that is a blasphemous perversion of the Jesus of Scripture.



All these unbiblical Jesus's are simply *redefinitions* of the true Jesus. They are spiritual frauds, invented Christ's, different Jesus's.

ANOTHER JESUS, ANOTHER SPIRIT, ANOTHER GOSPEL?

In Paul's letter to the believers at Corinth, God the Holy Spirit led the Apostle [under divine inspiration] to warn, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)

Apparently there were Christians in the church at Corinth who were putting up with the false apostles who were preaching 'another Jesus, another spirit and another gospel.' It must be noted that those who bring a [qualitatively different] Jesus also bring 'a different spirit' and 'a different gospel.' These false, counterfeit church leaders were not from God the Holy Spirit, and they did not bring or preach the Gospel of God (Romans 1:1-5). The same is true today of all false teachers and false prophets.

SATAN'S JOY—MIXING LIES AND TRUTH

It is nothing less than the genius of Satan that is behind this mass perverting and counterfeiting of the real Jesus. It is the Devil who seeks to inoculate people against the real Jesus and it is the Devil that is behind all false teachers and false prophets. These people, like the Devil, mix lies with the truth. Sadly, those who are deceived do not know it. They are in spiritual bondage to occult power that has enslaved them in the cultic and occult system.

Jesus Himself said that Satan is the Father of lies. Jesus declared: "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." (John 8:44)

Satan seeks to delude people by promoting any type of misunderstanding of whom and what Jesus Christ really is. Satan knows this will lead people to a perverted view of God, a perverted understanding of who Jesus really is, and a perverted view of Christianity and salvation. Tragically, many ministers in our age are teaching false doctrine and living lifestyles that end up maligning the name of Christ before the Church and the unbelieving world.

PERSONAL FANCY OR SATANIC DELUSION?

Like some in the first century church, many people throughout history have accepted and put up with what is contrary to the clear teachings of Scripture. No doubt this has led to countless millions of people being led away from the clear teaching of the Biblical Jesus to a user-friendly, social gospel Jesus. This type of Jesus fits one's personal fancy, allowing ungodly living without deep contrition over sin that leads to repentance and change. This type of "Jesus" cannot save from sin because it is a false Jesus of one's vain imagination. Many more examples could be given of this type of satanic deception. Through this avenue of spiritual deceit in the name of Christ, untold millions have been led away from the real Jesus unto eternal damnation. Jesus, who was always led by the [Holy] Spirit of God, [who is the Spirit of Truth] (John 14:17;15:26; 16:13) said: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if

ye believe not that I am [He], ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24) Those who opposed Christ understood He was ascribing deity to Himself. (John 10:30-33)

FOR MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME

It was Jesus Himself who clearly warned that before His return at the end of the age, many would come in His name and 'deceive many.' This includes false teachers, false prophets, false apostles and false Christ's who profess to be Christians. Jesus answered his disciples and said unto them:

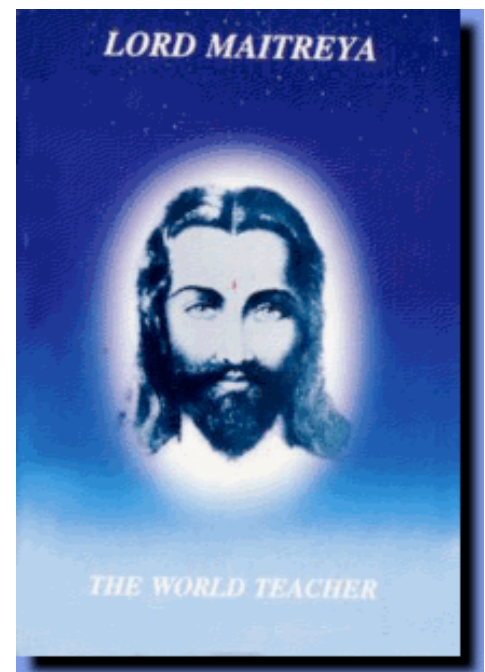
"Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many... Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christ's, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; in so much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." (Matthew 24:4, 5, 23-26)

Should we not pay more attention to what Jesus said the first sign of the end of the age and of His coming would be—spiritual deception in the name of Christ? Instead of being wide awake and discerning the times, many who profess to be Christian are part of the sleeping apostate Church—including "unsaved ministers"! Jesus' very own words about false Christ's and false prophets in the latter days are being fulfilled today. Only the ignorant and blind are failing to see this.

A DIFFERENT CHRIST FOR EVERYBODY?

Consider Benjamin Crème, New Age leader and founder of *Share International* [and the *Tara Centre*]. Crème, a spirit medium, claims to be the 'forerunner' of Maitreya, the New Age Christ. This New Age Christ is recognized by occultists, Freemasons, Buddhists, etc. all over the world. The *Share International* website for Maitreya boldly declares: "*Many now expect the return of their awaited Teacher, whether they call him the Christ, Messiah, the fifth Buddha, Krishna, or the Imam Mahdi. Millions now know that the Teacher who fulfills all these expectations is already living among us.*" [www.share-international.org]

There is an endless list of spiritual leaders, celebrities, occultists, so-called Christian 'prophets', etc., who redefine the Jesus of Scripture and invent new Jesus's to fit their own brand of theology and lifestyle. These people have done nothing but malign the real Jesus, destroy the Biblical message of salvation, and produce converts who are quickly indoctrinated into the kingdom of the cults and the world of occultism. It is amazing to think that the prophetic warnings of a man called Jesus of Nazareth, who claimed to be God and was worshipped *as Christ and God*, would have overwhelming fulfillment in the 21st century... two thousand years after He spoke them!



THE REAL JESUS OF SCRIPTURE

False prophets, false Christ's, self-proclaimed god-men, and supposedly reincarnated "enlightened ones" have come and gone; they have all died in their sins. Unlike all of them, the historical Jesus of Scripture, the prophesied Messiah of Israel, is the Savior of the world. He is able to save Jew and Gentile [non-Jew] alike. Jesus, the Eternal God, came [was incarnated] into this world as a sinless baby around 4BC. His birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection are the crowning "turning points" in world history. It was Jesus Christ's incarnation in human flesh that separated B.C. from A.D. The 'birth date' of every human being is even a testimony to the fact that Christ the Savior of the world has come. Jesus, who is called Immanuel [God with us] (Matthew 1:23), and whom His earthly mother Mary called "God my Savior" (Luke 1:47), has come!

It is a well known fact that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled over 300 prophecies concerning His birth, life, death on the cross, bodily resurrection, divine nature and purpose (Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Psalm 22; Zechariah 11:12-13; 13:7; Isaiah 9:6-7; 53; Psalm 16:10). No other person ever in human history has done this *or could do this!* For 2000 years the Jesus Christ of Scripture has been known by true believers in Christ to be God Incarnate – that is, Jehovah [Yahweh] God manifest in human flesh, Second Person of the divine, Triune Godhead. The Jesus of the Bible is 100% fully God and 100% fully man.

THE REAL JESUS — ETERNAL GOD

The Gospel of John is full of Christ's claims of deity while on earth. Twenty-three times in all we find our Lord's extremely meaningful "I AM" (*ego eimi*, Gr.) in the Greek text of this gospel (John 4:26; 6:20,35,41,48,51; 8:12,18,24,28,58; 10:7,9,11,14; 11:25; 13:19; 14:6; 15:1,5; 18:5,6,8).

A prime example of Jesus Himself declaring to be Eternal God is when He was refuting the Pharisees and He told them that He [Jesus] existed before Abraham was even born. "Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.' Then they took up stones to stone Him..." (John 8:58).

A rough translation could be rendered, "...before Abraham sprang into existence, I AM eternal God." Here Jesus declared Himself to be Yahweh, i.e., the LORD of the Old Testament. The exact same expression Jesus used for Himself (John 8:58) is basic to texts such as Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 32:39; Isaiah 41:4; 43:10 where God declared Himself to be the eternally pre-existent God who revealed Himself in the Old Testament to the Jews. This has been the biblical position which the Church has held for two thousand years now.

ATTACKING JESUS CHRIST

Those who reject the deity of Jesus Christ, are attacking HIM! He is the one that claimed to be Yahweh! His resurrection, the myriad of fulfilled prophecies, and much more, declare Him to be God Almighty! It is the cults, the liberal theologians, the Atheist's, the New Agers, and many more who are attacking the Deity of Jesus Christ; His very Personage is the at core of the issue and kingdom of darkness hates Him! Jesus alone is the Redeemer of mankind and His purpose in coming into our space-time domain was to deal with sin, save sinners and glorify God. He was the blood-atoning sacrifice for sinners who died on the cross as a Substitute in our place (Romans 5). He alone is the One that satisfied the due penalty

against sin that divine justice demanded. He suffered and paid the penalty for our sin so that we might be declared righteous (Romans 4; Galatians 2,3,4) before all Holy God.

The “chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53). His shed blood on our behalf was the redemption price for mankind. He alone is “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). He rose bodily from the rock tomb (1 Corinthians 15) conquering the power of death and He alone is the one who *has triumphed* over Satan and all the powers of darkness [Satan and his demons] (Colossians 2:14-15). This is the true Jesus that true Christians believe in. **The real Messiah is not a user friendly, post-modern positivist who never addresses sin and never warns about Satan, hell and eternal damnation.** No, the real Jesus dealt with all these issues and clearly told people, “I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

TRUSTING CHRIST OR DELUDING SELF

Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophetic Scriptures. He is Messiah [Christ] and as such He is the [true] Light of the world (John 1:4,9; John 8:12; Isaiah 49:6; 1 John 2:8), not a false inner light or some New Age angelic messenger.

Eyewitness accounts of His life have been recorded and the Biblical text is proof of it. We do not need more ‘Christ’s.’ Neither do we need to try to become ‘a Christ’ or listen to people who tell us that “we need to remember that we are “little Christ’s,” or “gods,” or “God,” or that “we are each Christ and have a spark of divinity in us, but simply forgot.” Those who say so are liars, spiritual frauds, deceivers and antichrists.

Inventing new Christ’s and saying that humans are ‘gods’ is a delusion just as surely as saying that we are all Superheroes and can fly, but have simply forgotten that we really are. Humans are sinful, corrupt, fallen, creatures. We can never become ‘gods’ or ‘divine’ - this was the lie of Satan in the garden of Eden (Genesis 2). However, we can be forgiven of our sins and brought into a right relationship with God. The price was paid for our redemption [to buy back] with the precious blood of Christ! This is Good News indeed - *the free gift of Salvation!*



ONLY ONE GENUINE MESSIAH

To further clarify who the real Jesus Christ is, the Scripture speaks of only one true genuine Messiah who is the Savior of the world. There is only one Messiah [Christ] - *not one for each age*. Both the Hebrew word *Messiah* [Messiah] and the Greek word *christos* [Christ] mean the same thing; “the anointed one.”

He alone, the historical Jesus of Nazareth, is Only Unique Savior. He is the *Son of God* and as such He *alone* is God the Son (Psalm 2:7, 11-12; John 1:1, 14; Luke 1:35; Romans 1:1-4; Hebrews 1). He is eternal... both past and future (John 1:1-3, 14; 8:58). He is the One, “who Himself bore our sins in His own

body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). He satisfied the wrath of divine justice so we could be totally justified [declared righteous] in God’s sight, forgiven of our sins, and saved from God’s wrath (Isaiah 53; Matthew 1:21; John 1:29; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-3). Jesus, ‘The Christ,’ is the only way to the Father (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5). The Bible is very clear that there is no other Savior or way of salvation. Contrary to what Oprah and countless others think, all spiritual paths *do not lead to God!* Jesus alone had power over His own death and the ability to take back His life again (John 2:19; 10:17-18). The resurrection of Jesus Christ was not an “illusion,” as the mind science cults teach, but was physical (Luke 24:39). He rose bodily from the dead, never to die again. His gospel is the only one that saves.

IN THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK

The New Testament also clearly distinguishes Jesus as the Jewish descendant of David (Matthew 1:1; Romans 1:1-5). He is the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2). He came the first time as the suffering Servant and Redeemer (Isaiah 53), and at His second coming He will set up His Kingdom which will never end.

Jesus accepted worship, is equal with the Father (John 20:28-29; Philippians 2:6), and is to be honored with God the Father (John 5:23). Jesus declared that worship is to be directed toward God alone (Matthew 4; Luke 4) and many verses confirm this (Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20; Matthew 4:10; Acts 10:25-26; 14:14-15; Revelation 19:10; 22:9).

The Jesus of Scripture has the power to give life to whom He will (John 5:21), and the Father has committed all judgment to the Son (John 5:22). The Eternal Son, Jesus, was with the Father and directly involved in the creation of the universe. It is by His hand that all things are held together (John 1:1-3; Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:8-10; Colossians 1:17). Jesus, is our Creator (John 1:1; 8:58) and will also rule the world at the end of this present age (Hebrews 1:8; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:35, 44; Revelation 19:11-16). He alone was born of a virgin, and His full human body was conceived by the Holy Spirit, with God being His Father (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:20-23; Luke 1:30-35).

No self-proclaimed ‘Christ,’ ‘prophet’ or so-called ‘god-man’ in history has done what the Jesus of Scripture has done. Unlike all other religious leaders ever, Jesus alone demonstrated that He has the attributes of God. He forgave sins and healed the sick (Matthew 9:1-7); He calmed the wind and waves (Mark 4:37-41; Psalm 89:8-9); He knows us and is acquainted with us (Psalm 139; John 1:46-50; 2:23-25); and He can and did raise the dead (John 11; Luke 7:12-15; 8:41-55), including Himself (John 2:19; 10:17-18).

The clear testimony of Scripture points to Jesus as God. This is why the Bible points to Him over and over again. “Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me [Jesus]), to do thy will, O God” (Hebrews 10:7).

RECEIVING OR REJECTING FALSE CHRIST'S

Based on the teachings of the Bible then, it is totally appropriate to reject all self-proclaimed ‘Christ’s’ and all promoters and endorsers of false Christ’s and counterfeit Jesus’s. Accepting false Christ’s and their teachings is one of the most damnable sins mankind can commit. For to do so is to clearly reject

the genuine Biblical Christ who said He alone is “the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6-7). Those who accept and believe in false Christ’s have *the wrong Jesus*. Jesus Himself said:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13, 14)

TAKING HEED TO GOD’S WARNINGS!

It must never be forgotten that throughout the entire Bible, God has warned humanity about spiritual deception, false teachers, false prophets, dangers of occultism, etc. (Genesis 3; Deuteronomy 13; 18; Jeremiah 23; Ezekiel 34; Isaiah 47; Matthew 24; Mark 13; Acts 20:28-33; Romans 16:17-19; 1 Corinthians 14; 2 Corinthians 11:1-4, 12-15, 19-20; Galatians 1:6-9; 6:11-13; Ephesians 6:10-20; Philippians 3:17-21; Colossians 2:8-10, 18-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22; 2 Thessalonians 2; 1 Timothy 1:3; 4:1-5; 6:3-10; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:17; 3:1-9; 4:14-16; Titus 1:10-16; and many more).

It is not “unloving” to tell people the truth. In fact, not telling the truth and not warning people about false teachers and the lies they bring is evil. Would you want to be warned if someone was putting poison in your food, in your child’s lunch box, *or in your Church*? God commands His church, the Bride of Christ, to discern properly, reject false doctrine and false teachers, to separate from them and to warn the Church about them. Discernment is not an option for the Christian - *it is a divine command!* Every Christian is called to reject false teaching and false teachers. To not do so only leads individuals, as well as the Church, into compromise, sin and spiritual delusion.

JAMMING DOWN THE TRUTH

How great is the depravity of mankind! When Jesus came as God manifest in human flesh, the religious leaders of His day, who did not understand Messiah’s first coming [as the Suffering Servant], rejected Him as a blaspheming counterfeit. They even picked up stones to stone Him because He claimed to be Yahweh (John 8:58,59; 10:29-33). Today, 2000 years later, much of professing ‘Christendom’ is just as blind, accepting false teaching from false teachers, false prophets, liberal ministers, etc. This is the genius of satanic counterfeits paving the way for the coming Antichrist.

The Scriptures teach that one day, the apostate church (Revelation 17) and the unbelieving world will together bow down to the son of perdition [who will be possessed by the Devil] and worship him as god (Daniel 7:25; 9:27; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20; 2 Thessalonians 3:3,4; See also Lucifer [who became Satan / adversary] in Isaiah 14:13,14; Ezekiel 28:2,6,9,12-19).

All who reject the Biblical Jesus will be given over to this lie. They will worship the ultimate counterfeit Christ who masquerades as Messiah and brings false peace to the world. Paul spoke to the believers in Thessalonica about this:

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delu-

sion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12)

THE GREAT APOSTASY BLOOMING

Noted evangelist, author, journalist, and Bible expositor Arno C. Gaebelin, who for over 50 years faithfully proclaimed the Gospel message, remarks on the great apostasy that precedes the rapture of the Church:

"His return is preceded by the falling away. Throughout this age there has been going on a falling away from the truth. John wrote of the many antichrists in his day. (1 John 2) The mystery of iniquity was then already at work (2 Thessalonians 2:7). When the end of the age comes (Matthew 13) the harvest, the tares which began in the beginning of the age will be full grown. When He comes again He will not find 'faith on the earth' (Luke 18:8); the days of Noah and Lot have returned, days of violence and lust (Luke 17:26-37). The Epistles bear a startling testimony as to the final great apostasy, an apostasy which is apparent today, for the modernistic rationalism in the different evangelical denominations is the beginning of this falling away (See 2 Thess. 2; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 4:1-4; Epistle of Jude; 2 Peter 2 and 3)."

- Arno C. Gaebelin, *Twenty Prominent Facts Taught in the New Testament on the Return of the Lord*, New York: Publications Office "Our Hope," 1925.

BUT WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

The question that every individual must answer is the question that Jesus asked his own disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15; Luke 9:18)

Every human being will be held responsible for what they believe about Jesus Christ. In order for one not to be deceived by the world's lies about Jesus, the real Jesus Christ of Scripture must be sought, worshipped and obeyed. Every person's eternal destiny hinges upon what they do with the Christ of Scripture.



THE ULTIMATE PRIVILEGE

It is our God-given privilege as created human beings to humbly respond to our Loving Maker. God Himself gives us the free opportunity to repent of sin and to bow down to Him... and personally worship and declare Jesus Christ as Lord, God, and Savior (John 20:28). Jesus, the King of kings and the Lord of Lords, offers the opportunity to be ‘born anew’ [born again, regenerated, made alive in Christ] by the Spirit of the Living God (John 3:3-5).

Let us then wholeheartedly reject every false teaching and unbiblical misconception of Jesus and let us yield our hearts, minds and wills in full surrender and worship of Him who alone is the risen, living Christ. For it was Jesus who,

“...being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:8-9).

Forcing Change

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