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# *THE FAITH OF A PSYCHOLOGIST: A PERSONAL DOCUMENT*

*by Victor B. Cline*

Dialogue *wishes to encourage this kind of expression of personal religious commitment as it relates to academic and vocational life. Victor Cline, Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Utah, is the author of a wide variety of professional articles; he has a special interest in clinical psychology and empirical studies of religious belief and behavior.*

IN 1933 JAMES LEUBA[1] CONDUCTED A SURVEY OF THE BELIEFS IN deity held by scientific and professional men. He found that only ten per cent of the psychologists surveyed admitted to a belief in God. This compared with twenty-seven per cent for biologists and thirty-eight per cent for physical scientists; in effect, psychologists were the least "religious" of all professional groups studied. In a later study by Riggs [2] in 1956, the results generally showed an increase in the percentages of scientists believing in a deity (e.g., physical scientists fifty-two per cent, biologists forty-seven per cent and psychologists twenty-three per cent), but again psychologists were at the bottom.

Some of the reasons for this are hinted at in the later work of Dr. Ann Rowe;[3] in her study of eminent scientists she suggests that many psychologists are a rebellious lot, fighting parents, authority, and religion. It would appear that many, when they reject the religion of their youth, find a new religion in psychology, psycho-

analysis, or B. F. Skinner's operant conditioning. These seem to provide for them new, more up-to-date explanations and models of behavior for understanding man and his place in the universe.

Several years ago I found myself challenged by a friend to explain how I, as a clinical psychologist, could also be active religiously and believe in such a fundamentalist religion as Mormonism when many people in my field had rejected even a belief in a deity and conceived of the world from an extremely mechanistic, stimulus-response point of view. Was I being intellectually honest? Did I have a compartmentalized mind where I put religion in one corner and psychology in another, with never the twain to meet? What finally emerged was a brief chronicle of my own intellectual and experiential journey which had led to a religious commitment.

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I must first confess that I am basically reluctant to put this in writing. My religious feelings are quite personal to me, and I feel somewhat uncomfortable wearing my religion on my sleeve, though I have found that at times I can be articulate about such matters if it is necessary and in the proper setting. Also, I am too aware of some of my own prejudices, biases, irrationalities, and at times intuitive (as opposed to logical) thinking to risk exposing these to strangers without some trepidation and misgivings.

To begin with, I had pleasant and happy experiences in my early family life and in my early associations with the Christian religion. My mother was an active and devout Mormon. My father was an inactive nondenominational Protestant who saw no harm in church attendance and activity for his children. My mother respected his free agency and never pressed him about religion (though he did in later years join the Mormon Church). Both were basically good people from agrarian backgrounds, of high personal integrity, and possessed of a keen sense of honor and justice. Education and intellectual achievement were highly valued and rewarded both openly and subtly. This climate was positive and comfortable rather than overbearing or oppressive.

The school years slipped by, and possibly by the end of the second year of college I made a definite decision to make psychol-

[1] J. A. Leuba, "Religious Beliefs of American Scientists," *Harper's Magazine*, CLXIX (Aug., 1934), 291–300.

[2] D. M. Riggs, *An Exploratory Study of the Concepts of God Reported by Selected Samples of Physical Scientists, Biologists, Psychologists and Sociologists* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, U.S.C., Los Angeles, 1959).

[3] Ann Rowe, "A Psychological Study of Eminent Psychologists and Anthropologists and a Comparison with Biological and Physical Scientists," *Psychol. Monogr.*, LXVII, 2 (1953), 1–55.

ogy my career field. Though I was a member of a minority denomination, my religion fit fairly comfortably. No one ever made an issue of it or even of such peculiar habits as not smoking or drinking. In my eight years at Berkeley, where I received all my training, very few people even noticed my religion. To many of my peers there, religion was not something they were rebelling against but rather something they were indifferent about. This reminded me of an old saying that the opposite of love is not hate, but rather indifference.

The indifference to religion at Berkeley was obvious. To some, especially in psychology, religion hardly existed, and few paid much attention to it. In all of my years at Berkeley, I was aware of no psychology professor who ever discussed personality theory or people in our Western culture in terms of religion, worship, or the impact of belief in deity on people's lives. In my graduate seminars problems of religious guilt, values, and ethics or ways a therapist might help one deal with religious or moral conflicts were never even considered. Yet evidence from a variety of studies [4] indicates that at least ninety-six per cent of the citizens of this country believe in a deity. And later in clinical practice I found that one deals frequently with patients with religious problems, moral conflicts, and deep anxieties about death or about the meaning of their lives and places in the universe. Though I came to have a deep affection for the campus and the intellectual ferment which always abounded there, I was disappointed that religion was an issue which psychology as a field studiously avoided. The silence was deafening.

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As I moved ahead in my discipline, repeated challenges and questions for my religious faith presented themselves. In a church that believes in "speaking in tongues," revelations, miraculous healings, and the like, one must face the very reasonable question of psychologists about the relationship between religious experience and psychopathology. For example, occasionally one sees people who are psychotic who may either believe they are divine or who claim to have visions, revelations, hear supernatural voices or to have extremely unusual religious experiences. How is this any different from a valid religious experience? How is it possible to distinguish between the two? This, for me, has never presented any great overriding problem of explanation or interpretation. If the individual is hallucinating and is sick or psychotic, his judgment

[4] Discussed in G. Lenski, *The Religious Factor* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1961).

will be impaired generally, and there will be an abundance of other evidence of sickness or confused thinking. Admittedly there are borderline cases where it may be hard to tell, but in cases of sickness or disease usually the truth will out. The same is true of the psychopath (e.g., the character disorder or criminal personality). Some psychopaths are very adept at deception and misrepresenting themselves; but these deceptions tend to catch up with them, and the fabric of their lies and claims crumbles under careful scrutiny and examination. In other words, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

If a person who is fairly religious becomes mentally ill, in most cases some religious symbols, ideas, and beliefs become mixed in with his psychopathology. This certainly is not unexpected nor unusual. It does not necessarily mean that his religion made him ill, but only that he makes use of whatever ideas and symbols he was familiar with before his illness (religious, scientific, vocational, sexual, etc.) to restructure the world during his illness. We have to be careful of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy — that merely because B follows A, A is necessarily responsible for or causally connected with B. Because a person has been religious and has unusual religious beliefs while mentally ill, it does not follow that these beliefs or his religion made him ill.

A related question presented by some of my colleagues has to do with the possible role of religion in creating illness, such as through guilt. They point to such neurotic conditions as anxiety attacks and obsessive compulsive neuroses. Their view is that religion makes people feel guilt about various real or even contemplated misdeeds (such as breaking sexual taboos), often greatly out of proportion to the severity of the offense. My experience, especially in the last five years, has often been to find amazingly little guilt among many patients for breaking society's so-called taboos. Ours appears to be an extremely permissive age. Adultery, for example, is committed by many church-going people, with easy rationalizations and remarkably little psychic pain, even though the results may ultimately be quite disastrous. The view that has made most sense to me is that guilt, remorse, and sometimes acute psychic pain are extremely important prerequisites to constructive change. When people exploit and injure others without remorse, empathy, or pangs of guilt, they are approaching the type of personality seen in the true criminal psychopath. I certainly have not seen many people clinically who have been "damaged" by the stern morality of their religious teachings. However, I have seen sick families inflict religion on their children in unhealthy ways. Neurotic,

excessively hostile, or borderline psychotic parents can take certain facets of their religious belief and in almost diabolical ways torment and ravage their children with these. I do not, in these cases, blame the religion particularly, whatever the denomination, though I would recognize that some religious groups do have more "healthy" techniques for instruction and control than others. If the sick parents happened to belong to no religion at all, they would seize upon other symbols or convenient values in their culture and in like manner inflict these on their children, with the possible production of neurotic or disturbing symptoms in their offspring.

One sometimes hears religion, belief in deity, and religious faith criticized rather disdainfully as a kind of crutch and a sign of weakness. This seems to be an entirely irrelevant point. Crutch or no crutch, the basic question seems to be, "Is there a Supreme Intelligence in the heavens, and if so, what is His nature and plan?" I am not afraid of being either dependent or independent, if my condition is in reasonable balance and appropriate to reality.

Another issue, with which many of my friends have struggled painfully, is the problem of free will versus determinism in the lives of men. The view of some has been that *all* of our behavior ultimately is determined by our genetic endowment plus the pattern of training, conditioning, and life experiences to which we have been exposed since our conception in the womb. They have further claimed that the subjective feeling one may have that he is an agent who can freely choose his destiny is really only illusory. This view posits that our every move, wish, choice and thought could, if we had a large enough computer and sufficient data, be completely predicted and that in a true sense life is determined. This has been called by some the "new materialism." It implies that we are not really responsible for our behavior but rather are merely hapless pawns buffeted about by the winds of our environment on the sea of our self-duplicating nucleic acids (our genetic endowment).

My personal view is similar to that of Vannevar Bush,[5] wartime director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, who states that of the two vital realities of man's being, his free will and his consciousness, science not only gives no proof but does not even produce evidence. Thus, rationally, empirically, or scientifically there can be no absolute demonstration as to whether or not we are completely determined, as some would have us believe. I agree with Bush that, even so, one's sense of free will is still a vital reality (as are consciousness, love, and many other scientifically unmea-

[5] "Science Pauses," *Fortune*, LXXI, 5 (May, 1965).

surable entities). However, people do vary in the amount of freedom available to them; some people are more free than others. The goal of successful psychotherapy is to free an individual from the tyranny of his impulses (frequently unconscious). Some individuals are slaves to obsessive-compulsive or other symptoms such as inability to stay on a diet or regulate food consumption, masochistic self punishment, alcoholism (and other addictions), chronic depression, and the like. They have, in a sense, lost some measure of rational control over some or many aspects of their life or behavior. The Apostle Paul put it well when he wrote, "I do not understand my own actions, for I do not what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." [6] One sees this in marriage counseling when an ordinarily sane and rational housewife with five children, active in her church, loses herself in an affair with a man she would never think of marrying; she risks disaster, loss of family, incapacitating guilt, and all the rest for a few words of flattery and moments of passion.

With regard to the contributions of the major philosophers to my religious growth, I'm afraid the cupboard is bare; most of these thinkers seemed merely analytic (though often brilliantly so), and rarely did they contribute anything to live by or any newer, higher morality. I also have found myself increasingly disappointed with the major Protestant theologians, many of whom, in my view, have pretty much written themselves out of Christianity. Christ and his role in history have been so emasculated as to be hardly recognizable and remain only as a caricature of what one reads in the Four Gospels. Or as O. Hobart Mowrer, professor of psychology at the University of Illinois, has succinctly put it, "Theology has come near to spoiling religion — and life itself for modern man." [7]

Despite this blanket indictment, I must confess to admiration for such men as Robert Elliot Fitch,[8] Dean of Christian Ethics at the Pacific School of Religion, whose clear-eyed views on personal ethics and social responsibility, especially in the area of sexual conduct, much impress me. Even the maligned and often disparaged Reverend Norman Vincent Peale cannot be dismissed too cavalierly. I have seen patient after patient who obtains solace and significant help from such books as *The Power of Positive Thinking*. This may be an "out" book for the professional therapists, and the Reverend Peale may be an embarrassment to the professors in schools of theology; yet, in fact, he does give people

[6] Romans, 7:15 (paraphrase).

[7] O. H. Mowrer, "Integrity Therapy," *Faculty Forum*, XXX (May, 1965).

[8] *The Decline and Fall of Sex* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1957).

help, and his books do assist some people significantly in staying afloat. As a pragmatist and empiricist, I am more impressed by this than by his reviewers' disdainful comments.

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Some people have mistaken notions about what psychology, psychiatry or even psychoanalysis can tell us. These fields have made and do make major contributions scientifically, as well as relieving suffering and untangling deeply imbedded psychic conflicts. But they give us nothing in the way of values or morals. They say nothing, really, about what is right or wrong, good or bad; if anything they try to avoid making value judgments. And they tell us nothing about who man is, where he is going, or why he is here. Nevertheless, every psychotherapist seems to gradually assume the function of a "priest and prophet." He is almost forced into this by the very nature of his work; patients daily bring him their most intimate problems and challenge him to set their lives aright. This can be a very ego-inflating experience — especially if one has some measure of success. But it also poses the danger of creating unwarranted feelings of omniscience. It is not unusual to see some therapists become extreme cultists, no less fanatical than the extreme religionists one sometimes sees. Psychotherapy is not a science; it is an art. Ten therapists interpreting the same dream will come up with ten interpretations. We still are very much on the frontiers in our understanding of the behavior of man and of many aspects of mental illness, such as schizophrenia.

Frequently I have noticed that some people, when they move into a new town, choose their psychiatrist as others choose a minister. They pick someone with whom they feel some rapport. They may shop around awhile — visiting one therapist, then another — until they hit on someone who particularly suits their fancy. Thus the therapist frequently falls into the role of guide, father, financial advisor, second spouse, healer, priest, and so on. And my prediction would be that as our Western civilization becomes increasingly secular, the psychotherapist will tend to gradually replace the minister and priest as reliever of guilt and dispenser of comfort, wisdom, and personal counsel. Professional people in the arts, sciences, and particularly in the communications industry, appear to be leading the way in this trend (substituting a therapist for a minister), with many middle-class people following suit. To counteract this there is increasingly a tendency of the ministry of the major denominations to move into clinical psychology, social work, and, to a lesser degree, psychiatry. This apparently represents an effort on their

part to "legitimize" their function and become respectable. Thus, as I see it, the seeming convergence of psychology and religion is no convergence at all. Actually psychology (which includes the psychoanalytic view of man) has made no compromises at all toward religion. The religionists, primarily middle-class Protestant ministers, are doing most of the compromising; and if the trend continues, they will wind up as teachers of mental health to their congregations, with private psychotherapy being their primary responsibility and religion in the classical sense coming in a poor third.

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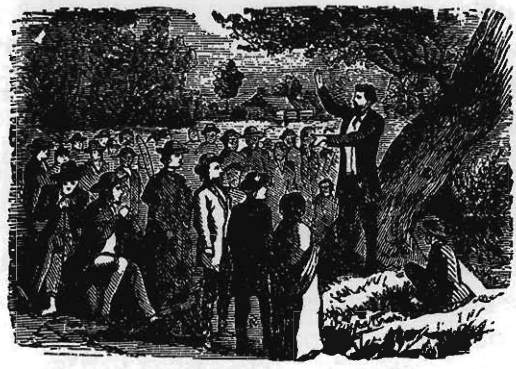
Even though I consider myself a committed Christian, there are some loose ends, frustrating dilemmas, and completely baffling problems that at present defy all honest attempts at resolution. These focus in several areas. The first has to do with scriptural contradictions. While I accept the Bible and other sacred writings as, for the most part, inspired words from the mouths of men, at times I run into baffling contradictions. God seems to be saying one thing on one day and just the opposite on another. I might try to explain these as faulty translations sometime over the centuries or the distortions of men somewhere in the receiving or editing process. But I am not always comfortable with these explanations. How does one distinguish which inspiration is the correct one? My way of dealing with such a problem is to admit that it is for the moment insoluble and to put it down in writing in a center section of my Bible where there are a number of blank pages for notes. I periodically come back and study the problem again, trying to look at it from another vantage point. Some of my conflicts have been resolved this way, meeting reasonable tests of evidence; others have not.

The second problem area has to do with people. Occasionally people in positions of religious authority say things that rouse my ire, that make no sense whatsoever, that seem calculated to offend and destroy, not heal and repair. Sometimes their biases and politics are very contrary to mine. The view I have finally come to regarding this is that a church can make all of its leaders strictly conform and follow a straight "party line" in expressing their thoughts and politics, or it can allow a certain amount of free agency and independence of thought and expression. Somehow, the latter course would seem to me in the long run to be the most healthy, even at the cost of occasional ruffled feathers. It permits some individual interpretations and personal biases to be expressed — and

thus allows for some honest disagreement and the possibility of individual error.

The third kind of problem I run into has to do with my church's position or lack of position on certain social and moral issues which seem to demand some response. But I am painfully aware that some other active church members, men of good will, do not see eye to eye with me in defining which are the most pressing social and moral issues that should be immediately dealt with; and even if they did, they would not agree as to what would be the most appropriate action. I am not quite egoistic enough to believe that if the Church doesn't happen to agree with me on every social and moral issue it is wrong and I must walk out in a huff. But I am of the conviction that even though the Church has revelation and inspiration guiding its leaders, God is concerned that we exercise our intelligence, pursue truth diligently, and use our free agency. I don't think He wants to solve all of our problems for us, thereby creating an extreme dependency; I think we must sweat it out sometimes. If this is true, it means that occasional tension and disagreement are healthy for the Church. The difficult thing here is making use of talent, diverse ideas, and disagreement in a way that is positive and constructive, rather than allowing them to become destructive and divisive. I have a feeling that even in immortal life we will find differences of opinion inseparably linked with free agency.



Despite the many unanswered questions, the scriptural contradictions, and other issues which constantly challenge my religious belief and faith, I find that science, while ably conquering the material universe, has less to offer than my faith concerning what matters most. In fact anyone involved in continuing research is continually made aware that science only collects evidence. Sometimes, if we are fortunate, this evidence leads to hypotheses, but

these are retained only as long as new evidence supports them. Science proves nothing absolutely; something more is needed. While I can certainly empathize with the bleak and lonely existentialist position which concedes only that man exists, it is not enough for me.

This leads to the next major point: how I can reconcile my religious beliefs with a professional tradition that is so indifferent to religion. My present view has taken many years to evolve, so that all I can do is give a synoptic overview. The Christian view (as I saw it early in my life) was that some twenty centuries ago a man was born who was the Son of God, chosen to come to this earth to fulfill not only ancient prophecies but also to introduce a divine plan conceived and developed prior to the organization of this earth.

From the documents available there appeared to be four separate accounts of Christ's life and ministry on this earth, plus the writings of some of his contemporaries such as the Apostle Paul. A study of these records ultimately convinced me that, with regards to men and their relationships with each other, the records contained some supremely important truths. However, in matters of this kind, the only sure way of testing their validity (as much as we can ever do) is through the crucible of our own experiences and those of people we know or know about — and in part through a study of our history and literature. Thus, completely apart from the supernatural aspects of the New Testament, the ethical and moral teachings, I came to believe, have validity and significance for men and women of all cultures and ages.

However, from an early age I had felt an obligation to examine the scriptures and literature of other religions. I frequently asked myself how the teachings of Jesus Christ might compare with those of mystics and inspired men of other centuries and cultures. In the process of this study and searching, I found myself experiencing delight and appreciation for the great insights and revelations of Buddha, Zoroaster (in the sacred writings of the Gathas), Mohammed, and Confucious. In fact, I found a common theme running through most of these. However, the more I studied these writings and their various interpretations and commentaries, the more I became impressed that the Christian ethic, as an inspired and magnificent piece of architecture, had no really close competitor.

As I have gained experience and maturity in my profession, an examination of the most intimate and precious aspects of my own personal life and the lives of those individuals who have entered

my "life space" has led me to continue my critical appraisal and evaluation of the validity of the teachings of Christ. And I have found myself continually coming to the same conclusion: that, whoever Jesus Christ was or wasn't, the Christian ethic is unmatched anywhere. To deny this, I would be false to myself and those powers of judgment and discernment which I possess. It has seemed quite apparent that of all the billions of intelligences who have existed on this earth, none made such a contribution and impact as this one individual, Jesus Christ. I therefore came to believe that Christ's claim to divinity had to be given serious consideration.

I was deeply impressed by the New Testament account of the teachings and miracles of Jesus, which are certainly appropriate to a divine being. He offered mankind a plan for salvation from sin and error and for self-fulfillment in this life and in a post-mortal existence, and he demonstrated His unique power over sin and death in His crucifixion and resurrection. But, however deeply impressed the investigator and truth-seeker is by this great series of events, one may still wonder if it is really all true. Did Jesus Christ actually conquer death? Or is this merely a legend which has developed around a humble and deeply spiritual mortal being? This question is obviously one of the greatest importance.

It was at this point that the crucial element of faith entered in. I am convinced that from the study of visible evidence men will never have final, certain knowledge about most things in the fields of science or religion. The history of physics, for example, has been one of continuing revolutions in which the "past" has repeatedly been challenged and in which new theories have replaced the not-so-new. We might consider, for example, Yang and Lee's [9] overthrow of "parity" a few years ago, or Werner Heisenberg's introduction in 1927 of the "Uncertainty Principle," which plays a fundamental role in quantum mechanics and which shook physics to its foundations. In fields such as archaeology, there is even less "certainty" (the downfall of the Piltdown man being a dramatic example of this).

I finally concluded that after I had read all the books from Aristotle to Camus and the learned discourses of both the wise and foolish, I would still find no absolute final proof. I would have to reach out into the unknown and seek my creator through an act of faith. I could have played it safe and refused to do this, preferring

[9] Drs. Chen Ning Yang and Tsung-Dao Lee (of the Institute of Advanced Studies at Columbia University) won the 1957 Nobel Prize in physics for their work earlier in the year, in which they toppled a corner stone in nuclear physics, the principle of the conservation of parity or space reflection symmetry.

to wait for "ultimate evidences," but in so doing I think I would have denied myself peak spiritual experiences and self-actualizing insights. Complete verifiable evidence will never be available. But I believe that an encounter with the Creator, a vastly more moving and profound experience, is well within the realm of possibility for any human who chooses to seek it.

I am convinced that it is through faith, sometimes by the medium of prayer, that we receive the witness of the Holy Spirit (which Jesus Christ has promised to all men who so wish to avail themselves). And it is the witness of the Holy Spirit which testifies that Christ is the Son of God and that His teachings are true and which indicates whether our judgments and discernments are true. It is this most powerful of religious experiences that burns within men and motivates them to dedicate their lives to the service of their Creator. It can bring about a most dramatic change of personality, creating a sweetness and gentleness of spirit and a tolerance and love for one's fellow man that are amazing to behold.

That this occurs is not to say that members of other religions who worship God do not also have experiences of this nature. I cannot believe that God rejects any person who sincerely seeks after truth concerning His reality.

For many years I heard the term "born anew" used frequently in connection with the Christian faith. I found it, frankly, devoid of much meaning. My own religious or spiritual development had been rather gradual and, while there had been moments of deep religious significance, there were never any dramatic changes. However, I have occasionally known people to experience this spiritual rebirth. Sometimes one who has lived "carelessly" and seriously offended members of his family or others within range of his influence "accepts Christ" and as a result develops an attitude of deep regret and humble repentance. He acquires a totally new sweetness of spirit and tolerance toward others, and a very obvious inner light radiates through his whole personality. He experiences a vital spiritual awakening and a faith that transforms him, and his experience gives great meaning and significance to the term "born anew."

A physician in Scotland who attended Billy Graham's crusade in Edinburgh wrote of this experience in a national (U.S.) publication. He ridiculed the whole affair, particularly the teen-age girls and others who responded to the "call" and were "saved." He cast them in the stereotype that many dormant religionists and agnostics apply to camp-meeting salvation, which amounts to

a ridiculous caricature and parody of the real thing. I feel that this reflects only ignorance about a supremely important experience in the lives of legions of men and women. Some of these individuals, through their cynicism and pride in their "emancipated" intellect, have cut themselves off from almost any understanding of or sensitivity to a genuine religious experience.

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With regard to my attraction to the Mormon view of Christianity, two factors weigh heavily with me. I am impressed by the positive impact of its philosophy and remarkable action program on people's lives, an impact akin to what I occasionally witness in psychotherapy. And, secondly, the Book of Mormon has come to have a unique validity for me. This I initially found very hard to relate to myself, but when I eventually studied the book with care, I was very impressed, especially as a psychologist and student of human behavior. I was struck with the universality of its content and its "psychological validity." It was not "paranoid gibberish," but a remarkable chronicle of challenge and travail of the human spirit. Its history is psychologically true for any age or people.

To thumb through or read a chapter at random does not do justice to the Book of Mormon. It has major rhythms, remarkably similar to those of the Old Testament, in its recounting of cycles of reconciliation and alienation in the relationship between God and his chosen people. It has new names, faces, and geography, but the plot is ageless: the eternal struggle between tyranny and liberty, freedom and bondage, and the flowing tides of a great civilization's rise and fall. Always, however, there is the central unifying theme, the relationship between God and man.

There are some specifics of dogma, theology, and religious history in my church that leave me confused. Somehow they do not seem to fit into the architecture of the Four Gospels. These scriptures are indigestible, sometimes painful to face. My temporary solution, as I mentioned previously, has been to write these discrepancies out on a blank page in the center of my family Bible. My understanding of my religion is like an unfinished tapestry which has an overall pattern that is fairly clear and makes sense to me. On that basis I have decided to exercise a little patience with the dissonances and ambiguities that exist on the unfinished edges of this tapestry. But the same is also true with my profession; there are a vast legion of unanswered questions. I have learned to live with this.

In my profession as a clinical psychologist I have a personal and professional interest in ridding my patients of their demons, their unconscious, self-destructive impulses, their irrational approaches to problems and their loss of identity. I try to free them of the pathological preconditionings which hound them, so that they can rationally choose their destinies as free men. My success has been variable. Some people get well for reasons I do not understand. Others, with rather minor problems (apparently), stay about the same, for reasons that are also hard to understand. The goals of the healthy religion are very similar to those of some aspects of psychiatry and psychology — to enlighten and liberate men, not through fear and coercion, but through reason, love and faith. And as a pragmatist and empiricist I am much impressed by what I see as the fruits of healthy religious development, though I recognize that religious dogma and institutions are sometimes misused with sad and painful results (as are other kinds of dogma and institutions, such as academic and political).

I must add that I have much appreciated and have highly valued my friends of other faiths, as well as some who have had no involvement with religion. I have found them to be men of honor and good will, who have on occasion shown great courage and grace under pressure or in moments of personal sorrow. They have greatly helped me to appreciate the complexity of the human spirit and to recognize other pathways to personal fulfillment.

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I have come to know God through Jesus Christ. At the intellectual or rational level I have examined the tenets of my faith against the evidence of my own experiences and those of other individuals I have known and have become personally convinced of the validity of these experiences. A comparison with other faiths, scriptures, and prophets has led repeatedly to this same conclusion. I have seen the tremendous changes that can come into the homes of individuals who have accepted Christ and his ethic into their lives. And this, when all is said and done, may be the most powerful evidence to the outside observer.

The cumulation of these evidences and experiences has enabled me to plant and nurture a germ of faith whose growth in time has led to the witness of the Holy Spirit. It is this "light" which sharpens my spiritual and ethical discernments and leaves me with a burning testimony of the truth of Christ's message and the essential validity of His restored Gospel.