

THE CRUMBLING PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS SCIENCE.

Driving along any freeway in the United States, you may pass a car with a green and yellow bumper sticker, bearing the phrase, "Prosperity is your Divine right."

Such is the message and philosophy of the Church of Religious Science. These stickers are the promotional campaign of the popular Religious Science minister, from La Jolla, California, Rev. Terry Cole-Whittaker. Her television program, which was viewed weekly by over one million people, came to an abrupt stop in March, 1985, when she discovered that her philosophy on life was no longer valid and does not work.



Terry Cole-Whittaker

THE MINISTRY Mrs. Cole-Whittaker's message of prosperity drew large crowds of people who saw her as the answer to their problems in life. The La Jolla Church of Religious Science had a meager 50 people attending in 1977, when Rev. Terry Cole-Whittaker, who had just been ordained by the Los Angeles Church of Religious Science two years earlier, was installed as their pastor. The attendance immediately grew to 200, then 2,000, and leveling off at 4,000 this last year. The church was growing so fast that they felt that her message should be heard by all, so they launched into a television ministry in 1979. Every week, over one million people eagerly listened as they were told that God is already in them and they are in God, essentially, the human spirit is Divine. They were told that sin was only self hatred and that you only need to cover it and replace it with love. The way to get close to God is to experience your true self. You do not have to become god-like, because you already are god-like. Heaven is not a place to go, it is what you create consciously on earth. Finally, prosperity and health are yours if you claim them, they are your Divine right. Many of her other messages were filled with motivational affirmations and self-help methods to overcome fear and negative thoughts.

Where do the teachings of Rev. Cole-Whittaker come from? Weekly she quoted the Bible, as if to say that it was her main source. But when we dig deeper into her teachings, we find an array of sources that Rev. Cole-Whittaker used to formulate her beliefs.

"What I do," says Rev. Cole-Whittaker, "is (take) every discipline that has ever worked in my life and made a difference, and incorporate that in church." In addition to her primary source of Religious Science, she adds, est, gestalt therapy, rolfing (a massage technique), Transactional Analysis, actualization, Transcendental Meditation, re-birthing (a technique for re-experiencing birth), and the positive affirmations of motivational seminars.²

RELIGIOUS SCIENCE The Church of Religious Science, also known as Science of Mind, began in 1927 by a man named Ernest Holmes, their founder. The teachings of Religious Science draws heavily from the metaphysical/gnostic teachings of Dr. P. P. Quimby, Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science), Charles Fillmore (Unity School of Christianity), Madame Blavatsky (Theosophy), and the transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Mr. Holmes openly blends Hinduism and the occultic practices into his principles. The Bible and Jesus Christ are referred to throughout his works. The Bible, however, is only one book which contains truth for Mr. Holmes; and Jesus Christ is only one of several "religious leaders".³ The Bible is interpreted by Mr. Holmes, and the other Gnostic groups, with a metaphysical approach. Biblical terms are re-defined and the meaning of Biblical statements are spiritualized and developed into principles.⁴ An example is that Heaven is not a place, it is redefined as a state of consciousness which you create by eliminating all negative influences.

God: Ernest Holmes and Religious Science has denied the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity by redefining the meaning of "Trinity." Mr. Holmes says, "Throughout the ages, this Trinity has been taught. Every great religion and every great spiritual philosophy has taught this Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is the Christian Trinity. It is the Thing, the Way It Works, and What it does."⁵ What Mr. Holmes has done has been to make the Trinity a principle - "The Thing", "The Way It (the thing) works", "and What It (the thing) Does". This is not the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity. The Bible teaches us that God exists as three distinct Persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, (Matt. 28:19; Isa. 48:16; Rom. 1:7; Jn. 1:1; Jn. 20:28; Acts 5:3-4).

Mr. Holmes also takes away God's personal nature by saying that God is not a person himself, God is actually the person of every human being, God is the person in you.⁶ By saying this, Mr. Holmes has denied the Biblical truth that God Himself is a Personal Being. The Bible teaches that God spoke of Himself as a Personal Being long before man was created (Gen. 1:26). The "Us" and "Our" in this verse refer to the Three Persons of God's nature - the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Jesus: Mr. Holmes also denies that Jesus is truly God. He says, "Jesus was a man, a human being....Jesus never thought of himself as different from others....As Jesus, the man, gave way to the Divine Idea, the human took on the Christ Spirit and became the voice of God to humanity."⁷ He more explicitly states, "...Jesus never expected us to worship him either as a person or a God."⁸ A careful study of the New Testament will reveal the opposite of what Mr. Holmes propounds. Jesus was worshipped on many occasions, (Matt. 2:11, 8:3, 9:18, 15:25; Jn. 9:38; Rev. 5:14), which not only shows us that He was worthy of worship, but He accepted the worship from others. Even the angels in Heaven were commanded by the Father to worship the Son, Heb. 1:6, which would be blasphemous if He were not worthy to receive it. The reason that Jesus is worthy of worship is because He is truly God, (Mtt. 1:23; Jn. 1:1, 5:18, 8:58, 10:30, 20:28; Acts 20:28; Phil. 2:6-8; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:8, 1 Jn. 5:20; Rev. 1:8).

Metaphysical groups also divide Jesus from "the Christ". They teach that Jesus is only the man and that the Christ is a spiritual principle which came upon Him. Mr. Holmes said, "Jesus - The name of a man. Distinguished from the Christ. The man Jesus became the embodiment of the Christ, as the human gave way to the Divine Idea of Sonship."⁹ The Bible does not teach that the Christ is separate from Jesus. It teaches us that Jesus IS Christ, and anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ is the liar and the anti-Christ,¹ Jn. 2:22.

The Holy Spirit: Religious Science teaches that the Holy Spirit is the female aspect of the Trinity, which is a denial of His true Person and Deity! Mr. Holmes said, "The Holy Ghost signifies the feminine aspect of the Divine Trinity. It represents the divine activity of the higher mental plane....(the Spirit is), the supreme Law of Cause and Effect...the divine creative fertility of the universal soul when impregnated by the Divine Ideas."¹⁰ Contrary to Mr. Holmes, the Bible does not teach that the Holy Spirit is an "it". The Bible demonstrates the Person of the Holy Spirit, (Rom. 8:26-27; Jn. 14:16-17; Acts 13:2), as well as the Deity of the Holy Spirit, (2 Sam. 23:3-4; Acts 5:3-4).

Man: The teachings on Man in Religious Science contain the fallacy that all mankind already has God in them and that their person is God. According to Mr. Holmes, "As the human gives way to the Divine, in all people, they become the Christ."¹¹ These teachings are in disharmony with the Bible. Jesus said that anyone who claims to be the Christ is a deceiver, (Matt. 24:5).

Salvation: Sin is minimized in Religious Science to only represent mistakes. Salvation, therefore, is only to correct those mistakes. Mr. Holmes states, "...The answer to every question is in man, because man is within Spirit, and Spirit is an Invisible Whole! The solution to every problem is within man; the healing of all disease is within man; the forgiveness of all sin is within man; the raising of the dead is within man; Heaven is within man...Each of us, then, represents the Whole."¹² True Salvation, according to the Bible, is first to recognize that we are totally incapable of meeting the holiness of God because we have been separated from Him by sin, Rom. 3:23, 6:23. The only way of salvation is through the atonement of Jesus' shed blood for our sins, (Heb. 10:10, 1 Jn. 1:7), which is provided by God's grace, and not by anything we have done, (Eph. 2:8-9).

THE FAILED PHILOSOPHY In February of 1985, Rev. Terry Cole-Whittaker was quoted as saying, "I'm gonna keep on going 'cause I know this stuff works." She also said that Religious Science will create "heaven on Earth" by 2020. "Of course," she adds, "all the present systems and religions will have to collapse first."¹³ This would mean that Christianity would have to collapse to make way for Religious Science by the year 2020. One month after she had made these statements, on March 17, she stood before her congregation and resigned from her position as pastor! The reason was that she had recently returned from India and had discovered, while there, that people in poverty can be happy. This discovery pulled the plug on her philosophy that "prosperity is your Divine right." Just four weeks earlier she had said, "I know this stuff works," and now she sees that it does not work. Her resignation may also have something to do with her ministry **not** being a financial success either. When she resigned, she left behind \$350,000.00 of debts and an unpaid 2.5 million dollar lease on the ministry facilities. The philosophy of Religious Science does not work.

THE TRUTH Did it work? No. Does it work? No. Prosperity is not your divine right. According to the Bible, our "rights" in God only begin when we abandon our "rights" and humbly turn ourselves to God's mercy and grace. God's desire for us is not that we seek after wealth and prosperity. His desire is that we seek after His love and His kingdom, (Matt. 6:24, 33). Our happiness cannot be found in a series of principles or in a philosophy. Happiness can only be found through a personal relationship with the True Jesus of the Bible. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man can come to the Father except through Him, (Jn. 14:6).

(1) San Diego Union, 11/4/79, p. A-5 (2) Los Angeles Times, 11/16/79, p. A-15 (3) What Religious Science Teaches, Holmes, p. 10 (4) Words That Heal Today, Holmes, p. 87 (5) Science of Mind, Holmes, p. 80 (6) Words that Heal Today, p. 14 (7) What R. S. Teaches, p. 19-20 (8) Words that Heal Today, p. 90 (9) Sci. of Mind, p. 603 (10) What R. S. Teaches, p. 65 (11) Sci. of Mind, p. 360 (12) Words that Heal Today, p. 133 (13) L. A. Times, 2/10/85, Calendar-5 (14) San Diego Union, 4/14/85, p. B-8.

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