

# Truths We Believe about God 3

## **A Biblical & Theological Rejection of Wm. Paul Young's book, "Lies We Believe About God" (*Third in a series.*)**

*"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you."*

*—Emphasis added, Jeremiah 23:16-17*

## **A Review of the Book's Chapters**

### **The Book's Foreword, Introduction and Chapters 1-14**

We turn now to review each chapter of *Lies We Believe About God*. The reviews will include a summary of Young's belief, citation(s) of Scripture which contradict or confirm the author's beliefs, and my personal comments for purpose of clarification. Based upon what you read, you can decide who is telling the truth. Note: I do not necessarily disagree with all the points Young makes in his arguments about what God would not say, but my agreements are sparse. We begin with the Foreword written by Wm. Paul Young's friend, Dr. C. Baxter Kruger.

#### **Foreword**

- Kruger: "Who is Jesus, really? What does His existence mean? There are many answers." (LWBAG, 7)
- The Apostle Peter: (Addressing Jesus from a perspective of many answers) "Thou art *the* Christ, *the* Son of *the* living God." (Emphasis added, Matthew 16:16)

**Comments:** Kruger answers the "who is Jesus question" in his *Foreword*. He explains that speaking the name of Jesus is

confessing that there is no separation between the Trinity and humans, only relationship. "Jesus is Himself the relationship;" says Kruger, "He is the union between the Triune God and the human race." (LWBAG, 11) To Kruger, Jesus' identity involves being the great unifier of the Tri-Personal God with all humanity which union brings the Jesus-Trinity's new covenant kingdom to earth. To Kruger the kingdom is totally *now* and involves no future millennial and messianic reign of Christ on earth (Isaiah 9:6-7; Revelation 20:4, 6; ). Observation: If the kingdom is already present (this is called realized eschatology), then the Jesus-Trinity's kingdom is a mess!

Kruger states that Young's teachings stand "in the mainstream of historic Christian confession . . ." (LWBAG, 12) A consultation with one dictionary of theology informs that *apokatastasis* (another word for universalism or restitution of creation to its original pristine condition; see Acts 3:21, "Jesus Christ . . . Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution [*apokatastasis*] of all things") was taught by Clement of Alexandria (c. 150- c. 215), Origen (c. 185-c. 254) who was influenced by Clement and Gnostics and declared a heretic by the early church, Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330-c. 394), John Scotus Erigena (c. 810-c. 877), Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Karl Rahner (1904-1984) and some others. The Council at Constantinople (AD 543) declared the universal salvation-restoration of humanity, as held by those early church fathers, to be heretical. [23] One scholar informs that, "Jerome, Augustine, and most evangelicals, while insisting on an eschatological restoration by Christ [Acts 3:21], deny the corollary assertion of the ultimate salvation of all men." [24]

Though in Kruger's opinion Young stands in Christendom's "mainstream," universalism belongs to a heretical minority and not the orthodox majority. Universalism-*apokatastasis* might be compared to an

upstream *tributary* that flows into Indiana's Wabash river which then connects to the Ohio and the Mississippi. As the waters of the Mississippi totally engulf the waters from the Wabash's tributary, so the teaching of mainstream Christianity overwhelms belief in universal salvation. Further, just because the polluted waters of universalism flow within the "mainstream" does not mean they're fit to drink or the fish safe to eat!

## **Introduction**

- Young: "'Words you will never hear God say.' . . . I keep a record of wrongs." (**LWBAG**, 15)
- The Apostle John: "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Revelation 20:12; Compare Daniel 7:10.)

**Comments:** On this point, Young raises a half truth which he turns into a whole truth, and as such becomes a lie of a different sort, but a lie nonetheless. True. For those who are forgiven, God does not remember sins. Of Israel's disobedience, Micah predicted that after judging the nation, Yahweh "will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." (Micah 7:19). For the nation's disobedience *Yahweh* stated, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." (Isaiah 43:25) But, as the Scripture from Revelation 20 tells us, God remembers the sins of rebels and will, as any good prosecutor, "throw the book at them."

## **Chapter 1**

*"God loves us, but doesn't like us."*

- Young: "In the religious subculture in which I was raised, we all knew that God is love. . . . But saying 'God is love' does not capture our question [Does God **like** us?]. . . ." (**LWBAG**, 27)
- Jesus Christ: "The Father himself loveth (Greek, *phileo*) you [the disciples], because ye have loved (*phileo*) me, and have

believed that I came out from God.” (John 16:27)

- Jesus Christ: “Greater love (*agape*) hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (*philon*). Ye are my friends (*philon*), if ye do whatsoever I command you. (John 15:3-4)

- James the Brother of Jesus: “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend (*philos*) of God.” (James 2:23)

**Comments:** This verb and noun for love (*phileo/philos*) means “to love . . . approve of . . . **like** . . . treat affectionately . . . kindly . . . [and] befriend.” [25] Yes, God engulfs in the arms of His love those who by faith come to Jesus to be forgiven of their sins and thereby become His sons and daughters. But God also likes us!

## Chapter 2

*“God is good. I am not.”*

- Young: “Yes, we have crippled eyes, but not a core of un-goodness. We are true and right, but often ignorant and stupid, acting out of the pain of our wrongheadedness, hurting ourselves, others, and even all creation. Blind, *not depraved, is our condition.*” (Emphasis added, **LWBAG**, 34-35)

- Jesus Christ: “And, behold, one [a law-keeping rich young man] came and said unto him [Jesus], Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God:* but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” (Emphasis added, Matthew 19:17)

- The Psalmist: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” (Psalm 51:5)

- The Apostle Paul: “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; *there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*” (Emphasis added, Romans 3:10-12)

**Comments:** In reference to God, the adjective “good” (Greek

*agathos*) means that “God is essentially, absolutely and consummately good.” [26] In light of the Scriptural verdict that from birth we’re all sinners (*Yahweh* indicting: “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”—Jeremiah 17:9, NKJV; Jesus indicting: “Out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. *All these evil things come from within and defile a man.*”—Emphasis added, Mark 7:21-23, NKJV), can any human justly claim to be intrinsically good? But Young’s template of universal salvation demands that by virtue of their being in union with God (i.e., inside the Trinity), humans like the Tri-Personal God they’re in relationship with, are essentially, absolutely and consummately good. “How good do you have to be to go to Heaven?” goes the question. Answer: “As good as God.” Young’s twisted theology views humans to be, because they’re inside the Trinity, as good as God. However, the problem of our reality is we’re not as good as God! We’re sinners. That’s why we desperately need God’s Gospel, that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The truth is, because I am not as good as God I need Christ’s righteousness to cover my sinfulness, I need Christ’s righteousness to become my righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). Question: How does Young know whether my heart, your hearts, and for that matter his heart, are good? Just after declaring that human hearts to be “deceitful and desperately wicked,” *Yahweh* says: “I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” (Jeremiah 17:10)

### **Chapter 3**

*“God is in control.”*

- Young: “Do we actually believe we honor God by declaring God the author of all this mess in the name of Sovereignty and Omnipotent Control?” (LWBAG, 37)

- Isaiah the Prophet: “I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.” (Isaiah 45:6-7) [In the context the Lord identifies as the sovereign source of judgment upon Israel for their apostasy and through king Cyrus the Persian (6th century B.C.), the source of blessing upon His people for reason of His covenant faithfulness, ed.]
- The Apostle Paul: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

**Comments:** In my opinion, the paradoxical issue regarding the relationship of God’s sovereignty (which the above verse bluntly states) and human responsibility defies comprehension by the human mind (Isaiah 55:9; Job 11:7-8). The Bible teaches God is sovereign. The Bible teaches humans are responsible. In the paradoxical spectrum, hyper-Calvinism leads to fatalism and radical-Arminianism leads to humanism. Personally, I believe God is sovereign and I am responsible. While God macro-manages our lives, I don’t believe He micro-manages them. I don’t believe God determines where, what or how much I eat. (I would be better off if He did!) I remember once when Dr. Charles C. Ryrie (1925-2016) addressed the controversy regarding sovereignty and free will at a pastor’s conference in Western Michigan in the mid-70s. Ryrie, who had been my professor of theology in seminary, asked the pastors, “How many of you believe that God knows when you’re going to die?” Hands I could see were raised. Then he asked, “How many of you ate breakfast this morning?” Again, hands were raised. His remark: “Every good Calvinist shows himself to be an Arminian at least one-two-three times a day!” To live we all need to eat, right?

## Chapter 4

*“God does not submit.”*

- Young: “If God communicated this same truth [ed., The Golden Rule, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,” Matthew 7:12]

through so many messengers, it must first apply to God. [Notice Young's arbitrary inference.] But we often think that God gives commandments as if they are arbitrary tests for us humans rather than expressions of God's own nature. . . . The Golden Rule is immensely significant because it is the way God is. God treats me exactly the way God wants to be treated [As if God is not self-sufficient and therefore has wants and needs, ed.]." (LWBAG, 46)

- The Apostle Paul: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery . . . kill . . . steal . . . bear false witness . . . covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. . . . love is the fulfilling of the law." (Romans 13:8-10)

**Comments:** That God submits to me because of an inference Young derives from the Golden Rule, is not true. Why? Because *first*, that's not what Jesus said. The relationship Jesus was speaking of was human to human, not God to human or vice versa. *Second*, God does not have "needs or wants." To say that He does is a pagan perspective. In his Mars Hill Sermon the Apostle Paul stated: "God . . . made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth . . . Neither is worshipped with men's hands, *as though he needed any thing*, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Emphasis added, Acts 17:24-25). Thinking that God submits introduces us to the concept that God could be wrong.

Regarding the Ten Commandments, they might be understood as "ten tests of love" or "ten tests of faith"; the first four expressing love for and faith in God and the last six, love for our neighbors and belief that God will meet our life needs (Exodus 20:3-17). The question the "ten" asks is this: As demonstrated by obeying the commandments, do we love God and our neighbors? (See 1 John 4:7-8, 10-12.) As such, *The 10* are not, as Young states them to be, arbitrary impositions on God's part. They are for living a good life together, they are

about human getting along together by living righteously. But as Israel's disobedience and Jesus' words highlight, we do not keep the Lord's Law (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28). Keeping the law is a "relational" impossibility (Galatians 2:16). "For by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). Therefore, all of us absolutely need grace (Romans 3:21-24). But in Young's paradigm of how God and people get along, relationship eclipses grace and relationship requires for God, as a good husband or wife (Young's god can be either), to submit. Yet the Apostle Paul wrote that in the end, "when all things shall be subdued unto him [Jesus Christ], then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Corinthians 15:26-28). Submission it appears is a one not two-way street, everything first to Christ and then Christ and everything to God.

## Chapter 5

*"God is a Christian."*

- Young: "So is God a Christian? . . . If you are asking, does God relate to all of us as *beloved insiders* who are completely ignorant and miserable, does God love us and incessantly find ways to lead us to discover Jesus as *our only way, truth and life* . . . then, of course." (Emphasis added, **LWBAG**, 55)

- Jesus Christ: "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. . . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*" (Emphasis added, John 14:6-7, 9)

**Comments:** Jesus is ("I am!") the only way, truth and life. He is the way despite whether or not He becomes "our" personalized way, truth and life. In typical liberal-syncretistic-pluralistic innuendo (all religions are equally true because they're all inside the Jesus-Trinity), Young proposes that though we can discover Jesus to be *our* way, that does not mean He is *the* way for the rest of the world. In *The Shack*, Young makes up the following conversation. *Jesus to Mack*: "Those who love me come from every system that exists. .



. . . Buddhist or Mormon, Baptists or Muslims . . . I have no desire to make them Christian." *Mack to Jesus*: "Does that mean that all roads will lead to you?" *Jesus to Mack*: "Most roads don't lead anywhere. What that does mean is that I will travel any road to find you." (*The Shack*, 182) The Lord Jesus Christ is to be worshipped because He is God and set apart from the rest of humanity. Another misnomer Young creates in this chapter is referencing the Christian to be a "little-Christ" or "mini-Messiah." (**LWBAG**, 53) But dwelling within a Jesus-Trinity does not make humans *little-mini* Messiahs. For their uncompromising confession to be followers of Jesus—"I am a Christian!"—believers in the early church were martyred. [27]

## Chapter 6

*"God wants to use me."*

- Young: "God is a relational being; that is who God is. The language of God is about partnering, co-creating, and participating; it's about an invitation to dance and play and work and grow. If God uses us, then we are nothing but objects or commodities to God." (**LWBAG**, 62)
- Jesus Christ: "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew :10:38-39)
- Jesus Christ "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . ." (Matthew 28:19-20)
- The Apostle Paul: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10)

**Comments:** The truth is that Jesus wants to use (not exploit) us; that is, if we are going to be His disciples. If Jesus does not want to use us as Young's chapter title infers, then what's the point of the Great Commission to go and "make disciples of all the nations"? (Matthew 28:18-20) But if it is

assumed that all persons are inside Young's relational Jesus-Trinity, then there is no need to make disciples, is there? As Young falsely accuses, we do not become God's commercial "objects or commodities" if He wants to use us. We become Jesus' disciples and disciple-makers. "Only one life will soon be passed, only what's done for Christ will last."

## Chapter 7

*"God is more he than she."*

- Young: "All of maternity, as all of paternity, originates in the very nature of God. The image of God in us (*imago dei*) is not less feminine than masculine. The feminine/masculine nature of God is a circle of relationship, a spectrum, not a polarity. . . . Is God more masculine than feminine? Absolutely not!" (LWBAG, 73-74)

- The Scriptures: The Father is "Father," and not "mother" (*'ab*, Deuteronomy 32:6; *pater*, "Our Father . . .," Luke 11:2; *abba pater*, Mark 14:36). The Son is "Son," and not "daughter" (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 2:7). The Holy Spirit is "He," not "she" (John 14:16-17, 26). I accept God to be masculine because in Scripture God reveals Himself to be masculine.

**Comments:** Couching the argument for an androgynous deity in an emotional story like Young has done does not make his argument true. Predominantly, ancient pagan religions presented God as female—Aphrodite (Greek), Artemis (Greek), Diana (Roman), Kali (Hindu), Isis (Egyptian), Nike (Greek), and Venus (Roman). [28] That Israel's God *Yahweh* is masculine distinguished Him from the "hers"—the pagan gods—of the ancient world. He alone is God (Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one!"). I also believe that poly-gendering, as was common in the Canaanite religion, gives rise to polytheism (i.e., belief in many gods). For example, Mormonism teaches a divine father and a divine mother generated millions and billions of spirit beings or "little-Christ," Jesus being the eldest brother of them all.

## Chapter 8

*“God wants to be a priority.”*

• Young: “So how did Jesus answer the question that seemed to be asking about priorities? He said, ‘The greatest and foremost’—remember those two words—‘is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.’ God first, right? God as priority. Not so fast. Jesus then says, ‘The second is like it [the first].’ How? The second is also ‘greatest and foremost . . . love your neighbor as yourself’ (Matthew 22:36-40 NASB). . . . God doesn’t want to be first on your list, but rather central to everything.” (LWBAG, 80-81)

**Comments:** Young makes too much out of the adjective “like” (*homoios*) which means “like, resembling . . .” Had Matthew understood Jesus to say that the first and second commandments were identical he might have employed one of the adjectives meaning “same” (*isos* or *autos*). [29] Though the second great commandment is “similar” to the first, it is not “the same.” Further, in light of a plain reading of the Jewish *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4-5, “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” as affirmed by Jesus Christ; Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:29-30), how can Young legitimately deduce, excepting by twisting and rationalizing the passage, that God should not be a priority in our lives? God does not need to be a priority in our lives. God does not need anything or anyone. The Trinity is self-sufficient. That He wants to be a priority in our lives is for our benefit and His glory. By the way, what’s the practical difference between Young’s quibbling distinction that God wants to be central to but not a priority in our lives?

## Chapter 9

*“God is a magician.”*

• Young: “We religious people rely on two common kinds of magic . . . The first kind of magic involves *faith*, and the second is based on *performance*. . . . With the first kind of magic, *faith*-magic, you should be able to move mountains, [30] raise the dead, perform miracles, get rich, or have a baby.

Then if something goes wrong . . . you either didn't have enough faith or you didn't exercise it properly. Or perhaps there is sin in your life . . . The second kind of magic, *performance-magic*, works like this: if I do the right things . . . then God will bless me . . .” (LWBAG, 84-85, 88)

- Hebrews: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)
- Jesus Christ: “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.” (Matthew 12:39)

**Comments:** Young rightfully calls into question the *faith-magic* of the Charismatic movement with its emphasis upon “signs and wonders” and the health and wealth gospel. His definition of *performance-magic* also calls into question the motive for the production of church ritual in any of its ecclesiastical expressions, from smells and bells (e.g., Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and etc.) to altar calls (e.g., Protestant churches), and so forth.

## Chapter 10

*“God is a prude.”*

- Young: In “the tribe in which I grew up . . . greetings were often graphic and sexual in their expression. . .” Offended by the sexual overtones . . . “a Western missionary raised the issue of language with the [church] leadership. . . . Graciously they told him that they would have a meeting to talk about his concerns and would report back [Note Young’s put-down that while the tribal church leaders were gracious the missionary was not, ed.]. When they met next, here is what the elders told the missionary. ‘When you are around, we will do our best and not use those words, but we are not going to stop praying that way.’ For them, human sexuality is a good and right language of intimacy. Turns out that it is not God who is the prude; it is us.” (LWBAG, 98)
- The Apostle Paul: “Charity [the love] . . . doth not behave itself unseemly (*aschamosune*, “behavior which is opposed to modesty or purity”)”; “But now ye also put off . . . filthy

communication (*aischrologia*, “speech which is opposed to modesty or purity”) out of your mouth.” (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5 and Colossians 3:8) [31]

**Comments:** God is not opposed to sex. He created it (Genesis 2:18-25). Sex is sacred (set apart) to be shared by a man and woman in marriage (Matthew 19:4-6). Of the Greek words for love, *eros* is not used in the New Testament though both *agape* and *philanthropia* (from which we get the word philanthropy) are. Thus, it might be asked, what kind of praying were the elder-tribesmen talking about? Was the elder telling the missionary that when he was not around they were going to continue to use sexual language in prayer to God? Well, if everybody’s inside the Trinity it must be okay. But where in prayer is the line of decorum between *agape* (I love you Lord.) and *eros* (I want to feel you Lord.)? By the way, if any culture is “hung up” on sex it is ours!

## Chapter 11

*“God blesses my politics.”*

- Young: “Government is not instituted by or originated by God. We built it.” (LWBAG, 103)
- The Apostle Paul: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: *the powers that be are ordained of God.*” (Emphasis added, Romans 13:1)
- The Apostle Peter: “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto *governors*, as unto them *that are sent by him* [the Lord] for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.” (Emphasis added, 1 Peter 2:13-14)
- The Prophet Daniel: “Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he [God] removeth kings, and setteth up kings.” (Daniel 2:20-21; see also Daniel 4:32)
- Jesus Christ: Pray, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. *Thy kingdom come.* Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Emphasis added, Matthew 6:9-10)

**Comments:** By their constant colluding, plotting and agitating

together, the Psalmist pictures the nations to be united in their rebellion against the Lord and His Messiah (Psalm 2:1-3). Young correctly, I believe, calls into the question the dominionist aspirations of the American Christian Right (We need to make America "Christian" again.). But because of the residual anti-Messiah attitude prevalent among the nations as the Psalmist stated, the Christian Right movement is doomed to fail. But Young's categorical dismissal of the truth that human government possesses no divine source is not Scriptural. Remember . . . when the Apostle Peter wrote the injunction cited above, the infamous Nero was Roman Emperor! Furthermore, the Millennial Reign of the Lord Jesus Christ will not be of human origin. (Psalm 2:6, 8-9; Revelation 2:26-27; 12:5; 19:15) Christ's Kingdom will originate from Heaven, not from humans. Question: If everything's inside the Trinity, how can government not in some sense be of divine origin? It has to derive from inside the Trinity, doesn't it?

## **Chapter 12**

*"God created (my) religion."*

- Young: "God did not start religion. Rather, religion is among a whole host of things that God did not originate but submits to [Mark this concept: *God submits to my religion.*] because we human beings have brought them to the table. God is about relationship; and therefore, any understanding of church or any community of faith that is centered on structures, systems, divisions, and agendas has its origin in human beings and not in God. 'Religion,' by definition, is people-based, not God-based." (LWBAG, 109-110)

- Jesus Christ: "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines *the commandments of men*. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold *the tradition of men* . . . Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep *your own tradition.*" (Emphasis added,

Mark 7:6-9)

**Comments:** True. God does not create religion. But Isaiah and Jesus' words contradict any notion that God submits to "my" or "your" religion. Jesus' quote from the prophet Isaiah indicates that God does not submit to commandments and traditions humans invent. Jesus, as the author contrives pluralism-syncretism in *The Shack*, will not submissively travel any religious road to find us. (**LWBAG**, 112) True, though God did not create *my* religion, He did reveal the content and character of it in the Bible. To a point, Young's protest is right. If *churchy religion* centers on structures and agendas, the Apostle Paul tells believers to "turn away" from such forms of godliness which deny God's power (2 Timothy 3:5). Oops . . . there goes "relationship"! Furthermore, the Apostle warns true believers against becoming cozy with false teachers who are, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2 Timothy 3:7) In light of his warning, it becomes difficult to see how the Apostle's injunction to separate from Sophia-teachers (ever learning and unable to arrive at the truth) is compatible with Young's assumption that such teachers might be in any kind of mutual "relationship," actual or potential, with God inside the Trinity. Fact of the matter is, professing Christendom is not one big happy family!

### **Chapter 13**

*"You need to get saved."*

- Young: "Are you suggesting that everyone is saved? That you believe in universal reconciliation? That is exactly what I am saying! This is real good news! (**LWBAG**, 118) . . . "Further, every human being is in Christ (John 1:3), and Christ is in them, and Christ is in the Father (John 14:20). When Christ—the Creator in whom the cosmos was created—dies, we all died. When Christ rose, we all rose (2 Corinthians 5)." (**LWBAG**, 119)

- Jesus Christ: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not

perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:16-18; See Matthew 25:46.)

- The Apostle Paul and Silas: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts 16:31)

**Comments:** On this point Young turns the Gospel upside down. By inverting the Gospel he’s perverting the Gospel. The implications of his universalism destroy the entire biblical-doctrinal structure of the Christian faith, and the dominoes will fall (are falling). If everybody’s saved because everybody’s inside a ubiquitous and metaphysical Jesus-Trinity, then there was/is no need for Jesus’ incarnation (1 Timothy 2:16), penal substitutionary atonement for our sins (Galatians 3:13), physical resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4), ascension into Heaven where He is the mediator on our behalf (1 Timothy 2:5; Colossians 3:1), and future personal return to bring His kingdom to earth (Titus 2:13; Revelation 20:6). To ask the question again, If everybody’s saved, why believe Christianity? Everybody’s saved anyway! As regards our salvation Young’s saying, just trust and feel good about the universalism he and Kruger are peddling to the Christian public. “Don’t Worry, Be Happy!”

## Chapter 14

*“God doesn’t care about what I’m passionate about.”*

- Young: Young uses an illustration taken from C. Baxter Kruger’s encounter with a systemic microevolutionary botanist who was about the business rescuing endangered species of plants. Kruger asked the scientist where he thought his passion to save plants came from. The scientist was at loss to explain it. So Kruger offered an explanation based upon drawing three intertwined circles symbolizing his (and Paul Young’s) *perichoresis* view of the Trinity (also called social Trinitarianism, co-inherence or “the dance”). “Look” Baxter



said to the scientist," this is the symbol for the Three-Person Oneness of God. *Inside of this moving divine dance of relationship, everything was created: every human being, every plant, every subatomic particle, everything.*" (Emphasis added, **LWBAG**, 127-128)

- The Apostle Paul: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." (Romans 1:20-23).

**Comments:** Was the universe created "inside" or "outside" the Trinity? If inside (the *perichoresis* view of reality), God and the universe are one together. As indicated by Young's spelling of it with an upper-case "C", creation shares divinity in the Trinity. (**LWBAG**, 38, 161) The Trinity, the universe and everything that fills it, inanimate and animate, are dancing together in "Love"! This worldview which proposes that everything's in God and interchangeably God's in everything, is monism, oneness or "one-ism" as Dr. Peter Jones defines it. [32] Such a natural view of reality is pagan. (Yin/Yang, or As Above, So Below) In the beginning God created everything external to Himself and therefore is not in everything (Genesis 1:1); except of course, in believers indwelt by the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9). God is Holy; that is "separate" from His creation and therefore rules over it. (See Acts 14:15; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:2; Revelation 4:11.) *Observation:* "Passionate" is a buzzword floated around among evangelicals today, I'm so passionate about this . . . or that. So the question arises, when do passions become lusts? The equivalent Greek word for passion is lust (*epithumia*), which occurs about thirty-seven times in the New Testament. In three occurrences

*epithumia* means to desire in a good sense (Luke 22:15; Philipians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:17). But in every other instance the word means to “lust,” to be passionate in an fleshly and worldly anti-God sense (e.g., “the lust of the flesh,” Galatians 5:16; “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes,” 1 John 2:16; etc.). Let it be stated that just because someone *feels strongly* about something does not make it true or good. About strong feelings we need to be careful lest they become or in reality are lusts.

*To be continued . . .*

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### Endnotes

[23] Marcus Braybrooke, “Universalism,” *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, Alan Richardson and John Bowden, Editors (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1983): 591.

[24] Bruce A. Demarest, “Apokatastasis,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Walter A. Elwell, Editor (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984): 67.

[25] Emphasis added, Strong, James: *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996, S. 5368.

[26] W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, Jr., *An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984): 493.

[27] The originators of the name Christian “took Christ as a proper name [like Herod-Herodians, Mark 3:6] and not as the designation of his office, the Anointed One.” See R.S Rayburn, “Christians, Names of,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Walter A. Elwell, Editor (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984): 216. During the New Testament era followers of Christ were first called “Christians” at Antioch (Acts 11:26).

[28] “Goddess Names,” *Goddess-Guide.com*, 2007-2017 (<http://www.goddess-guide.com/goddess-names.html>).

[29] W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, Jr., *An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas

Nelson Publishers, 1984): 672.

[30] For a take on “mountain-moving-faith,” see Larry DeBruyn, “Little Boy,” April 22, 2015, *Guarding His Flock Ministries* (<http://guardinghisflock.com/2015/04/22/little-boy/#more-2934>)

[31] W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, Jr., *An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984): 1186, 1029.

[32] Peter Jones, “Two-ism and One-ism Definitions,” *truthxchange*

(<https://truthxchange.com/two-ism-and-one-ism-definitions/>). Jones states that Two-ism means “All Is Two. We worship and serve the eternal, personal Creator of all things. God alone is divine and is distinct from His creation, yet through His Son, Jesus, He is in loving communion with it.” On the other hand, One-ism means “All Is One. We worship and serve creation as divine. All distinctions must be eliminated and, through ‘enlightenment,’ we discover that we also are divine.”