

Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 21 No. 4

Anthony Buzzard, editor

January, 2019

Testimony of a Former Catholic

by Terri Moore, Minnesota

My name is Terri Moore and I once described myself as a Roman Catholic believer. I was raised in the traditions of the Catholic Church: regular church attendance, Lenten observances, first communion, confessions, confirmation — all that was expected of a good Catholic. For confirmation, I memorized a catechism of numerous questions and answers about sacraments, prayers, and some biblical material (Ten Commandments, fruit of the Spirit, etc.). I longed for my confirmation to receive the Holy Spirit and very seriously went through all the steps prescribed. My great desire as a youth was a close walk with God. I was the unusual Catholic who actually read the Bible. There are notes written in my childish 10-year-old hand in the margins of my children's Bible. One summer in my early teens I set an alarm to rise by six each morning in order to read through the Bible from cover to cover. There were few books available to me on spiritual matters, but what there was, I read — Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, and such as these.

I was disappointed by the confirmation ritual because nothing changed in my sense of spiritual closeness to God, but I was not discouraged from continued reading and learning. I searched encyclopedias in the public school library for information about biblical people, places, and events, writing copious notes (some of which I still have to this day!). I even delved into the few books on spiritism available at school. I was hungry and continued to feel frustrated in my effort to truly draw close to God, in spite of praying the rosary nearly daily. I was looking for the formula that would break through to know God. The greatest problem was that the Catholic tradition had sent me in search of a Trinitarian God that doesn't exist, so I could never find him.

My first year at liberal arts college I took a composition class that used the Bible as its textbook. We wrote both creative and research papers based on biblical themes and I was commended for insight into the Bible texts. Although I was familiar with the historical events described in Scripture, I believed the church's teaching about spirituality was truth. Yet I was still searching for God.

The second year in college I roomed with an atheist, who had formerly been a Christian. Together we determined to read through the Bible, examining the contradictions she believed were there. She didn't carry

on with the project, but it was the spur I needed to begin examining what troubled me. But I did not find contradictions in the Bible. Instead I found contradictions between what the Catholic Church taught and what was in the Bible. I wanted to know on what authority the Catholic Church insisted on: going to confession,¹ the Pope invoking his will on the people, the position of Mary in the church's beliefs, the origin and purpose of canonized saints, etc. The lack of Scriptural basis, contradictions, and changes over time in the Church's stance on doctrines told me that these practices couldn't be from God. The authority and influence of the Catholic Church in my life crumbled before my study, although it took until my senior college year to make a complete break.

I made a determined effort my last year in college to spend an hour every day in Bible study, memorization, and reading. It led me to trust the Bible more deeply as God's words and ways for life. I was looking for a denomination that offered what I was seeking, but still returned to the Catholic Church to pray and occasionally to attend mass. The final break with Catholicism occurred when I explored the differences between Catholicism and Lutheranism. When a male Lutheran friend and I went to a priest to discuss the Eucharist (Communion), the priest did not share any Scripture with us and instead pried into our personal relationship. Dissatisfied after that meeting, I met alone with a Lutheran minister, who was busy labeling what I was learning about baptism as fundamentalist and finding books from his shelves for me to read rather than pointing me to the Bible. I left college, rootless in my search for fellowship in spite of visiting numerous churches.

A couple years later I was attending a fundamentalist, somewhat Baptist Bible study at the University of Minnesota with a former Catholic friend. Around that time I met Jeff Moore, who would become my husband. Jeff was the first person ever to bring to my attention that the Trinity is not in the Bible — neither the word nor the concept — something I had missed in all my study. That spurred another study frenzy, spending time in bookstores to research from

¹ At that time the new thing was face-to-face confession with the priest. I did it only once, and this was the last time as the priest wanted intimate details of my experiences and thoughts, which I did not think were his business. I already believed that God was great enough to hear me and forgive me without a priest.

books I did not own. When I asked the pastor of the Baptist college group about the Trinity, he was tongue-tied and shed no new light, even seeming to want to distance himself from me. That was the last time I attended that group.

After two months of study, though, I was still not convinced that the Trinity did not exist. I was studying the Bible at this time and did not get into the historical roots of that teaching. If I had, it might have shortened the time it took me to realize the Trinity was of man's construction. But there were some passages in Scripture that seemed to support the Trinity that I couldn't simply dismiss. Jeff and I knew we had to have agreement in our faith and determined to break off our relationship the next week, after I studied all my material once again.

Through all these years of searching, I prayed heavily on these issues. And that week of decision I prayed diligently, asking God to show Himself to me as He is, giving me some indication of the truth. I remember it clearly to this day. I was walking in my apartment to my bedroom, talking to God, and suddenly there was a dropping of a curtain in my mind. It was as though a fog was blown away and all I had learned through the years came together and made sense — in that single moment. I knew without a doubt that God was one God alone and Jesus was His Son. Everything of Scripture made solid sense in light of that truth. And I had peace.

Truly knowing God led to a very grounded, complete, and clear understanding of His plan. With further study, the truth about God's nature naturally led to understanding truths about man's nature, the condition of death, and conditional immortality at the final judgment. The customs and teachings of Catholicism and its many Protestant offshoots based on man's imagination or philosophies of pagans were rapidly overcome by reading Scripture without the filter of traditions and rules developed over hundreds of years. The Fall and its repercussions for mankind, the need for a Savior and his role as Messiah, made sense in light of the message of the Kingdom of God and God's desire for a return to fellowship with mankind in the eternal Kingdom. These deep and loving truths are missing from the traditional messages of a Trinitarian God we cannot comprehend and heaven-going at death.

But the peace I had was on a spiritual level only. Experiencing God's truth led to estrangement with my Catholic family who thought I was too educated to believe what they thought was a lie. Yet they were unwilling to study with me and listen to the specifics of my discovery or make any attempt to convince me that what they believe is true.

And although I lived near a one God believing church fellowship in the early days, it was not a congregation that warmly embraced newcomers, as the

Baptist college group had. The truths that had been so hard-won for me were common fare for them. There was no celebration of truth winning out over the lies, and no conversation or interest in the journey I had taken. Fellowship fell far short of the rich sharing of the spirit and the heart that I sought. Perhaps they doubted my conversion to truth. Through the years many of that congregation have left the fellowship of one God believers while I remain firm in the truth. The fruit proves the heart. But then and now it is clear that there cannot be fellowship with Trinitarians. We do not serve the same God.

The 30 years since God's revelation to me have been difficult and rich at the same time. There were periods of great isolation, sometimes even among other like-minded believers. What I believe has been labeled "heresy" to my face, and a woman "friend" stopped meeting with me for our children to play when I told her my faith. But despite experiences like that, today there are individuals near and far with whom I have fellowship based on the word of God. There is a church fellowship that allows me to teach the Bible in a clear and grounded manner that makes sense of the great plan of God found in the Scriptures, even as I continue my journey of discovery in the word of God. I deeply appreciate those who have taught me.

The mission of my life is to open the Scriptures in a way that dispels confusion. There is power in God's word. People's lives start changing as soon as we begin to study from Genesis 1. And God clearly reveals Himself in His word when the history and traditions of the established church system are put into their correct historical context.

Praise be to El Gelah, the God Who Reveals.
Amen. ✧

Us Against Them

by Kenneth LaPrade, Texas

"But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God" (James 1:19-20).

How might this biblical truth apply to our approach to a world in which rapidly fired opinions are tweeted quickly from the hip in the arenas of social issues, political agendas, religious wrangling, and a volatile tangle of "us against them" controversies?

Many of us know from experience what it is like to have strongly defended former views with which we now firmly disagree! On top of that, we might have undergone the experience of being pegged as traitors by good friends — for no longer going with the flow of a previous paradigm. Sometimes, it might be advisable to slowly and humbly meditate on all the implications of

such dilemmas in our own lives. We cannot undo any past failures via time machines, nor pretend to have known things that we didn't know in the past.

Serious Christians in general know what it is like (in their opinion) to be lovingly outspoken at times and yet be badly misunderstood. Some very reflective, thoughtful ones, upon changing perspectives, might realize in hindsight that they were previously often guilty of confusing "boldness" with **brash** arrogance. Being in denial about having been previously contentious helps no one. Sometimes clear distinctions like this are hard to pinpoint even if we have had good intentions. At times, prayerful self-doubt about our possibly mistaken past behaviors and attitudes is truly a good thing, leading us to greater clarity!

Honest folks desire to be frank and forthcoming without being rude, controlling, or pushy. They also want to be gentle and approachable without being gun shy, defensive, or wishy-washy. As highly imperfect, growing individuals within a slowly maturing community of believers, how do we keep from getting out of kilter? We know that clamming up and making Christianity a purely "private religion" is unscriptural, but we also know that brazen, bullying public displays can often do more harm than good! They can even end up turning folks **away** from the faith.

In fact, in the context of zealous evangelism with an incomplete or distorted message (such as a lack of a true Gospel of the Kingdom focus), Christians can sadly be as harmful as the hypocrites rebuked by Jesus! "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell [the judgment of Gehenna] as yourselves" (Matt. 23:15). One might keep in mind that these first-century religious leaders were convinced in their own eyes that they were totally "right"; they did not think of themselves as false or hypocritical.

As we humbly examine any doubtful fruit in our own experiences, we must never lose confidence in how merciful and forgiving the Heavenly Father is with our sins, shortcomings, quirks, and misunderstandings — as we keep seeking to be genuine with Him according to Scriptures. If we believe (correctly) that God will be fair and compassionate in future judgments with those who never even heard the message, can we not be patient and forbearing with one another who endeavor (at some level) to live as Christians? If we are to love even our enemies, why not be an example to the unbelieving world of extreme forgiveness among fellow Christians? Shouldn't we do this, even if there are serious household errors that should be challenged? We know from the Bible that we don't really love God if we can't love one another.

I know that I am not alone when I make this personal observation: I have never been treated with more cruel suspicion and hostile rejection by secularists, atheists, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, etc., than I have been by fellow "Christians"! **You** could probably make a similar statement! Why is that? Is a spiritual battle in play in which we are seduced to forget who the real enemies are?

On top of such tragedy, I would say that most "Christian" mean-spiritedness (including either subtle or over-the-top expulsions) has been due to dogfights among brethren from the same basic background. Such pervasive trends make religious chatter about "loving one another" a matter of hollow rhetoric without substance. You shall know them by their fruit, right? Of course, it should be no surprise if outsiders accurately size us up in exasperation and mutter, "Why in the heck believe in God and Jesus and all that stuff if those guys who believe spend all their time quibbling over issue X or which leader to follow?" Our bad "Christian" example can speak more loudly to outsiders than a "correct" doctrinal understanding of anything! (In saying this I am not relegating true knowledge and practice to a status of insignificance; unity built around hazy lies is of no value before God.) I **am**, however, being observant concerning mutual, widespread sloppiness in learning to be good, decent neighbors.

Of course, what follows here is sadly logical. How in the world can we genuinely exemplify loving our neighbors and even our enemies, while being baited into treating the close circle of family members with hostility? There must be a loving way to help one another out of this obviously dark, centuries-long travesty, without compromising important beliefs or without getting distracted by less important issues.

As an example of less important issues (also of real neighborly priorities), I will recount incidents from my school workplace over 10 years ago (in the spring of 2008), during primary campaigns in U.S. politics. A friendly colleague, with good intentions, distributed copies of a religious publication from her church to all of us on the faculty. Shortly after that she went on to chat with each of us about the upcoming voting situation, informing each of us solemnly that one of the candidates was a secret Muslim plant being inserted to undermine the nation. (Perhaps you have also heard this particular conspiracy theory.) This idea had been boldly preached at her well-known El Paso megachurch. Though I thought this was an alarming, misguided "mission" falsely representing Christianity (and I seriously doubted her bizarre theory), I tried to stay civil. I did feel some anger that Christianity itself was getting a black eye. I honestly felt quite embarrassed for her, and I simply prayed for her. She really did not know any better.

Nevertheless, in hindsight, I've considered some good lessons from this weird example. My role as a believer is to do my best to represent the Gospel of the Kingdom, not to get distracted by **any** political wrangling or conspiracy theories (as if such "preaching" could help anyone). As one who has had careful dialogue about Jesus with intelligent, good-hearted Muslims, how can I be genuinely loving toward them if I were to endorse ideas that implicitly demonize them in a categorical way? Honestly speaking, if I had been an "unbeliever" listening seriously to my old colleague, I would have been badly **turned off** from considering any "Christianity" she supposedly represented! Asserting political views that brashly demonize others is **not speaking the Gospel!** It would be a shameful example if one were to turn people away from the Gospel with such ungodly distractions. Remember that God desires that **all** humans be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Nevertheless, before I applaud myself for not having been seduced by that nonsense (in my opinion), I must humbly ask myself: have I ever done the same thing? You bet I have! In addition to years of know-it-all assertions promoting **dangerous** strands of "got it made" theology, I compounded such errors decades ago by proclaiming certain wild conspiracies! Nowadays, I am very content to obey the Bible and pray for those in authority. Even in speaking candidly about social issues, the goal should be to help folks, not to control Gentile nations.

Anyway, I believe now that our Heavenly Father was extremely forgiving toward me, while I had assumed quite falsely for a long time that my walk of faith was solid. Like my zealous old work colleague, I did not know any better! So, I can certainly remember my own troubled plight and be empathetic toward others. Shouldn't we all humbly strive to follow how He is exceedingly kind and forgiving? We should not be baited into demonizing one another!

Once again, to embrace such overflowing kindness does not imply being flaky about certain doctrinal understandings, but it does involve being quick to listen, slow to speak, and (to emphasize it a bit) very, very, very slow to get **angry!** If I'm **quick** to get angry (a very common, worldly tendency), at best I only "love" those who agree with me, or maybe those whom I can coerce with my anger! Even "unbelievers" can "love" at that level, right? Once again, as we have seen, our anger does not produce God's righteous agenda!

Love as a compassionate effort means willingness to be supportively "under" others, acting as real servants. We don't win anyone by "lording" something "over" them in a way that is disrespectful to their free will choices. God always honors free will; why are many Christians often so unwilling to really do so? Too many

Christians act as if they are doing others a favor by **rapidly** spouting bombastic, "in your face" bullets, as if such a tactic will "set them straight."

We are to be quick to carefully hear others out, befriend them (despite possible disagreements) while slowly speaking information which might eventually help them see things more clearly. This might be difficult at times, but it is a doable challenge, without necessarily being pulled into "us against them" wrestling. I think about how strong marriages and mature friendships grow to calmly handle dealing with disagreements without bullying or strife.

However, growth in gentle, self-sacrificial love does not mean the falsity of being obsequious, and it does not exclude the occasional, timely use of sharp wake-up calls. Nevertheless, genuine compassion is absolutely free from the taint of cynical, eye-rolling, holier than thou grudges!

The "tongue" and the heart (real thoughts and intentions) must be carefully renewed, by patient, obedient efforts to humbly acquire God's spiritual help. Honesty is vital.

"But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way" (James 3:8-10).

If even our "enemies" are just as much made in God's image as we are (who profess belief in the Messiah), there is **no one** with whom it would be a waste of time to sincerely endeavor to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger! If we kid ourselves into assuming that hasty, abrasive speech means "taking a stand on the Word" when lightly chalking off others, we are missing the point. Even if we momentarily bide our time (thinking up sharp, combative retorts) before verbally pouncing, we are quite far away from obediently being quick to listen with a humble, empathetic ear.

I know that the "quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger" concept cannot be used as a simplistic formula for automatic success, but it might help us greatly to continually keep it in mind. After all, getting pulled into "us against them" posturing is really an insidious "us against **us**" trap of collective self-sabotage, whether as fellow members of **one** spiritual body, or as fellow members of **one** human family — in which each person is equally designed to be a potential image bearer of the Creator. What does it really mean to love without partiality and without hypocrisy?

When the Satanically influenced world publicly pits "red against blue," religion X against religion Y, ethnic group A against B, cultural norm C against D, tribe E against F, or whatever else, we are **definitely not** to get

baited into fighting in their edgy arena! Although, as conscientious truth-seekers, we do not shabbily endorse all belief systems as artificially “one,” how can we slowly and thoughtfully speak up regarding God’s reality? How can we proactively **listen** first when it is very essential? How can we be peacemakers? How can we avoid going along with the flow of caustic dismissal of fellow Christians or of fellow humans? Unlike Jesus himself, we have all emerged from severely corrupt thinking patterns. “Evil” is not just something to point out in “them”; its tainting streak has run boldly and deeply through “us”! Let’s be diligent to be honest! As humble, repentant ones, we should be aware that we are still in constant recovery from darkness, as we develop skills to extend our “quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger” hearts in service toward others. Such painstaking efforts are not in vain! ✧

Are the Gospels Christian?

Don Samdahl, Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, writes at doctrine.org:

“Most Christian churches spend the majority of their time in the Gospels. I would venture to say that 90% of the churches spend 90% of their time in these four books. While Christians should study all of the Scriptures (Rom. 15.4; 1 Cor. 10.11; 2 Tim. 3.16-17), **the Gospels contain no Christianity**. This may be shocking but it is true. **Not one word of Christianity exists in the Gospels. The Gospels are all Jewish. They contain only Judaism — Jewish theology...**

“What we call by convention the Old Testament ends with a prophecy of the coming of Elijah...The Gospels pick up with this prophecy (Luke 1.12-17). What is the significance? **We should be alerted to one simple fact: the Gospels are Old Testament. They are as much Old Testament as Genesis, Deuteronomy, or Isaiah**. Everything in them is Jewish and pertains to **the nation of Israel, the covenant promises, and the coming of the prophesied earthly kingdom of God**.

“If John’s appearance as Elijah is **not sufficient proof the Gospels are Judaism and not Christianity** the Scriptures provide additional evidence of this fact.

“1. The environment of the Gospels is the Mosaic Law. **Jesus ministered under the Mosaic Law as did the Twelve** (Matt. 22.34-40; Mark 10.2-9; 17-22; Luke 5.12-14, 17.11-14, 18.18-22). Paul, however, wrote that **Christians are not under the Mosaic Law**; we are under the administration of Grace (Rom. 6.14). These are two vastly different operating environments...

“4. No one was known as a Christian inside the borders of Israel during the ministry of Jesus or before the salvation of Paul. **Those who believed the gospel of the kingdom, that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of**

God, were known as **followers of the Way** (Acts 9.2, 19.9, 23, 22.4, 24.14, 22). **They were not Christians...**

“Nothing in Jewish theology proclaimed a heavenly kingdom and the Jews had no hope of dying and going to heaven. They certainly had no concept of a kingdom in the hearts of men. Their hope was earthly. The idea of a heavenly kingdom or a kingdom in the hearts of men are but fanciful creations of those who do not know their Bibles. They are projections forced upon the text.”

I hope that our readers will be suitably shocked and shaken by these amazing words from a so-called “Dispensationalist” scholar. We have to point out that his very false understanding of the faith could not be more blatant and clear! What has happened in his dogmatic assertions is that Jesus has been separated from his own Gospel preaching. Can a greater catastrophe than this be imagined?

In terms of dissolving plain and easy words, this scholar’s statement reminds me of the miracle of misunderstanding written by the late V.P. Wierwille, founder of the Way International:

“The records of baptism in Acts, the book which records the events of Pentecost and immediately after, do not mention water at all; thus to say that there is water involved in baptism can only be a private interpretation.”²

(Did he read the book of Acts? See Acts chapters 8, 10, and 11. Paul *deliberately* rebaptized in water former disciples of John the Baptist in chapter 19.)

We urge our readers to do whatever they can, as their expression of love for and loyalty to Jesus (“If you love me, keep my commandments,” John 14:15), to “contend earnestly for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). At the transfiguration, which was a *vision* (Matt. 17:9) of the future Kingdom of God on the earth with the resurrected Moses and Elijah seen in a glorified state, the voice of God Himself was heard: “This is My beloved Son; listen to him!” (Mark 9:7). Paul reflects often on how seriously he took that announcement from God. “If anyone comes to you and does not bring the health-giving teaching of Jesus, he is pompous and deluded” (1 Tim. 6:3-4; 2 John 9: “Anyone who goes too far [in the name of progress] and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God”).

Paul defined his own Christian identity and agenda when he asked us to follow him as he follows Jesus (1 Cor. 11:1). Paul clarified his own Christianity as in opposition to the Law of Moses: I, Paul, a Jew and a

² V.P. Wierwille, *The Bible Tells Me So*, 1971, p. 135, in Braswell, *Understanding Sectarian Groups in America*, 1986.

Christian, “am convinced that nothing is unclean of itself...All things are clean” (Rom. 14:14, 20).

In 1 Corinthians 9:20 Paul deliberately distances himself from the Law of Moses by saying that he, a Jew and a Christian, is “not under the Law,” but firmly attached to the Law of Messiah. Please note the clear distinction between the Law of Moses and the Law of Messiah. The latter is the absolute Christian standard for every believer, Jew or Gentile. In true biblical Christianity there is no distinction between “Jew and Gentile...We are all to be one in Messiah Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

At present there is a fearful division amongst those claiming to be Christian. The thousands of different denominations do not reflect God’s will as proclaimed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:10: “I wish you, brothers and sisters, all to say the same thing and be perfectly united in your judgment.”

A giant step towards unity would be achieved if everyone understood the plain statement of Daniel 12:1-3: The unique Great Tribulation (12:1) will occur just prior to the future resurrection of the dead (12:2), which we all should know will happen at the future one visible Parousia (second coming) of Jesus. Jesus loved those verses and cited them in Matthew 13:43; 24:21, 29 and Mark 13:19.

Christians are supposed to have “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16), but while there is such confusion over the identity of God, Jesus and the Gospel we are far from the ideal of 1 Corinthians 1:10. To begin the process of restoration towards unity, let us all start where Jesus started: by understanding and preaching God’s Gospel of the Kingdom of God, the great hope for world peace and our immortality, living literally forever and ever. “Without vision the people are perishing” (Prov. 29:18).✧

Comments

- “Both my wife and I were first generation Jehovah’s Witnesses. I got baptized at the age of 22. I was a pioneer (full-time minister) for 7 years, an elder for 7 years, delivered talks at District Conventions, and was a part-time translator. (At the Bethel Course for Translators I unwittingly realized how inconsistent the New World Translation really was!) We had the feeling that something was missing and were burdened by a heavy load of general guilt. Even though we did all we could, and even more, it was never enough. We were completely burnt out after a series of stressful congregation problems and our health started to deteriorate. We were empty and our faith withered. However, we slowly started looking for answers.

“With much internal turmoil (JW’s are not allowed to read ‘apostate’ material), we came across several dissenting JW’s web sites, and read books by the former

JW Governing Body member, Raymond Franz. Gradually, we came to comprehend that Jehovah’s Witnesses are not God’s ‘Organization.’ The same way the Catholic Church misinterprets one single Bible verse to gain control over its flock (Matt. 16:18), so the Jehovah’s Witnesses do the same by misapplying the text of Matthew 24:45, where a simple parable got a completely wrong interpretation. After the initial shock we experienced as we kept discovering many “twisted” doctrines of the Watchtower Society, we were increasingly interested in finding out what was the real truth.

“Our first encounter with Restoration Fellowship was through a video, showing Anthony talking to a couple of JW’s in his house. A little bit later, I bumped into a short video explaining Jesus’ true identity. It was an eye-opener! I came to understand that, unlike JW teachings, Jesus did not have ‘a perfect human body,’ was not ‘archangel Michael,’ that he was resurrected in his body, and not as a spirit. Jesus did not trick his disciples when he let them touch his wounds! I looked up the Wikipedia entries on Gnosticism, Arianism and the Hindu teaching of the Avatars, and recognized that the JW doctrines are frightfully similar. Scriptures like Isaiah 53:3 and Hebrews 2:10, 14-18 finally became clear.

“If only an angel could be obedient to God, why bother trying at all! And of course, we would then gladly accept ‘the visible Organization,’ very much like the Corinthians did (2 Cor. 11:4), because Jesus will never again visibly come back! On the other hand, only a human Messiah can understand other humans and be a High Priest. So we don’t need human intermediaries! It became clear why Satan promotes such a lie!

“For some time now we’ve been watching and enjoying Restoration Fellowship videos, as well as those of Dan Gill, Sean Finnegan, Victor Gluckin and the others. They have really been spiritually uplifting. The Watchtower Society boldly claims that they are the only ones that provide healthy spiritual food. What a misconception!

“Eventually we found out that there was a former JW (a dreaded ‘apostate’!) in our area who wrote a number of books on the same topics, coming to the very same conclusions about Jesus and the Kingdom as most Biblical Unitarians did! We got in contact with that humble man, and were so excited to find out that we share the same beliefs! We just couldn’t believe that he didn’t speak a word of English and never listened to Sir Anthony Buzzard or the others! Yet it was as if we’ve been simultaneously reading the same material!

“For a while, we were still active in the congregation. Since I was an elder, I started tactfully introducing some of my newfound beliefs at the congregation Watchtower study and other meetings,

including larger gatherings. Once I asked the audience the following question: ‘How can we answer those in our ministry who say that our understanding of Jesus’ birth is a form of reincarnation?’ There was, of course, no real answer, because JW’s, in fact, teach that very thing! Or: ‘How can we simply calculate the pivotal year of 1919, when God chose JW’s as his Organization?’ There was no answer, because there isn’t any! (Later, the elders threatened me not to ask questions that nobody can answer. They said that I was embarrassing the elders. I just smiled.)

“Finally, the pressure to conform became too strong, and our conscience couldn’t take it anymore. I stepped down from my ‘privileges.’ We stopped going to the meetings altogether. Many of our fellow Witnesses were curious about our sudden change of behavior, so we were able to explain our beliefs to some of them. A married couple from our congregation also realized we were telling the truth. Some others also lent us a hearing ear. Their support has really been precious!

“However, one ‘friend’ accused us of apostasy and we received a phone call from an elder. The next day we decided to write a short message to many of our friends, saying: ‘As we studied the Bible, we realized that many doctrines Jehovah’s Witnesses teach are, in fact, “twisted teachings,” created to draw Christians away from the Christ, and make them into followers of men (Acts 20:30). Hence, we inform you that we do not want to be recognized as Jehovah’s Witnesses anymore.’

“Now we are being shunned by most of our (former) friends and family members. But the feelings of Christian freedom and peace have also been overwhelming (2 Cor. 1:5). We have felt divine intervention in our lives and pray that lord Jesus would help many more to ‘repent and believe in the good news of the Kingdom’! (Mark 1:15).” — *Croatia*

- “I have been following Restoration Fellowship online for more than a year now. I realize I’m going to be soon disfellowshipped or otherwise shunned by my entire JW family. I am trying to reconnect with my broader non-JW kindred and am relying on the few, overall healthy relationships I have from school and my workplace. On a spiritual level I’d like to distance myself from the bitterness of ex JW’s and don’t really want to join any organized religion. Do you have any presence here in central Europe?” — *Hungary*

- “I’m a 78 years young retired psychologist who became a believer in Yeshua/Jesus in 2015. I was born Jewish and explored many paths and traditions over the years prior to 2015. Recently I have felt increasingly uncomfortable with what I perceived as many folks worshipping Jesus as God. I feel dedicated to serving Our One God (*echad*) and it feels more resonant to relearn who Jesus is as anointed by God as Messiah

(Maschiach). I was a neophyte in 2015 and now am feeling like I have to release many Triune notions I’ve been taught and am open to learning who Yeshua Jesus truly is. I had heard about unitarianism a while ago and let it go. Now it’s feeling more right than ever.” — *Email*

- “I enjoy your videos on YouTube as well as your monthly magazines. I am actually one of Jehovah’s Witnesses so I have never believed in the Trinity. This is one of the worst things to ever happen to Christianity, but it was foretold. However I have come to know as well that Jesus certainly is not or was not Michael the archangel. Recently I’ve come to see myself more as simply a follower of Jesus rather than a JW. Although from experience I can say sincerely that they are very honest hearted people and I care deeply for them, yet I understand that they are not perfect when it comes to theology. Knowing that Jesus was truly a man and that someday I can meet him really fills me with joy (who invited men to heaven anyway?). I will continue to watch your videos. Thanks a lot and may Yahweh continue to bless you.” — *Florida*

- “I read Greg Deuble’s book a few years ago. He kept the topics simple, and he used an easy to understand method of explanation. At that time I had already studied the topics he covered but I definitely enjoyed the ways he laid out his argument. I would highly recommend his book to anyone who is just getting started with wanting to learn more about what the Bible actually teaches (as opposed to the traditions of the modern church). As a follow up, kind of like a more in depth second part of Greg’s book, I would recommend Kegan Chandler’s *The God of Jesus*. And, of course, any of Sir Anthony Buzzard’s books should be part of your library as well. Thanks for all of your hard work!” — *Youtube*

- “I’m a kind of ex-JW, as I left before I got baptized, mainly because of differences of viewpoints (the 144,000 of Revelation, Paradise in Heaven instead of the restoration of Earth). I’m seeking to live a Christian life. And I respect the work you are doing to promote unitarian beliefs and all the historical and scientific research that such a work demands. I believe in One God and His only begotten Son Jesus.” — *Reunion Island (near Madagascar)*

- “I have faded this year from JW’s. I’m lost and nearly went completely atheist from lack of faith. I know my Father is real. I wish there was a way to have a Bible study. I need guidance and help. As JW thought goes I’m an apostate just for leaving. I have enjoyed your videos and Sunday livestreams as well. So much of Watchtower to let go of. Thank you.” — *Email*

SAVE THE DATE! April 11-14, 2019
Theological Conference • Hampton, GA