

In This World, Not of It: The Hidden Meaning of The Story of Jesus

December 6, 2006 at 7 p.m.

The Pratt Mansions
84th Street and Fifth Avenue
Admission: \$15

For over 2000 years, the story of Jesus has had a powerful hold on human beings in diverse cultures on every continent. Myths and legends abound on Earth and have for all of our written record. They rise, exert great influence, and then fade away. We no longer worship or fear Mithras, Ra, Zeus or Apollo. Wotan and Thor have been reduced to days of the week. Yet after two millennia, the Christ story continues to exert its influence and shape the destinies of nations as well as individuals.

What accounts for the power of this tragic tale? Why does it resonate so deeply with over two billion people on the planet today? What does the Christ story tap into in the human heart and unconscious? What makes it so universal in its appeal that it transcends time and space?

Thousands of books have been written about Jesus Christ. Some promote the narrow beliefs of specific Christian sects; others demonstrate the perversion of Jesus' simple message of love into its opposite. Many historians have shown how aspects of the Jesus narrative were taken from earlier myths and grafted onto the Christ legend. And a number of books claim that Jesus never existed.

Over the ages, great painters, sculptors, composers, poets, novelists, and dramatists have portrayed this story in moving, profound creations. Philosophers and theologians have peered deep into the legend and sought its meaning for mankind.

Out of all of the writings about Christ, one book presents a unique view—a shocking and challenging interpretation of the meaning of the story of Jesus. Join author and Mindshift Institute co-founder Michael Mannion for an exploration of *The Murder of Christ* by Wilhelm Reich. Discover what profound meaning the Christ tale had for Reich, and for our own understanding of who we are.

Dear Mindshifter,

Here's wishing everyone a Scintillating Solstice, Splendiferous Saturnalia, Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, Captivating Kwanzaa, and/or Fabulous Festivus, whatever is appropriate.

Before the festivities begin, we thought we would start the holiday season with an exploration of the source of the emotional power of the story of Jesus Christ on **Wednesday, December 6 at 7 p.m. at the Pratt Mansions on 84th Street and Fifth**

Avenue. What is it about this legend or belief that still attracts women and men as powerfully today as it did 2000 years ago? Whether or not Jesus Christ actually existed; was a woman and not a man; was a man and not a god or vice-versa; or was merely an amalgam of earlier mythic figures created by the early Christian leaders, his story resonates with the human heart and mind as few others do.

As a young boy, I spent hundreds of hours listening to the New Testament read at Catholic services. It seemed to me at that time that there was a consistent message that was Christ's and then there was all this "other stuff" that came from the disciples and later sources. The Jesus message was simple—love one another. The "other stuff" concerned sin, judgment, fault, blame, guilt, salvation and so forth. This year, I learned that Thomas Jefferson had gone through the Gospels and selected what he believed was the message of Jesus, eliminating all that "other stuff." Intriguingly, this Jefferson version of the gospels is strikingly similar to the Gnostic gospel of Thomas, written two millennia ago.

As a teenager and young man, I read many books about Jesus, among them—*The Last Temptation of Christ* and other novels by Nikos Kazantzakis; *Dear Judas* by Robinson Jeffers; *The Man Who Died* by D.H. Lawrence; *Barabbas* by Par Lagerkvist; *Jesus* by Kahlil Gibran; *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis; *The Psychiatric Study of Jesus* and *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, both by Albert Schweitzer; *The Life of Jesus* by Ernst Renan; *The Greatest Story Ever Told* by Fulton Oursler; *Jesus Christ and Mythology* by Rudolf Bultmann; and *Socrates, Buddha, Confucius and Jesus* by Karl Jaspers.

In recent years, I was drawn to *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* by Leo Steinberg; *Christ: A Crisis in the Life of God* by Jack Miles; *Jesus Through the Centuries* by Jaroslav Pelikan and books by such writers as Elaine Pagels, John Lash and Gary Wills. But, to me, one book stood out among them all—*The Murder of Christ* by Wilhelm Reich.

To Reich, the Christ story both reveals and conceals crucial truths about humanity that it needs to understand if it is to survive—and that it is trying to avoid with all its might. In his view, God is Nature, Love and Life. And Christ, the Life Principle itself, represents the full realization of natural law. So why, then, was Jesus murdered so ignominiously? For thousands of years before the birth of Christ, and for thousands of years since, what Reich calls "The Living" has struggled to survive against the assault of the Emotional Plague, which is characterized by a hatred for The Living in all of its manifestations. We hope you will join us for a fascinating examination of this unique interpretation of the Jesus story. Reich's insights are vital for anyone who is working today to help create a better world.