# My Story of Trauma and Recovery After Leaving Christian Science

Linda Kramer



## Linda's recovery story:

- *Perfect Peril: Christian Science and Mind Control,* Linda S. Kramer (available at Amazon.com)
- Christian Way Website: www.ChristianWay.org/personal-stories/from-christian-science-to-freedom



## Christian Science Teachings

- Based on the first chapter of Genesis
  - God created everything good
  - Therefore, everything is spiritual
  - Matter does not exist
- Understanding one's spiritual perfection
  - Healing
  - Control over life circumstances



## Consequences of living Christian Science

- Straddling two realities
  - Living in the material world while trying to know its unreality
  - Requires suppression of deeply human emotions
  - Unintended emotional, physical neglect
    - To self
    - To others

## Consequences of *leaving* Christian Science

- Damaged relationships: family, church, role models, spiritual mentors
- Feeling betrayed by CS role models: parents, CS teachers, Eddy
- Feeling like a traitor for leaving the faith
- Feeling like a spiritual failure for leaving Ultimate Truth, even while knowing that what they left was *not* Ultimate Truth
- Unrecognized loyalties
  - Keep a person tied to Christian Science and its thinking patterns
- CS "recordings" that keep invading one's thoughts.
  - "I'm God's perfect child."
  - "There is no sensation in matter."
- Spiritual and emotional triggers all over the Bible



## People who grew up in CS must learn to:

- Embrace their humanity.
- Accept their bodies as real and good.
  - Tune in to their bodies' needs. (Learn some biology!)
- Learn to process true human emotions without spiritualizing them.
- Re-process a lifetime of issues that they didn't deal with properly as CSists.
- Grieve for things lost.
- Record over the "CS tapes" to correct false information.
  - Example: "There is no sensation in matter."
    - Respond to self: "There IS sensation in matter!"
- Overcome fears about medicine. Learn to navigate medical care.
- Deal with physical problems left over from failed healings.
- Watch loved ones still in CS suffer and sometimes die because of it.



## Strategies for recovery - 1

- Recognize that you're probably not crazy.
  - You're just reacting to crazy things that were done TO you!
- Talk with other former CSists –
  - Validating experiences, emotions, etc.
  - Facebook groups, FFCS has support groups
- Read books by former Christian Scientists
  - *God's Perfect Child,* by Caroline Fraser
  - *Blue Windows,* by Barbara Wilson
  - *Leaving Christian Science*, by Laruen Hunter
  - *Discovering a Larger God*, by John Andrews
  - Lists of helpful resources: FFCSministry.org, ChristianWay.org



## Strategies for recovery - 2

- If you have a counselor,
  - Educate them about Christian Science.
  - Don't worry about shocking counselor – he or she is a professional and can hear what you need to say.
- Evaluate your experience in light of "cult theory."
  - *Perfect Peril: Christian Science and Mind Control*, by Linda Kramer
- Keep a journal – Start with "I feel…"…and then just let the thoughts flow.
  - "Journaling conversations" may be helpful (e.g. with "inner child")
- FEEL your fears in a SAFE environment.

# Strategies for recovery - 3

- Take cues from your "triggers." Think, "Why is that bothering me?"
- Sometimes you may be afraid. Forge ahead anyway.
  - Facing fears often diffuses them.
- If you had childhood trauma, "connect" with the child inside you.
  - Stuffed animals can be helpful.
- Learn to self-nurture.
  - CSists tend to "live in their heads" – pay attention to your emotional, spiritual, and physical needs.



# Strategies for recovery - 4

- Put medical care into perspective:
  - If you eat, you can take medicine (both are tools used by your physical body).
  - Not to be feared, not a spiritual failure.
  - You are a consumer – educate yourself, shop around if necessary. Some care will be helpful to you, some will not.
- Learn to "re-record" the CS tapes playing in your head.
- If the Bible triggers you, switch from the KJV to another translation. Example: ESV (English Standard Version)



# Strategies for recovery - 5

- Decide what to "keep" and what to let go of.
  - Ask yourself:
    - What did I GAIN by leaving?
    - What did I LOSE?
      - (Sense of roots, respect, ties to family, etc.)
    - What do I WANT TO KEEP?
      - E.g. – Principia College. "Kept" the place—not the CS feelings of the place.
    - What do I NEED..
      - ..from my past
      - ..to move forward



# Strategies for recovery - 6

- APPRECIATE the good experiences you had
  - In the midst of "processing," the pain can eclipse everything.
  - As issues resolve, embrace and enjoy good memories that resurface.
- RECOGNIZE that the truly good parts of CS can be found elsewhere
  - Values, nice people, love for God, etc.
- If you want to know God,
  - Recognize that the God of the Bible is SO much more than the Christian Science version of God.
  - You can have a personal relationship with God rather than just "knowing the Truth."

# Strategies for recovery - 7

- Take things “one step at time.”
  - My prayer was constantly, “What’s the NEXT step?”
- You’re on a marathon.
  - Pace yourself.
  - Be good to yourself.
- ENJOY the world around you. It’s a marvelous place.