

In Vain They Do Worship – Chapter 10

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Ch 10: In Summation · By Willis Young

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By Willis G. D. Young

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CHAPTER 10: In Summation—Fifteen Years After

There is no doubt about it. Life really does go on.

My first **eleven years** on this earth were spent in private preparation for the day that I would profess and become a Two-by-Two, because I actually that was what everyone did, or should do, or was expected to do. I always heard that there was "great rejoicing in heaven over one sinner the [repented]"; but, more than that, and much more to the point, I knew that there was always a great deal of approval, affectionate tongue clucking, and wise looks of welcome from all the aunts and grandmothers and the other little old ladies sitting around convention grounds with blankets on their knees, shawls over their shoulders and cute little cushions tucked under their arms for use during the I-o-n-g morning and afternoon meetings. The uncles and the grandfathers, and the old men peeling potatoes out back of the cook house, had a much more masculine way of showing their pleasure and often shook one's hand, or, if no one was looking, gave a great big hug and a slap on the back.

Who would not want to profess when such rewards were at stake?

I professed, as you know, and I was so scared about what I did that I don't remember if I got any approval from anyone, and I could not have cared less about such things at that point, anyway. What I did care about, however, was the terrible job it was going to be for me to go back home and start "taking part" in the meetings. I think if I had thought that through a little longer, I would never have professed at all!

Thus, the next **sixteen years** were spent psychologically preparing myself to go into the Work, and I've already told you about the personal battles I waged over that decision. **One year** was spent—or wasted: who will ever know?—in trying to garner and glean a sinful sheep or two for Christ; and then my life went bask, more or less, to normal.

And for **eighteen years**, from July 1961 to February 1981, I strove, yes literally strove, to serve the God of Heaven in my newly carved capacity as "one of the ex-workers." The majority of those years were good ones, and, although I have been told directly to my face that I never gave the impression of ever having had a clear knowledge or "vision" of "the Truth," I really did enjoy many moments of fulfillment and fellowship; and, to this day, I have quite a few very pleasant memories of happy times spent in the presence of both the workers and the friends in many countries around the world.

In some ways, it hardly seems possible that **fifteen years** have slipped away since that night I sat and wrote those two letters to the two men who were in charge of the two meetings I had attended each week for such a long, long time. I must say that the *first seven-and-a-half* went much faster than the *last seven-and-a-half* since I have begun living my life in a wheelchair. But, since the beginning of time, the evening and the morning still mark the end and the beginning of each new day, and I have gradually—oh, so gradually—learned to cope somehow with the adjustment that have had to be made over and over again. I am absolutely certain that on my last day in this world, I will still not have learned how to completely adapt to every situation that this mode of living has imposed on me and on thousands of others who are much, much worse off than I am.

And now, as I "pen" these words to try to bring all my thoughts, all my reactions and all my conclusions together, I must tell you that it is the month of February, 1966—almost fifteen years to the day since I was finally able to disentangle myself from the workers' web of deceit what so many in the world have now come to know and fear as the Two-by Twos.

I have no doubt that those who chance to read this material will recognize some variations in style, perhaps the odd shift or two in mood, and as the work progresses, even a few different layers of perception, and a deeper understanding of the lies with which I had been brainwashed from such an early age. There are, I think, *four basic reasons* or explanations for the changes or the progressions which you may detect.

Reason One: Time

I began writing the first lines of Chapter One exactly six years ago. I'm not really sure what made me roll up my sleeves, roll up to my typewriter one night when it was late enough that I should have been thinking of going to bed, and write, "I was brought up believing I was a Christian. . ." Soon word upon word became line upon line, and, a few paragraphs later, I began to see that I had a lot of pent-up emotion, and it was going to take a whole lot more to "get it all off my chest" than my first idea of writing only an essay, or, at the very most, just a short story.

I knew, of course, that over the years, hundreds of people had, as had I, "lost out," "gone back" or "become discouraged," as the "saints" would put it. But my only thought was that all of us, in one way or another, had trouble with the idea that the workers were acting very much like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, and were, like their biblical prototypes, preaching "for doctrine the commandments of men." I thought often about putting an ad in the local paper, or perhaps on in Toronto, to see if I could contact anyone at all who had either been "brought up in the Truth" or who had professed for any length of time.

I never got around to doing that, however, and I gradually lost interest in writing any more because I was sure no one but I would ever be reading it, anyway. Besides, the words I had written had proven to be a great catharsis for me, and I saw no need for me to continue.

One day in the early summer of 1994 I had a telephone call completely out of the blue from Eric Brown, a friend of mine from Saskatchewan, with whom I had lost all contact for many years. He gave me all sorts of information about books, pamphlets and other documents that had been written and published and which were available for the asking. He told me, too, about the vast numbers of people throughout Canada, United States, Australia and New Zealand who had finally *seen the light* and had formed an interesting sort of network that was quickly enlarging and becoming a type of support system, both for those who had already left "the faith" and for those who were still inside and had become disillusioned with the dogma and with such a worker-centric set of principles.

What a thrill that information gave me! And what an incentive I now had once again to roll up my sleeves and roll up to my trusty typewriter and try—in earnest, now—to share with others the tale I had waited too long to tell! I knew now that someone else out there probably *would* be interested in reading what I had to write. And I was fairly certain that what had been a catharsis for me would have an equally cathartic effect on others who could identify with the guilt we were all made to feel when we stopped going to meetings.

I wrote with renewed vigor, and, as I have said, with an almost completely different perspective about the way I had been brought up. Also, I was better able to understand the lies behind "The Truth" and the truth behind the lies that had permeated my entire existence for almost half a century. So much of what I had suspected for such a long time became as clear as crystal, and so many questions I had asked of workers all over North America and Europe now had answers. For that, I am thankful indeed that I was halted in my prose five-and-a-half years ago.

(I must, at this point, pause a moment to acknowledge the works of others and to attribute credit to all those who led the way with their research and their desire to expose the cult for the fraudulent entity that it is now and that it always has been. I want to thank them for the information which they have uncovered, and for the intelligence they have shared with others. Their work certainly gave me a clearer understanding of what I was writing about, and they provided me with a better sense of direction about where I wanted to go with these few words of my own.)

Reason Two: Experience

The previous paragraph in which I gave credit to the brave souls who helped spearhead "the movement against The Movement" led me straight to the second reason for my change of tone and mood between the first and last chapters of this lucubration.

For example, I had refrained in my first draft from naming names and pointing my finger at actual workers and friends and the specific role they played in "bringing me down." You may call it cowardice, if you wish, but I think a part of me was still hanging onto the hope that was some *fabric of truth* woven into the *fabrication of lies*—and that with time, and a good, swift kick in the place good, swift kicks are reputed to have the best effect, things might still change for the better.

'If only the workers could be made to "come clean" and to face up to reason and reality,' I thought, 'surely then people would start to understand their errors, and, as the psalmist put it, they would be happy and thankful to be cleansed from their secret faults.' (Psalm 19:12)

Ten or fifteen years of experience, though, had pretty well taught me that no one was going to own up to anything or be thankful for anyone—especially a brash heretic like me—attempting to puncture the egos of such smug and eminent men as Andrew Abernathy, John Richards, Carson Cowan, George Poole, Arnold Brown and innumerable others who had spent or were spending their whole lives living off the wages of deceit while instilling abject fear and a strange form of hate into the hearts and minds of thousands of men, women and children all over the world.

Thus when I began reading about the feelings of others who had "departed from the Way [cult]," and when I saw that so many of them were unafraid to sign their own names to documents where real people and events were exposed, I felt I had no choice but to be equally brave, and to tell my story exactly as I had remembered and experienced it. I went back, therefore, to my first pages, and deliberately and without compunction, inserted the names of every relevant person and every pertinent incident which not only led to

the breakdown and destruction of my confidence in “The truth,” but also came dangerously close to making me doubt the very existence of God, Himself, as well as the reality of eternal life and the part that Jesus Christ played in pointing us in the direction of heaven above.

In further reference to the part experience has played in the development of my story, I would like to elaborate a little further on “that strange form of hate” that I grew up with and had, in fact, learned almost from the time that I was in my mother’s womb. Some might call it distrust, and others may regard it as self satisfaction or self glorification, but I like to call it what it is, and that is “a strange form of hate.”

I was told it was the love of God!

“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26)

“Well,” hedged all the workers I ever asked to explain the meaning of that verse, “what it *really* is saying is that you must love them less.”

And that was exactly my experience and the experience of every member of the Two-by-Twos. We all had to go through life with the strange sort of hate for everything and everyone because we had been taught to “love everything and everyone less.”

And I mean everything and everyone.

We were taught to “hate” all outsiders—because *we* had the love of God, and *they* didn’t.

We were taught to “hate” the Catholics and the Protestants, alike, for they were all going to hell whether they wanted to or no—because *we* had the love of God, and *they* didn’t.

We were taught to “hate” all our friends and relatives who were divorced—because *we* had the love of God, and *they* didn’t.

We were taught to “hate” all those who had allowed “the birds of the air to devour them up” and all who had “fallen by the wayside”—because *we* had the love of God, and *they* didn’t.

We were taught to “hate” our schoolmates and colleague—for *we* had the love of God, and *they* didn’t.

But we were *not* taught to “hate” the brother workers who got sister workers pregnant, because *we* had the love of God, and nobody ever told us that *they* didn’t.

We were *not* taught to “hate” the sister workers who got pregnant by themselves, more or less, and kept on preaching—because *we* had the love of God, and nobody ever breathed a word to us that *they* didn’t.

We were *not* taught to “hate” the girls who switched from flesh-colored stockings to black as they rode to meetings in the back seats of taxi-cabs, and then reversed the procedure on their way home—because *we* had the love of God, and nobody ever mentioned that *they* didn’t.

We were *not* taught to “hate” the wonderfully faithful souls who sneaked off to movie theatres in some nearby city or some out-of-the-way location to take a peek at the latest films—because *we* had the love of God, and nobody thought to tell us that *they* didn’t.

We were *not* taught to “hate” the workers who ran off and got drunk when they were supposed to be spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ in foreign lands, and who were picked up in local pubs and ended up in police stations—because *we* had the love of God, and nobody would have believed that *they* didn’t.

Experience, however, revealed to me that somebody *had taught* George Poole to “hate” me, so *he* must have had the love of God—and it must follow, therefore, that *I* didn’t.

“Everyone from Moncton, New Brunswick to North Bay, Ontario” who “hated” me enough to allegedly ask the same George Poole to “first cast [that] stone” of discord and contempt obviously was filled with the love of God—even though *they* were breaking every rule in the book by pointing fingers of derision and then sitting back contentedly on their whole hands while one of the “servants of the most high God” was more than delighted to do their dirty work for them. And *I*, just as obviously, was not so filled.

Experience has taught me, too, that somebody someplace must have taught the Two-by-Twos here in Ottawa to “hate” me—since *they* obviously believe that *I* do not have any love of God at all, and that I do not deserve either a visit from any of them or even so much as a cup of water offered in the name of the Lord during the seven years that have followed my return “home” in a wheelchair after spending almost one whole year in the hospital.

The experiences I have had in the past two years of meeting former cult members in Saskatchewan, North Dakota, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Ontario have changed my attitude tremendously, and have incited me to write with a freer spirit and a less fearful sensitivity about a way of life that held me captive so long, and which forced me to pick my and choose my expressions very carefully in the first few pages of this narrative. Without my telling you, I am sure you will be able to detect immediately where I began to write more assertively, where my words took on a more confident air, and where I suddenly knew the tale I was telling could now be meaningful to many other like-minded souls.

Reason Three: Health

In my introduction to this chapter I spoke again of spending my seven-and-a-half years in a wheelchair. While this condition has not in any way caused or altered either my opinion of, or my attitude toward the Two-by-Twos in general or workers in particular, it has caused many delays in my ability to commit my thoughts to paper. For instance, I have sometimes gone for many weeks and even

several months at a time without being able to write a single word. You would understand, therefore, that when I began again after a long absence from the keyboard, my mood may have changed, or my phraseology might reflect a different frame of mind.

I suppose these long “silent” periods could have had both a good and a bad effect on this final outcome.

The good that I see is that, after each return to my script, I had reread long portions of it, and tried to tie in the new with the old. In that way I was able to remind myself of promises I had made to cover certain points later on, or perhaps to elaborate on issues which I felt deserved a more thorough coverage.

The bad, as I'm sure you will agree, is found in too much repetition of the same old complaints even though they may have happened in different contexts and become cloaked in an associated variety of expressions. For that, I must thank you for your forbearance and apologize for my many redundancies.

Apart from the many obvious ways that the state of my health has affected and influenced my writing and story telling, I feel, as well, there has been a very great change in the “me” that lives in this tired and wheelchair-bound body that answers to the name of Willis Young. I have learned to look at life from a very different perspective from the one I once had, and, although it is still very difficult for me to ask for help from anyone, I have had to bow to circumstances beyond my wildest imaginings and learn a form of humility that, a few years ago, never could have seemed possible.

“What has that got to do with anything?” I hear you ask.

Nothing, perhaps.

Or everything.

For one thing, I've had so much more time on my hands than I ever would have believed feasible had I continued to teach and tear around on my two hind legs trying to keep up with life and all the appending challenges that compelled me, propelled me or impelled me to “force my heart and nerve and sinew to serve [my] turn long after they [were] gone.” Because of, and since, my accident, however, I have had many long hours that have stretched into many longer days to sit and think, or lie and think, about the blows that have been dealt me, and to reflect on how I would have got along with things had I chosen so many years ago to remain in the Two-by-Two fold.

I have already written that, about six weeks after my accident, I had a visit from a professing man whom I considered for many years to be my best friend. He left his wife and family vacationing in Alberta so that he could fly to Ottawa to see me, and I was very grateful for his efforts to make the trip, and for the spirit of real friendship which he brought, and which *at the time* I believed was both heartfelt and mutual.

Within a period of a very few years, however, and with no warning whatsoever, I would receive from him two inconceivably piercing and painful “stabs in the back,” and with your forbearance, I would like to elaborate on each of them a little later on.

What I wish to say here, though, is that during his visit as we talked and reminisced together about so many people we both knew on either side of the Atlantic Ocean, as well as across and around this sprawling North American continent, I had a strange sense of “aloneness,” and I believe I could have been “almost persuaded” to ignore my better judgment and go back to the superficial friendship of the cult where everything *seemed* so familiar, so comfortable, so inviting and so captivating—but which at the same time was so devious in its allure, and so completely destructive to one's sense of faith and of God, and of one's spiritual health and well-being.

Such feelings of nostalgia were very fleeting indeed, and they didn't last very long at all once the week-end was over, and my friend flew back to rejoin his family, and I got on with my rigorous routine of physiotherapy.

And those sentiments have never once returned.

At this time, however, and regardless of any other points I may attempt to make under this heading of “Health,” I would like to assure everyone that at no time ever did I feel that my accident was a form of punishment by God, the great Creator, for my “sins of the flesh.”

I am, at the same time, more than a little confident that the Two-by Twos would think otherwise, and they would interpret everything that happened to me as being my just rewards for the audacity I showed in questioning the workers' authority, and then abandoning the whole silly setup and trying to expose it as the hoax it is and always was.

In fact, I still have in my possession a copy of a letter written to me by an “old girl” named Jessie Lowe, formerly of Ottawa but presently somewhere in Manitoba. In her missive she told me how happy I should be that God loved me enough to afflict me as he had, so that all my temptations of the flesh would be removed, and I could now be free to serve him as I should. She prattled on about my mother wanting a daughter instead of a son when I was born, and, as a result, I was completely mixed up emotionally, and had never matured either naturally or spiritually, and now it was absolutely clear to her why I had never shown any “vision of The Truth” even after all the years I had spent in it.

Having never met the woman until I was in my late teens, I could still puzzle over “what she knew and when she knew it,” but I chose not to honor her with any sort of reply. I relate this anecdote only to show you the extent of evil that may lurk in the hearts of women and men who have been poisoned by the doctrine of William Irvine and his followers for the last one hundred years.

Just days into my long and laborious hospitalization, I recall one of my colleagues from school inquiring about any religious affiliation I might have that would help me endure the pain and sorrow that the loss of half of my bodily functions would induce. The only answer I could give her was that for many years I had been attached to a group of fanatical hypocrites called Two-by-Twos, and that under no

circumstances was I prepared to call on them again for any spiritual sustenance, and that I would not lie there in bed and pretend to make bargains with God when all my chips were down.

I think, between you and me, what I really meant was that nothing on earth could persuade me to promise God that if He would make me whole again, I would be happy to go back to “the meetings” and to give up the freedom that I had come to know after so many years of being held hostage to such a rigid and artificial code of ethics which was nothing more than a litany of earthly traditions which Jesus, himself, said were only “commandments of men.”

About six or months after I left the Rehabilitation Center, I had another visit from Vance and Deana Johnston—the couple who had earlier refused to post a letter for me. As usual, they were accompanied by their two teen-aged sons. They had called ahead to say they were planning to come over and that they would bring some Kentucky Fried Chicken with them for supper. I was not surprised that they would come to see me again, as they had remained marginally friendly toward me after my “apostasy” and had, on one or two occasions, even invited me to their home when I was still able to walk.

Our visit went well, and everything was very pleasant and civil indeed, until Vance began telling me about one of his recent business trips out West where he’d had the privilege of attending a Two-by-Two convention. While there, it seems, he overheard a conversation between two people who just happened to know me—one of them being that “best friend” of mine who had flown east to see me so soon after my accident, and the other being the husband of a wonderful girl I had known in Ottawa many years before. It further seemed that one was being asked by the other if he knew “how Willis Young is getting along since his accident.” That was really all I needed to be told about that discourse, id I needed to hear anything about it at all; but as was my visitor’s wont, he kept on wading into ever deepening water.

Yes, my best friend had some knowledge of how I was faring and said so, but, for some unknown reason he went on to discuss his fear that I would have some adverse effect on his children should I ever have the opportunity of coming in contact with them. Can you just imagine for a second how I felt, hearing these words being uttered by a person who, for years, had been “closer than a brother”? I explained to Vance that I was not at all happy that he had taken the trouble to convey these words to me, and that I seriously wondered what his real motive was in doing so.

Shortly thereafter, the dinner party broke up.

That very evening I went to my typewriter and wrote to my friend in the West, telling him about the news I had just received concerning the specific conversation he had been overheard having at the convention, and I asked him if what I’d been told was true. (I think I wanted him to flatly deny that he had uttered such words, and to state that he would never consider even *thinking* them, since our friendship had been so longstanding and had withstood an odd “pothole” or two here and there along the road between our teenage years and 1989.)

Nothing could have prepared me for the immediate reply that I received.

There was no denial. There were no qualifying explanations which would have softened the blow. *There was not even a wisp of a hint of an apology that might have, in some way or other, helped to bind up the reed of friendship which was now tattered and blowing in the winds.*

What there was, though, was a great deal of anger directed with unwavering aim at the man from Ottawa who had, with “such unmitigated gall,” chosen very unwisely to become the “carrier pigeon” of complete and useless gossip that would prove to be the beginning of the end of a beautiful friendship of over forty years.

That was the first and more subtle of those two symbolic stabs in the back to which I referred a page or two ago, and on which I promised , with your forbearance, to elaborate more fully.

The second one, a real kicker, came about two-and-a-half years later.

To set the stage, I must tell you that, quite unexpectedly, I received an invitation from one of my former students to visit him, his wife and their family, who were (and still are) living in Sydney, Australia. I had no idea whether I could manage such a long jaunt by myself, but after quite a bit of persuasion from them, along with some information I was able to glean from the Australian high commission about accessibility for the handicapped, I finally thought I had acquired sufficient intestinal fortitude to consider heading off—wheelchair notwithstanding—into the wild, blue yonder.

Shortly after I made my plans to go, I received a call from my friend in the West, and as soon as I told him of the trip I had in mind, he suggested that it was indeed quite a trek for me to attempt on my own, and he asked me if I would not consider breaking the journey by stopping at his home—or *theirs*, as the case may be—for a few days both going and returning.

Because that idea had never once crossed my mind, I told him I would think about it and get back to him. (He assured me that their doors were wide enough for my chair to pass through, and he would not consider it any bother at all to make a little ramp for me up to the front of their home.)

About a week later I called back to tell him that I had decided not to go to Australia at that time as I really felt it was too far for me to go alone, when I had so little experience traveling in a wheelchair.

“Then why don’t you come out to see us anyway?” he asked.

That was another new idea for me, and I told him again that I’d have to think about it and would call him when I had made my decision. About a week later when I telephoned him to say that I had accepted his invitation and informed him that I had made a

tentative plane reservation for a certain time, he immediately said that he regretted that they were expecting other company on that very weekend, and he asked me if I could change my date.

I did.

This time, however, he was so sorry, but, should the weather be suitable during my revised schedule, he would be terribly busy getting his garden in and would be unable to spend any time at all visiting with me. I thanked him, hung up the phone, and within two minutes my trip to the west coast of Canada and my visit to the man who had been my best friend for almost four decades was cancelled completely.

And so was our friendship.

“What,” I hear you wondering, “do these two tales of woe have to do with your health, this whole story in general, and the Two-by-Two cult in particular?”

I suppose what it had to do with the cult in general was that for almost fifteen years before I left it, my friend and I shared many concerns about the validity of its claim to apostolic succession. He was with me, in fact, when I approached Rasmus Pripp in Copenhagen, Denmark, and asked him about that very issue. He was with me, too, in Northern Ireland when one of the friends in the town of Bangor unabashedly referred to the period at the turn of the century as “the revival of the Truth.” And there was much, much more that we talked about concerning our inability to match the written word of the scriptures with the practices that were being espoused by the workers in all of the countries we visited around the world.

When I stopped going to meetings, therefore, I assumed that he, like almost all the faithful followers of Irvine, would abandon me to the “beggarly elements” to which he was sure I had returned. That, however, was not the case, and he continued to write to me, phone me, and even entertain me in his home long after I had been condemned to death by everyone from “Moncton to North Bay”—at the hands of the workers, of course.

When, on one occasion, he was planning a visit to Ottawa with his wife, his children, and his professing sister, he wrote ahead to ask if they all could “abide at [my] house” and use the place as their “jumping off” spot while they visited every “patient, loyal bearer of the cross” residing in and around the beautiful capital city of Canada.

“Of course you can,” I wrote back, because I was delighted to have them, and I would never have guessed during the whole time they were there that he was afraid that “[I] would have any adverse effects on [any of them, including his] son and daughters.” I know, at the time it never crossed my mind, and I’ve never been able to figure out why he later expressed such a concern to a common friend at that western convention.

What all this has to do with my health, as you’ve likely figured out, is, first of all, his unmeasured kindness in traveling such a long way to see me when I was still unable to do much more than lie in bed or sit in a wheelchair after someone had assisted me in transferring into it. Secondly, of course, was the fact that, should I have been able-bodied and walking, I would never have been at the mercy of his outstretched hand and phoney invitation to go to see them, whether or not I had made plans to visit those “worldly” and genuine friends living in Sydney, Australia.

I believe all of this ties in with my whole story and the numerous tales I have told you of the shallow and hypocritical attitude of so many of the good, God-fearing and self-righteous souls who have for so long been held captive in the morass of deception that has been created, maintained, and preserved by worker after worker after worker for the last one hundred years.

I think you will soon see what I mean.

About two years after I was invited—and, almost in the same breath, un-invited—to visit this good man and his wife, I received a telephone call from them telling me of their up-coming business trip to Ottawa.

Would I, I was asked, be so kind as to meet them at their downtown hotel on one of their free days and drive them to Almonte so that they could visit with some friends of theirs and (formerly) of mine as well?

“I’ll give it some thought,” I replied, “and see how I feel on the day you wish to go.”

Immediately, however, I wrote them a letter and made my position very clear. I would not drive them to Almonte, but they were more than welcome to the use of my car should they wish to go on their own to visit whomever they wished to see. I also expressed surprise that they would consider asking such a favor of me after the way they so rudely withdrew their offer of hospitality to me such a relatively short time before.

My response came in the form of their actual visit.

They had already decided not to go to the nearby town of Almonte after all, but they would be delighted to have me join them for dinner at a restaurant of my choice if I would like to pick them up. I did that, of course, and, though I felt a slight tinge of tension within myself, we had a very pleasant meal and evening together with several comments being made by them on how surprised they were to “find [me] so mobile and so independently able to get around.”

It had been already decided that my friend would like to have a visit with me the next morning while his wife was doing some shopping with some of the other “girls” attending the conference.

‘Good,’ I thought—mistakenly, as it turned out—‘now I’ll have an opportunity to talk to him alone and get to the heart of the problem and find out why he had so quickly and so deliberately changed his mind about my visit to their home since the whole thing had been proposed by him in the first place.’

But, as I said, I was not to discover a single clue from him either then or since about why he had so quickly developed such a severe case of the old “cold feet syndrome,” changed his mind so completely, and done an immediate about face when he heard that I had actually taken him at his word and made plans to go for a visit.

As you might imagine, I went “for the jugular,” but he just sat there and laughed me off by telling me that I was “reading too much into it,” and that I “should not think about it any more.” That, to be sure, would have been the best solution, but, since this incident had occurred between two such long-standing friends as we were, and because we had been able to discuss almost any topic under the sun, I really felt that I deserved a completely truthful explanation and not one that simply made light of my concerns or tried so blithely to sweep everything under the rug. I believe that the all-important factor was that I wanted him to say something that would restore our wonderful, open and honest friendship which I knew, right at that very poignant moment, was on the brink of almost total disintegration.

He has left me, as has almost every other member of the cult, without trust and even without remorse, because now I know beyond an iota of doubt that they seek, as Paul wrote in Gal. 1:10, “to please men,” and, because of that desire, they cannot be “the servant[s] of Christ.”

Reason Four: Feedback

You may remember that I have mentioned two or three times throughout this manuscript that, when I began writing it, I had no idea that it would be anything more than a personal catharsis, and that I had no thought whatsoever of ever sharing it with anyone else except, perhaps, one or two very close friends who knew and espoused my attitude toward the workers and my reasons for departing from their doctrine which consisted almost entirely of “commandments of men.”

When I had completed what has now been designated as Chapter I, I had the opportunity of reading it to a young blind couple, the wife of which was brought up as a Two-by-Two and who, herself, had professed for a very short time. They liked it, they said, and asked me to let them know if I should decide to go any farther with it. Unfortunately, I have never had the opportunity of seeing them since that time.

The next time I ventured to let anyone in on what I was doing, I was talking to some of my friends from the U.S.A. Both the husband and wife had professed, as did almost all of their children at one time or another, but now the only one who had not “gone back” was the wife. We had so often discussed—while I was in the cult, and after I left it—how rigid were the laws that some of the workers had made and other workers had locked onto, and I fully believed that they would be in complete agreement with the words that I had committed to paper. I was, however, completely unprepared for the response that I received.

While her husband “slumbered and slept,” like the virgins in Matthew 25, the professing wife made it quite clear to me that she was not at all comfortable with the criticisms I made either about the “ministry” in particular or the overall hypocrisy that exists in the entire cult itself. Somehow she seemed to have forgotten that, had I been able to replay for her a tape of her own previous—and frequent—rantings, she would easily have recognized that neither of us was very far from the other in the descriptions I had used for the whole sorry set-up.

I could not help but remember the way she always tried to “fix” her hair in such a way as to keep it looking long enough to please the workers, but, at the same time, making it appear sufficiently short and sophisticated to pass muster with “. . .this world of woe and sighing. . . [which is] longing to be healed and blest.”

Nor could I forget the words of her own aging father a few years after the death of his first (professing) wife, when he was talking to me about his re-marriage to one of the local eligible widows who had never once set foot in a Two-by-Two gathering of any sort. So prideful and so full of man’s wisdom was he that, when he told me the story, his ignorance alone kept me from either laughing in his face or chiding him for his abject stupidity. . .

“When she asked me why we couldn’t get married,” he related, “I told her, for one thing, she’d have to profess first.

“So she asked me what she’d have to do to profess.

“Well, it’s like this, I told her. You’ll have to let your hair grow long for starters.

“She didn’t think that would be too hard for her to do,” he proceeded, “and so she started to go to the gospel meetings, and when they tested the meeting she took her stand, and that was that.”

And that was that!

And this was the father of the selfsame woman who would not read the first twenty-five pages of this thesis because I had criticized the workers and their following a little too harshly.

Oh, my!

If only he’d taken the trouble to read his Bible. If only he’d stopped when he got to Acts 16:30-31.

“Sirs,” [said the keeper of the prison], “what must I do to be saved?”

Can any one of us imagine Paul telling the poor man to first let his hair grow and then get himself down to the mission and stand—weeping, if possible—to his feet when the workers asked if there were any who would like to profess—and perhaps get saved into the bargain?

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ ,” [instructed Paul and Silas], *“and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”*

How simple, how straightforward, and how immediate is one's own salvation when one seeks for answers from the lips and pens of those who have been called and anointed by God to spread his message of hope to a lost and perishing world!

Even had my old story teller stopped reading before he got as far as the Book of the Acts, he might possibly have read the words we find in Luke 8:12.

"Those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

To me—apart from the fact that it's God's word anyway—that sounds a whole lot less complicated than having to wait for six months or so to "let your hair grow long."

Should my old friend have stumbled onto those marvelous words in John 3:3 and 16-17, he would have read:

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

And then—surely then—he would never have directed his bride-to-be to simply let her hair grow long and then start attending the gospel meetings so that she would be ready to stand to her feet to show the workers, the old widower, himself, and—oh, yes—Jesus Christ, too, that she was more than willing to do almost anything to get her name in the old man's will just in case she should outlive him when he went on to meet his heavenly Lord and Master.

The very thought that that old fellow's daughter would have the audacity to disagree with her own previous feelings and opinions and accuse me of being too judgmental about the workers and their man-made methods of getting to heaven gave me quite a bit of incentive to get a whole lot more "off my chest" before I relegated my material to the very back of the bottom drawer of my filing cabinet.

One of my very good "worldly" friends—one of those people who believed that Christianity was comprised of "doing [good] unto the least of [Christ's] brethren—had read my material in its initial stages, and he knew exactly how I felt about the false doctrine of the cult and the fearful and influential power held over its members by each and every worker everywhere around the globe. I had shared my writing with him—page by page—in the initial stages before I filed it away as very personal and pretty worthless stuff.

While we were chatting one day about our backgrounds and beliefs, he asked me quite pointedly what had ever happened to that book that I was writing.

"Book?" I snickered, "Is that what you call it?"

And then I went on to tell him where I'd put it, and I explained that it had enabled me to get pretty much all of my anger and resentment off my chest, and, since I never expected to do anything with it anyway, I was just going to leave it where it was. He quite agreed, and we never spoke of it again.

And it stayed there in the back of my bottom drawer of my filing cabinet until that day in the early summer of 1994 when I received that memorable telephone call out of the blue from that wonderful friend with whom I had lost contact for so many years.

And those of you who have now chosen to read it know what has been happening to it from that day to this one.

By now, some of you have read bits and pieces of it, and some of you have even chosen to share those bits and pieces with others. The feedback that I have received from some of you, many of whom I met only after you've read it, and some of whom I have yet to meet, has been so positive that I've had no choice, really, but to keep on writing, writing, writing until—well. . .

I think we all agree that it's just about time for me to quit!

Go to **Chapter 11**