

THE PERFECT ARGUMENT

by Paul Bunch & Ben Williams

OUT THERE in the quest for “the truth,” there are those who are finding it, and there are those who are not finding it. Some just cannot seem to see it ... no matter how hard we try to show it to them. If “we” who have it could just figure out a way to enlighten “those” who are in the dark, then we could begin to see real progress, and we could enjoy the unity that comes with agreement on doctrine. Society would turn around and the Kingdom of God could come.

Right?

Well ... let’s think about it. Even if the presumption were right, how do we go about getting their attention? And just how do we call them out of error into the light of “truth”? Maybe we could devise THE PERFECT ARGUMENT, then no one would be able to resist “the truth”!

Truth resistance is a problem that we all have seen. Haven’t you had times when you wished you had a perfect argument so you could straighten someone out? Being able to come up with perfect arguments would sure be handy wouldn’t it? That is ... if it really worked. Problem is, it doesn’t!

First of all, there is no perfect argument without perfect truth ... and who among us has it? Every church claims to have it, every preacher presumes to have it, every “man of god” insists that he has it ... as they try to convince others of the truth THEY

see. They work and strive to devise THE PERFECT ARGUMENT to correct the other poor devils. The blind and lost must be called back into the fold. Those that refuse are denounced and shunned as “heretics,” “false prophets,” “Jews,” “infiltrators,” etc..

Belligerence, however, does not prove the case for the belligerent. It only makes us suspect that he has something to hide, or that his argument cannot stand on its own.

What does the Bible teach? Should we strive to convert and save the unwashed? Should we believe teachers who tell us that we are on a countdown to “the end” and a final judgment ... and that our responsibility is to convert as many as possible while we still can?

This religious paradigm is common in nearly every church. It has been replayed over and over for hundreds of years in the churches, and for thousands of years in pagan temples before churches were invented. And to what end?

PARADIGM SHIFT

Paradigms are like pathways in the forest. We get accustomed to walking along a certain pathway, and it becomes familiar and comfortable. We think of it as “our pathway.” We continue walking that familiar pathway even when it keeps taking us to the wrong destination. We do this because it is not natural to question our own

pathways (paradigms).

Nonetheless, if one pathway gets us lost, wouldn’t it be a good idea to try a different one ... rather than just continue on the one that has proven to be wrong?

For example, take the zealous Constitutionalist who is stuck in his paradigm. No matter how many dead ends he runs into, or how many walls he hits, he won’t change his pathway. No matter what you present as evidence that the Constitution is a fraud and doesn’t work, he continues to extol the wonderful government “of the people, by the people and for the people.” He’ll repeat that the Founding Fathers gave it checks and balances, a Bill of Rights, and everything it needed to operate as a well-oiled machine for the good of mankind.

He’ll insist that the machine is designed perfectly, even though it is always on the fritz. This “well-oiled machine” is always clogged up with dishonest, criminal types at the top. You’d think that a well-designed machine would have some built-in protections against criminals at its helm.

The typical answer is “just vote out the bad guys” in the well-oiled machine ... over and over and over again. No big deal. The Constitutionalist is like the owner of a car that’s always breaking down. Instead of admitting that he’s got a lemon, he keeps telling everyone what a good car he has ... even though it never

performs according to expectations. He won't dare think that if the car was any good to begin with it wouldn't be causing him so much trouble.

The fact is, if the Constitution was really as good as "patriots" think it is, then the government it empowers wouldn't be criminal. Right?

Jesus said:

17. Thus, every good tree produces good fruit, but the bad tree produces bad fruit.

18. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, neither can a bad tree produce good fruit."

Matt. 7:17-18

Bad fruit indicates a bad tree. Can you point to a time when the US Government wasn't producing bad fruit? Hasn't it always been run by liars, thieves, and murderers?

But the blind Constitutionalist is frozen in his Constitutional paradigm and it is unthinkable to consider another view.

Proverbs 26 states the problem of paradigm rigidity:

11. As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool returns to his folly.

Proverbs 26:11

People are creatures of habit; they get comfortable in a rut, and they ignore all the bad things that come along with that rut. But, wouldn't it be logical to move to a better place if the rut you are in is shown to be not in your best interest?

So how do we quit returning to, and wallowing in, our worn-out paradigms? First let us understand how a paradigm works. A paradigm is a pattern of thinking: a bias matrix upon which we build our reasoning and logic. Once established, it influences and shapes one's thoughts about everything.

Our paradigms are like maps for life that we are given when we are small children. Many people in our lives contribute to the construction of our paradigm maps. Parents, siblings, friends, movie stars, school teachers, government officials, pastors ... they all pass by during our life and ink in

the lines, legends, charts, words, etc. that comprise our map. This is our map, and it dictates how we view the society we live in. We view everything based upon how this map has been drawn for us. We accept the map, and we believe it is correct because it was deemed "official." It is our second nature, and it is shaped by a million impressions inherited from youth. It is from our parents, our teachers, our peers, our own personalities, news broadcasters, and official answers from officials in government. We assume it is the majority consensus. We give it credibility and assume it is true.

The Map is a very complex thing with many sectors, and it takes years to memorize it all. But like computers being programmed we memorize it perfectly, without reasoning. Then, when an out-of-the-box thinker comes along and suggests a good thought that just happens to NOT be on The Map, we assume he's crazy, and we either ignore him or try to discredit him. The Map prevents us from hearing his ideas, and it warns us that if we listen to those ideas God will punish us.

One's paradigm ("The Map") is truly a mind control machine. In the American paradigm we grow up believing that freedom is automatic, and all Americans have full access to knowledge and information. But in truth all we really have is propaganda authorized by the custodians of information (the state-sanctioned officials, school teachers, historians, leaders, men of religion, and TV newsmen). Try openly discussing unauthorized information and see how far you get. Only the rare thinker and the battle-scarred veteran are bold enough to consider anything not on The Map.

THE MAP IS WRONG

The problem with The Map, or American Paradigm, is that IT IS NOT THE BIBLE. It is not put together by God. It is put together by men who live their lives to take advantage of you and me. It is designed to make you and me easy to control. In short, it is a theological/political tradition of men, and in American society it has been given precedence over God.

Men have invested so much time in the construction and maintenance of the tradition of The Map (the American Paradigm) that if someone voices a different opinion BASED ON THE BIBLE, rather than based on The Map (the sacred tradition), it is dismissed out of hand.

Jesus encountered this problem with the scribes and Pharisees:

- 1. Then scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,*
- 2. 'Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat a meal.'*
- 3. But He answered and said to them, 'Why do you also transgress the commandment of God through your tradition?'*
- 4. For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He that reviles father or mother, let him end in death.'*
- 5. But you say that whoever shall say to his father or his mother, 'that by which you might have benefited by me, it is a gift (to God),'*
- 6. And he should not honor his father. Thus have you invalidated the commandment of God by your tradition.*
- 7. You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,*
- 8. 'This people honor Me with their mouth, but their heart is far from Me.*
- 9. 'But in vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'*

Matt. 15:1-9

First we must get our priorities straight. One's Map (his paradigm) should not take precedence over Holy Scripture. That means that if someone postulates a theory that isn't on The Official Map, we shouldn't automatically assume he is crazy or a heretic. Maybe he's got an idea we haven't considered before. Maybe we DON'T have all the answers. After all, The Map cannot be above ques-

tion. The Map (the current paradigm) is in a constant state of revision and change – although most people don't realize it and won't admit it.

If we can continue learning, even after other people think of us as “old” and “set in our ways” then maybe we can still find new insights into theological matters as well. People who think “inside the box” are rigid like hardened, molded concrete. People outside the box are more likely to continue learning, and are less likely to be imprisoned by the paradigms of the religious/political matrix all around us. But if people's minds are like hardened concrete they won't be malleable to new ideas. They will simply memorize The Map – nothing else.

A better approach to learning would be not merely memorizing the current paradigm and then attempting to fit yourself within those parameters. Instead of searching for a comfortable place to retire our thinking processes, we should be in a continual learning and growth process. None of us has a patent on truth, and none of our “Maps” are above improvement. We should think about it and constantly test our own paradigms. That takes courage because some of the “truths” we have learned COULD be wrong and we might have to change our thinking about them. It means we assume the responsibility of self-examination, **EVEN IF IT DISAGREES WITH THE OFFICIAL MAP GIVEN TO US BY THE CURATORIAN OF INFORMATION.**

You can begin to see how the Map can be a good thing ... if it is a good map. But if The Map is bad ... it can be a very bad thing indeed.

TRUTH ALONE WON'T CHANGE PEOPLE

What about the masses? Can we defeat the American Paradigm and convert them to the truth? Should we agonize over convincing people of the truth by giving them the right evidence, and logic (The Perfect Argument)? Based on experiences with family members, and splits within groups and churches where people are forced to take sides, I would have

to say no! If the one you are trying to convince isn't ready for what you have to say, then The Perfect Argument will do no good. If he wants to continue in the mode he is already in, then your Perfect Argument – even though it's a good one – will only convince him that you have been led astray. He will end up being more convinced than ever of his original view of the matter.

This is a difficult truth to accept and usually can only be accepted once you have experienced it firsthand. If it has happened to you, you may first think of yourself as a failure, unable to help or communicate with people.

If you start with the premise that being a Christian means that you must progressively convince more and more people until you have a great army of united Christians who know the truth, you will always view yourself as a failure. Why? Because that scenario will never happen.

But if we face reality and what the Bible says, then we will realize that being a Christian means that our “Perfect Argument” will actually DIVIDE people one from another. And in this, we WILL be successful. Of course, in the final analysis, it's really not we that are being successful – it's the Word of God that is being successful:

12. For the Word of God is alive and active, and is sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrows, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

During the churches' annual Christmas tradition we hear a typical item on the official map repeated: “Peace and unity among all men.” This then is assumed to be “truth” in the official paradigm. Everyone has slavishly memorized it without question. And yet when we look at what Jesus himself said, we see a different message:

51. Are you assuming that I came to give peace on the earth? I tell you, no, but rather division.

52. For from now on five in one

house will be divided: three against two, and two against three.

53. The father will be divided against the son and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

Luke 12:51-53

The official paradigm says, “Peace and unity.” The truth from the mouth of Jesus says, “Division on Earth.” Could these verses actually be quotes from the Bible? Could this be on The Map? Jesus said this division would happen right in the middle of families. Maybe the father wouldn't see the truth, but the son would.

Most people don't like to hear this, so right in the middle of your “Perfect Argument” they suddenly interject something like, “Hey, did you catch that game between the Raiders and the Cowboys?”

Jesus never agonized over constructing the Perfect Argument. In fact, He often spoke as to insiders, as we see when he spoke to people in parables. At these times He wasn't trying to reach new ears, as one might expect. Instead He spoke in ways to enlighten those who already had “eyes to see.” His disciples asked Him why he spoke to people in parables, and Jesus replied that He was not trying to convert people, but rather He was separating those who were IN the Kingship from those who were OUTSIDE the Kingship:

11. And He was saying to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the Kingship of God; but to THEM THAT ARE OUTSIDE, all these things are done in parables,

Mark 4:11

The bottom line is that you either have the capacity to see, or you don't; to be IN the Kingship of God or not.

Notice the phrase: “... THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT ...,” Jesus was referring to New Jerusalem – The Reign of Heaven – and this explains why some folks hear truth, and why others don't. Those who hear truth

are the same ones who can see the gates of "the City" (New Jerusalem) and are entering in. Those who don't hear truth are those who reject the gift of "eyes to see, and ears to hear," and consequently they don't "see" New Jerusalem's gates. They cannot enter a city that they cannot "see."

We must learn how to recognize who is IN and who is OUT.

But what is it that separates them? Apparently it is not enough for us to invite others into the city ... for although people can enter at any time, few actually do.

In Revelation 21:25, the Bible tells us that the gates of New Jerusalem are open day and night, and are never shut. Then in chapter 22, it refers to the Kingship as a symbolic "city," and tells people how to enter it – not in a future age," but RIGHT THEN:

10. *And he said to me, "Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book, for THE TIME IS AT HAND (i.e., now).*

11. *"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and the filthy one, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

12. *"And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with Me, to give to each as is his work.*

13. *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.*

14. *"Blessed are the ones washing their robes, that they may have right to the Tree of life, and MAY ENTER IN THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY.*

15. *"For outside are dogs and sorcerers, and fornicators and murderers, and idolaters and everyone liking and perpetrating deception."*

Revelation 22:10-15

The gates are open, but not everyone can see them. This city is different than any other city ... in that it is not observed by some. Those who do not belong can neither see the gates, nor enter. No matter what kind

of a Perfect Argument you direct at them, some just cannot see the gate. If they're unwilling to repent, they cannot enter. They'll not hear the truth of the Perfect Argument.

But if they are hungry for truth, and if they are willing ... then they'll see the gate and they will enter ... AND THEY WILL HEAR GOD'S WORDS ... WITHOUT ARGUMENT. They'll partake of the trees and waters of life. If they desire to be there, they will be. But if they fall back and revert to their old ways of thinking, they will find themselves back on the outside ... because they do not belong inside.

27. *And there shall not enter into it any thing that defiles, or anyone working an abomination or a lie: only they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Rev. 21:27

Notice that there is a continuing metaphor of entering into the city through a door or a gate. And, more importantly, notice the PRESENT tense of entering in! People were entering in at that time ... and more are entering even today.

13. *But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, (translators and religious leaders) hypocrites! For you are shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven before men, for you are not entering, nor do you allow them to enter that are coming in.*

Matthew 23:13

The Futurist churches have interpreted the Bible to say that entering into New Jerusalem is an end-time event which occurs only after a so-called end-time "judgment day." But what does the Bible really say? It says that citizenship in New Jerusalem is a present relationship with God. It is the status of "knowing" Him ... or rather Him knowing us ... and it is today.

24. *Strive to enter in at the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, will seek to enter in and will not be able.*

25. *When once the master of the house is risen and shuts the door,*

and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' and answering He will say to you 'I have not known you. Where are you from?'

26. *Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your sight, and you taught in our streets.'*

27. *But He will say to you, 'I do not know where you are from. Get away from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'*

28. *There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingship of God, but you yourselves cast out.*

29. *And they will come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down (at the table) in the Kingship of God.*

Luke 13:24-29

21. *"Not everyone that says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingship of Heaven, but he that is doing the will of My Father who is in Heaven.*

22. *Many will say to Me in that Day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name done many powerful works?'*

23. *And then will I confess to them, 'I never knew you: get away from Me, you that are working lawlessness.'*

Matthew 7:21-23

Thus, we see that "powerful works" is not a reliable basis to judge whether or not someone is of God ... even if they claim to speak in Jesus' name. This shows that insincere people (outsiders) may prophesy (teach) and do great works claiming to be "in the name of Jesus Christ." But Jesus doesn't recognize them.

This is a description of things we see happening around us today.

Another myth on The Map is that anyone who professes Christ – especially a pastor of a church – is good, honest, and is led by Jesus. To these kinds, Jesus says "I don't know you."

Read the passage again. There is no one else to whom He could have been referring. Churches claim to do

things “in Jesus’ name,” but that does not make it so. If Jesus says “I never knew you,” that indicates that the people don’t know Him either.

There are obviously many people who think they know Jesus, but don’t. Perhaps one explanation of this phenomenon is explained by the fact that different groups define Jesus differently ... as in the case where one group claims Jesus is the Son of God and another group claims Jesus is God Himself. Obviously, at least one of these is wrong, and therefore “doesn’t know” Jesus.

With regard to admittance into the city, it is not a matter of being coaxed into entering. Either you can see the Kingdom, or you can’t. If you cannot see New Jerusalem, obviously you cannot find the gate to enter. You either know Jesus or you don’t. You are either one of Christ’s sheep or you are not ... and if you are, then you can “hear” and understand His voice as He bids you to enter in.

1. *Truly, truly I say to you, he that is entering not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, that one is a thief and a plunderer.*
2. *But he who is entering in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.*
3. *To him the door keeper is opening, and the sheep are hearing his voice: and he is calling his own sheep by name and he is leading them out.*
4. *When he is bringing out his own sheep, he is going before them and the sheep are following him, for they know his voice.*
5. *And they will not follow a stranger, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.*
14. *I am the Good Shepherd, and I know my sheep, and my sheep know me.*

John 10:1-5, 14

Scripture also tells us that even though men were hearing the words from Jesus’ mouth, they still couldn’t understand about the Kingdom.

22. *Then occurred in Jerusalem the*

festival of dedication, and it was winter.

23. *And Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon’s Porch.*
24. *Therefore the Jews encircled Him and said to Him, “How long are you keeping our souls in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”*
25. *Jesus answered them, “I TOLD YOU, AND YOU ARE NOT BELIEVING. The works that I am doing in My Father’s name, these are bearing witness of Me.*
26. *But you are not believing, because you are not of My sheep.*
27. *My sheep are hearing My voice, and I know them and they are following Me.*
28. *And to them I am giving eonian life, and they are not getting lost, and no one is snatching them out of My hand.*

John 10:22-28

As you can see, Jesus told them He was the Christ and yet they didn’t believe. Jesus presented His proof – His “Perfect Argument” – but that wasn’t enough for them ... because they weren’t of His sheep. His call did not register with them.

THE CALLED-OUT ONES

14. *Many are called, but few are CALLED-OUT.*

Mtt. 22:14

Jesus is the Shepherd and HE calls the sheep. Man does not decide who will hear the call. It is not our prerogative to choose the people who will hear. It is not our fault that we have no effect upon those who don’t hear. If people are fighting and quarreling and disregarding Jesus ... because their impression of Jesus is wrong, and they do not really know Him ... that is not our fault.

All the division going on is simply God’s judgment working itself out. The goats are being separated from the sheep. The dogs and sorcerers are outside the Kingdom and the Ecclesia [ECC = out; KALEO = call] – the

called-out ones – are separate ... having been “called-out” to be “separate” from the world. Therefore, Jesus calls people into his Reign. Many are called ... but only a few come OUT (i.e., only a few respond). The ones who respond to the call and come out of the world are the ones who know Jesus. They are not being coerced by you or me, or by some perfect argument.

This doesn’t mean we should stop striving to learn and share truth. But those who are rejecting the call are choosing to not see the Kingship.

The call to “come out” is different from the recruiting of the churches. In the church environment you simply memorize the map you are given. You try to fit in or belong to the group. You decide to accept a liturgy of some sort as truth via agreement in church and doctrine ... and any disagreement is considered bad and unacceptable. You go to Church to feel good about yourself and others.

Conversely, in the Ecclesian environment we must follow Jesus, not organizational conformity and acceptance. We are drawn to truth, not to conformity. It is a growth process, not a process of defending tradition and past mistakes. We are called OUT from the herd, not coerced to fit in.

In the Reign of Christ (the Ecclesia) we constantly undergo the change process that is essential to growth, and we avoid the stagnant pool of the status quo. Once a truth is established, Ecclesians continue into more truths ... rather than constantly rehashing the same material for 20, 30 or even 50 years, glorying in one past discovery. Ecclesians are who they are, not because it feels good, but because God’s spirit compels and draws them.

44. *No one is able to come to me, unless the Father who sent me draws him:*

John 6:44

We don’t volunteer into the Ecclesia. We are drafted. We are drawn into it by being “called out” ... we don’t find our own way. Man’s dependence upon God’s call is the part of the equation most people forget about.

But the people in the church paradigm answer a different “call” ... one

that appeals to the pagan, the carnal-minded, and the spiritually-dead. History bears it out.

The church paradigm was initiated to circumvent God's Kingship during the reign of the Roman emperor Constantine in the 4th century AD. He, being a political opportunist, used a corrupted form of religion as a tool to increase his own power and control over his empire. He laid the foundation to The Official Map or Paradigm, and it has been burned into the minds of churchgoers ever since.

The kingdoms and governments of men, by their very nature, have always been at odds with the Reign of Christ. That's why Jesus' people are often "underground." They don't fit into any state-authorized category or group, so they remain on the opposite side of the wall from the rest of the world. True Christianity is STILL hated. It operates "underground" today despite what The Map says!

Mithraism was the unabashed religious force behind Rome's Constantine. To make himself more popular with the masses, he issued the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D., which granted "freedom of religion" within the Roman Empire. "Christianity" was then allowed to legally exist in pagan Rome. Of course, the authorized forms of "Christianity" were defined and authorized by Constantine. In other words, he developed the Church of Mithras and called it "Christianity" ... and it continues today.

With the promise of acceptance for Christians they succumbed to the lure and the new temples called "churches." They used Latin terms like "vicar" and "diocese" taken directly from Diocletian, an emperor who preceded Constantine.

Within a few years the new "church" establishment was up and running. The word "church" came from the Greek "kuriakos:" which means "the lord's." The Greek word "kuriakos" eventually evolved into the Old English "kirche," and the Scottish "kirk" – hence, the modern name "church." But this "church" is NOT in the Bible.

"The established church," as we know it, didn't exist before Constan-

tine invented it. The state churches of Rome belonged to "Lord Constantine." The state has always been "lord" of the churches. The state licenses them and their leaders, permits them to exist, and grants them authority to baptize, marry, and bury their members. The state grants tax-exempt status to churches, and allows members to deduct their offerings from their taxable income. The state closes churches it does not like.

Yes, it (the state) owns the churches. The state is "kurios" ("lord"), and the churches are "kuriakos" ("the lord's"). Churches exist by authority of the state. They get their authority from the same place they get their form and polity: from their "lord" – THE STATE!

Roman Christians acquiesced to government, and in so doing they were boxed into the authorized paradigm ... in buildings that had formerly housed pagan religions – buildings owned and defined by the Roman LORD (the Emperor). Thus, the building was called "kuriakos" ("church"): i.e., "the lord's." By 318 church bishops had been granted all the civil rights and privileges that the Pagan high priests of Rome formerly held.

In his quest to master the world, Constantine, took another step to "Romanize" Christianity by convening the Council of Nicea in 325. In the Council of Nicea Rome instituted the Nicene Creed: a document which etched an Official set of beliefs on The Map for the church paradigm.

Constantine invented the Roman church system based upon his known religion of Mithraism, and called it "Christian." His goal was to replace the true Christian faith with the Roman religion of Mithraism. Constantine created "the church" as an institution wherein Christian and Pagan could join together under the banner of religion. Thus, today, churches have pagan doctrines cleverly intertwined with Christian doctrines ... and churchgoers can't tell one from another.

"Christianity" as it is known in the churches is the product of Constantine The Great – a Pagan Emperor of Rome. Some people assume Constantine was converted to Christian-

ity. But that is incorrect. Constantine was a very good politician.

"Christianity was on the rise, and he (Constantine) simply backed the winning horse. Historians still marvel at the brilliance with which Constantine converted the sun-worshipping pagans (of Mithraism) to Christianity. By fusing pagan symbols, dates and rituals into the growing Christian tradition, he created a kind of hybrid religion that was acceptable to both parties."

"Transmogrification," Langdon said. "The vestiges of pagan religion in Christian symbology are undeniable. Egyptian (Mithraic) sun disks became the halos of Catholic saints. Pictograms of Isis nursing her miraculously-conceived son Horus became the blueprint for our modern images of the Virgin Mary nursing Baby Jesus. And virtually all the elements of the Catholic ritual – the miter, the altar, the doxology, and communion, the act of "God-eating" – were taken directly from earlier pagan mystery religions (Mithraism)."

—The DaVinci Code, by Dan Brown

Constantine was also responsible for popularizing the idea of "INCAR-NATION." Thus, the churches' concept of the "divinity of Jesus" (via the Trinity doctrine, or the "Jesus Is God" doctrine) dates back to Constantine. Constantine incorporated it into the new Church establishment in 325 AD at the Council of Nicea. Since that time, churchmen have denounced thousands of "heretics" ... and tortured and killed many of them for rejecting this pagan church doctrine.

Thus, today Christianity is wrongly associated with churches and pagan doctrines like The Trinity, Christmas, Easter, and Priestcraft, etc.... all from Constantine's political ambitions. He took Paganism and Christianity and fused the two so that neither were the same again.

Church historians look back and remark what a wonderful thing it was that Christianity was finally given credibility – by a Roman Emperor no less! A Perfect Argument finally worked and Christianity gained a foot-

hold in the world ... or did it? Did Jesus gain credibility through Caesar? Not hardly.

Constantine hijacked Christianity, corrupted it, redefined it, and subjected it under himself. For the Romans he obscured Christ's Kingship. Thus Romans (and others later) lost sight of it. Since Constantine's day, churchgoers still blindly wait for the Kingdom to plop down from the sky and reveal itself to all people.

Today, Christians are duped to believe in a "separation of church and state." But the Roman central government paradigm has successfully been embedded in the common man's definition of both church and state. People now equate Christianity with the Church, and the Church is under State control. So, for all intents and purposes, the Church is a branch of the Beast ... through the State.

There are a lot of "church" people in government, and government people in church. They get along perfectly because both church and state are modeled after Rome. Both are Roman Pagan paradigms, so there are no conflicts.

The church paradigm demands that we fit in and conform. It prepares us from youth to fit into a government system and conform to it ... so we won't be seen as "unpatriotic."

ENTERING THE KINGDOM

The Kingdom (more correctly, "Kingship") is not something we find. Rather, we are called into it. But some people have a mystical, magical, superstitious way of thinking about "the call." Religious people seem to expect "the call" to turn them into a pastor or a prophet. They think "the call" is somehow associated with church.

But in reality there is nothing religious about being "called out." It happens to ordinary folks ... and it DOES NOT call them into a church! It calls them into Christ's Reign.

People who are "called-out" may experience the calling over many years of struggle, division and learning. And these experiences are not always pleasant. With all the church splits and family fights they endure as they are called out of Babylon, people some-

times wish they had never been called. Some people think that being a churchman proves they have been "called." There are also many who hear "the call" of money and celebrity in the position of a pastor.

What follows are some interesting quotes that give insight into the true calling process:

"You can find truth with logic only if you have already found truth without it."

— G.K. Chesterton.

The Perfect Argument, though full of logic, cannot effectively convert people to the truth. You must first be called and led by Jesus to discover the truth. It's not something YOU accomplish on your own. Once you have been shown the truth by Jesus, then the logic works.

"The eyes see only what the mind is prepared to comprehend."

— Robertson Davies

That quote helps us understand the growing process. You can present your Perfect Argument to people who will think you are crazy ... but then, later on, after they have grown through tribulation and struggle of one form or another, when you again present your Perfect Argument, they will be able to see what you are saying. Jesus understood this when he told his disciples the following:

12. I have much to say to you, but you can't bear it now.

John 16:12

25. I have spoken these things to you in parables. The hour is coming when I will no more speak to you in parables, but I will speak to you plainly of the Father.

John 16:25

To know who sees the Kingship and who does not you need only know who is hearing the Shepherd's voice and who is not. Once you see this, invest your energies into them that hear, not the blind, the "dead," the "dogs and sorcerers" etc., that are outside "the wall" and do not hear.

14. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.

Rev. 22:14-15

Those are the terms used to distinguish citizens of the Kingship (Ecclesians of New Jerusalem) from non-citizens. Anyway, Jesus gives some good advice concerning those in whom we should invest our truths and our energy ... and in whom we should not. These descriptions are rather harsh ... too harsh for some people to accept. So, instead of applying the Lord's words to the people for whom they were intended, most people delegate the words to imaginary people they never really see. It is easier that way ... but if we do this we undermine ourselves:

6. "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Matthew 7:6

Those "dogs and sorcerers" are described again in 2 Timothy:

- 1. This know also: that in days to come perilous times shall come.*
- 2. For men shall be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, presumptuous, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,*
- 3. Uncaring, unwilling to give of themselves, devils, without self-control, savage, amoral,*
- 4. Betrayers, headstrong, prideful, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God,*
- 5. Having a form of godliness but denying its power. From these turn away.*
- 6. For from these come the ones who insinuate themselves into*

houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with various lusts,

7. EVER LEARNING AND NEVER ABLE TO COME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH.

2 Timothy 3:1-7

The King James Version says “in the last days,” which is an unfortunate and inaccurate translation. The Greek idiom actually means “later on” or “in days to come.” The so-called “last days” is another one of those phrases on The Map that keeps Futurists touting official church eschatology. The perilous times, according to the churches, don’t come until “the end of the world.” Never mind that there have ALWAYS been perilous times all down through history! Similarly, there have always been men who were lovers of themselves, etc. – ALL DOWN THROUGH HISTORY! And, of course, last-days-thinking presumes the Earth must come to an end. Futurism is a big feature on the official Map that churchgoers adopt.

But also notice that these people are EVER LEARNING AND NEVER ABLE TO COME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH. There will always be people who reject truth even though they are always learning! The challenge is to not let these people and their pagan theologies cause us to stumble or be distracted from what we know is right ... and who we know we can trust.

14. And whoever will not receive you, or hear your words, when you go out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

Matthew 10:14

Jesus didn’t say we are failures when we can’t get people to listen to us. They didn’t listen to Jesus either.

It’s not about lining up perfect logic and irrefutable arguments to convince people to turn to Jesus. Rather, it is about accepting God’s plan, and relating to the brethren who are in it. We are to minister to the sheep in HIS flock. We have no authority to try to herd other sheep from other flocks, or sheep that are running wild.

Also, He will give us the words we should say at the right time:

17. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the courts, and they will scourge you in their synagogues,

18. And you shall be led before governors and kings on account of Me, for a witness to them and the nations.

19. But when they deliver you up, be not anxious of how or what you should say, for it will be given to you in that hour what you should say.

20. For you are not the ones speaking, but the spirit of your Father is speaking in you.

Matthew 10:17-20

Waxing eloquent and impressing people with your oratory will not change them. The gospel is not something we can peddle. People cannot be herded into the Kingdom, nor can they be persuaded into it. **We** cannot give them the ability to SEE the Kingdom. They must be called into it by God. We may have good answers, logic and arguments, but people cannot see or hear unless they have “eyes to see, and ears to hear.”

CONCLUSION

Our commission is NOT to wield a PERFECT ARGUMENT to convert pagans and unbelievers. Rather, we are to AVOID THEM, and work with those who are CALLED-OUT: the ones hearing the Shepherd’s voice.

The ability to hear Jesus’ voice is a precious but perishable gift. It must be kept, and treasured. Thus, when a man is called he must respond. If he develops a thirst for truth he will seek it and ask for it. He won’t reject truth, nor will he resent godly admonition and scriptural encouragement. He won’t argue with the truth ... because he is seeking it. He doesn’t need to be “converted.” Rather, he needs friendship, support, and help to continue learning and growing. Instead of argument, we offer edification and further education of the brethren.

And don’t be shocked when you

see divisions among our people who disagree and quit talking to each other. There are good reasons for the splits: whether disagreements over doctrine, or personality conflicts. No matter what the reason, Jesus is there judging and separating ... culling His flock.

It is not up to us. We do not own the flock. God does! It is up to Him to determine who He wants in his flock. Only God can do it. It is not our duty to decide which sheep will hear his call. Rather, it is our duty to learn how to discern them. They hear Christ. They do not fight Him.

By the same token, we need to learn how to recognize his enemies.

20. Remember the word which I said to you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have observed my words, they will observe yours also.

Jn. 15:20

We do not help Jesus save those who reject Him! What we are doing (or should be doing) is accepting HIS judgment in terms of who is in his Kingship. Thus, we are to fellowship with the saints ... who are separate from the world. The words “saints” and “holy” are BOTH from the same Greek word meaning SEPARATE. The holy spirit (spirit of separation) moves saints to SEPARATE from the world and seek Christ’s Kingship.

In I Jn. 3:24–4:1:

24. ... And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us.

1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Think on these words. God speaks to you in ways you may not expect.

“When the student is ready the teacher will appear.”