

## **God Hates Religion (part 3 of 4)**

*By Jim Fowler, contributing writer*

### **Authoritarianism**

God, because He is absolute, is authoritative. But when any man, or group of men, claim to be the designated instruments of God's authority and attempt to express such authoritatively, especially in an autocratic or totalitarian way, you then have the authoritarianism of religion.

The bulk of mankind are followers, who will follow a leader like sheep. There always have been and always will be some men, therefore, who set themselves up as leaders and authorities claiming to represent God and to speak authoritatively for God. They often claim to have a special "in" with God, a "hotline" with God, or they claim to have a special vision, a special "calling," a special understanding, or a superior spirituality. Some people inevitably follow such people and regard them as religious authorities – gurus.

The well-known proverb states, "Power corrupts; and absolute power corrupts absolutely." The selfish propensities within men cause them to abuse power and use people to their own ends as they lead. Such, results in authoritarianism. It may be but a subtle emphasis on "pastoral authority" or the spiritual authority of an elder or a "shepherd," or it may be a special esteem granted for those in exalted positions of so-called "clergy" or priests, ministers, preachers, presbyters, etc. These are then developed into a hierarchical order of ecclesiastical positioning and politicizing.

These self-designated, religious authorities often foster a dependency attitude of the people upon themselves. Directly, or indirectly, they encourage loyalty and commitment to the organization they lead, or to themselves. As incentive for such, they often convey the idea that they hold the eternal fate or spiritual destiny of others in their hands, in their power.

The sense of personal equality before God is lost. People are expected to learn their "place" and told not to "get out of order." "Do not ask questions; do as you are told." "We will do the thinking and the feeling for you." "We will do the Bible study and the praying – the relating to God." "We speak for God, and we will tell you what is true." What is this but mind-control propaganda, advocating blind, unquestioning submission and obedience? It is an undemocratic system of non-equality, wherein the religious authorities have no accountability to the people they serve.

Such religious authoritarianism creates a "fantasy-bond" of the people toward their so-called "priests." There is a projected idealization of the authorities as being especially close to God -- almost "gods" themselves. The religious authorities then exploit the people, utilizing superstition and fear to control people's thinking and behavior by shame, guilt, and threatened loss of identity or eternal destiny.

Religious authorities must create a sense of direction and momentum for the people; a sense of doing something and going somewhere. There must be a program of activity that will keep people "involved," feeling that they are meaningfully expending their lives and energy for God's "cause." This is also fueled by the self-serving purpose of financing and perpetuating the religious system.

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