

Revised March 15, 2011

### Before You Ask - Chapter 6

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#### COMPARISONS, ANALOGIES, ALLEGORIES

##### The Pearl of Great Price Analogy

The analogy that I've thought about for some time now is that when we professed we were "selling all" and buying a field that contains a "treasure" or "the pearl of great price." Only to find out that the treasure or pearl (pick your verse in Mat. 24) wasn't really the one of great price -- it was a man-made imitation. A forgery. Now we weren't told this at the beginning; we were told that it was the real thing and we believed those who told us. And we "sold all." For some of us that meant effectively abandoning our natural families because they were still in "worldly religions." But we believed those who told us that this treasure was the real thing from God.

Then we find out that some man named William Irvine made this treasure. He followed a pattern partially from the Faith Mission and partially of his own interpretation and he MADE it with his own two hands to look like what he believed the REAL treasure would look like. Later some of his followers helped reshape it a bit because they themselves had their own ideas about what the REAL treasure looked like. So the treasure that we all bought was not the real one from God, but the replica made by these men. This fact was kept from those who bought for many decades, though some knew but apparently agreed that it was "close enough" and did not fuss.

Later when we ask some of those who had represented the treasure as having been the real thing from God, they said "well, it's just like the real thing. That's what we MEANT. Sorry that you thought we were saying that it WAS the real thing. So, since it's just like the real thing, everything is dandy and why be bothered? After all, nobody else has made anything even close."

If this scenario happened to even the most hearty professing person in a retail store with some merchandise, for example, I bet they'd be none too happy. Probably call the Better Business Bureau.

But as we heard, we worship "in spirit and in truth", NOT in a form.

By B.G.

### The Painting Analogy

Suppose you paid dearly for a painting represented to be an original by a world famous artist. Unfortunately, you later find out that it had not been painted by that particular artist, after all—that it is a fake by an unknown artist. You have been defrauded by the art dealer you purchased it from. Yes, you still have a painting—but now, you don't know its value. Since there is no doubt that it is not in the class of paintings by famous well known artists, it is demoted to the class with unknown artists. Since the painting is not a genuine, original by a well known artist, it is not worth what you paid for it. You must now reappraise and re-evaluate the painting, and decide what you are going to do with it. Will you keep it, or let it go? Would you want to warn your friends (especially your FRIENDS) and even strangers against this crooked art dealer?

This is the situation many of the friends find themselves in when they learn that William Irvine started this 2x2 ministry and church about 100 years ago. They feel like the props have been knocked out from under them. The main overriding reason some bought into the 2x2 belief system was because they were told/taught and believed it was the ONLY genuine apostolic New Testament church on earth today. Many have remained in this fellowship primarily because (1) they believe it is of apostolic succession, and (2) they fear a lost eternity if they don't continue in it.

But, like the painting, the 2x2 church turned out to be a fake/fraud. The church and fellowship they bought into is not what it's cracked up to be. It is not of apostolic succession, and did not originate in the New Testament, and it has for a founder, not Jesus or God, but a fallible human man, like other churches do. It's not the bill of goods they were sold at all—not the original, authentic, genuine NT church of Jesus. With the discovery of William Irvine, it no longer merits an elevated status above other churches—it is demoted to the class of churches with founders.

When a person has accepted the fact that Wm Irvine started the 2x2 ministry and church, and that it didn't exist in a continuous line from the New Testament apostles, certain questions naturally come to mind. This additional knowledge calls for a serious reevaluation, and a possible realignment or change in spiritual perspective and beliefs. It is only normal to wonder, to struggle with a number of complex questions. The lives of many friends are significantly altered by the way they answer these questions:

- What is the value of this church?
- Does this knowledge change anything?
- What difference does it make that this fellowship has a founder?
- Does having a founder contradict any of my other spiritual beliefs?
- How can this fellowship be God's only true way, when it has a human founder?
- What reasons do you have for believing it is God's only way?
- Is there a good basis in the Bible for regarding it as God's ONLY way to Heaven?
- Is it the closest way to the New Testament church and ministry?
- How is this church and ministry superior to other churches and ministers?
- How is the 2x2 way unique?

- Where do I go from here?

By Cherie Kropp

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### THE INVESTMENT ANALOGY

Let's just say that Mom and Dad had trusted a certain firm with their money that they had squirreled away bit by bit, and chosen the "safest" place that there was by believing this firm's claims that they were the only ones never to lose anyone's money, as they were the only ones with the inside track to the world's financial markets. They faithfully watched the papers and the market reports daily, added more money, and rolled over c.d.'s as they matured. So frugally did they live, as money is the root of all evil.

One day their son came over with the newspaper, and on the front page, was the headline that this firm was busted. Evidently, the newer management realized what they could get away with, as they coasted along on the reputation of the firm. They had gotten reckless, and decided to use their clients' money without telling them, as after all, they were the financial experts, right? Well, of course they eventually got caught. Their response to their son was, "That's lies! Our accounts have been doing very well! We have all these statements to prove it! We know those people would never scam us, we trust them!"

As time plays out and more evidence surfaces, it is obvious to almost everyone that the money is long gone. Mom and Dad still refuse to accept that they are financially bankrupt. They would have too much to face if they accepted this fact. Number one would be their complete lack of security and identity, followed by realizing that life as they know it would change completely. Painfully, they would become aware of the fact that, as they cannot afford their previous lifestyle, that they would also lose the friends that went with it. I have to say that their pride would make it almost unbearable! The fact that they, who had so much, or thought they did, let people play them for a fool. How could they face anyone, especially their family and friends that had previously inquired.

- I wonder, if this were you would you try to warn anyone else?
- Do you think you might try to show people how to safeguard against this happening to them?
- Do you think you would just go on with your life in a week or two as if nothing happened?
- Do you think it would be natural to meet with other investors who were swindled by this firm to compare notes support each other?
- Would you condemn them as bitter and malicious?

NOTE: The author's name to above is unknown. If anyone knows the author, please Contact Us, and proper credit will be given.

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### THE BUBBLE ANALOGY

There was once a community of people who believed that life in the world was very dangerous. In fact it was deadly. No one could survive unless they were willing to come into a specially constructed Bubble a man and a few of his friends had planned and built, roughly following the plans of a Bubble they once had been in, where everything was "safe" and where none would be contaminated by the deadly outside world.

Life inside the Bubble was intense and stressful. Days were filled with hard things to do and endure. There were dress and hair codes for the women and the men were robbed of their masculinity by the leaders. The people were all under the surveillance of the leaders who said what to do and not to do in order to stay safe inside the Bubble. There were constant fearful reminders to everyone at frequent meetings which were deemed essential for everyone to attend. The people were told that life outside the Bubble would mean sure death! In fact, everyone was reminded from time to time by the builder of this bubble, and his subsequent leaders, that there were certain things that would result in a person being expelled from the Bubble. A small doorway was in the side of the Bubble through which anyone in violation of the rules would be shoved and left to DIE!

Now, a certain man was more bold than most and dared to ask the leaders how they knew for sure that life outside the Bubble was deadly. At first they ignored him and gave no answer, but, he was persistent and finally they said they considered him a troublesome person, who just wanted attention for himself. The leaders spread false stories about him. They said he was "bitter." They sternly warned him that if he kept up his questioning he could find himself on the outside someday; and then he could see for himself the truth of what they said. And of course, some of the leaders, especially the younger ones who were born inside the Bubble, believed everything that was taught.

Not to be easily put off, this certain man began to talk with others, in the Bubble, about his doubt concerning sure death outside the Bubble. He shared questions with them, which the leaders would not answer or to which they gave him only conflicting vague answers. The differing answers depended upon which leader he talked to in the various parts of the Bubble. Some of the Bubble people listened sympathetically. Some walked away in disgust and anger. Most disagreed with what he thought, for they were strong believers in everything their leaders taught them from their childhood. A few went directly to the leaders and reported what they had heard this certain man say. In fact, they embellished on his honest questions, hoping to be rid of such a trouble maker.

The leaders agreed among themselves that the time had come for action. On an appointed day everyone was called together and told that, due to the persistent and malcontent conduct of this certain man, he was going to be shoved out through the doorway. They washed their hands of all responsibility; made a weak attempt to get him to repent. When he maintained his integrity, and refused to follow their foolish rules, they hustled him to the doorway and shoved him out of the Bubble!

There was a great gasp. A few wept. But most just wagged their heads and clicked their tongues. Some stood transfixed watching to see how he would die outside the Bubble. They watched and they watched. What they witnessed became the source of a lot of trouble for many years to come.

The man's first reaction, thinking he was about to die, was to lay motionless and wait for death to come. But suddenly he took a deep breath and discovered the air outside was wonderfully fresh and had none of the artificial odor he had smelled inside the Bubble for years. The sky was bluer and the sun shone brighter. He stood and smiled back to the doorway through which he had been shoved and tried to open it. It was locked tightly. He began to motion to those still watching that it was better out than in. With an urgency he did everything he could think of to induce others to come out too, and to enjoy the wonderful life and safety he experienced outside the Bubble. Some thought a lot about this situation. Most only stood and stared.

At first no one could understand his gyrations. Soon, some did understand. They ran with haste to tell the leaders about what was transpiring at the doorway. When the leaders arrived, they were deeply mystified. As soon as they understood he had proven their teachings false the leaders became alarmed, then very angry. How dare he thwart their teaching and prove them false! How dare he put his doubts into their minds! He was jeopardizing their dominating leadership position. He was taking away the fear they had installed in "their" people for many years. Something had to be done!

Quickly the leaders organized a work detail to have the walls of the Bubble painted black to a height of ten feet so that no one could see out and watch what the man was doing. The leaders told the people not to have anything to do with what he was trying to communicate. Most of the people were pleased to have their upsetting view blocked! However, some were very curious to see what was happening to the man. When they thought no one was watching they would mount a ladder and peer above the black barrier. They began to understand that what their leaders had told them was not true! The leaders were divided in what to do. They had many leaders' meetings and tried to come up with a believable story. Some wanted to tell the truth. An assortment of conflicting explanations were made. Most said nothing should be done to destroy their feeling of harmony and unity which, as they often told the people, existed in all parts of the Bubble. Many different and conflicting versions were told of how the Bubble originated. Though they often contradicted each other, one thing they agreed on, at first, was that those who were caught associating with any who looked out of the Bubble, or asked questions, were also to be shoved through the doorway.

Many who left the Bubble devised ways of communicating the truth to some of those inside, in spite of the leaders telling people not to listen to what any of those "bad" outside people were

saying. The leaders told their people inside that everything they saw and read from those outside was a lie.

Then a most alarming thing began happening. Others decided to go through the doorway on their own! Now the situation was out of hand. The existence of life in the Bubble was in grave jeopardy, especially for the leaders, and those who had invested so much of their lives maintaining life in the Bubble which they had come to NOW, was the only way to live.

As the numbers of people in the Bubble began to dwindle, the leaders and younger "leaders-in-waiting" were scurrying. They spent their time trying to convince people still in the Bubble that they were not to doubt that the Bubble had always been in existence and what they taught about "death" outside the Bubble was the absolute truth. This is what the people remaining in the Bubble wanted to hear.

Meanwhile, most of those "outside" the Bubble were enjoying happy, abundant lives in freedom from the former bondage to which they had become accustomed. Many of them even learned of a very special Man who arranged for them to live forever in paradise, if they would accept the marvelous gift He had made arrangement for. And many thankfully accepted His free eternal gift.

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### **THE BOX ANALOGY**

Imagine living all your life within a little box. Everything you know is defined by the walls of that box. You are very comfortable around the people inside that box. You are all convinced that whatever God does, surely all of you inside the box will be the first to know about it. And in fact, talk of God doing anything outside the box is discouraged because everyone inside knows that they are God's people and life inside the box is what it's all about.

You know that there are people outside the box but you're not quite sure what they're about. The walls of the box prevent you from really understanding those other people and that's a good thing because if you got to understand those outside, well, you might just want to leave the box, and that would be really dangerous because when Jesus returns, He's only coming back to pick up that box and then burn up everybody else. You don't want to be outside the box when Jesus returns.

But then what happens when God opens the top just a little bit and you're only one that sees it. It's really bright outside and looks scary. Too many new things to consider. But you build up the courage and while everyone is screaming at you not to look outside you gently poke your nose out and take a sniff of the air. Hey! It smells okay! "Of course" yell all the other people "But it will kill you if you breathe it in long enough."

Meanwhile you're looking out through the gap and things look pretty interesting. So you

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tentatively slip outside but keep a tight hold on the box because you don't want to fall off the top and lose out. But hey! It's really scary out here and at the same time it's a bit exhilarating! There are so many amazing things to see and people start coming up and talking to you and they wonder what you're doing. You explain to them that you've been living in that there box and you're just having a look at what's outside. Some people tell you that they've seen the box and they know that others live inside and never come out. They think that's a pretty strange way to live because it's clear to them that not much would happen inside that little box.

But anyway you start taking some steps...one...two...three...but what's this? It hasn't killed you after all! but oh no! The thought jumps in your head that Jesus might come back while you're outside the box. You feel really afraid for a bit but then you look around and see all this amazing stuff and lovely people. Some of them even claim to know God! You spend some time talking with these people and you discover that maybe they do know God. They seem to act like they know Him.

Time slips by and you go on all sorts of amazing adventures and learn heaps of new things and have the best time with people you'd have never met if you'd stayed in the box. Meanwhile you discover that you still know God and that He didn't leave you when you stepped outside the box. In fact, if you're honest, you admit that you probably know more about God now than you ever did the whole time you were in the box. It seems like now, your life is just one big adventure with God instead of just saying and doing things inside the box that other people inside the box say and do as well.

So you discover that God is doing many different and amazing things and you admit that you'd never have found out about them if you'd stayed inside. In fact, when you really stop to think about it, you wonder why you stayed there as long as you did, and then eventually you ask yourself "What could possibly get me back in that box?" And you realise the answer is....nothing!

But then you remember there's a lot of people in that box that you care about. So you try and call out to them and try to explain how great it is outside and that God is doing so much more than we ever thought possible. But the people inside the box just don't want to know. Many of them ignore you, and others say you're lying and others pretend you don't exist anymore.

Most of them go on about their daily box lives as if you're just some annoying thing in their imagination. Really! The thought of it! Life outside the box! HUH! You might as well believe that people can live underwater without an oxygen tank. Some even make strange claims like, "I don't know to step outside the box to know that everybody out there is wrong."

But very, very occasionally, as long as you're patient and gentle and caring, someone inside the box asks a genuine question. They really want to know what life is like outside the box. So you tell them and share with them how great God has been.

And even more rarely one of them asks if you'll give them a hand because they want to get out of the box too. So you help them out, and they weep when they see how beautiful and amazing and wonderful and big that God really is! And after you've helped just one person out, you

realise that this is what life is about! It's not about living your own way and doing whatever you want to do. It's all about helping other people get out of the boxes they're in.

By Rob Oxenbridge

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### THE MAN WHO BOUGHT A HOUSE

In this town there lived a man who had been able to save enough money from his hard work that he decided that he was now able to afford a very nice house for his family. In one of the nicer parts of town was a beautiful old house that appeared to be vacant, and he often went by and looked at it from the street. The more he looked at it, the more he fell in love with this old house.

One day as he was standing admiring this house, he was approached by a very nice-looking gentleman who said to him: "I have noticed you frequently admiring this fine old house. I happen to be the agent for the owner, and I am authorized to sell it, if I can find a buyer." This was, of course, good news to the man, since the more he had looked at the house, the more he wanted it for himself and his family.

The agent took the man into the house and showed him through it, and everything the man saw made him want the house even more. The house was beautifully designed and built, with skill and imagination, in a style which was no longer very popular among most people, but which he and his family had always found attractive. He could picture in his mind how happy and comfortable his family would be there. It seemed that his fondest dream was about to come true. The man bought the house.

Before the man moved his family into the house, he asked the agent about the usual inspections, for termites, dry rot and other possible structural problems. The agent told him that everything had been inspected thoroughly by his staff. "You can take my word for it: this house is sound and solid. It is the finest house in the city!" The man thought for a moment that he should ask to see the inspection reports, but the agent was the kind of person that inspired trust and confidence, and the man had a strong feeling deep in his heart that the agent would not try to deceive him about something so important.

The man and his family moved into their home, and it was even more lovely and comfortable than he had imagined. They invited their friends and relatives to visit them, and they were able to entertain them graciously and hear their guests' praises of their beautiful home.

One evening his brother was visiting. The brother was a meddlesome and sometimes unpleasant person, but the man tried to be gracious to him because he was his brother.

"This is a very lovely old house you have," said the brother.

"Thank you for the compliment," replied the man.

"How is the foundation? Sometimes these old houses have structural problems."

"Don't worry about that," responded the man. "Everything has been inspected and is in good order."

"Who inspected it?"

The man began to get irritated with his brother. "It's really none of your business, but I'll be happy to tell you. The seller's agent had it inspected."

"Did you examine the report yourself?"

This was really going too far, the man felt. But he answered anyway, "I didn't have to. The agent read the reports and told me that they were in order."

"How can you trust the agent that much?" the brother asked, shaking his head.

"I pity you if you have to go through life without trust, without belief, without relying on the goodness of others! Sometimes you just know in your heart that you can trust someone."

The brother said nothing, but got up to leave. "I'll maybe poke around a little outside and look over your foundation. I'm not an expert, but I do have some experience with these things."

"I do not give you permission to go nosing about my house or grounds. You are just looking for something that will give you an excuse to find fault with my home and to spoil my enjoyment of it!"

"I assure you that I am only motivated by my concern for you as my brother. I will not cause any damage." And with that, he left the house.

As he looked around the grounds and examined the house, he had to admit that it was beautiful. But he also knew that paint could hide many problems. Near a corner, in the back, he found a small, almost invisible door that appeared to lead into the basement. It had been sealed shut with a half-dozen screws. He went back inside and asked the man: "Are you aware of the door into the basement which has been sealed shut?"

"Of course I am aware of it!"

"Why is it sealed shut?"

"Because there is absolutely no need for anyone to go into the basement. There is nothing there."

"Have you ever been there?"

"No, of course not! Why would I want to go down there? I'm sure that it's just dank and musty, and there's nothing there."

"I think it would pay to take a look, to check the foundation."

"Absolutely not!" shouted the man. "This is MY house! It is MY basement! I have no interest in

going there, and I forbid you to do so! I told you that the foundation has already been inspected. Now please leave me in peace!"

Rather than argue with the man, the brother left. But the sealed door continued to bother him, and the basement which it concealed. A few weeks later, when the brother knew that the man and his family were going to be away for a day or two, the brother took a screwdriver and a flashlight to the man's house and carefully opened the sealed door.

He had to stoop to enter the dark basement. The man had been right: there was nothing down there, except the posts and beams and braces that held up the house. As he crept among them, lighting his way with the flashlight, he noticed that the beams and posts had thick coats of paint. Everything was covered with paint. He took his pocket knife and scraped away the paint in a few spots, and where he had removed the paint, instead of solid wood he found a lacy, delicate framework of worm holes. He scraped away paint from some of the other structural members, in all parts of the basement, and found that the wood fiber was missing in all of them, either having been eaten by worms or termites, or having crumbled with dry rot. He was horrified. Not a single beam or post or brace could be relied on.

He wondered what could be holding up the great weight of the house. It seemed to be only the paint which was covering up the rot. He almost imagined he could feel the house settling, having removed the little bit of paint, and he urgently wanted to escape. He found his way to the door, and closed it carefully after he was again in the sunshine. But his mind was troubled.

As soon as the man and his family returned, the brother came to see him. "I have some terrible news for you," he said. He confessed that he had entered the basement, contrary to the man's order. "But I know you will forgive me when I tell you what I found." He then told the man that his entire house was in danger of falling down because of the worms, termites and rot in the structural members in the basement.

But instead of thanking his brother, the man flew into a rage. "You are telling me this only to rob me of the pleasure I have in living in this beautiful house! How can you attack me like this? How can you say such terrible things about a house that is so beautiful? You obviously are my enemy. You are jealous of me because of my house. You have made up these lies with the sole purpose of trying to destroy my happiness and to cast aspersions upon my house, the agent who sold it to me and the people who inspected it and pronounced it sound. Get out! And because you have become my enemy, I never wish to see you again!"

The brother tried to calm the man. "I assure you that I am not your enemy. I am acting only with your good at heart. Why would I want otherwise?"

The man would not be calmed. "You are trying to destroy my love for this house. Therefore you must have an evil motive."

"Please," said the brother. "Come down with me to your basement, and I will let you see with your own eyes what I have found."

"I am not interested in seeing anything that you have to show me. You are obviously such an evil person that you would stoop to any level to deceive me into believing your lies. You have probably planted phony evidence in my basement. You would twist and misinterpret anything I found so that it would appear to support your filthy lies about my house. No! I will not go into the basement with you! I don't care about your delusions, and I don't have the time to humor you."

The brother was puzzled by the man's obstinacy. He couldn't understand why he wouldn't at least look in the basement himself. Perhaps, by replacing the beams, or by taking other measures in time, the house could be saved. But if nothing was done, the house would surely collapse, sooner or later, perhaps injuring someone.

Seeing that he could not help, the brother left, sad that he had been unjustly labeled an "enemy."

In spite of the man's confidence in the soundness of his house, his brother's words did trouble him for a few days. Finally, he could no longer resist the temptation, and he took a flashlight and crept through the small door into the basement. He looked around and saw where his brother had scraped the paint away to expose the fragile, rotten timbers.

He was furious! Why had his brother done this? He went upstairs to a cabinet and got a bucket of paint and a brush, and carefully repainted all the places that his brother had scraped away. "There!" he said, as he screwed the door back into place.

He decided that he would not tell his wife and family what had happened, because it would only disturb them and spoil the love and pleasure they enjoyed, living in such a beautiful house.

By Richard Packham , 1995 (an ex mormon) <http://www.2think.org/parable.shtml>

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