

Charlie



Finds Religion

[By Paul Harris]

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One day Charlie pondered about what was missing in his life. After watching a television program about church-life, he thought that it might be religion. Charlie knew a little on the subject but decided to find out more for himself.

The first place he came upon was a **Catholic church**.



There he met a kindly **Priest** who welcomed him and told him to sit on a pew, which he did.



Although the wooden seat was hard, he was absorbed with the sermon, about **Jesus** and his ordeals.

He learned that **Christians** (those who follow Christ) read a book called the **bible** which was 2,000 years old, or something like that.

The priest told the congregation about going to hell and that Christ died to save us from the Original Sin.

Charlie did not think that something that happened so long ago was relevant today. He had doubts about someone dying to save him, "from what?" He thought. He left the church with an idea now of what religion entailed and looked forward to his quest.

The next place he found was a **Synagogue**.



Inside, like the Christian church, there were hard wooden pews.

The **Rabbi**, a spiritual leader, welcomed Charlie and told him to sit on the right-hand side.



On the left side were the women and they have to be separated from the men.

The Rabbi told Charlie this was the afternoon Service and there are three services every day.

The Jewish religion is known as **Judaism** and they have a religious book known as the Torah

which predates the Christian bible and as such, they do not believe Christ was the Messiah, but instead follow the books of **Moses**.

Charlie liked the synagogue but it was much like the Christian Church only more intense in their praying.

Charlie carried on his search and came upon a **Mosque**.



On entering he was met by the **Imam**, the spiritual leader.



He told Charlie to take off his shoes and to wash his hands as cleanliness is very important to **Muslims** who follow the religion of **Islam**.

Muslims believe that there are five Books of God: they believe that God revealed the holy books or scriptures to a number of God's

messengers. These include the Quran (given to Muhammad), the Torah (given to Moses), the Gospel (given to Jesus), the Psalms (given to David), and the Scrolls (given to Abraham).

They believe that these earlier scriptures in their original form were divinely revealed, but that only the Quran remains as it was first revealed to the prophet Muhammad. They pray to **Allah** (God) five times a day on prayer mats facing Mecca to the east. Their book is the Quran which they believe is the verbatim word of God.

They don't believe in any other religions and call non-believers in Allah 'Infidels'.

There have been a lot of wars over the centuries due to this belief where Muslims have wanted to dominate other countries and make them follow their religion. In contrast Charlie knew from what he has seen on television that Christians, and Jews especially, have been persecuted over those same centuries.

Charlie thought that this religion was even stricter than the Jewish belief and their dismissal of other religions was a put-off for him.

He carried on his quest and came upon a **Buddhist Temple**



and was met by the **Lama**, or **Monk**, who was in charge. He told Charlie that Buddhists follow the teachings of **Buddha** and the **four truths**.



The Four Truths being:

- 1) All beings experience pain and unhappiness (dukkha) during their lifetime.
- 2) The origin (samudaya) of pain and misery is due to a specific cause.
- 3) The cessation (nirodha) of pain and suffering can be achieved.
- 4) The method we must follow to stop pain and misery is that of the "Eightfold Path" which leads to **Nirvana** (Heaven) and the end of reincarnation.

The Buddhists were all in robes and sat crossed leg on the floor listening to sermons.

Buddhists outside Thailand and in the UK have regular meetings in normal rooms sitting on normal chairs and listen to the teachings of Buddha from normally dressed people.

This religion of sorts was good because there was no hell as in the other religions but if you were bad in this life you may come back again

as someone disabled (for example) which is called **Karma**.

Charlie was not a bad person but he had his moments and did not want to come again disabled or otherwise.

His quest he thought was over when on going home he came across a small building with the name **Spiritualist Church** on it.



He was met by a **Minister** who welcomed him to the church.



He said there were not that many Ministers in their churches and are not needed to run churches.

Ministers perform ceremonies like weddings, funerals and namings - similar to the Christian confirmation but instead a person is given their spiritual name.

He explained that his religion was called Spiritualism and that they worked with spirits from the spirit world to provide evidence of life after death. He went on to talk about the order of service and told Charlie that they had no holy books but followed the **Seven Principles of Spiritualism** which are on the wall of all their churches.

7 Principles of Spirituality

1. *The Fatherhood of God*
2. *The Brotherhood of Man*
3. *Communion of Spirits and the Ministry of Angels*
4. *Continuous Existence of the Human Soul*
5. *Personal Responsibility*
6. *Compensation and Retribution hereafter for all Good and Evil Deeds done on Earth*
7. *Eternal Progress open to every Human Soul*

North Star Spiritualist Church

is member of The Church of Spiritualist Centers

He sat with a hymn book that was given to him and eagerly awaited the **Medium** who would talk to the congregation and then give messages from the dead!

Although he was told there was no death and every religion believes in that but none of the others believe that the spirit of the dead person comes back to talk through a Medium to their loved ones.

Charlie sang the hymns and listened intently to the Medium who gave an address based on the 7 Principles of Spiritualism which were to him more of what he thought life was about.



Then the Medium began giving messages and came to him.

He asked Charlie if could come to him "Yes please said Charlie". The Medium said he had Charlie's sister with him. "I don't have a sister!" exclaimed Charlie.

"Well," said the man "She's telling me that she IS your sister and to ask Mum about her".

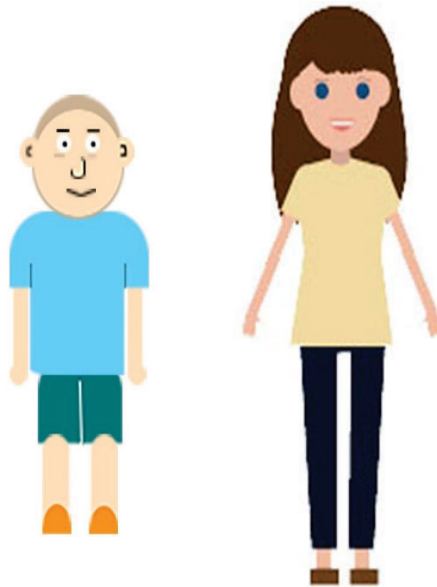


He went on to tell him things about his life that no-one else could know and how his sister - Layla - was watching over him.

Charlie was excited now, the church was everything that he wanted, no threats of going to hell, or being born disabled, but common-

sense things that he understood and words that he believed must be true from the spirit world and his sister!

He hurriedly arrived home and told his Mum of his quest and the Spiritualist Church he finally came to and that he had a sister in the spirit world.



His mum said the medium was right. He was born a twin but his sister was still-born. It was

too difficult for her to talk about and so she simply pushed it to the back of her mind.

She told Charlie how sorry she was that she never told him before and that she never named her, but Layla was a lovely name that she chose for herself.

Charlie knew now what had been missing all his life - HIS SISTER - his twin sister, a part of him which he now knew was why he never felt whole.

Charlie and his mum became regulars to the church from that day on and got more messages from Layla and how she was doing and the relationship she had with her grandparents in the spirit world.

Some years later Charlie became a Medium and a Minister and brought the truth that we do not die but live on in the spirit world to many people who were searching like he was for the truth.

Layla



Charlie

(Spiritualist Minister)



Mum

