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SATANISM: A TASTE FOR THE DARK SIDE

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SYNOPSIS

Satanism is a topic that many people would prefer to ignore despite the fact that for some it has become a way of life, a philosophy, indeed, a religion. What started out as perhaps an American novelty is now being recognized by some, even in other countries, as a bona fide way to worship. When Anton Szandor LaVey burst onto the scene in the 1960s with his Church of Satan and his dark and foreboding *Satanic Bible*, many were shocked. Some welcomed him, however, and to them LaVey became a mentor, if not a guru. LaVey's Satanism was, for them, a long-awaited religion that celebrated man's natural carnal desires and instincts and eschewed hypocrisy, acknowledging that the lives that people live on Saturday night should be preached on Sunday morning.

Is Satanism nothing more than a concession to our passions, or does it have substance beyond that? Its growth and development over the past nearly 40 years cause many to think there is more, including those who still embrace this religion of the dark side even after the novelty has worn off and who want others to understand why.

The term strikes fear in many and ridicule or skepticism in others. *Satanism*, standing as it has against the conventional morality and religious assumptions of much of Western civilization, strikes many as antithetical to all the pillars of decent society. Is Satanism what most people suspect? Do Satanists worship the Devil? Is it a serious religion or just a pretense to revelry and antisocial behavior? Should we be afraid?

ANATOMY OF A PHENOMENON

With the help of the Internet, anyone can set himself or herself up as an expert and self-proclaimed Satanist. The most conspicuous representation of Satanism in any official (if such a term can even be applied to Satanism) capacity, however, is the Church of Satan.

Investigative journalist Arthur Lyons's grouping of Satanists is probably the most used by those who discuss Satanism, although the Church of Satan objects to such categorization. In his book *Satan Wants You* Lyons divides Satanists into three types: Neo-satanic churches, solitary Satanists, and "outlaw" cults.¹ Others label these groups religious Satanists, self-styled Satanists, and satanic cults, respectively. This categorization is somewhat helpful, but there are potential problems with it. First, it fails to emphasize at least one important distinction within the category of religious Satanists, namely, between the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set, as I will explain below. Second, this categorization may put too much emphasis on satanic cults as an important segment of the phenomena. Lyons's book was written during the heyday of accusations, exposés, and confessions of the ravaging of victims in secret torture chambers,²

known as satanic ritual abuse by supposed sinister satanic cults. I will say more on this third category, but first I would like to look at the first two categories: religious Satanists and self-styled Satanists.

Religious Satanists: The Church of Satan

The person who is almost single-handedly responsible for making Satanism a household word was Anton Szandor LaVey. The timing was just right during the cultural upheaval of the 1960s for someone to come along to challenge and lampoon many of Western society's traditions and icons. In contrast to the ubiquitous Christianity in America, in symbols if not in values and morals, LaVey could find no better representative for what he wanted to start than Satan himself. "For all the centuries of shouting down the Devil has received, he has never shouted back at his detractors. He has remained the gentleman at all times, while those he supports rant and rave. He has shown himself to be a model of deportment, but now he feels it is time to shout back. He has decided it is finally time to receive his due."³

As the official story goes—much of it has been debunked⁴—Howard Stanton Levey, also known as Anton Szandor LaVey, "on the last night of April, 1966—*Walpurgisnacht*, the most important festival of the believers in witchcraft—...shaved his head in the tradition of ancient executioners and announced the formation of The Church of Satan."⁵

It turns out that even this much of the story is not true, according to LaVey's daughter Zeena. The idea of a church arose "as a business and publicity vehicle"⁶ suggested by a professional publicist since he was convinced that LaVey would "never make any money by lecturing on Friday nights for [the two-dollar] donations...that he charged...filling his living room with the curious and establishing a local reputation as an eccentric."⁷

However the institution came about, the Church of Satan certainly went on to attract quite a bit of attention. Much of this attention was aroused by the publication of its manual, *The Satanic Bible*, and the sequel, *The Satanic Rituals*. In *The Satanic Bible*, LaVey lays out his views, which can best be described as an atheistic religion of self-interested hedonism with a dash of occult philosophy.

Satanism Is Atheistic. Many people are surprised to learn that LaVey did not believe in the existence of a literal Devil. This is probably the most misunderstood element about LaVey's brand of Satanism: its adherents do not worship Satan. LaVey chose this title precisely because his philosophy celebrated all the aspects of the human experience that he thought had been wrongfully condemned by traditional religions, particularly Christianity. "Satanism...is a religion of the flesh, the mundane, the carnal—all of which are ruled by Satan, the *personification* [emphasis added] of the Left Hand Path."⁸ Satan, for LaVey, "represents opposition to all religions which serve to frustrate and condemn man for his natural instincts."⁹ In LaVey's estimation, there could be no better title for a religion that stands opposed to his own concept of Christianity than one that is derived from the name of the archenemy that Christianity itself declares.

The term *atheism*, however, might not apply outright to LaVeyian Satanism. He observed, "It is a popular misconception that the Satanist does not believe in God. The concept 'God,' as interpreted by man, has been so varied throughout the ages, that the Satanist simply accepts the definition which suits him best....To the Satanist 'God'—by whatever name he is called, or by no name at all—is seen as the balancing factor in nature...[a] powerful force which permeates and balances the universe."¹⁰ LaVey insisted that he believed in a God of some sort; therefore, we may allow him the prerogative of rejecting the label *atheist*. It does seem, however, that in the usual sense of the term, LaVeyian Satanism is atheistic.

Satanism Is a Religion. When one discovers that the Church of Satan does not worship or believe in Satan, questions present themselves: Why do they call it *Satanism*? Why not just call it *humanism*? LaVey anticipated these very questions in *The Satanic Bible*. He explained, "Humanism is not a religion. It is simply a way of life with no ceremony or dogma. Satanism has both ceremony and dogma. Dogma...is necessary."¹¹

Why is dogma necessary according to LaVey? "It is one thing to accept something intellectually, but to accept the same thing emotionally is an entirely different matter....Dogma provides man with his much

needed fantasy.”¹² It seems, however, that answering one question just raises another: Why does man need fantasy and emotions in LaVey’s Satanism? The answer to this lies in his understanding of magic.

Satanism Is Occult Philosophy. LaVey’s philosophy, without the ingredient of magic, would be just another version of humanism. What gives it more of a religious flavor to many is its focus on magic. *Magic*, for LaVey, was the “change in situations or events in accordance with one’s will, which would, using normally accepted methods, be unchangeable.”¹³ These “normally accepted methods,” presumably, would be the methods of modern science; thus, for LaVey, magic was more (or other) than science. “Magic is never totally scientifically explainable.”¹⁴ Consistent with other occult groups, LaVey’s Satanism teaches that there is an “action and reaction” principle that is responsible for everything that happens in one’s life.¹⁵ The cause and effect (action and reaction) aspect of the physical world is the foundation of modern science; applying the same paradigm to the nonphysical realm is the essential element of occult philosophy. Different occult groups interpret this action and reaction principle differently. It was, for LaVey, a sort of bioenergy that is conducted and controlled by ritual and ceremony. The ritual’s main function “is to isolate the otherwise dissipated adrenal and other emotionally induced energy, and convert it into a dynamically transmittable force.”¹⁶ Magic is the practice of harnessing this force.

The presence of this occult philosophy, together with its proximity to other occult traditions, is even more explicit in LaVey’s *The Satanic Rituals*. LaVey taught, “Satanic Ritual is a blend of Gnostic, Cabbalistic, Hermetic, and Masonic elements, incorporating nomenclature and vibratory words of power from virtually every mythos.”¹⁷ These “vibratory words of power” supposedly could be used to manipulate this energy in such a way as to affect one’s world. Whether one wished to curse an enemy to cause him harm or to seduce an object of one’s affections, LaVey offered a host of rituals to harness this energy to do one’s bidding. The fact that these rituals are almost entirely directed toward one’s own self-interest is characteristic of what Satanists call the “left-hand path” and is what sharply distinguishes the religion of Satanism from other occult religions such as witchcraft.

Satanism Is Self-Interested Hedonism. In the end, LaVey’s religion is directed toward one’s self-interest in the pursuit of pleasure, or *hedonism*. This is where he saw his views standing in their most stark contrast to Christianity: “The seven deadly sins of the Christian Church are: greed, pride, envy, anger, gluttony, lust, and sloth. Satanism advocates indulging in each of these ‘sins’ as they all lead to physical, mental, or emotional gratification.”¹⁸ His hedonistic philosophy also was evident in the summary of his religion known as “The Nine Satanic Statements.” These statements express what Satan represented for LaVey, including “indulgence, instead of abstinence,” “vengeance, instead of turning the other cheek,” and “all of the so-called sins, as they all lead to physical, mental, or emotional gratification.”¹⁹

These dogmas together with instructions on how to manipulate occult forces became the basis on which LaVey grew a “church,” which established *grottos* (i.e., local chapters) across America. According to Lyons, the Church of Satan reached its peak membership number in the 1970s at about 300 (if you believe certain disgruntled former members) or around 10,000 (if you believe the official church). Lyons estimates the true number to have been around 5,000.²⁰ It almost certainly has dropped since then. In 1975 LaVey restructured the church, which included dismantling the grotto system, “in recognition of Satanism’s Fifth Phase—Application.”²¹

Howard Stanton Levey died on October 29, 1997. The Church of Satan still exists, but under new leadership and with an Internet presence. It retains the philosophy of self-indulgence, however, which predated its founder and still plagues the human race. The Church of Satan’s emphasis on hedonistic self-interest makes it hard to imagine how any member could become disgruntled while wanting to remain a Satanist; but, this is exactly what happened to one of the church’s main leaders, Michael Aquino. His story takes us to a brief look at another satanic church: The Temple of Set.

Religious Satanists: The Temple of Set

Philosophical differences began to emerge between LaVey and Aquino. According to Lyons, “LaVey was disaffected with Aquino’s attitude, which he thought to be ego-motivated and overintellectual. Aquino,

in turn, had grown impatient with the High Priest's refusal to relinquish administrative power and had become increasingly dissatisfied with the church's professed atheism, which he thought to be sterile."²² Both groups have their own version of the story. The Church of Satan maintains that those who left to start the Temple of Set are "significant only in that they have continued to try to ride upon the coattails of the Church of Satan, and indeed even publicly claim to be the successor to and custodian of the Church of Satan"—a claim that the Church of Satan emphatically denies.²³ In its published material, the Temple of Set is quite open about its history and its former identity with the Church of Satan. It also has something to say about why a new organization was needed.

The Church [of Satan]...continued to experience increasing difficulty with the basic nihilism and negative connotations of its religious imagery.... [It] suffered periodically from petty crises and scandals among the general membership, and finally Anton LaVey lost confidence in its organizational viability. In 1975 he made a decision to redesign it as a nonfunctional vehicle for his personal expression, exploitation, and financial income. Until his 1997 death he continued to cynically advertise it as a "religion," and to sell "memberships" and "priesthoods" under this guise. LaVey's 1975 corruption of the Church of Satan was emphatically rejected by the majority of the Priesthood, who immediately resigned from the Church in protest and denied its legitimacy as an authentic Satanic religion henceforth.²⁴

According to Lyons, Aquino sought the counsel of Satan himself. It turns out that the biggest difference between LaVey and Aquino is that, while LaVey understood Satan only as a metaphor or personification, Aquino maintains that Satan really exists as a sentient being. Lyons comments:

Due to the strength of LaVey's charisma and the fact that he held a trademark on the Church of Satan name, Aquino knew that any attempt to start up another Church of Satan would be futile, so he decided to summon up the Prince of Darkness and ask him what to do. On the eve of the north solstice, June 21, 1975, Aquino performed a magical "Working" and Satan purportedly appeared to him in the image of Set—the oryx-headed god of death and destruction that Aquino claims is the earliest manifestation of the Christian Devil.²⁵

This encounter resulted in a writing titled *The Book of Coming Forth by Night* wherein Set instructed Aquino to depart from LaVey and inaugurate the age of Set. This new religion has sought a rather low profile, opting to reserve its official materials for only its members. The organization also has recently begun to distance itself from the term *Satanism*.

The philosophy of the Temple of Set, nonetheless, is of the "left-hand path," summarized by its adoption of the term *Xepher* (pronounced "Kheffer"). It is "the Egyptian hieroglyphic term for 'to become' or 'to come into being.'"²⁶ In contradistinction to those religions that seek to help individuals merge with ultimate reality (e.g., Eastern religions) or to be reconciled with ultimate reality without actually becoming that reality (e.g., Western religions), the Temple of Set seeks to help individuals explore and glory in their individual self as set against the rest of reality.

The Black Magician desires this psyche to live, to experience, and to continue. He does not wish to die or to lose his consciousness and identity in a larger, Universal consciousness....He wants to be. This decision in favor of individual existence is the first premise of the Temple of Set. The second premise of the Temple is that the psychocentric consciousness can evolve towards its own divinity through deliberate exercise of the intelligence and Will, a process of *becoming or coming into being* [emphasis in original].²⁷

More could be said about the Temple of Set, including the wide array of writings, the levels of initiation, and the various aspects of group gatherings, but this is enough to show both the similarities and the differences between the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set. The former is largely public in that its materials are readily available in bookstores or through the Internet; the latter is much more secretive. The former maintains a fairly simple philosophy of self-aggrandizement through the pursuit of carnal pleasures; the latter is a more complex system of philosophies through which one seeks to realize one's own divinity. The former recognizes no existence greater than the individual; the latter readily seeks the counsel of the Prince of Darkness. Both share a common commitment to the self as the focus of their philosophies and both seek to utilize occult forces to achieve their goals, however different each sees its own goals as being from the other's.

Self-Styled Satanism: Fascinated Youth

In seeking to analyze Satanism fairly, we should not lose sight of the fact that it has its destructive manifestations in the here and now. If all Satanism amounted to was adults living the hedonistic life or seeking deep philosophical self-deification, perhaps there would be little with which to concern ourselves as Christians beyond the obligation to reach out to any and all who need the gospel. This is not the case, however.

What has brought Satanism to the attention of some, especially parents, is the phenomenon of teenagers' interest in Satanism. Satanic images pepper CD covers while teenagers shout the lyrics of death, destruction, and violence to the beat of their favorite music. These teens' interest in Satanism can generally be described as self-styled: they desire only to dabble in Satanism using LaVey's *Satanic Bible* as a guide, but without any serious commitment or even understanding of its philosophy and without joining any official satanic organization. The promises of a self-centered hedonistic philosophy together with Satanism's promises of power through occult forces are a perfect recipe for seducing young people who are already struggling with newly found passions.

One should avoid the extremes of, on the one hand, simply dismissing indications of satanic involvement in an individual youth as being merely the whims of adolescence that could never do any harm and, on the other hand, falling victim to hysterical exaggerations of vast satanic conspiracies that have infiltrated virtually every level of society. Christian researchers Bob and Gretchen Passantino noted several factors that often accompany teenage involvement in Satanism, including extreme alienation; a morbid fascination with horror, death, and pain; drug and alcohol use; nonconformity in school, home, or job; and an unnatural attraction to the mysterious, the occult, or the magical.²⁸

The Passantinos offered several suggestions for anyone who suspects that a loved one is gravitating toward involvement in Satanism. Above all, while trying to minister to one who has been influenced by some form of Satanism, always bear in mind the encouragement of 1 John 4:4: "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."²⁹ Beyond this, one must try to intervene for the involved person by being willing to talk and listen, by praying for and with him or her, and by offering better solutions to his or her problems than those offered by Satanism. I would add to these suggestions that to the degree that the person has been dissuaded of the facts of the Christian worldview, anyone who tries to reach that person must be prepared to answer the penetrating questions that he or she may have picked up from reading satanic material.

The Satanic Cults: Legacy of Satanic Ritual Abuse

Another phenomenon that drew widespread attention to Satanism was the popularity of Christian comedian Mike Warnke. Warnke arrived on the scene in the 1970s with a unique blend of humor and inspiration against the backdrop of a testimony of a conversion to Christianity out of a secret life as a satanic high priest. Warnke fueled the fire of a growing hysteria that there existed a virtually global network of sinister occultists who were affecting numerous aspects of Western society. His story set the stage for a spate of testimonies by people who claimed to have escaped the grips of Satanists who held them captive for any number of unseemly purposes.

Numerous articles and books have been written on the subject of satanic ritual abuse (SRA), by those who claim to have been victims of it and by those who argue that such claims are fraudulent. A critical examination of Warnke's claims of his involvement in Satanism was accompanied by a number of other exposés of SRA claims.³⁰ In my opinion, these stories are not true.³¹ This is not to say that such crimes never have been committed; rather, it is to say that there never has been such a thing as a widespread epidemic of these abuses. I am convinced of this by the arguments and evidence marshaled by a number of highly competent and trustworthy Christian investigators and countercult apologists.³²

PLEASURE AND THE PURPOSE OF LIFE: REACHING OUT TO THE SATANIST

There is nothing wrong in principle with the philosophy of Satanism that says we ought to pursue pleasure (or, for that matter, self-interest). I would go so far as to say that we can agree with the Satanist

that it is natural (which is to say, it is part of our nature) to pursue pleasure. The problem is that the Satanist draws the line of what is permissible in the wrong place or draws no line at all. Christians are not obligated to defend the notion that humans exist only to deny ourselves all pleasure; indeed, it is just the opposite: we exist for the experience of pleasure. Perhaps *pleasure* is a misleading term. Philosophers like Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas used the term *happiness*.³³ Christian thinker C. S. Lewis used the term *joy*.³⁴

The problem is not that we as humans seek our own pleasure, happiness, or joy. The problem is that we as sinners look for it in the wrong places. Consider this analogy: Children always seek to eat only what tastes good to them. We, as adults, regret this in children and seek to wean them of this tendency. It is not that we adults think that eating should not include things that taste good. It is that we know that not everything that tastes good is good or is even food in the first place. Childrens' understanding of nutrition and their tastes are not developed, however; therefore, they invariably resist eating what is good for them and desire what is not good for them or is even harmful. If children ate according to the philosophy of Satanism, then they would never deny themselves whatever tastes good regardless whether it has any nutritional value, like cotton candy, or, worse, they would eat something that tastes good but is poison. They also would refuse to eat what is good for them, all the while mocking and ridiculing those who did so eat.

If we think of eating as an analogy of living one's life, and good and bad tastes as an analogy of pleasures and pains, then perhaps we can see that what we as humans need to learn is to recognize and appreciate what actually is good for us. Perhaps what we, like children, need is for our understanding and tastes to develop so that we learn to love what is good for us. What the Christian understands but the Satanist does not is that there is something wrong with us. We fallen humans too often find pleasure in what is not in our best interest or is evil. The problem, however, is not the experience of pleasure itself. The problem is in us: we choose the wrong things to satisfy our desire for pleasure. What we need is somehow to come to love the taste of what is intrinsically good and what is in our ultimate best interest.³⁵ This is where God comes in. We need to "taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" (Ps. 34:8).

What we need to help the Satanist see is that the pleasures of life that he (or she) so desperately seeks are found ultimately only in his Creator.³⁶ We are created to know God and "enjoy Him forever," as the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms say. Convincing a Satanist of this is, of course, not necessarily an easy task. If no one can see his need for God apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, then this is especially the case with the Satanist. In addition, getting the Satanist to see the truth of Psalm 16:11—"You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore"—also requires getting him to see a host of other truths, such as the fact that there is a God and an afterlife. This means that we must be prepared to defend the truths of the Christian faith and show that not only *experience* but also *reason* demonstrate the reality of the God of the Bible, the truthfulness of His word, and the meaning of the historical life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, the Satanist may come to see that his own pursuit of pleasure is in reality a rebellion against the God who made him, for which he needs to be forgiven. Then the stage will be set for him to be delivered "from the power of darkness and conveyed...into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13). This is what the Satanist needs. This is indeed what we all need.

NOTES

1. Arthur Lyons, *Satan Wants You: The Cult of Devil Worship in America* (New York: The Mysterious Press, 1988), 9.
2. Lyons himself did not necessarily contribute to the satanic ritual abuse hysteria as he seemed not to take sides on the question of the reality of any satanic conspiracy.
3. Anton Szandor LaVey, *The Satanic Bible* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), 29.
4. See Lawrence Wright, "Sympathy for the Devil," *Rolling Stone* no. 612 (September 5, 1991). Since Wright's article, more challenges to elements of LaVey's story have come to light, most significantly by LaVey's daughter Zeena Schreck. See Zeena Schreck and Nikolas Schreck, "Anton LaVey: Legend and Reality," *Night Breeds: Realm of Dark Magicks*, <http://fcos.us/aslv.html>. The charges of fraud leveled by the Schrecks not only extend to the person of LaVey but also to the Satanic Bible itself. They say, "Pressed for material to meet Avon's [i.e., Avon Books] deadline, ASL [i.e., LaVey] resorted to plagiarism, assembling extracts from an obscure 1896 tract—*Might is Right* by Ragnar Redbeard." For more on the plagiarism

- in *The Satanic Bible*, see excerpts from John Smulo, *Christ's Advocate: An Incarnational Apologetic to Satanism, Criticisms of Satanism*, <http://www.dpjs.co.uk/criticism/smulo.html>.
5. LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, 1. Other works by LaVey include *The Satanic Rituals* (New York: Avon Books, 1972); *The Satanic Witch* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 1970); *The Devil's Notebook* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 1992); and the posthumously published *Satan Speaks!* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 1998).
 6. Schreck.
 7. *Ibid.*
 8. LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, 52. Occultist Nevil Drury defines these expressions: "Right-hand Path. In mysticism and occultism, the esoteric path associated with spiritual illumination, virtue, and positive aspiration. It is the path of light....Left-hand Path. From the Latin sinister, 'left,' the path of black magic and sorcery. Practitioners in this tradition seek to use magic to acquire personal power, rather than of the purpose of spiritual transcendence." *Dictionary of Mysticism and the Occult* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1985), s.v., "Right-hand Path," 225 and s.v., "Left-hand Path," 149.
 9. LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, 55.
 10. *Ibid.*, 40.
 11. *Ibid.*, 50.
 12. *Ibid.*, 53.
 13. *Ibid.*, 110.
 14. *Ibid.*
 15. *Ibid.*, 41.
 16. *Ibid.*, 111.
 17. LaVey, *The Satanic Rituals*, 21. All of these named groups constitute a rich array of occult doctrines and philosophies.
 18. *Ibid.*, 46.
 19. LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, 25.
 20. Lyons, *Satan Wants You*, 115.
 21. Blanche Barton, *The Church of Satan* (New York: Hell's Kitchen Productions, 1990), 119.
 22. Lyons, *Satan Wants You*, 126.
 23. Peter H. Gilmore, "Pretenders to the Throne: Regarding the Temple of Set," Church of Satan, <http://www.churchofsatan.com/Pages/Pretenders.htm>.
 24. "Temple of Set: General Information and Admission Policies," Temple of Set, http://www.xeper.org/pub/gil/xp_TOC_gil_English.htm.
 25. Lyons, *Satan Wants You*, 126.
 26. "Temple of Set: General Information and Admission Policies."
 27. *Ibid.*
 28. Bob Passantino and Gretchen Passantino, "When the Devil Dares: Teenagers and Satanism," *Answers in Action*, http://www.answers.org/satan/teens_satanism.html.
 29. All Bible quotations are from the New King James Version.
 30. For a full exposé of the claims made by Mike Warnke, see Mike Hertenstein and Jon Trott, *Selling Satan: The Evangelical Media and the Mike Warnke Scandal* (Chicago: Cornerstone Press, 1993).
 31. For excellent research on Satanism and satanic ritual abuse, see articles listed under "Satanism and SRA," *Answers in Action*, <http://www.answers.org/satan/>. See also Bob and Gretchen Passantino, "The Hard Facts about Satanic Ritual Abuse," *Christian Research Journal* 14, 3 (1992).
 32. Examples of the more prominent cases that have been exposed as fraudulent include Lauren Stratford's *Satan's Underground* (see Bob Passantino, Gretchen Passantino, and Jon Trott, "Satan's Sideshow: The True Lauren Stratford Story," *Cornerstone*, <http://www.cornerstone.com/features/iss090/sideshow.htm>) and Rebecca Brown's *He Came to Set the Captives Free* (see G. Richard Fisher and M. Kurt Goedelman, "The Curse of Curse Theology: The Return of Rebecca Brown, M. D.," *Personal Freedom Outreach*, <http://www.pfo.org/curse-th.htm>).
 33. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.7.1097a30–1097b8; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* 1.2, Q3.
 34. C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955), especially chap. 15.
 35. It seems to me that only the Christian worldview is able to settle the age old disputes between several great philosophical models of ethics and the human good, namely, deontology (i.e., understanding what is right in terms of duty or intrinsic rightness), utilitarianism (i.e., understanding what is right in terms of what is most practical or useful), and egoistic hedonism (i.e., understanding what is right in terms of one's own pleasure and self-interest). In the Christian worldview, God is the union of all these concepts: intrinsic value (deontology), ultimate utility or usefulness (utilitarianism), and pleasure and self-interest (egoistic hedonism). It is our duty, therefore, to do the Creator's will even if it is unpleasant and against our own self-interest in the short term. For the redeemed in the afterlife, our duty results in maximum utility and in our ultimate pleasure and self-interest. In the Christian worldview, doing the good (i.e., what is right) ultimately is good for us.
 36. See John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1986).