

Jesus in the Unity School of Christianity

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The Jesus Christ of the Unity School of Christianity is not the Jesus Christ of the Bible, the second person of the Holy Trinity, but the invention of Charles Fillmore to support Unity teachings. The Jesus of Unity is the Unity practitioner and exemplar above all others.

According to Unity, once a person is mentally in harmony with universal law, he or she becomes a “God-man.” Jesus, who became the Christ, was such a God-man, and provides the supreme example to help us discover our innate divine nature and power. Our personality, according to Unity, is a barrier to the innate spirituality that allows us to experience our divinity: “We are all, in our personality, wearing the mask that conceals the real, the spiritual I AM [God-self].”¹ If we can remove our personality by becoming absorbed into the divine consciousness, we can become aware of our divine nature and thus experience our divinity. In fact, we “become Christ”: “Whoever so loses his personality as to be swallowed up in God becomes Christ Jesus or God-man.”² Christ is this true hidden self of each individual.

Unity informs us Jesus is not so much unique as he is exemplary, because more than anyone, allegedly, “Jesus Christ knew how the law of divine imagination works.”³ He is the prototype we are destined to become, and the sooner we begin changing our mental habits the quicker this will happen: “There are no miracles in science. Jesus did no miracles. All His marvelous works were done under the laws that we may learn and use as He did.”⁴ Thus, Jesus is different from the rest of us in degree but not in kind. For Unity, the key difference was in Jesus’ thought life; this is what made Him the kind of special man He was. “To say that Jesus Christ was a man as we are men is not correct, because He had dropped that personal consciousness by which we separate ourselves into men and women. He was consciously one with the absolute principle of Being. He had no consciousness separate from that Being, hence He was that Being to all intents and purposes. He attained no more than is expected of each of us.”⁵ In other words, anyone who wishes can become exactly like Jesus Christ

In line with its Gnostic beliefs, Unity separates “Jesus” and “the Christ.” Jesus Christ was not the eternal second Person of the Trinity who became a man to die for man’s sins, thus becoming two natures (divine and human) in one Person.

Jesus was only a man, a man who attained a higher mental state, “the Christ idea.” In other words, the “Christ” is God’s idea of man perfected in consciousness. J. Sig Paulson explains in *Unity* magazine:

Because of traditional religious heritage, most of the time we probably think of *Jesus*, *Jesus Christ*, and *Christ* as synonyms. However, as we come into a greater understanding of these terms, we can see that there are differences.... Each individual has within himself the Christ potential, the Christ presence, the Christ reality.... Most of our religious beliefs are based on the idea [erroneous, according to Unity] that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. When this belief is our foundation, we begin to think of the Kingdom of God as something outside ourself and heaven as a destination toward which we are headed, rather than as a potential that is unfolding within us.⁶

We can become the Christ because the Christ is a “higher” state of consciousness, not a person. Jesus manifested the Christ perfectly and so can we. According to the *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, you “reveal yourself to yourself,” “by affirming ‘*I am the Christ, son of the living God*.’”⁷ Supposedly, this affirmation will inevitably help produce its realization. Another blasphemous affirmation reads:

I am the son of God.... I am the only begotten son, dwelling in the bosom of the Father. I am the Christ of God, I am the beloved son in whom the Father is well pleased. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. I and my Father are one. I am the image and likeness of God.... Of a truth I am the son of God.⁸

Again, the ability to live as the absolute Son of God (as Christ was) is a potential that Unity claims resides in every man and woman. It is here that we encounter one of Unity’s many practical failures. Unity has never adequately explained the great futility of its program of positive thinking which, it claims, allows people to realize and display their Christ nature. No one in Unity has ever become who Christ is—or even approached His perfection. Yet we are told, “He attained no more than is *expected* of each of us.” So why has no one ever attained this expectation? Could it be because Unity teachings are false? If Jesus was really so “common,” really our true potential, why was He so unique in what He “attained”? If the teachings of Unity have never produced another Christ, not one among millions of people, and yet such potential can be achieved for anyone, Unity has a serious problem claiming to be “*practical* Christianity.” Unity then, is a terrible failure. The obvious conclusion is that people do not have the potential to become Christ.

Take the most celebrated example of the power of positive thinking in Unity history, Charles Fillmore and compare his life with the life of Jesus. Examine both carefully. Did Fillmore, or do his followers, really believe that he was the person Jesus Christ was? How can Jesus be offered as an example of the proof of what Unity can do for us when, normally understood, His teachings deny every fundamental teaching of Unity? How could Jesus have been spiritually *perfect* when

He rejected the doctrines of Unity? Because the teachings of Jesus are historically established, even Unity cannot logically deny that they refute Unity beliefs. When Unity claims that Jesus taught Unity ideals, the only evidence provided is Unity's *distortion* of Christ's teachings. Obviously, claims without verification mean little.

Because Unity has a false view of Jesus and a false view of man, it can never attain what it promises. Unity's claim to be a program of spiritual advancement toward Christhood therefore must be rejected. Yet we are asked to believe: "Each of us has within him the Christ, just as Jesus had, and we must look within to recognize and realize our sonship, our divine origin and birth, even as He did. By continually unifying ourselves with the Highest by our thoughts and words, *we too, shall become sons of God, manifest.*"⁹

Again, where are the other Christs that have manifested? Fillmore himself confessed that the most serious legitimate criticism that others make of Unity is its failure to produce other Christs. If not even Fillmore's advanced positive thinking could achieve the ideal, how can the average Unity member?

Notes:

¹ Charles Fillmore, *Dynamics for Living* (MO: Unity School of Christianity, 1967), p. 165.

² *Ibid.*, p. 321.

³ Cora Fillmore, *Christ Enthroned in Man* (MO: Unity School of Christianity, n.d.), p. 24.

⁴ Fillmore, *Dynamics for Living*, p. 164.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

⁶ *Unity*, October 1975, pp. 59-60.

⁷ *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, p. 150.

⁸ Fillmore, *Dynamics for Living*, pp. 351-353.

⁹ *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, p. 150, emphasis added.