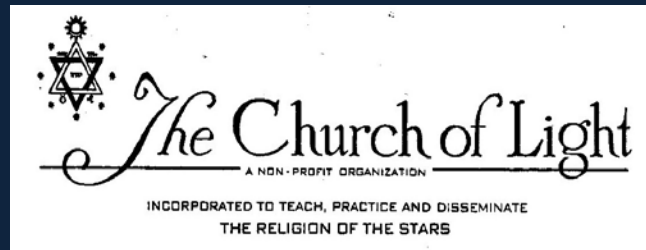




Elbert Benjamine founder of ...



Elbert Benjamine
REMASTERED

LIVING the
RELIGION of the STARS

Astrology for Aquarius
gives voice to
Elbert Benjamine



Elbert Benjamine

Those who follow him have the responsibility of continuing the work and perpetuating the teachings of the Aquarian Age to future generations.

Mildred Schuler

The only person you can trust to educate you about the Church of Light and the Religion of the Stars is Elbert Benjamine.

Elbert Benjamine's Church of Light...

... was established November 2, 1932 to teach, practice, and disseminate '**The Religion of the Stars,**' as set forth in 21 courses of lessons covering each of the 21 branches of occult science, as written by C. C. Zain under the auspices of 'The Brotherhood of Light'.

On that date the Brotherhood of Light closed its membership roster and ceased to exist on the physical plane. It legally became the Church of Light with Elbert Benjamine its President, Elizabeth D. Benjamine its Secretary-Treasurer, and Fred H. Skinner its Vice-President.

Elbert explained that the Church of Light was established to (1) counter the efforts of special privilege and those who strive to block the dissemination of religious facts and (2) ensure that there was an organization with sufficient human and financial resources at its command to get the Brotherhood of Light's teachings before a wide public.

And it has two objectives: (1) to make it impossible for any person in the world to be ignorant of the chief tenets of The Religion of the Stars, and (2) to secure the four freedoms for all the people of the world – freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

Elbert explained that the Church of Light was 'merely the continuation of the Brotherhood of Light' and in 1944 made it clear: 'We (the Church of Light) do not believe in special privilege. We are not trying to give information merely to the few. Instead, we believe every person in the world should have access to Brotherhood of Light teachings.' He knew that the word 'brotherhood' gave the impression of exclusiveness and he didn't want that.

In November 1932 the Church of Light had 14,000 members and Religion of the Stars meetings were being held in 23 cities across America with 2 in Canada.

Teachers at every center taught astrology and 19 were ordained ministers or teachers. Members enhanced their knowledge of astrology and Brotherhood of Light teachings through extension work that was conducted through the Church of Light Quarterly.

By July 1936 the Church of Light had 134 active ordained ministers and teachers most of whom were engaged in teaching classes.

But in August 1943 a deplorable event occurred when Elbert's son tried to gain copyright control of the Brotherhood of Light lessons and in response Elbert announced major reforms to the Church of Light.

In October 1943 the Church of Light was made '100% democratic and 100% cooperative' and it was decided that Elbert Benjamine would 'retain copyright control of what is put forward as Brotherhood of Light teachings'. These moves were made to insure against (1) internal political manipulation and (2) subversive groups in the future getting control of the organization and either diametrically changing, or completely suppressing, the publication of Brotherhood of Light lessons.

At the time Elbert wrote: 'Because the future, during the next 2,000 years, very largely depends on the degree of dissemination of the Religion of the Stars, and because if there is to be a New Civilization worthy of the name people must be familiar with our Nine-Point-Plan, I believe the Church of Light should have the most capable manager it is possible to secure. In this great work, on which the (spiritual) welfare of the race so largely depends... we need to have the most capable leadership that can be had.'

All board members, who were duty-bound to carry out Elbert's wishes and the Church of Light's business as stipulated in its articles of incorporation, would now be chosen by Church of Light members in a democratic vote.

Elbert always measured the Church of Light's success by the number of members. More members meant more people having contact with the Religion of the Stars, more intellectual talent, more spiritual diversity, more Hermeticians and more teachers and ministers. In 1941 there were 79 Hermeticians.

In 1948 four issues of 14,000 copies of the Church of Light Quarterly were posted and in November 1951 when Elbert Benjamine transferred to astral life the Mother Church was based in Los Angeles, California and there were 8 branch churches in California, 32 across American, 5 in Canada, 2 in England and one in Mexico, Liberia and Nigeria.

On Elbert's passing Edward Doane took the helm of the Church of Light. He had been chosen by Elbert as his successor but all future presidents would be chosen by Church of Light members in democratically held elections.

Elbert was well aware of human nature and its unsuspected pitfalls but he had to entrust the Church of Light's future to members of unknown intellectual and spiritual merit. He had to put his trust in board members knowing full well that pilots often crashed their planes. He knew that spiritually challenged, juvenile Hermeticians could do great harm to his Church of Light.

Its success depended on the loyalty, commitment and earnestness of future members. It would take spiritual warriors to accomplish the Church's mission. The environmental setting in 1951 was very dangerous. His chief concerns were the distortion and suppression of the words he wrote. Could his Church of Light survive? It was a long shot. Within 50 years it was a toxic mess of disinformation, infighting and power struggles.

By 1994, following years of personality clashes, financial mismanagement and stagnant growth the Church of Light was broken. Knowledge of the Brotherhood of Light teachings had deteriorated, misinformation and disinformation were widespread and commitment to the Church of Light had eroded.

By now members didn't have access to the words that Elbert had written in the Church of Light Quarterly and Rising Star magazine where he explained the Church of Light and the dissemination of the Religion of the Stars.

It was a situation that encouraged the development of dangerous ideas and disinformation so when Paul Brewer was selected as the Church of Light's tenth president in 1994 he faced major challenges from all directions. He was a long-time member having joined in 1969 and a Hermetician.

The Church of Light's spiritual elites are called Hermeticians. They're just people who have read the 21 Brotherhood of Light texts on the occult sciences and passed 21 open-book exams. They agree to actively participate by teaching or disseminating the Religion of the Stars in some way and are eligible to participate in the mundane management of Church of Light's affairs.

This right to participate in the Church's mundane management is cause for grave concern. A Hermetician's intellectual and spiritual merit is unknown to the members who elect them. It means that a person with no moral integrity and no loyalty or respect for Elbert Benjamine can join the Church of Light, attain positional power and exert undue influence.

In 1994 when Paul Brewer was elected president Hermetician numbers were regrettably very low. It's not known how many were actually eligible for the position but he felt he would make a capable leader and got the job but Church of Light members were in the dark in regard to his commitment to the Religion of the Stars, his loyalty to Elbert Benjamine, his spiritual intelligence, leadership ability and administrative expertise.

Paul's wife, Vicki, also a Hermetician, was elected and selected to be the Church of Light's secretary, but members had no idea of her practical intelligence, commitment, spirituality, administrative experience or capacity to make crucial decisions regarding the future of the Church of Light.

Administration has little to do with trust, commitment or spirituality – it's all about power. It's all about control, dominance, calling the shots, doing what you want, prestige and stifling dissenting views. And if there are no checks and balances the stage is set for power abuse and corruption. And if arrogance emerges power bends or changes the rules to suit its purpose.

Paul and Vicki Brewer were active participants in the toxic nightmare that was the Church of Light in the 1980s when members were feuding and ignorance of the Church of Light spawned disinformation and a false narrative. But now, as president and secretary of the Church of Light, they held the reins of power.

There were 7 other democratically elected board members but they just made up the numbers. Power was concentrated in the hands of Paul and Vicki Brewer. The Brewers were the Church of Light's power couple.

They immediately consolidated their power by silencing critics and ridding the Church of those members who they saw as dissenting voices, and recruiting board members who they groomed to think like they did.

In response dedicated board and longtime members left and in 1998 the animosity and spite between the Brewers and other Church of Light members erupted in division when a disgruntled group of Hermeticians, including past president Linden Leisge, split from the Church. But this personal vendetta by the Brewers to rid the Church of dissenting voices had drastic, vengeful consequences for the Church of Light.

With Hermeticians leaving the Church of Light its pool of intellectual and spiritual resources shrank; and in 1999 when Linden Leisge, launched The Light of Egypt website, he indulged his self-interest by pilfering the Brotherhood of Light lessons from Elbert Benjamine's Church of Light. He made them available for free depriving the Church of Light of its major source of revenue. It was a despicable, disgraceful act.

So in 1994 dedicated Church of Light members who longed for effective change and forward progress were in for disappointment. The Church of Light Quarterly continued to be published, old articles were recycled, new articles provided topical comment and Church of Light Conventions were held.

The Church of Light in 1994 was a tiny organization and the Brewers and other Hermeticians had already developed exclusive, small organization mentalities. A handful became small organization royalty. The Stellarian Honor guard wasn't enough. Royalty became Guardian Angels.

But in 1994 the digital age was coming in fast – there were 10,000 websites and two million computers connected to the World Wide Web – and the internet made Elbert Benjamine's dream of making the teachings of the Religion of the Stars available to everyone a reality. All it would take was a slick online presentation and smart promotion of the Church's religious message.

At this time the Brewers created a false Church of Light narrative. They claimed that Elbert Benjamine established the Church of Light in 1932 due to adverse political pressures in Los Angeles, California and that he never intended the Brotherhood of Light to become a church.

The Brewers didn't like the fact that the Brotherhood of Light had legally incorporated as the Church of Light in November 1932 so they changed facts to suit them themselves. They had no moral imperative to uphold the truth.

The fact is the Brotherhood of Light was a religious organization that taught, practiced and disseminated the Religion of the Stars and it was always Elbert's intention to establish a church which would be a more suitable vehicle for disseminating the Religion of the Stars in the Age of Aquarius.

Elbert knew the word 'brotherhood' projected an image of secrecy, mystery and exclusiveness that misrepresented what the Brotherhood of Light stood for.

Later the Brewers changed the header on the Church of Light's email communications from 'to teach, practice and disseminate the Religion of the Stars' to 'to teach, practice and disseminate the Brotherhood of Light lessons. They were masters of manipulation who played their fellow board members like a fiddle.

In the June 1999 issue of the Church of Light Quarterly the membership was informed: 'In the future, look for the Quarterly on the C of L website at <http://www.light.org>. The website is not yet fully functional so please be patient.' The message was easy to miss and raised eye brows. The Church of Light was going online as light.org!?

Something smelt rotten. To have the Church of Light's online address as light.org was ridiculous. More importantly why had the membership been locked out of the discussion? Well, it's now apparent that the Brewers and an inner circle of elite Hermeticians conspired to rebrand and misrepresent the Church of Light online which they kept secret from the membership.

Then in the December 1999 issue of the Church of Light Quarterly Paul Brewer informed the membership: 'Two of the more popular topics often discussed in C of L social circles include (1) the Church's chart and (2) our name, i.e., The CHURCH of Light.

The Church's chart is a contentious subject due to the T-square of Uranus, Saturn and Pluto. The opposition of Saturn and Pluto (1st and 7th) has stimulated particularly difficult situations throughout the Church's history with regard to opposition, usually destructive, from certain member groups. Often you will run into discussion about reincorporating the Church to get a better chart.'

Dedicated Stellarians at the time were stunned to learn that while they were studying the lessons and doing their best to live the Religion of the Stars board members were chatting about the Church of Light's name and reincorporation. Was it a sign of having nothing useful to talk about or fickleness, disrespect, disloyalty? Or was there a conspiracy to reincorporate the Church of Light as the Brotherhood of Light?

The 'difficult situations' referred to by Paul Brewer 'from certain member groups' primarily involved the New York branch of the Church of Light which took legal action over the harm being done to the Church of Light by the incompetent leadership and infighting at HQ in Los Angeles in the 1980s.

It had nothing to do with the Saturn-Pluto opposition. Paul Brewer's comments reveal a shallow understanding of astrology and a common tendency by beginners to blame misfortune on adverse aspect patterns. He missed the message sent by William Shakespeare in his play Julius Caesar in 1599: 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves...'

In the June 2000 issue of the Church of Light Quarterly Paul Brewer wrote. '(I prefer the term 'Brotherhood' to 'Church.')

I see the Brotherhood/Church as an organization of individuals (Uranus) recognizing diversity, and developing a vision (Neptune) for universal welfare (Pluto).' Which is all very well except the Church of Light is a church and it didn't need a spiritual leader with an exclusive 'brotherhood' small organization mentality.

In the summer 2000 issue of the Church of Light Quarterly Paul Brewer wrote: 'Recently, the entire membership was mailed the Vision 21 pamphlet that communicated the Church of Light's Vision for the 21st Century. This vision derives from the Church's basic mission (to teach, practice and disseminate the Religion of the Stars) and its core tenets. While the vision evolved from a process undertaken by the CofL Board of Directors, it also reflects the inputs from a significant number of CofL members.'

It's safe to conclude that the board of directors he refers to were recruited and groomed by the Brewers to think like they did and that the 'significant number of Church members' were a handful of elite Californian Hermeticians. The common Church of Light member was excluded from the conversation and never consulted. So Vision 21 was strictly Paul and Vicki Brewer's vision for Elbert Benjamine's Church of Light.

The vision was to attract 10 million members over the next 30 years 'through a dynamic and attractive web site that provides access, for both members and the public, to all the resources available at headquarters' and...

'An expanded advertising program that points people to the CofL web site where they can see in detail the benefits of the BofL Lessons by C. C. Zain.

A new logo (the one you now see on our stationary) that presents a bright, cheery face to the public. It is a stylized version of the Egyptian hieroglyph "Akhet" (horizon of the rising Sun) designed by our brother Pharaoh Akhenaten. It is not meant to replace the BofL emblem, but merely be an attractive gateway to the wonders in store for those who look deeper.

Easy to understand pamphlets that explains BofL philosophy (not the Religion of the Stars) to the masses.

A new program to promote study groups, CofL Centers and Branch Churches worldwide including a starter package of materials, equipment and books to get them started.

Trained Stellarian Practitioners that minister to people using our advanced techniques of astrology, alchemy and visualization/demonstration via directed thinking and induced emotion.

An academy of astrology that provides the best curriculum available for students. And the new Order of the Sphinx to promote advanced studies for Hermeticians.'

Paul Brewer explained that 'achieving 10 million members over the next 30 years may seem like a great leap from where the Church stands (about 2500 current and inactive members on file). However, it seems a lot easier when you look at the small steps that are required. Growth tends to be exponential, so the C of L only needs to achieve 2500 active members by the end of 2001 and 6500 active members by the end of 2004. At that rate of growth, we will meet our long-term goals.'

Paul Brewer's Vision 21, which was endorsed by the Church of Light board of directors, was a ridiculous laugh-a-minute delusion. It was irrational nonsense. The Church of Light did not have the human resources to do anything envisioned in the vision. In retrospect Vision 21 was preposterous. Maybe it was a joke played on the membership by the Brewers or a pretense designed to deceive and distract members from their real intentions. It was shelved immediately. Board members had no intention of implementing it.

On June 15, 2000 when the Brewers launched the Church of Light online they got its name wrong. They called it light.org.

In 1943 when the Church of Light was made fully democratic Mildred Schuler writing in the Rising Star magazine had warned:

‘Any deviation from the status quo, such as changing the name from that recorded on the corporation papers, or charging a fixed price for services of ministers, teachers, or classes, might jeopardize the tax advantages given the Church as a non-profit corporation, to say nothing of *thwarting the intent of the founders of the Church of Light Corporation as they sought to preserve the identity of, and relationship to, the venerable order of the Brotherhood of Light.*’

A website is a group of World Wide Web pages that are made available online by an individual, company, educational institution, government, or organization. Its domain name gives it an internet address and the Church of Light board of directors gave the Church of Light a wrong internet address.

According to its articles of incorporation its name is The Church of Light – not light.org. It was like calling The Washington Post post.org; or JP Morgan Chase Bank, bank.org; or the Church of England, england.org.

The digital transition of the Church of Light by the Brewers was a spectacular display of disloyalty and power abuse. The online address light.org misrepresented the Church of Light and by giving the Brotherhood of Light lessons the headline banner they suppressed the Religion of the Stars.

light.org was a fraud, a violation of Elbert Benjamine’s trust and an absurdity: The Church of Light didn’t stand a chance. The Brewers conspired to derail the Church of Light’s stated mission to reestablish the Religion of the Stars here on Earth and they got away with their treachery because they controlled the only check on their conduct – the board of directors.

The Church of Light board of directors is charged with policing the conduct of all Church of Light members, but if some, or all directors, go rogue they can misrepresent the Church of Light and do things that thwart the organization’s function and purpose. There are no safeguards in place to protect Elbert Benjamine’s Church of Light from traitorous, disloyal board members and when all the board members are in collusion the danger escalates.

The Church of Light board members in 2000 who conspired to misrepresent the Church of Light online and to cancel the Religion of the Stars were:

Paul Brewer President, Steve Carrothers VP, Vicki Brewer VP Wm. H. Jeffrey Secretary, Donald Baker Treasurer, Margaret Joscher, California Dorothy Fast Wissler, California Paul Klamer, Ontario, Canada. Their fingerprints are all over the imposter website light.org.

That said... the Brewers had no idea how the online world worked. There were no youtube videos to educate them on how to take a religion online. A website that misrepresents an unknown religious organization wasn't going to miraculously attract thousands of new members just by being there. And over the coming years the Brewers built a wall of silence to conceal the fact that their Vision 21 and light.org were pathetic failures.

In 2001, with (temporary) board member Brother Angelo Chirban pulling the strings, the Brewers re-launched the Order of the Sphinx.

It was chartered by the Church of Light and its mission among other things was to encourage continued participation by Hermeticians in teaching, practicing and disseminating the Religion of the Stars; and to support the growth and expansion of the Church of Light through encouraging study, research, and other means of obtaining new spiritual and occult knowledge.

It appeals to members with exclusive-secret-organization mentalities who feel special by participating in initiation ceremonies and in 2015 there were 43 Hermeticians in the Order of the Sphinx.

According to Paul Brewer the Church of Light's exponential growth in 2004 was projected to be 6,500 members but the only thing that was experiencing exponential growth was the incompetence and arrogance of the Brewers and their fellow board members.

Over the following years there was no dynamic leadership: Just a concentration of power and authoritarian control and an amazing capacity to conceal their incompetence from Church of Light members and convince them they were doing a marvelous job at managing the Church of Light's mundane affairs. The Brewers had a plan A that kept on failing and no plan B.

In 2009 due to a lack of Hermeticians who were prepared to do the job the number of Church of Light board directors was reduced from 9 to 7. With fewer board members there was less intellectual and spiritual diversity but the Brewers were always in control of what was discussed and happened. And by now the board's secrecy and disregard for democracy and transparency, which had exponentially grown for years, bordered on paranoia.

In 2015 when Paul Brewer stepped down as President of the Church of Light his Vision 21 and light.org were total failures.

Thanks to the Brewers the Church of Light was having a near death experience; and for 20 years long-time board members – Steve Caruthers, Donald Baker and Margaret Joscher – and board members – Angelo Chirban, Barbara Baker, Maggie Miles, Patrick Ramsey, Christopher Gibson, Gail Caswell and Mary Meg Dissinger – endorsed their failures.

To move forward and prosper the Church of Light needed capable leaders and in 1994 it got Paul and Vicki Brewer. The internet heralded a new beginning – it essentially solved Elbert Benjamine's problem of disseminating the Religion of the Stars to the world – but by 2015 the Brewers and light.org had brought Elbert Benjamine's road to amazing to a dead end.

In 2000 when light.org was launched online the Church of Light had 730 active members out of a total membership of 2071 and when Paul Brewer retired in 2015 it had 598.

If you're e numbers person these numbers spell pathetic failure but the Brewers were never about numbers. They were tiny mystery-school thinkers, who saw the lower than low numbers as a sign of success. They revealed that they had succeeded in converting the Church of Light into an organization that disseminated ancient occult mysteries to the exclusive few.

Whatever...you would think that between 2000 and 2015 that at least one of the spiritual elites at the Church of Light would have noticed that Vision 21 and light.org were dreadful failures. How could they let the Brewers destroy the Church of Light and do nothing to stop them? How could they sit by and watch the Church of Light sink into obscurity? How could they allow the Church of Light become a haven for mystical thinkers who crave the elitism and exclusiveness of secret brotherhoods that peddle secret doctrines.

How could board members submit to such destructive autocratic control? Did they experience collective stupidity? Were they delusional? Did they hold the Brewers to account? Who knows? Maybe they were spending their time having out-of-the-body experiences or focussed on shifting blame or covering up the entire debacle.

It seems board members were old fashioned, exclusive-secret-mystery-school, type thinkers who didn't want to know truth. They lied to themselves about who they were and didn't want other people to know the truths that Elbert Benjamine wrote about in the 21 Brotherhood of Light courses – the truths that could set them free.

From 1994 to 2015 the Church of Light was a casualty of the Brewer's corruption and treachery and board members were complicit in all the deceit and betrayal. They displayed hard core disrespect and disloyalty. They shredded their Hermetician certificates and their pledges to teach, practice and disseminate the Religion of the Stars.

For twenty years Paul Brewer failed the Church of Light and its members. He failed the leadership test and failed to learn from his mistakes. He provided no spiritual leadership. He was a backward thinker who liked brotherhoods and secret organizations. He had a personal bias against the words 'church' and 'religion' so he cancelled the Church of Light and the Religion of the Stars from the Church of Light's online persona.

The Brewers were masters of inversion. They created their own replacement version of Church of Light history and spread their false narrative to their fellow board members. They discarded truth – personal opinion became fact. They used secrecy and silence as weapons and made themselves opaque. They were very good at shifting blame.

The Brewers were never loyal to Elbert Benjamine. They breached his trust. For them the Church of Light was always about us. They thought they owned the Church of Light and could do with it whatever they wanted. They were delusional.

The Brewers caused the Church of Light great catastrophe. Their intentions were always traitorous. To say they failed the Church of Light is a gross understatement. They destroyed it. They didn't like the Brotherhood of Light becoming a church so they cancelled the Church of Light and abolished the Religion of the Stars from the public sphere. They violated their duty to disseminate the Religion of the Stars.

The Brewers intentionally derailed the Church of Light's mission to reestablish the Religion of the Stars on Earth – a crime against humanity. They ensured that humanity will never know the truths of this glorious religion. They were more than spiritually challenged, juvenile Hermeticians, they were morally bankrupt. They failed every integrity test. They will go down in Church of Light history as traitors. But every religion – popular or not – has its Judas-villains.

In 1994 the Church of Light was broken and the board of directors faced major challenges. 20 years later it was a train wreck and members knew that the Brewers were experts in betrayal and incompetence. They knew that the Church of Light board of directors couldn't be trusted.

The Brewers inflicted catastrophic damage on the Church of Light but it was beneath their sense of self-importance to apologize to the membership for their corrupt behavior. They did not express any regret for all the damage they caused the Church of Light. And the shameful things they did are not going away while light.org falsely misrepresents the Church of Light and members continue to believe their false propaganda.

It's only when their actions are viewed through a long term, ongoing lens that enormity of their destruction can be glimpsed. They are gone; but board members groomed by them, who are now in positions of power, have an appallingly low understanding of their obligation to the Church of Light. They've been duped by the Brewer's false Church of Light narrative and while they believe the misinformation they're complicit in the betrayal and treachery. They seem to be the only Church of Light members who didn't know the Brewers couldn't be trusted.

The Brewers have ensured that the Church of Light will have so few members and so few Hermeticians in the immediate future that its continued survival is in peril. Current Hermeticians, who are charged with taking the Church forward, have an appallingly low understanding of astrology and the Religion of the Stars; and when juvenile Hermeticians inflate their intelligence and spirituality the stage is set for ongoing disaster.

Spiritual warriors and dedicated Stellarian now and in the future have the task of repairing all the damage done to Elbert Benjamine's Church of Light by Paul and Vicki Brewer.

The Brewers will be held accountable for all the harm they caused the Church of Light 1994-2015.

The presidency of the Church of Light is a big gig. It's a tall order. No president since Elbert has half way got it right; and some have just been plain hopeless. Paul Brewer's was a corrupt horror story. His tenure was a series of monumental failures defined by treachery, betrayal, silence and spiritual bankruptcy. He and his wife Vicki were traitors who betrayed Elbert Benjamin. Their light.org website was an imposter and a fraud. 1994 to 2015 were the darkest years in the Church of Light's short history.

In 2022 the Brewers still had 8 years to get their 10 million members.

Elbert Benjamin had requested that the Brotherhood of Light lessons be corrected for errors and supplemented with new information when necessary but the Brewers failed to carry out his request. But they did make sexist language in the Brotherhood of Light lessons an important issue.

By 2022 the world was experiencing dynamic change and those board members born in the 1940s were showing their age. But the monumental failure of light.org didn't stop Vicki Brewer and Margaret Joscher from having another go when they rebooted light.org as the Academy of Hermitic Arts and again misrepresented Elbert Benjamin's Church of Light. But that's another story.

And the Brewer's conspiracy to derail the Church of Light's longtime mission to reestablish the Religion of the Stars was almost successful. If you type Religion of the Stars into your search engine you'll find one website, amongst all the silly nonsense, that provides information on that particular topic – AstrologyforAquarius.com.

This account of the Church Light (1994-2015) by D W Sutton is part of series entitled: The Church of Light after Elbert Benjamin. All data references can be checked on light.org.

Living the Religion of the Stars

(A crusade talk by Elbert Benjamine from March 1947 C of L Quarterly.)

Key points

- Misguided beliefs and scientific prejudices
- Thimble-rigging vs. real-life experience
- Life is continuous
- Astrology
- Stellar Healing

We Stellarians have a tremendous task ahead of us. We have the task of making it impossible for any person in the world to be ignorant of the chief tenets of The Religion of the Stars, and to secure the four freedoms for all the people of the world. (Freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of expression and freedom of worship.)

In this work our one big hindrance is the difficulty of making contact with the tens of millions of people who, because of their own personal experiences and thinking, are more than eager to embrace The Religion of the Stars if it were brought to their attention.

Currently there is a new movement afoot which seeks to convince everyone that there is no inner-plane and no inner-plane forces, and that your consciousness is extinguished when your body dies. And there's the old movement which seeks to impose on everyone the conviction that there is life after death, but that its condition doesn't depend upon the exercise of intelligence, initiative and effort to gain and apply facts to the benefit of all, but upon whether or not Jesus is accepted as the savior.

Those who do not believe in a vicarious salvation are to suffer, not a year, nor a century, nor a thousand years, but for eternity, in the tortures of hell. Those who do express such belief, even though they have drifted through life on the tide of least resistance, are to spend their time singing hymns in heaven, forever and ever and ever.

Modern science – the new movement – gives no credence to the belief that we can communicate with the dead. It claims that no one has convinced a reputable committee of scientists that any proposed spirit message is genuine and that mediums who have submitted to investigation have been either exposed as charlatans, or have proved to be sincere but powerless.

Here it depends upon the definition of a modern scientist. Sir Oliver Lodge did outstanding research in electrons, ether and lightning and made important contributions to wireless telegraphy.

Sir William Crookes was a pioneer in the study of electric discharges in gasses, and certain forms of the vacuum tubes he used still bear his name. He invented the radiometer and the otheoscope and discovered the fourth or ultra gaseous state of matter. The French Academie des Sciences bestowed on him a prize of 31000 francs and a gold medal in recognition of his discoveries in molecular physics and radiant matter.

And the French astronomer, Camille Flammarion, published many works on astronomy which were widely read.

Each of these three men, and a score of others who contributed markedly to the advancement of human knowledge, spent years painstakingly investigating, individually and in committees composed of other brilliant minds, psychic phenomena and became convinced man on Earth can, and does, sometimes communicate with those who have died.

In regard to materializations, Baron Von Schrenck-Notzing in his book, 'Phenomena of Materialization' (now unfortunately out of print), gives a critical account of his own very extensive experiments, and illustrates it with reproductions from 225 photographs of materialized forms in all their various stages of development as they exude from the medium and take human shape.

And the scientist Geley made plaster casts of materialized human hands and feet. Says Charles Richet, Professor of Physiology of the University of Paris, who took part in some of these experiments, and secretly employed his knowledge of chemistry to preclude possibility of trickery: 'We therefore affirm that there was a materialization and a dematerialization of an ectoplasmic or fluidic hand, and we think that this is the first time that such rigorous conditions of experiment have been imposed.'

Because an inner-plane intelligence can produce physical phenomena only through mentally directing the electromagnetic energies of a living organism, if those present at a séance have sufficient mental power they can effectively block such a manifestation.

They become the dominant mental directing force present. And a clever sleight-of-hand performer, if allowed to arrange his conditions, can imitate the production of phenomena. Where prejudice exists, a little thimble-rigging can make it appear that professional legerdemain produces the same phenomena as that of a medium who uses no such stage props.

But no amount of thimble-rigging can convince hundreds of thousands of people who, without the aid of professional mediums, have had one or more experiences in their lives that could have taken place only if someone who had passed from the physical were still interested in them, and had impressed them, or given them an unmistakable signal.

The voluntary use of extrasensory perception presents serious problems. But innumerable people have had spontaneous experiences in which were revealed some of the conditions of the afterlife. And as other information relative to mundane matters revealed at the same time was subsequently verified, there is every reason to believe that the same faculties that enabled them to perceive physical events correctly also enabled them to correctly perceive spontaneous revelations concerning inner-plane matters.

The countless reports of those who have had such experiences – some no more than a single glimpse of the activities of the next life, and some the extensive explorations of gifted seers – not only reveal that the personality survives the tomb, but that, due allowance being given to the properties of the inner-plane due to its high velocities, human activities there are much the same as those on Earth.

People do not spend all their time listening to angels play on harps, singing hallelujah, or in kneeling down before a great white throne. Streets there are no more paved with gold than they are here. People on the inner-plane have work to do, enjoy love and friendship, and employ some of their time in recreation. And there, as here, initiative, effort, motive and ability are significant.

But the most significant fact of all is that no one is compelled to remain in the condition where at the time he finds himself. Both while on Earth and in the afterlife, there is always opportunity for progress.

While on Earth some people live in the slums, and some live in a hell of hate and envy. But it is possible for those who live in a slum to move elsewhere, and it is possible for those whose mental attitude makes a hell of their lives to change that attitude and move into a more congenial atmosphere. Likewise, in the afterlife, those who do not wish to remain where they are can move to a better environment if they will make the effort and undergo the necessary training.

Because there is life after physical death, where people continue to learn and work and have pleasure and make progress, is no reason for people to lose interest in life on Earth.

We live now, and we will live beyond the tomb. And it is just as important that we live abundantly on one plane as on the other. But to ignore the fact that life continues after the physical, as the anti-God materialists are striving their utmost to get you to do, is criminal shortsightedness.

It is criminal in that it encourages the get all you can now motive, regardless of the cost in suffering to others, because death is the end; and it is short-sighted in the same way it is short-sighted to encourage a child to ignore the requirements of adult life.

If a boy child is convinced by myopic associates that his parents would supply his needs and pleasures throughout his life, or that there would be no life after he reached the age of 21, he would no doubt decide that so much time spent in education was foolish. Instead of spending arduous hours in school, he would decide he might as well spend all his time in play.

And it is highly advantageous for the boy in his youth to be given the facts about the conditions he will encounter in adult life by those who guide him. The more facts he has, the better he can prepare to meet and prosper among those conditions.

And the more facts you have about the conditions you will encounter after your life on Earth is done, the better you can prepare, not to sing hallelujah before a great white throne where all your needs and pleasures are supplied with no thought or effort on your own part, but to meet the responsibilities of that life.

And in preparing to meet the responsibilities of either life there is no better guide than a correct knowledge of astrology. I do not refer to the popular general indications; nor to the astrology which allegedly tells your fortune from the cradle to the grave. It is one of the misfortunes of astrology that attempts are made, and given great publicity, to use it in ways and for purposes that are beyond its scope.

Astrology, like the operation of all principles in nature, has well defined limits. And until the public learns these limits, as well as its sound uses, it will repeatedly be brought into discredit.

But Hermetic astrology when properly understood will indicate the natural aptitudes of a child, or an adult, and show how best they can be developed into abilities.

It will indicate his predisposition to develop a physical, mental or moral weakness, and show him (or his parents) what steps he should take to prevent these predisposition's developing into maladies.

And the progressed aspects will indicate, not inevitable events, but when these maladies will be likely to develop, when disasters will threaten, and when opportunities or good fortune are apt to arrive.

This knowledge enables the individual to take timely precautionary actions to prevent the disease or other weakness from developing, to avoid disasters when they threaten, to take advantage of opportunity, and to make the most of good fortune when it arrives.

The Religion of the Stars embraces the facts of astrology – not the many prevalent fallacies about astrology.

And those who live this religion use them as a guide to the actions they should take, the emotions they should cultivate, the type of thinking they should use, and the environment they should seek, and when they should employ these factors, to enable them to live to their highest physically, mentally and spiritually.

And in this endeavor they do not ignore the advantages of living on Earth, nor the fact that in due time they will be required to live on the inner-plane. They use astrology, extrasensory perception, induced emotion and directed thinking to get the most out of life for themselves, and to contribute most to the welfare of others.

Either here or hereafter they do not expect someone else, either a parent or a savior, to do everything. They are aware that progress, on Earth or in the after-life, cannot be made for one by another. Here or hereafter, no one can develop another's character or his intelligence. This is work you must do for yourself.

The most that another can do using astrology is to indicate where and when effort can be used to best advantage, and what methods will yield the highest returns.

It is not selfish, and it is not unspiritual, to desire to make progress. While it is true that the more progress you make the more you benefit yourself, it is also true that the more you progress the more you are able to assist others.

Here and hereafter, the level of existence occupied by your soul – your real character or self – depends upon your dominant vibratory rate. The more spiritual you are, the higher the level of existence you occupy.

There is no place in The Church of Light for those who are content to live a materialistic two-dimensional existence. Every person who becomes a member must first sign a contract, paragraph 2 of which reads: 'It is my desire to live the Life of the Spirit, here and now, upon this Earth, and to that end I agree to devote some time and energy to the assistance of others without thought of recompense.'

Those members who live up to this agreement thereby become more spiritual; for all the time and effort they spend in assisting others without thought of recompense increases their own spirituality.

Of course this matter of being of assistance to others without thought of recompense is not confined to those who practice The Religion of the Stars.

The early Christians placed great emphasis on healing in their effort to assist others. We emphasize that our members should both teach and practice The Religion of the Stars, and according to the Bible, Jesus commanded his followers, and emphasized them in a manner to imply they were of equal importance, that they were to 'Preach the Gospel and to heal the sick.'

And historians record that healing was a common practice among all the believers in Christianity for several hundred years after the crucifixion. Irenaeus, in 110 AD, for instance, chronicles, 'Man healed the sick by laying their hands on them.' And the last command Jesus gave – Mark 16:17-18 – indicated how those who were true Christians might be known from those who were mere pretenders to Christianity: 'And these signs shall follow them that believe;. . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.'

While healing the sick is only one avenue by which assistance can, and should, be given to others, it is a function of great importance. It was stressed by the early Christians, and it is stressed by those who practice The Religion of the Stars. When people are ill they cannot do as much for themselves or for others as when they are well.

The success of all non-physical methods of treatment – including Metaphysical healing, New Thought healing, Christian Truth healing, Mental healing, Divine healing and Yoga healing – depends upon altering the composition, the activity or the organization of the thought-cells within the astral form.

The general principle involved in all these healing methods is to bring about thought-cell and thought structure changes by prayer, affirmation, suggestion, or other means of directing thoughts to the accomplishment of the healing process. Such healing is applicable to oneself, or it can be used to give absent treatments to others. Full instructions are given in Brotherhood of Light lessons.

For a thought or mental image to affect the thought-cells, organic electromagnetism must be utilized; and for the thought-cells to bring about changes in the physical body organic electromagnetism must be employed. The inner-plane and outer-plane exchange energies and influence each other only through boundary-line energies having the velocity of light.

This organic electromagnetism is also the life of your body.

When you treat yourself through mental alchemy or prayer, your own electromagnetism is utilized by the changed thought structure to bring about corresponding changes in your physical body. When you give absent treatments, the electromagnetism of the patient is used by the changed thought structure to bring about changes in their physical body.

But when through laying-on-of-hands, or holding the hands close to the patient's body, the healer imparts much additional electromagnetism to the patient, this gives the patient vital energy, and at the same time affords the type of energy in abundance needed by the changed thought-cells to alter the physical cells and functions of the body.

Furthermore, as electromagnetism is the natural conductor of astral energy, and is itself plastic and directed by astral energy in the form of thought, the thoughts of the healer more readily reach the thought-cells of the patient, and have much more power, when they flow, along with his electromagnetism, through his hands to the patient.

That much of the healing accomplished by Jesus was assisted by his electromagnetism, and was not due to the mental factor alone, is indicated by His so often touching the patient. The mental factor was an important one, as revealed by His remark to the sick woman who touched the hem of His garment: 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.'

But as Mark 5:30 relates this episode, when she had secretly touched His clothes: 'And Jesus immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned about in the press and said, Who touched my clothes?' If the woman had been cured solely by her own mental attitude, it would not have been reported that virtue went out of Jesus to her in the healing process. This virtue was an actual healing energy which passed through the body of the healer to the body of the one healed.

Because progressed aspects are observed to coincide with characteristic events in your life, including events due to changes in the desires and activities of your thought-cells, there is ample evidence that planetary energies influence your thought-cell organization and activities. So any selected type of planetary energy can be tuned in on by a stellar healer, to vastly reinforce the thoughts they deliver to the thought-cells of the patient through the electromagnetism which flows from their hands.

There is no intention here of disparaging absent treatments; for we daily get enthusiastic reports from those who write in to Church of Light Headquarters for help with their health. And even more satisfactory results are obtained by those who personally attend a Church of Light Public Stellar Healing Service.

In all Branch Churches, Centers and Study Groups where there is a member who has some natural ability as a stellar healer, we encourage regular Stellar Healing Services as one avenue of assisting others and thus living The Religion of the Stars. However, not everyone can be a successful stellar healer.

In individual stellar healing the healer is guided as to the specific planetary energies to use by stellar diagnosis. In public stellar healing he raises his own consciousness to contact the all-pervading Divine Intelligence, and relies on Divine Intelligence to select the planetary and other invisible energies which are directed by mental power into the healing process.

As the early Christians were illiterate, this general method of giving treatments – although the hands were laid on or just over the patient to facilitate the flow of electromagnetism carrying the planetary energies and thoughts to the inner-plane structure of the patient – was the one commonly employed.

But 1,400 years before the time of those early Christians our good brother, Akhenaten of Egypt developed a method by which a stellar healer could deliver to the selected group of thought-cells of a patient, harmonious planetary energy of the type desired and in a manner which could produce the same change and activity of the thought-cells as would be induced by a harmonious progressed aspect from the planet.

This method of giving individual stellar healing treatment embraced laying-on-of-hands as practiced by the early Christians; but instead of the more general method used by them, it first determined the exact thought-cells that must be changed to bring good health, and then it used the specific planetary energy and the specific thoughts that most effectively would help the healer to bring about the required change.

The thought-cells whose composition, organization, and activity needed to be changed, and the specific thoughts and planetary energies needed to change them were determined through astrology.

Furthermore, as all the ills of human life are due to the reaction of thought-cells with the physical environment, not only the diseases of the physical body, but the other ills as well, can be successfully treated by this method of stellar healing.

Whether the healer uses mental healing, stellar healing, or employs physical methods or agents, it is a great advantage for him to know specifically the difficulty from which the patient suffers, and thus be able to apply a remedy selected specifically to correct the difficulty. Thus any type of healer can make his work more successful through learning Stellar Diagnosis.

This does not mean that physical symptoms should be ignored. Such symptoms alone, however, are often misleading. Combined with a map of the organization of the thought-cell structure of the finer body, which is afforded by the birth chart; and a map of its present condition, as revealed by the progressed aspects; a much clearer, comprehensive and accurate picture of the difficulty is presented.

If the disease is to be healed permanently the thought-cell condition which it expresses should be permanently altered but this does not imply that physical remedies are without value. Let anyone who believes physical remedies are worthless go without food and water for a few weeks or without air for as much as ten minutes.

The greater the facilities afforded the thought-cells by the physical environment, the less extra-physical power they will need to complete the healing.

What takes place in your life at any given time is the product of the facilities of physical environment and the pressure brought to bear upon it by your thought-cells.

The greater the resistance offered by physical environment to the events and conditions your thought-cells desire, the more power these thought-cells must have to be able to bring these events and conditions into your life.

The thought-cells desiring destruction of the physical body or some part of it, need only have the additional energy afforded by a weak progressed aspect to cause the body to be attacked by disease if facilities for the disease are sufficiently present in the environment.

Lack of vitamins in the food, over abundance of proteins or starch in the food, mineral poor foods, contact with virulent bacteria or viruses, and exposure to wet and cold, lower the resistance of the environment to the pressure of the disease-seeking thought-cells.

On the other hand, even the most powerful discordant progressed aspect may be unable to give the disease-seeking thought-cells enough activity to overcome the resistance offered them by the physical body if the foods recommended for the particular planetary affliction are eaten in abundance.

Assisting others to gain health is only one avenue by which those who have some ability along this line are able to contribute to the welfare of others, and thus live The Religion of the Stars. Others, who have ability in that direction, devote time, without thought of recompense, to teaching Church of Light classes, or conducting Church of Light meetings.

Those who pass examinations can start a class in their own home. Others can lecture, or otherwise make the four orders of facts known to a still wider public. And those who make financial contributions can help us reach new students. Our policy has been, and is, to depend upon voluntary help to keep our church solvent, and to spread The Religion of the Stars. In this noble work everyone should help.

Let us daily apply our religion

(An Elbert Benjamine article from the September 1944 Rising Star.)

To live The Religion of the Stars requires neither a long face nor pious hypocrisy. But it does require that the devotee should make a never-ceasing effort to guide their thoughts and feelings into channels which will improve their character. And it does require that the devotee should be active, that his actions should be determined not by narrow bigotry, intolerance, and the 'I'm holier than thou' attitude, and not chiefly by thoughts of advantages to self, but by what, to the best of his knowledge, will contribute most to the welfare of all mankind.

All souls pass through the animal stage of evolution. And until it gets a higher than animal point of view, each soul acts from animal motives. Looking back upon actions which were prompted by bestial desires, or by greed and selfishness, is how they chain the soul to lower vibratory levels. It retards the development of character and its development alone opens up the higher and more enjoyable types of happiness.

The devotee of The Religion of the Stars does not bewail their shortcomings. Instead they recognize that they are undergoing the education necessary to enable them to become a valuable workman in the development of God's Great Evolutionary Plan. They look upon their past transgressions of Nature's laws, including actions prompted by selfishness or ignoble desire, as lessons in that education which they don't need to learn again. Instead, they use these experiences as signboards warning of dangers which in the future they must avoid.

To be a constructive workman in the realization of God's Great Evolutionary Plan you need not wait until you are highly skilled. You can do something beneficial to others every day. And as your character and the use of your natural aptitudes develop, your efforts will become correspondingly more fruitful.

But to be truly helpful to others you must know your character, as well as your desires. And the best way to learn of your character, and what will be apt to help or injure, is to know your birth chart.

Furthermore, in the improvement of your character, so that you will be able to contribute more and more to the welfare of others, it is not enough to merely resolve to live according to the ideals of your religion. Deep-seated habits will oppose carrying the resolve into action. To be successful in living your religion, you must learn about your own character mapped by your chart of birth, and intelligently apply induced emotion and directed thinking to establish new and better habit systems.

To live The Religion of the Stars requires no vow of celibacy and poverty. It requires no crucifixion of the flesh. Neither does it countenance lust or low desires, nor the acquisition of wealth at the expense of poverty to others. To contribute to the welfare of the world it is an advantage for you to have economic security, good health and to be happy.

But if you are to acquire the habits which will enable you to become more and more skilled in the work of assisting to build the cosmos accordingly God's design, you must through the facts of astrology, the facts of extrasensory perception, the facts of induced emotion and the facts of directed thinking learn how to develop your potentialities and use them for the benefit of not merely yourself, but of others. This you can best do by daily application.

Let us, therefore, daily apply our religion. Let us daily study how best to improve our characters. Let us analyze each situation presented to ascertain the actions which when taken will be most beneficial to others. And by daily thinking, feeling and acting in the manner which will most benefit all, let us be outstanding examples of those who live by The Religion of the Stars.