

The Emerging Church

Let's Play Church



The Emerging Church

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More than a feeling

“I wish church was more exciting.”



I had an idea/no idea

“Why don’t we start a contemporary church service?”



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My Story

Surprising stats

- Less than 1/3 of members actually attend church.
- Of the 31 churches in Central PA only 10 had a baptism last year.



Are we playing church?

Why do you go to church?



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Consider this question carefully

Why pews are empty

- Church is boring
- No anchor to keep me there
- Someone hurt me
- Too strict/theological conflicts



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Where no oxen *are*, the
trough *is* clean;
But much increase
comes by the strength
of an ox.



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Proverbs 14:4

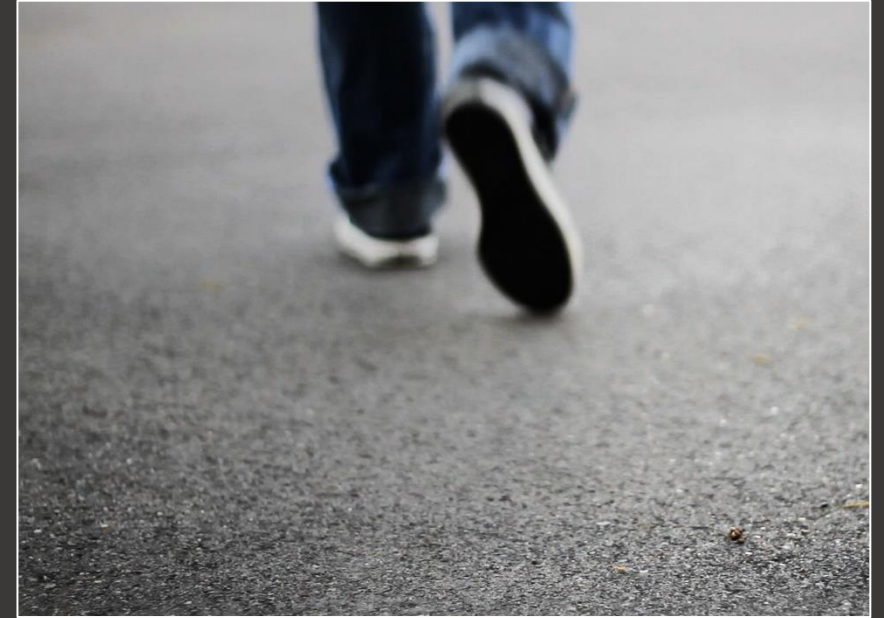
Let's fix church

- Lower moral standards
- Watered down Gospel/Doctrine
- Introduce spiritualism/new age
- Let's be different together



Let's Play Church

There is a way *that seems* right to a man,
But its end *is* the way of death



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Proverbs 14:12

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Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,



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1 Timothy 4:1

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HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?



The Emerging Church

Defining the Emerging Church is like
nailing Jell-O to the wall



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“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock...”



DEFINITION

The emerging, or emergent, church movement takes its name from the idea that as culture changes, a new church should emerge in response.



DEFINITION

In this case, it is a response by various church leaders to the current era of post-modernism.



DEFINITION

Although post-modernism began in the 1950s, the church didn't really seek to conform to its tenets until the 1990s.



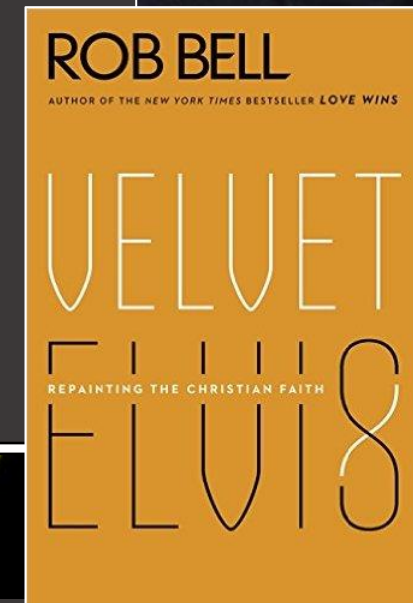
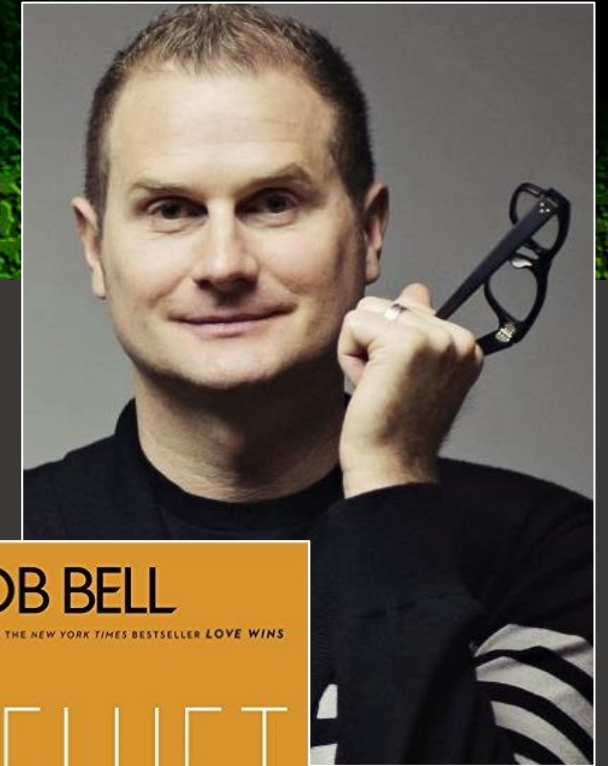
DEFINITION

Post-modernism can be thought of as a dissolution of "cold, hard fact" in favor of "warm, fuzzy subjectivity." The emerging / emergent church movement can be thought of the same way.

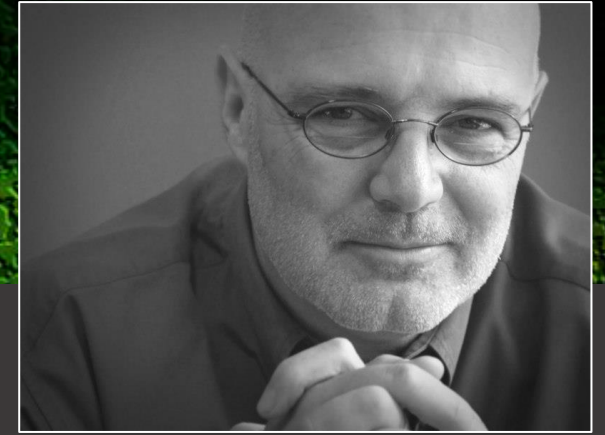


The Bible called into question

“Is the Bible the best God can do? With God being so massive and awe-inspiring and full of truth, why is his book capable of so much confusion?”



Heaven and hell called into question



Heaven and hell are subjective to your thinking, your paradigm



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Brian McClaren (paraphrased from audio interview)

The end called into question

Since God is in you. He must emerge from you. In other words things will get better on planet earth not worse, hence the focus on bettering the planet not strengthening your relationship with Jesus.



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CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

in connection with

Spiritualism



Warning against spiritual format



“We must be vigilant to test all things according to the supreme authority of God's Word and the council with which we have been blessed in the writings of Ellen G. White.



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Pastor Ted Wilson, General Conference President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church said publicly in his July 3, 2010 acceptance speech:

Warning against spiritual format



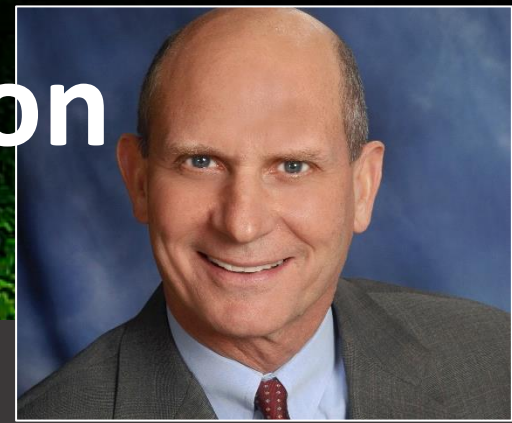
Don't reach out to movements or mega-church centers outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church which promise you spiritual success based on faulty theology.



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Pastor Ted Wilson, General Conference President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church said publicly in his July 3, 2010 acceptance speech:

Warning against spiritual formation



Stay away from non-biblical spiritual disciplines or methods of spiritual formation that are rooted in mysticism,



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Warning against spiritual formation



such as contemplative prayer, centering prayer, and the emerging church movement in which they are promoted.'



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Contemplative prayer

A contemplative prayer or contemplation is a form of prayer in **Christian mysticism**. It is distinct from vocal prayer and, strictly speaking, from meditation (a form of mental prayer, also called methodical prayer...)



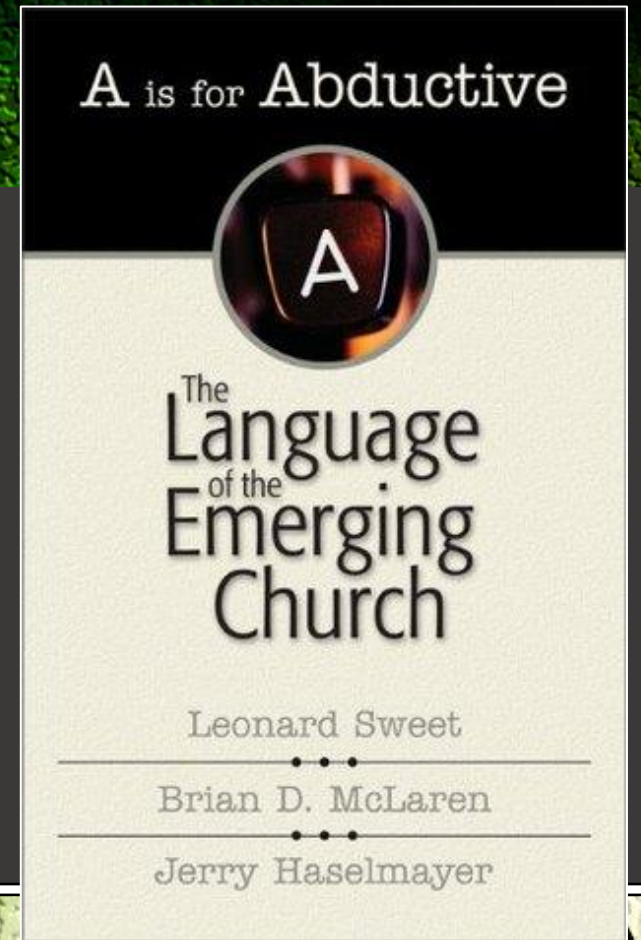
Model Prayer

And when you pray, **do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do***. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.



No ultimate truth

[Deconstruction] begins by questioning many of the assumptions of traditional interpretation.

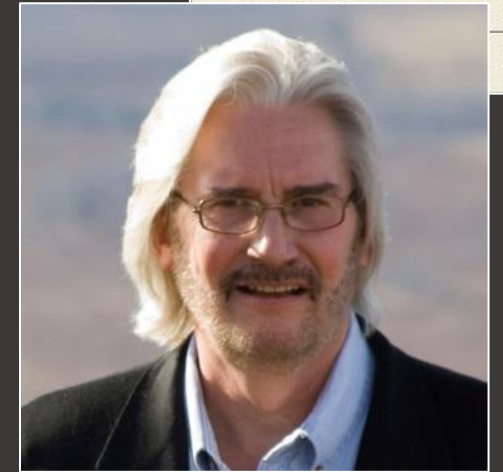
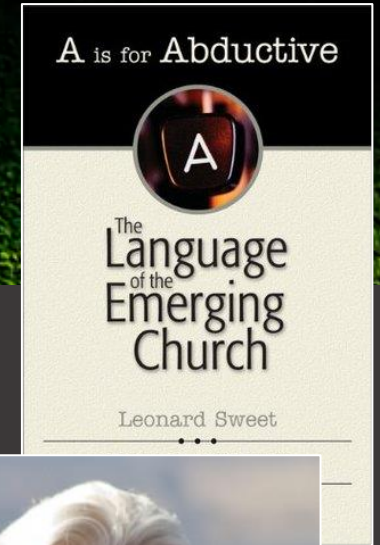


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Leonard Sweet & Brian McLaren – The Language of the Emerging Church

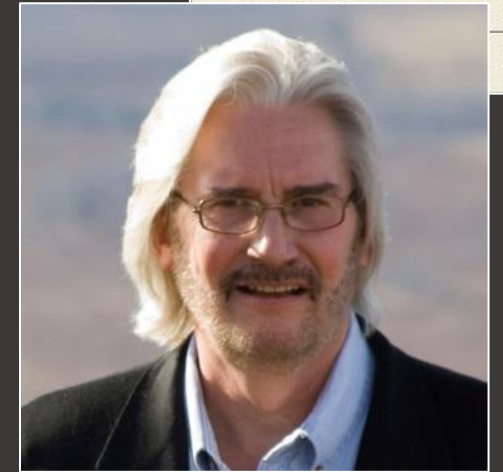
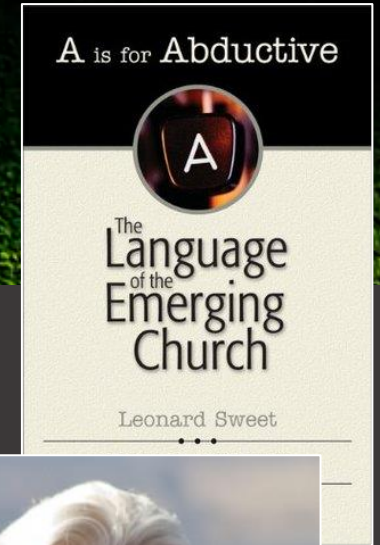
No ultimate truth

Traditional modern interpretation, then, is fond of finding the one “true” meaning in a text, while deconstructionists do not give any one reading privileged status,



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Unitarian Universalist

Whatever you say is truth



Mysticism

“Mysticism, once cast to the sidelines of the Christian tradition, is now situated in post-modernist culture near the center.”



Unification through Mysticism

- Christian Mysticism
- Sufism (Muslim mysticism)
- Vedanta (Hindu mysticism)
- Zen (Buddhist mysticism)



Mysticism in Yoga

A Hindu theistic philosophy teaching the suppression of all activity of body, mind, and will in order that the self may realize its distinction from them and attain liberation.



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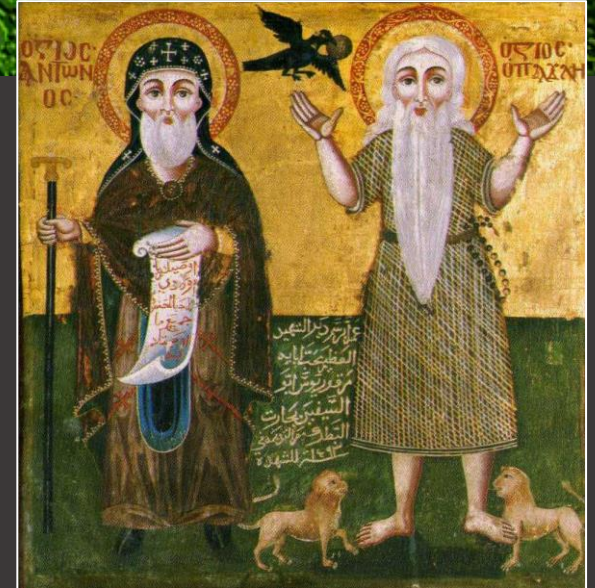
**BUT! How did Eastern
Mysticism enter the
Christian Church?**



HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

3rd Century monks: Desert Fathers

Practice of Hesychasm (from the Greek for "stillness, rest, quiet, silence" A.K.A. contemplative prayer) is a mystical tradition and movement that originated with the Desert Fathers and was central to their practice of prayer.



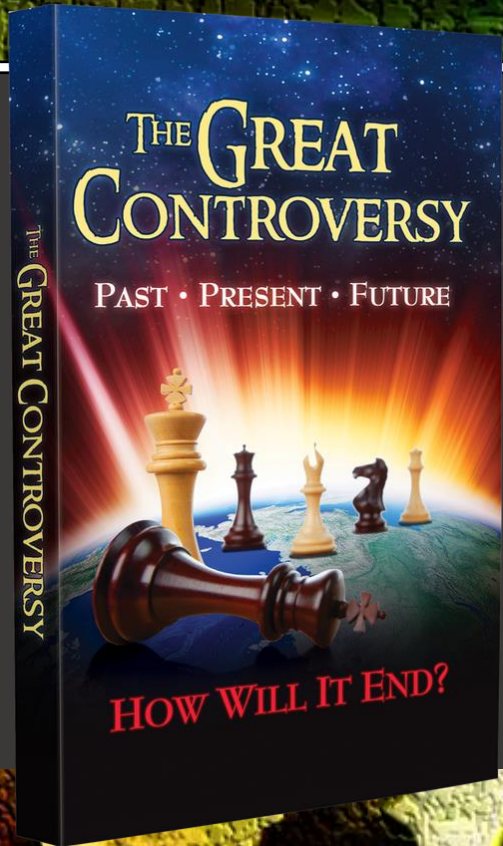
Jesuit Philosophy

Ignatius of Loyola started the Society of Jesus A.K.A. the Jesuits. This was a military-like organization for the Counter-Reformation.

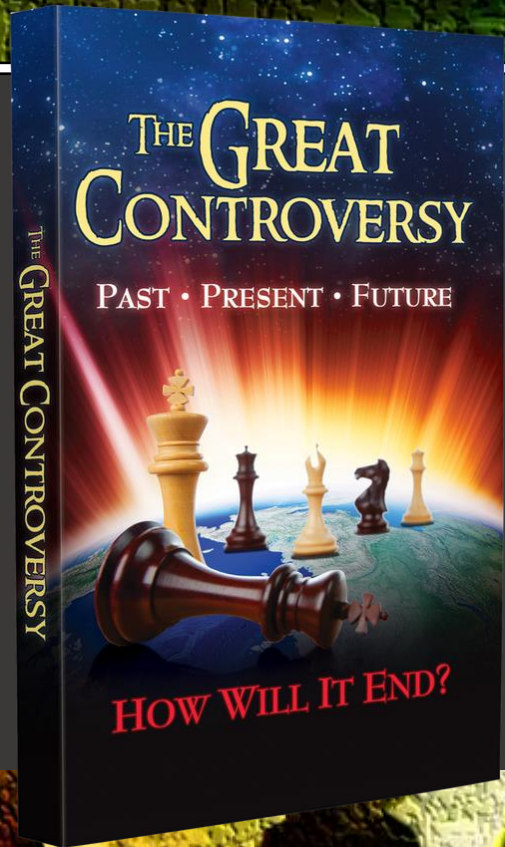


Prophecy in action

Throughout Christendom, Protestantism was menaced by formidable foes. The first triumphs of the Reformation past, Rome summoned new forces, hoping to accomplish its destruction.



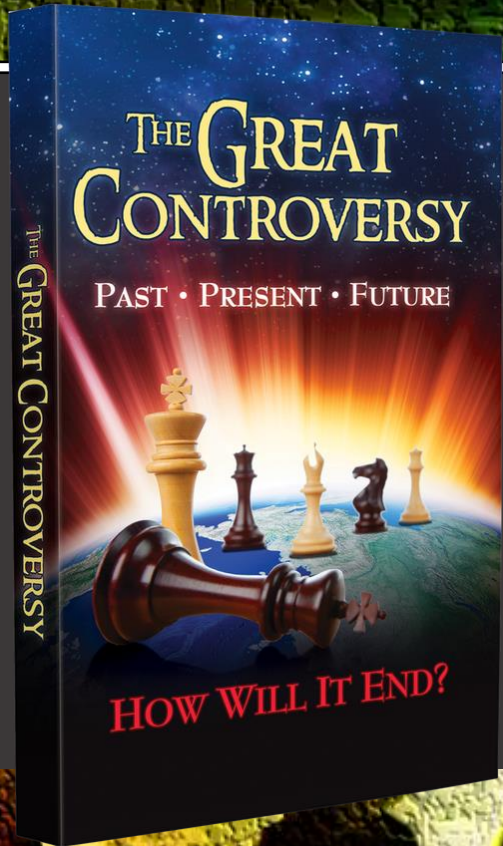
Prophecy in action



At this time, the order of the Jesuits was created, the most cruel, unscrupulous, and powerful of all the champions of popery.



Prophecy in action



The Jesuits rapidly spread themselves over Europe, and wherever they went, there followed a revival of popery.



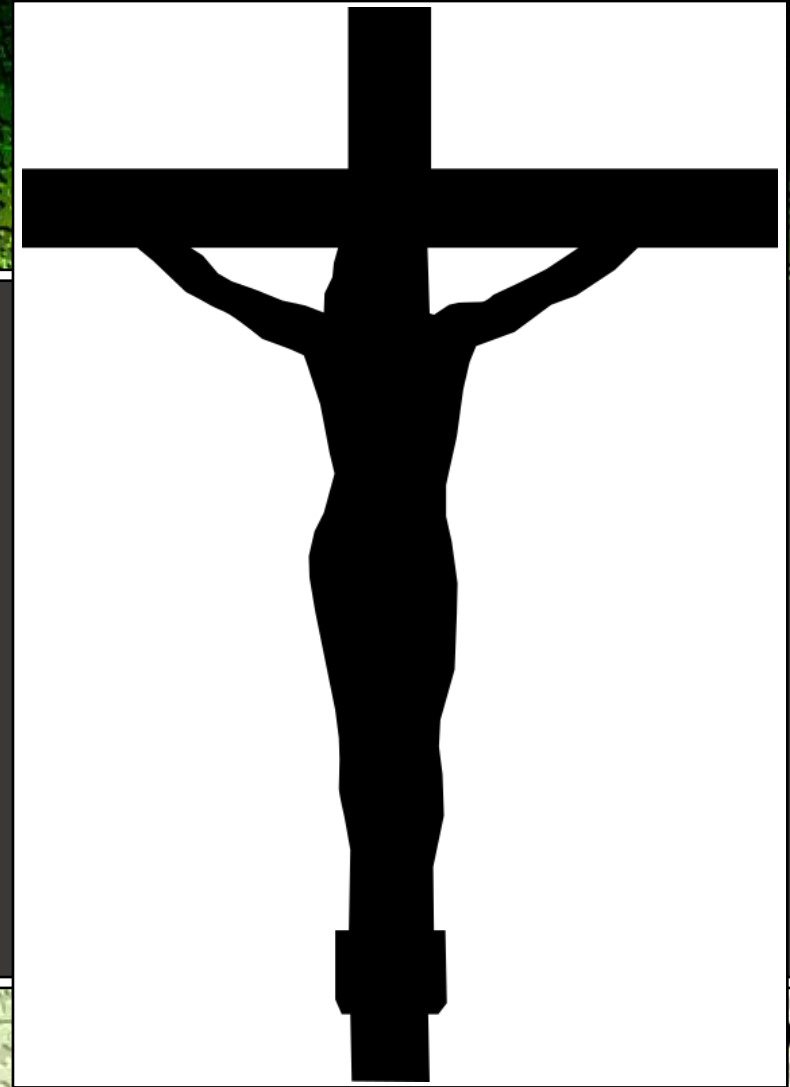
Prophecy in action

And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. **And all the world marveled and followed the beast.**



Jesus is the Way

I am the way, the
truth, and the life



Jesus is the Way

Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'



Jesus is the Way

And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'



Test teachings by the Bible

And when they say to you, “Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,” should not a people seek their God? *Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?*



Test teachings by the Bible

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.



Prophecy fulfilled

And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, “We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel;
Only let us be called by your name,
To take away our reproach.”



Are we playing church?

Is Pennsylvania
a Mission Field?



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Matthew 28:19-20 – GO!

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