

THE PAINFUL TRUTH



“The Cult Attraction”

by Jim Baldwin



THE PAINFUL TRUTH

BIO

I have spoken to both of you concerning my preparing a short biography about my early days back in the sixties before I joined up with the Herbert Armstrong cult in the summer of 1967.

Last year I decided I wanted my brother, Dale to understand my dropping out of society back in '67. Others might be interested who knew me then.

Dale and I had an uncle on my mom's side of the family that became a Jehovah's Witness. I recall a few times that Dale and I had made unkind remarks about our uncle whom we did not know very well and he never approached us concerning the cult he was in. One time a cousin (our uncle's son) also made unkind remarks about his dad. This was bothersome to me. Someday my family may be similarly speaking about my actions of joining the Armstrong cult. They may think of me as a little strange.

I'm sure my poor uncle had a story to tell about his reasons for joining the JWs back in the '50s. I know WWII had made quite an impact on his life. His marriage broke up.

I have traced the history of the English Baldwins who first obtained land in Billerica, MA in 1657. Three hundred years later I was entering my adult years. So, there were ten generations up to me. What personal papers did I have covering that period? One short note from my great grandfather to his son, my grandfather, where two dollars were enclosed to buy Xmas gifts back in 1917. (My dad was 2).

Ten generations and one brief note got passed down! I have nothing written by my dad other than his signature on his Social Security card.

Well, we all have a story. Here is part of mine.

Your friend,

Jim Baldwin



Brief Notes To Exiting The WCG by Jim Baldwin

(Joined in 1967)

30 JAN 72--Ted Armstrong banished from the church. Herbert reports that Ted is "in the bonds of Satan." (Much later I learn Ted is a serial adulterer.)

1975--Dr. Ernest Martin, the head of the theology department had resigned early in the 1970s. I started receiving early booklets from Martin at my request.

1. The Sabbath and the Christian.
2. The Tithing Question.
3. The Christian and the Ten Commanments.
4. Healing, Medicine, Physicians.
5. Church Government and Church Organization.

I also was added to the mailing list to receive Martin's studies and newsletters.

1977--A friend gives me some sample copies of "The Present Truth". Robert Brinsmead is the editor. He was a former Seventh Day Adventist. The journal introduced me to the concept of Imputed Righteousness.

19 JAN 78--Received a copy of Bill Hinson's Book, *The Broadway to Armageddon*.

31 MAY 79--Received an anonymous package. It was mailed by a friend in Pasadena.

1. "Did Christ Reorganize the Church?". (A major article by Herbert from 1939.)
2. "Dismissal of Members" from the Constitution and Bylaws of the WCG.
3. The Gerringe Letter of 1975.
4. Various HWA letters with clear contradictions.
5. C. Wayne Cole explanations.
6. Unsigned article: "Will Stan Rader Tell What He Knows?"
7. The Hull letter. A member tells of his sad experience.

8 AUG 86--Received study #99 from Richard Nickels detailing early history of HWA.

18 APR 87--Received my copy of the Pastor General's Report. The healing doctrine was completely changed!

30 AUG 88--Received a "Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups" from the Bible Sabbath Association. There exist 53 other COG groups!

8 NOV 88—Makeup doctrine scrapped!

3 JAN 89—It is not appropriate to see HWA/JWT in prophecy. "Philadelphia" not the best spiritual state.

31 JAN 89—*Mystery of the Ages* withdrawn from further distribution.

PT

2 OCT 89—JWT: “Whom did Jesus call ‘Children of the Devil’? Those who thought they had a corner on the spiritual market. Those who thought they were the only ones who could have a relationship with God. Their attitude of pompous spiritual superiority made them partakers of the attitude of the Devil.”

17 APR 90—JWT: HWA was a doomsday prophet.

15 MAY 90—A powerful Pastor General’s Report has an article by JWT listing past sins of the WCG running to eight pages!

24 JUL 90-- Interracial marriage is okay.

31 JUL 90—Rec’d some articles from Ted’s church in answer to WCG teachings.

Did Peter Have the Primacy?

Excommunication: What Does the Bible Teach?

Must you be a Member of a Church?

7 AUG 90—Jesus is central to the Gospel.

21 AUG 90—Preoccupation with prophecy is wrong.

22 JAN 91—We are “Born Again” now. Christ could not sin. We don’t have to imitate his life.

7 MAY 91—Church is now the Kingdom of God!

15 JUN 91—Received a copy of the “Watchman Expositor”, #5SP from a member concerning doctrinal changes in WCG. The pages have a shocking list of HWA false prophecies over the years. Two tapes are offered by ex-members Hollman and Degge. I sent for Hollman tape.

30 JUL 91—Received an internal WCG study concerning “Persecution Possibilities.” Lists a large pile of statements from various WCG publications regarding prophecies.

17 DEC 91—The Holy Spirit is God!

31 DEC 91—There is no health and wealth gospel.

JAN 92—Received a tape from “Watchman Expositor” discussing “Armstrong’s Gospel.”

6 JAN 92—Obtained the address of the “Ambassador Report.” Also got the address for ordering a copy of *Armstrong’s Tangled Web*.

14 JAN 92—JWT: “Love is more important than doctrines.”

15 JAN 92—Received a list of the AR issues.

22 JAN 92—PCG sent a copy of special edition of the Worldwide News (24JUN85) wherein HWA says, “New Biblical Truths will be covered in the New Book, *Mystery of the Ages*.” Also this issue shows that changes liberals wanted in the 70s are now in place in ’92.

29 JAN 92—Bill Dankenbring writes in his journal, “Has the WCG become a cult?”

PT

Jan-Feb 92—Finally read Bill Hinton's *Broadway to Armageddon* which I had obtained in 1978.

6 FEB 92—I found a copy of Eric Hoffer's *The True Believer* in a used bookstore. This book was a massive dose of reality-based thinking. Read it twice.

FEB thru MAY 92—Made an in-depth study of the tithing doctrine after reading Dr. Martin's booklet from 1975.

24 FEB 92—Received Ken Westby's tithing paper from 1974.

25 FEB 92—Received PCG's doctrinal changes booklet reporting on the WCG changes.

28 FEB 92—Received a Preterist booklet *What Happened in 70 AD?* I saw advertised in "Christianity Today." This teaching led me to question my adventist position.

3 MAR 92—I receive Ambassador Report #1.

4 MAR 92—Went to a college library to read the tithing article in the Jewish Encyclopedia.

6 MAR 92—Received Bill Dankenbring's article, "Incredible Doctrinal Changes in the WCG." Note to self: "I am just tired of trusting my eternal life to the fluctuating doctrines and commandments of uninspired and uninspiring men."

10 MAR 92—Received David Robinson's HWA's *The Tangled Web*.

20 MAR 92—Received a report by John Kiesz about the early years of the Church of God. Also received a report from the COG7 concerning HWA.

27 MAR 92—Watchman Fellowship sent me a copy of the Olin Degge testimony.

28 MAR 92—Dankenbring reports that JWT being at Hupp Aviation as a manager is false.

15 APR 92—Prepared a long list of "bothersome findings."

1 MAY 92—Dankenbring reports on the 1939 article HWA wrote.

2 MAY 92—Sermonette man says ministers have left over "weird and wacky" ideas. "God is revealing new truth to his apostle."

6 MAY 92—Received *Armstrongism: Religion or Ripoff?* This is reviewed in AR 1.

18 MAY 92—Received a WCG testimony tape from one Ron Neilon.

22 MAY 92—Received AR #2.

2 JUN 92—Read *Churches that Abuse* by Enroth.

19 JUN 92—Received Tuit's *The Truth Shall make You Free*.

30 JUN 92—Received Tony Badillo's tithing study booklet.

4 JUL 92—Mailed in my resignation from the church and the ministry.

16 JUL 92—Received AR #3 thru #46.

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Jim Baldwin

The Cult Attraction

*Congress shall make no law respecting
an establishment of religion, or prohibiting
the free exercise thereof;
(The First Amendment)*

These words are an amazing mixture of good and evil for the nascent nation of the United States of America. The government in control of religion would be terrible as was known in the Old World. But at that same time the Founders were penning these words the door was opened for any religious huckster to set up shop, have protection of the law, operate tax free and fleece the public. Yes, freedom of religion was promised but neither taste nor truth. That has been quite readily seen in the cults of the Christian Scientists, the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Scientology, the Seventh-Day Adventists, Jim Jones and The People's Temple, The Moonies, David Koresh and the Branch Davidians and the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) to which I once sold myself. This is only a small list. There are thousands of lesser cults that are not even counted because of being too small or because they decide to keep operations and statistics private while millions of American citizens are on the losing end.

*Men, it has been well said, think in herds; it will be seen they
go mad in herds, while they only recover their senses slowly,
and one by one.*

Extraordinary Popular Delusions
Charles Mackay 1841

*Cult: It is a group which violates the rights of its members
and damages them through the abusive techniques of un-
ethical mind control.*

Combatting Cult
Mind Control
Steven Hassan 1990

Yes, I was a member of a cult for 25 years. And for 16 of those years I was a teaching elder helping to keep my fellow fools in captivity. Here's how it happened. Everybody has a story to tell.

*The type of people who join cults are typically no different
than the vast majority of society. Some have been experiencing
a time of stressful transition or a temporary crisis. We are all
more susceptible to persuasion techniques during such times.*

www.rickcross.com

Contrary to our prejudices, most cult followers are not outcasts or freaks, but ordinary people who face the problems and insecurities common to us all.

Shame is one of the invariable consequences of cult involvement. Most ex-members feel 'stupid' for having been taken in, ashamed of the fact they were duped, and ashamed of the humiliation to which they allowed themselves to be subjected and to which they subjected others.

Moreover, explaining to someone unfamiliar with cults just why one joined is neither simple nor straightforward.

Cults in America
Willa Appel

Why one joined is difficult to tell anyone who is unfamiliar with cults. One has to describe the subtleties and power of the recruitment procedures, and how one was persuaded and indoctrinated. Most difficult of all is to try to explain why a person is unable to simply walk away from the cult, for that entails being able to give a long and sophisticated explanation of social and psychological coercion, influence, and control procedures.

According to their own reports, many participants joined these religious cults during periods of depression and confusion, when they had a sense that life was meaningless.

[The cult leaders] outline a clear 'meaning of life.' In return, they may demand total obedience to cult commands.

Coming Out of the Cults
Margaret Singer.

So what makes a person vulnerable to cults? How does a nice, kind, insightful human being become a member of a destructive cult? If he is like most cult members, he is probably approached during a time of unusual stress, perhaps while undergoing a major life transition.

Bingo!

We cannot understand where we are and where we are heading without knowing where we have been.

Left Back (2000)
Diane Ravitch

I was born in Claremont, NH in 1937. My mom was from that town. I grew up and attended public school in Springfield, VT where my dad was born and raised.

Happily, I was raised with no religious indoctrination by parents who had no interest in religion. Churches were simply part of the culture of a town. Just as there were different stores for different products and services as well as different town offices like a fire department, town hall, police department, there were churches. Religion meant nothing to my folks, just part of the landscape. I grew up thinking the same way.

I was directed to the shop course in Springfield High School as I learned I had to grow up and hold a job so I could be a docile, productive, non-questioning and obedient taxpayer to make my way through life. Unfortunately, I chose a course that would leave me poorly educated as a result of only spending half my education time in school and spent the balance of the school year in one of the several machine tool shops in Springfield. I happened to be chosen for the Fellows Gear Shaper where I settled down to spend 20 years there after my graduation from high school.

My high school education was of a basic nature. I was not educated in those fields that would have better prepared me for life. I wasn't trained to think, wonder, or ask questions. I learned little about history, nothing about religion, philosophy, art, literature or even the Constitution. After all, it wasn't a course to prepare one for higher education. It was preparation to work at a machine as many other young men had. My grandfather worked at Fellows for 49 years. I was a not a college-bound student. Like so many others I was

pushed into undemanding vocational, industrial, or general programs by bureaucrats and guidance counselors who thought they were incapable of learning much more. This stratification was not only profoundly undemocratic but was harmful, both to the children involved and to American society.

Large numbers of children were pushed through the school system without benefit of a genuine education.

Left Back (2000)
Diane Ravitch

I wasn't taught that men could lie, cheat and steal in the name of God. I came out of high school highly gullible, naïve and poorly educated. I was a ripe candidate for the cult.

In thinking about this paper and what had happened to me, I decided to go through an American history book ["American Chronicle: 1920-1989"] to see what things from age 14 on I recall that I disliked, shocked me or attracted my interest.

1952-Swing dance music was dead.—Flying saucers are seen over Washington—Mad magazine starts.

1953-Korean conflict. 54,000+ dead.—Russia acquires the H-Bomb—Presley cuts a record. Yucch!

1954-Weirdo Liberace—94% of Americans believe in God.—"The Blackboard Jungle" film opens up with "Rock Around The Clock" By Bill Haley. The effect was stunning! Haley's film is shown in '55.

1955-James Dean dies in car crash at 24.—Lawrence Welk show premiers. Yucch!—Pop music sucks.

1956-Rock music is considered a disease. Graduation from high school. I start post-graduate shop training.

1957—USSR has nuclear missiles.—Billy Graham draws 92,000—President sends troops to halt mob rule in Little Rock.—Rock and Roll fad not passing.—Presley famous—Russia launches Sputnik, the world's first satellite.

1958-US acknowledges educational deficit—poor curricula, overcrowded class rooms, poorly paid teachers, lack of proper attention to substantive matters. I've been out of public school for two years when some realized the public school system wasn't preparing an educated citizenry. I'm one.

(Then consider this from the National Committee on Excellence in Education as reported in the New York Times of 1983:

If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.

Albert Einstein mused:

It is a little short of a miracle that modern methods of instruction have not completely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry.

1960-Think tank says only 20-30 million need die in an atomic attack. Only!

1961-4000 troops sent to Vietnam.—My father is killed in auto crash.—The Twist is a dance craze.

FCC chairman says: *I invite you to sit down in front of your television sets... and stay there. You will see a vast wasteland—a procession of game shows, violence, audience participation shows, formula comedies about totally unbelievable families...blood and thunder...mayhem, violence, sadism, murder...and, endlessly, commercials—many screaming, cajoling, and offending.*

At this point in my life I realize how bored I was with many things. The job is not interesting. All I've got to look forward to is more boredom. My social life is going nowhere. Two friends I hang out with get the hell out of town to CA. I sell my great car ('57 Chevrolet convertible), buy an old clunker, quit my job and head to CA. I don't know why and I've got no plans except to link up with friends Bob and Vicki who also have no plans. On the way out I stop in the university at Baltimore, MD to see a Windsor, VT girl I had dated a few times. She also had a loss in that her brother had just died in a car crash. We agree to keep in letter contact.

CA visit ends up a bust. I did get a job in a missile plant. I work one day and quit. Same old, same old. I decide to try to find something else. I enroll at a junior college. I spent one week there and quit. I wasn't prepared by my public school education to tackle even junior college studies. I hang out with a lot of party people who want to just drink and smoke pot. The big thrill among them was to instigate fights in bars between complete strangers and then stand aside to watch the fun.

As spring of '62 rolls around I'm running out of money so I decide to head back to VT for my brother's wedding. I wanted to be there for the occasion. I had gotten a letter from my MD friend. She had decided there was no future with me. That's okay. What the hell did I have to offer? I was going broke with no prospects in CA except to return to a manufacturing plant.

My Springfield girlfriend loaned me some money to come home. The first night I was home we went out to a quiet place. She told me a man she had been dating wanted to marry her. I told her I hoped she would be happy. We had no claim on each other.

So, eventually I ended back at Fellows with my old job back with the same old pay and same old boredom. But I did feel a little bit lifted by actually having tried to make a change. I simply wasn't prepared to do anything else in life and I knew it. I was washed up at 25.

About this time I started hanging out with a National Guard buddy. We got along well and I admired him for his many self-taught interests in electronics, photography, mathematics and playing acoustic guitar. He was a high-school dropout as a result of getting a girl pregnant but was very sharp. He was way ahead of me.

One time when we were just riding around in the evening he tuned in the car radio to a radio host who was into political matters as I recall. My buddy admired the speaker's ability to hold his attention. Right after that show another program came on called The World Tomorrow presented by one Garner Ted Armstrong, son of Hebert W. Armstrong who ran the Worldwide Church of God in CA.

One observer and former student of Garner Ted's wrote:

What you will encounter is a superlative salesman who takes pride in the fact that he was often mistaken for a news commentator rather than a preacher. Silver-haired and golden-tongued, Garner Ted Armstrong has been selling his unique brand of Jesus for more than 20 years, and he's good at it. Sometimes

cynical, often sarcastic, always hard-hitting, Armstrong's presentations never contain the slightest trace of religious sentimentality.

This is no common religious huckster. But listening carefully to what he is actually saying, one cannot but wonder: 'What's his point?' Rarely do his arguments reach a discernible conclusion, while self-contradiction, fallacy and circular reasoning abound. Nevertheless, his resonant, authoritative-sounding delivery gets results. To hundreds of thousands of listeners Garner Ted Armstrong is absolutely irresistible.

John Trechak in a
Hustler Magazine article
About Ted Armstrong

I had never heard anyone speak like this! And yet he wasn't preachy like Billy Graham or other Bible pounders I'd heard on my cross country drive to CA and back. In fact, Ted seemed to mock preachers. He also was quoting Bible passages I had never heard before-passages about prophecies and promises. He was offering a free magazine called the Plain Truth.

I wrote off the next day and I was on my way to becoming a cash cow for over 25 years. But, I was no longer bored. Something was stirred in me. I was being drawn to something bigger than I. I'd known many Christians but I had never heard any of them speak about their faith the way Ted Armstrong did. He sounded like a man in charge. And yet he worked for his father and the Big Boss, Herbert W. Armstrong.

When people are bored, it is primarily with their own selves that they are bored. The consciousness of a barren, meaningless existence is the main fountainhead of boredom.

...there is no telling to what desperate and fantastic shifts they might resort in order to give meaning and purpose to their lives.

All forms of dedication, devotion, loyalty and self-surrender are in essence a desperate clinging to something which might give worth and meaning to our futile, spoiled lives.

The True Believer
Eric Hoffer

When in CA I shared an apartment with a friend who was studying the Bible with a group called Christadelphians (CDs). I was curious what he was learning from them. I wondered why they were

different. He told me a number of things he said they didn't believe that most Christians did. That was interesting. I made it a point to read some of the Bible sometime. It was for sure I knew nothing about the endless number of divisions of teachings in Christianity.

I mention this as after I began to read the Plain Truth magazine, the booklets and continued listening to Ted Armstrong, I began to see similarities in CD teachings and what Armstrong was saying. I wondered if the local CD Church and the Worldwide Church of God were teaching the same thing. I was looking for someone to discuss teachings with as the WCG had no local church as far as I could tell. The headquarters were in Pasadena, CA.

I was friendly with a young woman whose mother was a CD. Pretty soon I was attending Sunday services with the CDs. They treated me kindly and I was frequently invited to the home of one of the elders. His son and I went to public school together. This elder understood much about the Bible and answered many questions I had about Bible subjects. Unfortunately they were not questions of critical thought.

Soon I learned that the WCG folks were keepers of the Bible Sabbath, Saturday. The WCG had a booklet explaining why the seventh day was to be kept, not the first day. That helped me walk away from the CDs. There were other differences between the two groups. I decided I needed a break from religion. This was 1964.

Time rolled on. I continued reading the monthly Plain Truth, the multitude of booklets and the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. I was being indoctrinated. I had some questions I sent into the HQ. But I didn't know how to critically examine the issues. The public schools taught you to not question the text at hand. Just shut up, read, learn and parrot back the answers when tested.

The odd thing was that I never even asked about God. That would have stopped the advance right then and there. What's the proof? The Armstrongs had a booklet on the subject that was intellectually way out of date being based on popular uneducated assumptions. Herbert, a high school dropout and Ted certainly were not educated men. But I didn't know the atheist's side so I just kept marching as everybody I knew believed there was a God. My belief was just absorbed and assumed from the Christian culture around me, not proved.

I should have asked Ted, "Who are you and how do you earn your bread?" I later learn that he is a liar, a playboy and a serial adulterer. But, man, what a gifted speaker. In my mind I considered that anyone who could speak as well as Ted Armstrong and with the conviction he had certainly was an educated person.

If I had spent one of the four years between my severance with the CDs and my full acceptance of the tie with Armstrongism I might have read some history about comparative religion in America to gain some background. I could have learned about the Second Advent Movement of the early 1800s. Then I would have learned about one William Miller of Poultney, VT and his various dates for the return of Christ. He stirred up a great many people right here in the Northeast. Many lives were terribly affected

by the ravings of old madman Miller back in the Great Disappointment of 1844. The history was in the encyclopedias. There were also half a dozen books published before I left high school speaking of the Adventist movement eventually being made up of the Seventh-Day Adventists, The Church of God (Seventh Day), the Christadelphians, Jehovah's Witnesses and others. Had I been directed to any of the studies I could have perhaps seen that Armstrong was just another false prophet of Adventist persuasion. But I didn't even have education in library usage and academic research. I could have read an early book of 1924 called *Days of Delusion: A Strange Bit of History* by C.E. Sears giving the history of the Millerite movement and the connection to the Worldwide Church of God. (Today the book is online.)

Fact is, over 200 dates have been set for the return of Christ. And that foolishness continues to this day with the recent rantings of one Harold Camping. He has followers as ignorant as I was.

Yes, Herbert Armstrong had set a suggested date in his booklet, *1975 in Prophecy*. That was the first booklet I had sent for. Prophecy was a big draw for many being attracted to the cult. Well, I was still there in 1975... and 17 years later.

There is nothing like certainty in predicting the future to help religious sects to grow and to attain additional adherents.

The millennial excitement which occurred in the period before 1843 has seldom abated, and in these later times the electronic revolution provides the expectant with more than 100 popular millennial sites which can be found on the internet.

Saints, Sinners and Reformers
John H. Martin [online]

More from the American chronology:

*Everyone agrees that the Sixties blindsided us with mind-bending
Swiftness, challenging and changing almost everything that had gone
On before.*

Nothing was beyond question and there were fewer answers than before.

BOOM! Voices of the Sixties
Tom Brokaw

1963-250,000 march on Washington for civil rights.—Four little girls are killed by a bombing—The President is assassinated by a lone nut.—Huge march in Birmingham—The Beatles have their first success.—“Feminine Mystique” published starting the women’s movement adding another dimension

to the stress in society.

1964-Harlem and Brooklyn riots—US planes bomb N. Vietnam.—Riots in Philadelphia—China explodes their first A-Bomb.—The Beatles invade America.

1965-First US troops land in Vietnam—Now anti-war marches—Pope cries out, “No more war! War never again!”. Just spitting in the ocean.

1966-Texas tower shooting, 12 dead—eight young nurses murdered in Chicago apartment—400,000 troops are in Vietnam. US dead are 6,358.

1967-Black riots in Newark and Detroit, 70 dead.—US troops in Vietnam, 525,000—Dead now 16,000.

At this time I’m hanging out with folks and going to listen to Rock bands. I hate the music so I spend much of the time numbing myself with drink. But I kept thinking about the things I was learning in the Plain Truth. I continued listening to the World Tomorrow radio show where America’s slide into oblivion was quite evident to any with one ear open. Ted was hammering away on the fulfillment of prophecies.

Then the outbreak of war in the Holy Land woke me up. Warring armies fighting around the Temple Mount in Jerusalem got everybody’s attention with half an interest in Bible prophecy. Israel wins a 6-day war. The Plain Truth Magazine was on a roll as new subscribers crawled on board the prophecy train.

I had been deeply involved in the Armstrong Bible Correspondence Course the winter of ’66 to ’67. That winter I got punched out by a band member at a club. I’m going nowhere and decide I’ve got to get baptized. I’m unhappy, I’m drinking too much and I’ve got to find something to give me direction in life. I didn’t know that I was about to throw my life away and the cult is gaining a fresh recruit whose tithes, donations and efforts will help gain more poor fools to support this very rapidly expanding cult. The 1960s saw the greatest period of growth as a result of the frightening apparent decline in America.

I wrote to Armstrong in June when I was 30 years old. I was baptized August 10, 1967 in Stoughton Pond. The next Saturday I was headed to Manchester, NH for my first time at Sabbath services. I rode with another family from Springfield who had also been sucked into the cult. I met them the day I was baptized.(They later dropped out of the cult some three years before I did.)

A year or so later a friend stopped by to visit me. He didn’t know of my commitment to the WCG cult. He told me years later that after he left me that day he had gone home and told his wife, “Judy, something terrible has happened to Jim.” I had undergone a terrible personality change. What I had experienced was called “Snapping” by one research team studying the cult phenomenon.

Twenty-five years later I was a greatly disillusioned walkaway. That’s another story. If one follows the timeline events of America from 1968, my first full year in the cult, the history only affirms that it seems that I had made the right decision.

Life in the Armstrong cult was one of the unlettered teaching the ignorant to do the impossible.

Thank you for reading.

If you would care to understand my 25 years as a cult goon you should read Steven Hassan's *Combatting Cult Mind Control* (1990). He was a former recruiter in a cult popularly called the Moonies .

Popular delusions began so early, spread so widely, and have lasted so long, that instead of two or three volumes, fifty would scarcely suffice to detail their history.

Charles Mackay 1841.
Extraordinary Popular
Delusions

Here and there in the midst of American society you meet with men full of fanatical and almost wild spiritualism, which hardly exists in Europe. From time to time strange new sects arise which endeavor to strike out extraordinary paths to eternal happiness. Religious insanity is very common in the United States.

Alexis de Tocqueville
Democracy in America
1840

Jim Baldwin
2013

Take what you want and pay for it.

Spanish proverb.

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