

In Vain They Do Worship – Chapter 11

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Ch 11: Epilogue · By Willis Young

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CHAPTER 11: Epilogue

"I was brought up," I began writing, "believing I was a Christian or, more precisely, that my parents and grandparents were Christians and that one day I would become one."

"One day," I went on to add, "I did."

And to emphasize my love of God and my faith in his one and only true way which led, I was told, like Jacob's ladder, from earth to Heaven, I even told you, "[that] for the next thirty-six years I 'pressed toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. . .'"

As I look back on those opening sentences, and as I venture to scan again the words I have written on the pages between those paragraphs and these, I have no choice but to rephrase them and write them again—but, this time, more correctly.

I was brought up believing I was a Christian or, more precisely, that my parents and grandparents were Christians and that one day I would become one.

One day I professed and became a member of the sect of the Two-by-Twos even though I knew "that [like the true Christians in Acts 28: 22] it was everywhere. . . spoken against," and, as a result, I was fooled into believing that I had indeed become a Christian.

"So what is this undenominational. . . sect that I'm referring to?" I asked myself shortly after I began to write this piece of literature. "Is it really a sect?" I continued to wonder. "Or could it really be described as a cult?"

And then I plunged in with what, in retrospect, I considered to be not only the four most important questions in the book, but also the very essence of my whole critique of William Irvine's exclusive plan of salvation as well as his personal rendering of the gospel of Jesus Christ:

"How did it get its start?"

"Where did it come from?"

"How old is it?"

"How has it survived?"

Is it a cult or a sect?

You will have noticed throughout my writing that, in some places, I call it one thing while, in others, I refer to it as the other. Frankly, you see, I am somewhat confused about the terms, myself.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary doesn't do much to help me out, either.

Of a **cult**, the dictionary says, in brief, that *it is a religion regarded as unorthodox or outwardly corresponding to another [way of worship] without having the genuine qualities [of the latter]*.

I doubt that there is one ex-Two-by-Two or even, perhaps, one solid-minded, and honest soul yet held victim within its confines who would not say—or, at least be tempted to—that that definition of a cult describes rather fittingly the group that has descended, pure and unadulterated, from the mind and pen of that one William Irvine.

What do you think?

Of a **sect**, Webster says, again in brief, that *it is a dissenting or schismatic religious body, or a religious body regarded as extreme or heretical as well as a group adhering to a distinctive doctrine or to a leader.*

Now what do you think the Two-by-Two religion is?

Is it a cult or is it a sect?

What one of us with any experience whatsoever in or out of the doctrine of William Irvine, George Walker and all the other “founding fathers of their faith” could not wholeheartedly agree with Webster’s definition of a sect?

I think you will now see why I am very confused, myself, and you can now better understand why I said that Webster’s Dictionary did not make it any clearer for me.

Some things we do know and can see quite clearly, however. *There is no doubt whatsoever that the Two-by-Twos try very hard to emulate true Christianity.*

How did it get its start?

As I was growing up, professing, as you know, I often wondered to myself and, I now believe, far too often to the workers, “why it was that the Bible ended with the Book of Revelations, and why it was that we had no record of any workers filling the great gap in time between Peter, Paul, Timothy, Silas, and John Mark, as well as all the others mentioned in the New Testament, and the present-day workers, all of whom, it seemed, had come from Ireland or Scotland or England.”

Always, when I screwed up the courage to wonder aloud to the workers, I was told “we believe that God has maintained a *remnant* down through the ages,” and that, by some miraculous reason—perhaps *even by way of the Roman invasion (some of those soldiers just could have been professing, you know)*—the lowly way that Jesus trod was “revealed to those men of God around the turn of the century.”

And I gobbled it up, hook, line, and sinker; and, what is even worse, I was guilty of preaching those false suppositions (or lies if you prefer) off and on and then off again from those gospel meeting pulpits scattered around Dufferin County, Ontario, and elsewhere in the world.

I remember one day, shortly after I walked away penniless from Almonte convention in 1963, that one of the young professing friends from an area near Ottawa told me the whole story of Irvine, Cooney, Walker and others starting up “this way” in Ireland back around the year 1900.

Knowing that the young man had his mind partially made up to go into the work, I felt I should try to “help his unbelief” by telling him that I really didn’t think the story was entirely true. I have wished many times since then that I had been truthful with him, so that we could have shared each other’s knowledge and groped our way together through the fog of deceit that was clouding every attempt at rational thinking.

For a while I was lulled into accepting the theories I grew up with by talking to Cornelius Jaenen and by reading his “paper” which absolutely dripped with erudition as it purported to trace the “church-in-the-home” cult down through the score of centuries that separated the Apostle Paul from our oh, so well known and famous George Walker.

As I wrote earlier in the book, I got the most honest and forthright explanation about “our beginnings” from a wonderful British worker named Robin Amos who was preaching in Germany during the time that I was teaching there under the auspices of the Canadian Armed Forces. He told me exactly the situation as he understood it apart, that is, from not being quite clear about when William Irvine professed or who it was whose “feet” had carried such “glad tidings of great joy” to him in such a faraway corner of the globe as Scotland. He, as did I at the time, really felt that that knowledge was sufficient for accepting the Two-by-Two creed as God’s only plan for the salvation of mankind.

I learned the whole truth through the efforts of several brave souls who dared to research and dredge up the true facts, as all of us now know them to be. I literally chanced upon their marvelous work while this book was stored on my PWP diskettes under layers of dust on my desk, and I cannot thank those heroes enough for the intelligence they have brought to all of us and for their giving me the inspiration to roll up my sleeves and go to work again—this time in earnest.

How old is it?

It will not now surprise you when I tell you that, for the first twenty-seven years of my life, I believed wholeheartedly and testified most adamantly that “it” was “some nineteen hundred years old,” having, as I was told also most adamantly, no break whatsoever between the time that Jesus and his disciples and Apostles walked the earth and this “latter time” in which we were all living, breathing, eating, “marrying and giving in marriage,” driving many miles to as many meetings as we could squeeze into a week, and going straight to Hell in a hand basket if we didn’t dress and act in a manner approved by the “priesthood” of workers who literally stood between us and God’s approval through the shed blood of Christ.

In other words, I believed that it “was from the beginning,” and that we alone, out of every other religion and religious denomination in the entire universe could claim *Apostolic Succession* which, naturally, placed us as the sole heirs of our heavenly Father’s many mansions that Jesus had gone on to prepare before us.

Is it any wonder, then, that we acted like a bunch of arrogant snobs running around the world looking down our very clean noses on all those other “breakaway” groups who were obviously wasting their time singing and praying and preaching about the Holy Trinity while they were headed to a lost eternity unless they repented of their heresy and professed to become a Two-by-Two through the

tender tutelage of some grouchy old bachelor with an enlarged ego (or was it his prostate?) or some crabby old maid with inflamed bunions and poorly fitting dentures who insisted on calling themselves the servants and hand maidens of the living God?

No, indeed, it isn't.

It isn't any wonder at all.

"When did your group break away from the main line churches?" asked a colleague of mine after she attended a gospel meeting with me and I was driving her to her home afterward. After a few seconds of thought I got the courage to reply, "Well, the way we see it is that the main line churches broke away from us."

"Oh! I see," she answered, and, as I suspected, she never again asked if she might go along with me for a repeat performance.

I doubt, too, that I will ever forget an experience I had one Sunday morning during my second visit to Jamaica.

I was visiting with some Two-by-Two friends in the little town of Bog Walk and some of their professing neighbours were going on a weekend jaunt to a village away up in the hills in the vicinity of Montego Bay. I was asked to go along with them, and, naturally, I accepted their invitation. We stayed with a lovely family, the Billings', in a rather simple home in quite a remote mountainous area where tourists never get to go. (That's where I learned to enjoy eating boiled green bananas.)

On Sunday morning we all trekked up the hillside to another little home—quite plainly appointed—for the "fellowship meeting." On our way up the hill we had to pass one of the "worldly churches" which, of course, was much less plain and simple than was the home that we were headed to. How superior we felt to be passing such a "temple of Satan" and going to meet, "according to the Scriptures," with God's chosen, faithful few in the simple surroundings of a church in a man's home!

As we bowed our heads in prayer for thanks for one of the emblems—I can't remember which—I could hear the singing wafting up the hillside from that worldly temple below, and I can still recall the unchristian-like pride that swelled my chest as I sat there believing that God would be so pleased with our little gathering while condemning the very same words, the very same spirit of adoration, and even, in some cases, the very same hymns that emanated from "[that temple] made with hands" just so few yards away. Because it was 1961, and I was planning to enter the work the following year, that pride in my chest surged even greater when, even then, I imagined myself making sermons about what a wonderful and humbling effect that "Jamaican morning" had had on my Christian experience.

Would I have been so proud, so arrogant, and so filled with those feelings of exclusivity and self-righteousness had I troubled myself to open my King James Version of the Bible and simply read the words found in Luke 24:50-53?

"And [Jesus] led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass; while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen."

How little I actually knew at that moment of pure Christianity, of true humility, of the real love of God, and of the wonderful and universal fellowship of the doctrine of Jesus Christ!

"In the beginning," I wrote at the end of Chapter I, "this nondenominational, no-name, generic brand of religion was called 'The Truth'. . . but from the beginning it was not so."

No, indeed, it wasn't.

What I did not know as I was being brainwashed as a child is that in the year 1897, across the Atlantic Ocean in the little country of Scotland, a man named William Irvine, after having "professed" in the Presbyterian Church, affiliated himself with a religious group known then—and yet—as the Faith Mission. Very soon thereafter, having been sent by the group to Ireland to spread the *Good News* of the Kingdom among the papists and other similarly blind souls, he apparently received a vision of *his own*, and decided, there and then, to create a brand new, and generic, version of Christianity.

He had the good fortune of convincing a few other like-minded and equally zealous individuals—both female and male—to go along with him to "try out" his *experiment* of imitating the *Gospel of Jesus Christ* inasmuch as he—and they—could, in their uninstructed and unskilled way, interpret, fathom, and understand it, and suddenly, and without any universal fanfare or opposition, another new sect was born. It soon fanned out to the whole of the United Kingdom and thence to North America and to every other continent around the globe—except Antarctica, I would guess.

It has, therefore, come down to us through the decades, and we who have left it, as well as some who have not, refer to it—not too affectionately at times, I venture to add—as the Twoby-Two cult.

This brings me at last to the fourth and final leading question I asked of all my readers back in Chapter 1.

How has it survived?

When anyone has ever asked me this question, or when, in recent years, I have paused to wonder about it myself, I have almost always been (and this fact will be considered a miracle in and of itself by all my closest friends and relatives!) at a complete loss for words. Now, however, after being out of the cult for over sixteen years, after having read so much of the literature that other wonderful people have researched and written, and after having, myself, penned these few pages for others to read, I believe I now know exactly how the Two-by-Twos have survived even one century of the ravages of time and circumstance.

I have, therefore, as I have done so often throughout these pages, arbitrarily chosen TEN terms or topics that I feel will put some semblance of order into my response.

LEGALISM

Even though it has been difficult for me to prioritize my list of terms, I believe, after some consideration, that the word *legalism* must be placed at the top.

According to the revised and updated second version of Webster's Dictionary "legalism" means "strict adherence to law, especially to the letter [of it] rather than the spirit [of it]."

I cannot help but believe that the Apostle Paul knew exactly what legalism meant when he wrote to the church at Corinth and made the following statement:

"...our sufficiency is of God" he said in II Corinthians 3:5; and then in verse six he continued, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: *for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*"

Paul would also know only too well what "legalism" meant, having been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and having been subjected to the endless discussions of the Talmud by Rabbi after Rabbi discussing precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little." (Isa. 28: 10)

There is, of course, no denying that the doctrine of Judaism has survived for thousands of years because of all those precepts and lines, and because of all those rabbis and their legalism, but, at the same time, we must admit that its survival has caused (or should we say "depended on") the endless controversy, and squabbling, the bloodshed, and the battling with which the Apostle Paul could so readily identify.

It isn't any wonder then that those early Christian converts like Paul, Silas, Barnabas, and all the others were so delighted to be able "to begin with those same scriptures and preach unto [the unbelieving throngs] Jesus" whose burden was light and whose yoke was easy because it was all distilled into that one well-known word: LOVE.

Thus the doctrine of the Two-by-Twos has survived for one hundred years patterned completely on the style of the Pharisees and their Talmud, and those of us who are still alive to see it are able to note, with sadness and a certain sense of amusement intertwined, the same controversy, the same squabbling, and the same "regionalism" that "legalism" alone has always been capable of producing.

When Jesus came to the world the first time, we read in John 1: 11 that "he came unto his own, *and his own received him not.*"

One cannot help but wonder if this doctrine of the neo-Pharisees—or the Two-by-Twos, as we have come to learn that they are—will still be in existence when Christ appears unto his own for the second time, and, like his own in John 1:11, will these modern Pharisees, these Irvinites, these Two by Twos prove equally inhospitable to the very one whose blood was shed on the cross of Calvary to make them free?

INTIMIDATION and FAVORITISM

One either "professed" or one went to hell.

One either worshipped the "workers" or one went to a lost eternity.

One either went to every fellowship meeting, to every gospel meeting, to one or more Special Meetings, and to at least one convention every year or one was considered "weak in the faith" and a very PERIPHERAL Christian, indeed.

And the workers simply would not come to "dine at thy house" if you were only living on the fringe.

And where was your blessing if the workers did not come to eat at your table, to sleep in your bed, and to borrow your car?

I am sure you now understand fully why I chose to put these two terms together and discuss them as if they were one and the same because if one cared at all about "being saved," one "knuckled down" and "voted" the party line whether one felt like doing it or not. After all, who wanted the workers to think less of YOU than they did of all those other people who seemed always to have the right words to say, the right clothes to wear, and the latest news about all the "mission- work" from San Isidro, California to Cape Spear, Newfoundland?

It was easy to be a bit envious of those who seemed always "in the know," those whom the workers appeared "to like a little better" or whom they "used" a little more, and whom they "singled out" for a little extra private conversation, for surely that meant that God was looking down on *those special saints* from on high and was taking note of *their* "faithfulness" and *their* apparent interest in the things of His kingdom here on earth.

Oh, yes, the doctrine of the Two-by-Twos has survived the ravages of time because people are terrified that they won't pass muster when the workers come around "to inspect the troops in the field." Who ever gives much thought to studying to be approved unto God or showing any sort of love toward one's fellow "human being" when it is far more important to be "noticed" or—which is more to the point—*favored* by the workers right here on earth? As long as one has the right length of skirt, the right color of stockings, or, if one is of the male persuasion, the exact number of hairs on one's head, all cropped off to seven-sixteenths of an inch above one's left ear, one is considered "strong in the faith" indeed.

Shame on me for exaggerating just ever so slightly! Shame on me, too, for allowing myself to be intimidated and—what adds even more to my embarrassment—to be *favored* for well nigh forty years.

"Many will say unto me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?'" Matt. 7:22

[Lord, Lord, have we not worn black stockings when the workers said we should? Have we womenfolk not let our hair grow long so that we could tie it up in a bun the way the workers told us we had to do? Did we not throw away our wedding rings and all other jewelry when that was the rule of the times?

[Don't you recall, Lord, that we refrained from buying radios—even in our cars; and we barely squawked when the workers refused to borrow our cars unless we removed the radio aerials from them. We also stood by so helplessly and passively watching some of the more zealous of the Two-by-Two preachers literally break or saw off those aerials if we did not do it soon enough to satisfy their stupidity. Later we refused to buy a television or, in some cases, even to look at one, because the followers of William Irvine told us that all those things were of the world, and that we would not go to heaven if we disobeyed either one jot or one tittle of their commandments?

[You remember, too, Lord, that we men folk were so afraid to let our hair grow just a little bit longer than the military-like example shown us by the “brother workers.” And, Lord, how could we know that when the Two-by-Two cult was started by Irvine, Cooney, Walker, and their band of obedient conformists, all the men were compelled to wear beards? Not knowing that that law had ever existed, therefore, we allowed the workers to force us to keep our chins clean shaven lest we be insulted—as the custom of some of the more ignorant of the preachers was—and referred to as long haired hyenas and porcupines.

[Oh, yes, Lord, and have not many of us stayed in unhappy and abusive marriages because we were told by these modern Pharisees that we would not be allowed to “take part in meetings ever again” if we should get divorced and then marry someone whom we loved?

[Lord, did we not show much more respect and obedience to George Walker, Andrew Abernathy, and all the other workers than we ever did to your word and the living examples of TRUTH and LOVE which we could have found in the doctrine of your Son, Jesus Christ?]

“And then I will profess unto them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’” (Matt. 7:23)

“Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.” (John 8:15, 16)

BRAINWASHING

“. . . a method for changing attitudes or beliefs, especially through torture or psychological stress techniques.” (Webster's Dictionary)
Torture?

Were we tortured? Was I tortured? Did I ever see anyone being tortured around me?

Yes. Yes. And yes again.

For thirty years or more I would never have entertained even the remotest thought that I was being brainwashed or tortured or psychologically manipulated in any way. However, now that I can look back objectively across almost two decades of freedom and relief that I have had from the worker-controlled captivity I was in, I have no doubt whatsoever that a well-ordered and cleverly-camouflaged form of torture was practised on all of us. We were successfully brainwashed into believing that God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and the whole plan of salvation existed solely within the confines of our method of worship at the workers' feet, and that we should not and could not find eternal peace and happiness anywhere else but sitting, as we were, under—and listening to—the noise of all that sounding brass and all those tinkling cymbals from all those convention, or special meeting and gospel meeting platforms that bore absolutely no resemblance to the boundless love and compassion of our heavenly father from his throne on high.

It is true that we were not beaten or caned every day at sunrise or at sunset, but we were tortured.

We were never put into an extremely brightly-lit room and left there for hours with water dripping on us from a tank over our heads, but we were tortured.

Not a single person in the group was ever starved for days while being interrogated mercilessly and promised a wonderful meal if he or she would just tell all he or she knew [about the family where the meeting was held or if the workers (in that area that year) were preaching what George Walker, Willis Propp, or Carson Cowan told them to preach]. But we were tortured.

It is a form of torture to be told that you are being talked about and defamed while those who are doing the talking and the defaming are able to remain anonymous.

It is a form of torture for a young worker to be sent out to preach with some old battle-axe who left the world behind so many years ago she hardly knows there is a world any more; and it is equally torturous for an experienced worker who should be given a position of responsibility to be placed with someone who is so deaf he hasn't heard anything but the dinner bell for the last fifty years.

It was torture for me as I was growing up to have to suffer the teasing of the other kids in school because of the way my mother dressed—and, for that matter, the way she made ME dress—or the way she had her hair “done up”—just because “you're Two-by-Twos, aren't you?”

I found it a form of torture that I could never attend a Christmas concert at school because I loved to have a role in a play or sing the carols with my classmates. And don't you think it was torture for my mother and every other woman in the cult to have to dress the way they did and have their hair long and rolled up in a bun?

I can tell you, of a truth, that for almost every one of them *it was torture—pure and simple.*

Yes, dear friends, these few things—and many, many more were and are some of the tricks of the trade that have been used for the past one hundred years to keep this nameless group alive and well and, in some cases, even kicking. Indubitably, they are all forms of undisputed brainwashing and torture, and those of us who spent any time at all in the cult know of a certainty that it will take the rest

of our lives—and a lot of painful struggling—to rid ourselves of its influence and the guilt we all were made to feel when we finally awakened and saw the real Truth as it was—and is—in Jesus.

“For you know what we’ve always heard at convention, my dear, that even though the world may ridicule you now, you know you are in God’s true way, and your blessing will be multiplied ‘a hundredfold’ in heaven in return for all the humiliation and embarrassment that you have been subjected to here on earth.”

Does that sound just too familiar?

MYSTERY

When I stop to consider this word, mystery, I can think only of the times when, after I would ask a perfectly good and honest question, I would be told:

“Oh, it wouldn’t do you any good to know *that*.”

Or . . . “I don’t think *that* is a very profitable topic to be worrying about.”

Or . . . “I wouldn’t like to see you wasting your time thinking about *that* when there are so many other wonderful things to be learning.”

Or . . . “I believe we were meant to take *that* spiritually.”

And although one was left with such a feeling of being unsatisfied with an answer such as that, one also had the distinct impression that one could not discuss *why* a topic was unprofitable, or *why* some things were meant to be spiritualized while other practices were held in great literal regard and diligently practised—every jot and tittle—according to the law of Moses and the Pharisees that came along after him.

Thus, we never did get told how “this way” got started, or who the first workers really were, and through whom *they* professed. No one was ever able to fill the gap between the Book of Revelations and the existence of one George Walker or Eddie Cooney or—yes, I had often heard his *name*—William Irvine. These men were shrouded in mystery and even a certain aura of mysticism, and it was always with trembling limbs and unsure tongue that I ever dared approach George Walker, and even then, it was usually just a word in passing and never anything of any import whatsoever.

So the mystery—for me—continued for over fifty years, and, unfortunately, it is still continuing for many, many others, some of whom are out preaching the gospel even as I write. Unfortunately, as they go forth to follow the call of the “harvest field,” they continue to propagate the theory—the lie, really—that the “gospel according to Irvine, Walker, Carroll, and Cooney” came to us straight out of the Garden of Eden from the very loins of Adam and Eve, themselves.

My Cruden’s concordance defines a mystery as “something secret, hidden, not known to all,” and the very first biblical reference that follows that meaning is Matthew 13:11. Jesus is talking to his disciples, and, in answering their question concerning why he talked to the Pharisees in parables, he said, “. . . it is given unto you to know the mysteries (the New English translation says “secrets”) of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.” If the situation were not so very, very sad and so very, very serious, it would be amusing to draw a parallel between then and now. But the situation is serious and very sad indeed.

If you will look again at that verse and note carefully to whom and about whom Jesus was speaking, I think you will see very quickly what I am about to write. He was talking directly to his true followers, the disciples; and he was discussing his true adversaries, the Pharisees; and, once again, just notice what he said:

“Unto you [my true followers] it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them [my real adversaries] it is not given.”

Is it any wonder then that I spent that half century and more trying to serve a God that was kept shrouded in mystery, because “unto them [the workers: the Pharisees of the twentieth century, and the real adversaries of Christ] it was not given to understand the secrets of the kingdom of God”? Did not Jesus tell us of the dangers that would befall them when the blind lead the blind? I was born into a Two-by-Two home and, because of that, I was not only blind to the things of God’s kingdom, but I was also kept blind by the same “Pharisees” that had kept my parents and grandparents blinded (and who were blind themselves) to the doctrine of Jesus Christ and the love he brought to the world when he shed his precious blood for ALL on the cross of Calvary.

Little by little—I see it all so clearly now—as God kept revealing the real truth of his kingdom to me (Eph. 1:9), and as the blindness I was born into—and bred in—began to clear away, I became, more and more, a threat to the workers, these neo-Pharisees; and they did their best to get me to keep my mouth shut lest I would influence others to look beyond the veil of lies, and lest we would “blow their cover.” They would lose their sinecure, and they would be need to seek a real job, and it would pay quite a bit less than most of them were used to “packing away.”

As we look back over the past one hundred years, therefore, we can now see quite clearly that it has never been the mysteries of God’s kingdom that the workers have been most worried or concerned about because, quite frankly, as was true of the Pharisees they have been emulating, there is no evidence to show that the majority of them were ever privy to the secrets of God’s kingdom and the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

No, that has not been the problem at all!

What has terrified them the most—and it still continues to do so—is the revelation to the so-called “People of God” that the beliefs they have been hanging onto so dearly are nothing more than a giant hoax, in the form of a cult, a system, that had its beginning—just as other cults have done—in the mind of a discontented or disgruntled human being who, after becoming tired of toeing the mark in the “worldly” church he “professed” in and attended, decided to start one of his own and run it to suit himself.

What a *mystery* it has been!

What a *revelation* we have received!

L I E S and D E C E I T

I have again combined two of my ten terms because the Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary states that a lie is "an assertion of something known or believed by the speaker to be untrue with the intent to deceive," or "an untrue or inaccurate statement that may or may not be believed by the speaker." So it follows quite logically that deceit is the act of making such a false or untrue assertion. I am positive you will realize immediately why I have included these two words in this position in my final chapter.

A *lie* is certainly not a new phenomenon, nor is *deceit* a recently concocted stratagem. Not only is this true in the worldly sense, but it is also—and I say this with sadness in my heart—one of the strongest and most widely-used methods employed by the Two-by-Two members, both workers and "friends" alike, to keep the cult in existence for one whole century.

I'm sure everyone feels as I do that it's a very difficult thing for us all to look around at the workers we know and, in some cases, even grew up with, and think of them as deceitful. Moreover, regardless of our present status in or out of the cult, it is even more difficult for us to come out openly and to boldly accuse these men and women of being liars.

But that is exactly what they were and are.

Who among us could have suspected, as we sat and listened to them as they preached to us so diligently about the way of God, the *Truth* of God, the plan of God, and the Son of God, that a large number of them who were older "in the Way" were unabashedly propagandizing and deceitfully propagating the lie that had been passed on to them either directly by the founder himself or indirectly by someone who was very, very closely associated with his first few "catches" (or followers, if you prefer)?

"For already the *secret* power of wickedness is at work. . ." wrote the Apostle Paul in II Thes. 2:7-12. ". . . secret only," he continued, "for the present until the Restrainer disappears from the scene. And then he will be revealed, that wicked man whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and annihilate by the radiance of his coming.

"But the coming of that wicked man is the work of Satan. It will be attended by all the powerful signs and miracles of the *Lie*, and all the deception that sinfulness can impose on those doomed to destruction.

"Destroyed they shall be, because *they did not open their minds to love of the truth, so as to find salvation*. Therefore God puts them under a delusion, which works upon them to believe the *Lie*, so that they may all be brought to judgment, all those who do not believe the truth but made sinfulness their deliberate choice."

When I chanced upon—or was guided to—this passage, I couldn't help but imagine that the Apostle Paul must surely have been personally acquainted with our old friend, William Irvine—especially when he wrote in verse 3, "Let no one *deceive* you in any way whatever."

Doesn't it really seem uncanny—certainly much, much more than coincidental—that, almost two thousand years after Paul wrote those words to the Church at Thessalonica, Mr. Irvine would rise up in rebellion against the "Kirk" in which—as the Two-by-Twos put it—"he professed" and the one in which he was ordained to go forth and preach the "gospel" to a perishing world? Isn't it interesting to note how quickly he turned against that church's teaching, against Christian practices everywhere, and against even the very doctrine of Jesus Christ, Himself? From that point on he would branch out on his own with a self-made ministry and a completely false notion concerning the end of the world and would, as a result, draw many other people to him who would likewise deny the very foundation of God's Grace, and Peace, and LOVE, and would go forth on their own to deceive such a large number of the world's population in almost every country, for a long, long time.

It is—for me—quite a mystery indeed.

And now I would like to ask you, if you don't mind, to look back again at II Thes. 2:7 (this time in the King James Version), and read the first phrase only:

"For the *mystery of iniquity* doth already work. . ."

I find it very interesting to connect this verse to the verses found in I Tim. 4:1-4 where, according to the New English Translation, Paul wrote: "The spirit says expressly that in after times some will desert from the faith and give their minds to subversive doctrines inspired by devils, through the specious falsehoods of men whose own conscience is branded with the devil's sign. They forbid marriage and inculcate abstinence from certain foods, though God created them to be enjoyed with thanksgiving by believers who have inward knowledge of the truth."

Of course we know that, since Paul wrote those words to Timothy so long ago, there have been many factions, many sects, and many cults and cult-like groups which have arisen and have tried very hard to draw men and women away from the doctrine of Jesus Christ, but, as I read and re-read both passages—both in Thessalonians and Timothy—I cannot help but believe that God was giving Paul a warning to pass on to all His people in all ages to come, that men such as William Irvine would step outside His simple plan of salvation and would entice hordes of people everywhere to follow them to their irrevocable downfall.

The Two-by-Two workers all, like all their counterparts around the globe, have survived—and thrive—by lying, by deceitful behavior, by making things sound esoteric and mysterious, and by changing the simple law of the LOVE of Jesus Christ into many complex commandments of men which ultimately do nothing but spawn HATE and hostility in the hearts and minds of everyone who believes them and follows them to their own destruction.

FAILURE or REFUSAL to PUBLISH a CREDO

It's a very difficult thing, I think you'll agree, to tell someone that he or she is wrong if he or she has never really told you what it is that he or she believes—or believes in. For the past one hundred years or, in other words, since their inception in 1897, the Two-by-Twos have been squeaking by without harm or hindrance because, to a very great extent, the “workers” don't want anyone recording anything anywhere by any means whatsoever that tells exactly what it is that the cult believes or has built its foundations on. Therefore, when its members are asked why they behave as they do, why they can't wear what others are wearing, why they can't go where others are going, why they can't do what others are doing, and what it is that they put their trust in, they invariably answer either that they believe “it's God's will that they be different” or that the interrogator should “have a talk with the workers who are having a gospel meeting [next Sunday night] in the local Grange Hall.”

When I mentioned briefly in the latter paragraph that the workers don't like people recording anything, I was referring mainly to the practice of note-taking in meetings. I recall that one year at Almonte convention Marion Anderson, one of the friends from Ottawa, ran athwart my old friend, Murdo MacLeod, because he felt that, instead of listening, she was taking too many copious notes in shorthand. When she told me about the incident, I had difficulty at the time understanding why he was so opposed to such a harmless activity, but I have heard since that some workers are quite explicit in their instructions, and they state specifically that “notes may get into the *wrong hands*, and *people might get to know what it is 'we' believe*.”

I know, too, that the workers were approached at least on one occasion about the possibility of taking a tape recorder into the meetings so that someone who could not get to convention or Special Meetings would be able to hear all that was said “from the platform” and become edified as a result.

No! No! No! Oh, my no! Never! Never!

When I heard about the request and the refusal to allow it, I could not understand why it was not a good idea, since speakers are set up in the cook house for the benefit of those who have to miss the meeting in order to prepare the noon and evening meals. I knew, too, that, on a few occasions speakers were put inside little travel trailers for the benefit of some who were too old or too ill to be able to sit in the meetings or for young parents caring for their little children whose natural noisiness might be a distraction to the preacher and audience alike. Why then would tape recorders be refused so that similar old or young people, house bound at home or in hospital, could hear “the Word of God” for themselves just as it was delivered from the platform for those who were well enough to be in attendance at the meeting?

However, a tape recorder—like a radio, a stereo, a video camera, and a television—was a “thing of the world or the devil,” and, as such, it “smacked too much of Hollywood” for the workers' liking.

Now that I have come to learn the real reason—that “some people might get to know what we believe”—I can see very clearly that the cult has survived for such a long time because its basic tenets have been kept secret in order that the excuses—like the workers' minds—can change at any time the workers feel that some of us are getting a little too “uppity” or too knowledgeable and may just puncture an ego here or there along the way.

When the Apostle Peter wrote his first letter “to those of God's scattered people. . . in Pontus, Galatia. . .[and] Asia. . .” he had no hesitation in telling them what to say when anyone would ask them for a “reason of the hope that [was] in them.”

“Be always ready with your defense. . .” he wrote in I Peter 3:15, “but make that defense with modesty and respect. . .”

I like the way the N.E.B. translates his admonishment: “. . . whenever you are called to account for the hope that is in you. . .” There was no mention of their having to explain why they were dressing differently, why they were abstaining from wine, or why they couldn't do what others around them were doing. The only thing that Peter felt they would be questioned about was “their hope”—not their strange behavior. Moreover, he told *them* to be ready to give an answer—not beat around the bush by saying they *thought* they were doing God's will, or to get in touch with “us *Apostles*” (Peter and others) during “*our next mission in that area*.”

There is, however, one very serious problem with having to contact the workers before giving an answer to anyone who might question us about anything that we believe. *I doubt very seriously if you would be able to find any more than five universally held, man-made rules among all—or even between any two—of the workers you would choose to contact at any given time and in any part of the world.*

The answers will, in all likelihood, vary from state to state, from province to province, from country to country, from continent to continent, and, finally—and this is very sad indeed—even from worker to worker. But this is what happens, you see, when there is no credo or, in fact, no standard existing between and among the workers or between and among the areas in which those workers preach. It isn't so hard to figure out, however, when you stop to think that there is nothing of a universal God encapsulated in their *oral teaching*. And, therefore, how can anyone then be sure about the Truth as it is found in Jesus Christ, who is the Son of that universal heavenly Father on His throne on high?

“For the *mystery of iniquity* doth already work. . .”

What a way they have chosen to survive! Just keep people guessing. . .

FAILURE to DIVIDE the WORD of TRUTH

I am going to resort yet again to the writing of the Apostle Paul in order to attempt to explain what I mean by the need there is for the messengers of God to correctly interpret and properly portray the word of God to a needy and perishing world before them. This time I will go first to II Timothy 2:15, and I will begin by using the King James Version:

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the word of truth*.”

The New English Version makes it just a little clearer to me when I read, “Try hard to show yourself worthy of God’s approval, as a laborer who need not to be ashamed; *be straightforward in your proclamation of the truth*. Avoid empty and worldly chatter; those who indulge in it will stray further and further into godless courses, and the infection of their teaching will spread like a gangrene. . .”

Away back in the summer of 1975 I was seated beside my (then) best friend and his wife at Silverdale Convention in British Columbia when, lo and behold! a young worker stood up on the platform and started to preach from the portion of this verse in Timothy that admonished him to “rightly divide the word of truth.”

The worker seemed to be filled with pure, unadulterated revelation, and I began to listen with my mouth sagging agape in a way I had not listened before, and to understand in a way I had not understood before. The worker began to do for us exactly what Paul had told Timothy to do, and for the first time in my many years of imprisonment within the cult, I understood clearly what Paul’s instructions to his young companion meant.

The word of God that was meant for the Old Testament was put into the Old Testament and left there. God’s words for men were spoken to men and were not misconstrued and pretended to be for women, too. Messages for masters concerning their slaves were addressed within that context, and words directed and meant for women were not somehow spiritualized and apologetically applied to men. Words to fathers and mothers were spoken to fathers and mothers, and words meant for children were singled out appropriately and spoken to the children in the congregation there that afternoon.

When he started his message, my then best friend turned and whispered in my ear, “Where is he going with this?”

My answer to him is still clear in my mind: “I’m not too sure just yet, but what I understand so far, I think is wonderful!”

Later my then best friend confided in me, admitting that, like me, he had never heard such a clear and succinct description of how the word of God should be separated and applied to all facets and aspects of Truth, the Bible, and the very foundation of what the true way of God was—and is—all about.

If the word of God were rightly divided and correctly applied to those for whom and about whom it was written, we would not be burdened down with rules and laws that had their heyday away back in the years before Christ came to earth to fulfill every jot and tittle of the old Levitical law where unruly little boys were beaten to death in the town square and where women were not supposed to wear skirts since that was man’s apparel in those ancient times—and still is in the “lands of the Bible.”

When women in the church at Corinth were told to “keep silence in the churches” and to “ask their husbands at home” (and they *were* told to, I am fairly certain), they did it whether they liked to do it or not, because “the word” was written to them and not to the men in the same congregations. When the early *Christians* were asked to lay aside some money during the week so that it could be picked up by Paul and others and taken to those who were in need, I am sure they thought nothing of it because that was the word of God rightly divided to instruct them in what *they* were to do, as opposed to what *the Apostles* were to do when they came along.

When we read Galatians 5:4-6 in the New International Version, we get a very clear picture, indeed, of how Paul wished the early Christians to “rightly divide the word of truth.”

“You who are trying to be justified by law,” he wrote in verse four, “have been alienated from Christ; you *have fallen away from grace*.”

“But,” he adds in verse five, “*by faith* we eagerly await through *the Spirit* the righteousness for which we hope.”

“For in Christ Jesus,” he concludes in the sixth verse, “neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. *The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love*.”

Is not Paul saying, in effect, that we cannot claim the cleansing of Christ’s blood and pretend to live by God’s grace if we don’t leave behind the basic elements of the old law and stop creating our own doctrines by picking and choosing bits and pieces from here and there and combining what we like in the Old Testament with things that appeal to us in the New? I think he has shown us very clearly what he meant when he directed Timothy to “rightly divide the word of truth.”

Why and when did things change?

They suffered great changes exactly one hundred years ago this year—1997—when William Irvine decided that he knew the scriptures better than did Christ and all the Apostles, and, instead of rightly dividing the word of Truth, he mashed the words up just as one would do with a pot of boiled potatoes, and, as a result, the church which he invented—and proceeded to flesh out with the mixture and conglomeration of ideas that he and all his followers concocted—has continued to grow farther and farther away from the solid base of love comprised in the doctrine of Jesus Christ. And, today, one is hard pressed to find any resemblance at all to the perfect way of God established fairly and squarely upon the sacrifice of Jesus and his simple doctrine of love, peace, joy, long-suffering, goodness, faith, and temperance (for, “against such there is no law”).

In concluding verse 23 of Galatians 5, the New English Bible reads: “There is no law dealing with such things as these.”

Isn’t that the truth? Have we not seen the breakdown of many a peace treaty in recent history? How many truces have been broken between enemy nations just in our individual lifetimes? Could a government pass a law that would command a husband and wife to love each other when they have decided that the differences between them are just too great to make the marriage work? How many of us have ever experienced any real joy in our work because our superiors *told* us that we had to be happy in order to hold our job?

I believe, then, that it bears repeating that Paul so wisely wrote that there was no law dealing with such things as love, peace, joy, long-suffering, goodness, faith, and temperance.

Because the Two-by-Twos have abandoned those simple articles of Christ's teaching, *they have had to invent law after law, line upon line and precept on precept* just to keep themselves surviving. If their leaders—the Workers—on the other hand, had had the vision during these ensuing years to simply return to the Word of God, to turn their backs on the lies they had been using to propel themselves forward for one whole century, and to accept the simplicity of the Holy Bible, they would not be having to resort to screaming, to threatening, to propounding false doctrine, and to some of the most extreme cover-ups known to man in order to keep a following in the face of such overwhelming difficulties in the world today.

"If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit," Paul wrote as well in Galatians 5:25 & 26.

"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, [and] envying one another."

"Carry each other's burdens," we read in verse two of the sixth chapter, "and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

CREATION OF AN AURA OF AROGANCE AROUND ALL WORKERS, ESPECIALLY THE SENIOR MALES

We often hear the expression, "Last but not least," and I think you will all agree that that sentiment applies very aptly here in this part of my work. I would like to add also that I firmly believe that every crossed *t* and every dotted *i* in the "non-constitution" of the Two-by-Two cult has survived for the past one hundred years because of the aura of arrogance that the workers have established around themselves, and because of the measure of "fear and trembling" they have instilled into the people who approach most of them with a simple question or suggestion that just might have been on one's mind.

This, we all know, is not, and has not always been, the case with young workers just starting out, or, even, with a few older workers who seemed quite happy to allow themselves to be treated in a manner befitting any normal human being.

But this certainly was the case with our one and only famous George Walker! I would never risk being accused of saying that he was an arrogant old man, but I will say that there was such an air of "untouchability" about him that I could only bring myself to talk to him fewer than ten times in his lifetime, and those occasions included even the times when I was in the work and had the occasion to drive the car that was sent to pick him up from some place or other and transport him to the Strathroy, Ontario convention site.

I can't help but wonder if those early Christians were as fearful of Paul and Silas as I was of George Walker and others of his ilk. And were they, perhaps, less in awe of Timothy and John Mark who were mere novices in the trade?

It isn't any wonder that the Two-by-Two cult has survived this long when the workers build such a wall of aloofness around themselves and when they make it almost impossible to approach them at convention or any other time to ask the questions that they have been avoiding for the last ten decades and counting.

I would like to direct you now to II Tim. 2:24-25.

The New International Version paints a beautiful picture of what all Workers should have been like—and what they should be even yet as I draw this work to a conclusion (a most welcome one, I am sure!):

"And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead *he must be kind to everyone*, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that *God will grant* them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will."

And before we let this thought slip away, let's have a look at the warning Paul gave Timothy concerning the "terrible times" to come. In chapter three and verses two to seven, he wrote:

"People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, unholy, *without love*, unforgiving, having a form of godliness but denying its power. . . *They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are always swayed by all kinds of evil desires*, always learning but are never able to acknowledge the *truth*."

In no version or translation do we read that an Apostle or a servant of the Lord or, if you will, a Worker, should disport himself with an aura of arrogance, a wall of aloofness, or a cloak of self-righteousness. I was, as I have never let you forget, a teacher, but I cannot imagine how I would have taught and tried to impart knowledge for over thirty years had I kept myself holed up in one of those little "convention houses" under the maple, oak, and elm trees (had there been such an escape mechanism out behind the school).

As the Bible tells us, a good teacher is one who is *apt to teach*. And if the true servant of the Lord is directed in the word of God to be a good teacher and apt to teach, he is definitely not fulfilling his duty to either God or man by running away as fast as he can from that infamous location, the "Workers' table," so that he can catch forty winks (or perhaps a few more) in that little house under the spreading chestnut tree before appearing again in all his pomp and glory—to walk up the aisle in the convention tent filled to capacity with hushed and reverent followers waiting with bated breath to see who was going to step up onto that "most holy platform" and occupy that all important middle space where so many of us once dreamed of sitting, and eventually standing.

I finally had *my* holy platform seat dream fulfilled in the month of June, 1963, in just such a hushed and expectant setting as I have described above, before a crowd of about seven or eight hundred souls in the Saturday evening meeting of the convention at Dunnville, Ontario.

I discovered there and then that that platform was far from the holy place I had always imagined it to be. If my service to God, moreover, was going to be as a worker, and if that position was someday, somehow going to take me around the world from one such platform to another, I was going to have to do an awful lot of bluffing. Even then I had already begun to see through many of the loopholes that I wrote about in Chapter Six, and to recognize the *lies* that had been stuffed down my throat from the time I was a child

—lies which, as well, had been the steady spiritual diet of all the *mostly innocent* congregations scattered around the planet—just like the one seated before me that evening in Dunnville.

I found myself speaking words and thoughts which I can now honestly say I was beginning to scarcely believe, and which I had for the most part memorized beforehand for that meeting so that I could impress the “hungry” audience before me and make them believe I was a mouthpiece for God, the Lord of the universe.

I remember having two very, very strong emotions welling up within me as the meeting “hour” drew near. First and most prominent was a feeling of abject and overpowering fear lest my mind would go blank and I would be left standing there with a dry throat and not a word in the world to say. But, secondly, to my utmost shame, I recall having a sense of pride that I had finally *made it*, and I was going to be able to preach in front of a well-respected and most-admired cousin of mine who was in the meeting; and I knew that he, too, was looking forward to hearing me “for [my] first time from a convention platform.”

Yes, my friends, what an absolutely shameful emotion that was for me to have—especially when I was seeking to portray a spirit of humility and purporting to have only the interest of God’s kingdom in my heart, and mind, and in the very pores of my spiritual body!

May I make one more humiliating confession before I draw this work to a close?

For a year or two before I went into the work, I had “chummed around” with a wonderful professing girl who was living in Ottawa at the time. I knew, she knew, and I knew that she knew that I was slated for the work, so our friendship remained pleasant and cheerful; but, nevertheless, we had become very good and, in some ways, very close friends.

She was at that convention at Dunnville in 1963 .

To my amazement and utter disappointment, she felt she had to leave before the last meeting each evening as she was driving back and forth from Toronto each day, and she didn’t want to be too late getting home as she had to get up early on Sunday morning to get back in time for the first meeting at ten o’clock.

I wanted very much for her to stay for that meeting. I wanted her to hear me speak.

I shed tears when her car pulled out of the convention grounds, and I just knew that I would not feel as good about speaking in that meeting when she was not going to be there to hear me.

Why did I feel so dejected?

I was a human being with every one of my human emotions at the fore, and I was just as big a hypocrite as were so many I was going to be speaking in front of that very evening.

I can hardly bring myself to tell you that I was far more concerned over my own image and over the impression I would be making on the note-taking friends in front of me than I was over my heavenly rating from on high. Sadly, too, and what is even more to the point, I was more worried about how the workers on either side of the platform were assessing my every syllable and movement than I was over what my heavenly Father was thinking of me and whether I was measuring up to the attributes of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, my elder brother, and God’s dear son whose sacrifice would bring me into the pure and unadulterated fellowship “with the faithful, with Christ, and the few.”

As I was that night, in my human state, I was not one whit better than the founders of the “faith” I was purporting to believe and follow, or, for that matter, the Pharisees of Jesus’ day who had become the true pattern for me and who have remained such useful examples for every other worker from William Irvine in 1897 right down to everyone who is out there today, even as I write, fulfilling —albeit, in many cases, unknowingly—the words in Matthew 15:9:

“THIS PEOPLE HONORETH ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME.

“HOW BE IT. . .

“IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,

“. . . TEACHING FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.”

(I started writing this thesis in the winter of 1989. After completing around 60 pages, I put it away, and decided not to ever bother writing any more. An “out-of-the-blue” phone call from Eric Brown during the summer of 1993 helped me to change my mind, so I resurrected it from my files, re-read it in its entirety, and began to write again.

After many delays due to a variety of physical health problems, which have affected me psychologically as far as putting my mind to writing was concerned, I finally feel it is ready for some sort of publication.

My calendar tells me this is the fourth day of October, 1997, and as I put this last page into my binder, I glance at the clock and, lo! and behold! it is 11:30 p.m.

It is done, and I am going to bed.

Before I leave you, however, I would like to dedicate this work specifically to Leigh Townsend and, in general, to Larry and Bonnie Lindemann, and many others who have helped me, prodded me, encouraged me, and bore with me until I have finally brought it to fruition.)

Willis Young

THE END

TTT NOTE: Willis Young died November 21, 2007. He turned 73 on October 20th. Toward the end of his life, he fell ill with many issues and died rather suddenly. He didn't want a funeral service and his body was cremated. His ashes were spread somewhere in a body of water (Ocean, Lake). Printed by permission of Executor of Estate of Willis Young.