

MESSAGE: "IT IS THE WAY!"

PSALM 34:11-16

One of the most difficult parts of relationships is making the right decisions about our relationships. There needs to be a standard by which we determine what is proper in our relationship with God and others.

Paul writes to Timothy about determining proper faith and the relationships that define that faith. It is interesting that Paul chose to establish these principles while in prison facing death for his faith.



What is relationship?

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Timothy was born in the Roman colony of Lystra in Asia Minor. His mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were Jewish while his father was not and must have been opposed having his son raised Jewish because Timothy was not circumcised as a child. We can assume that Timothy's father was likely in the Roman military and retired to Lystra and may have desired that his son enter the military or politics where being identified as a Jew would hamper his career paths. We do not know if Timothy's father was still alive when Paul visited Lystra.

Lois and then Eunice joined the Christian community and led Timothy into the faith.

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Lois, Eunice and Timothy by
JD Partridge, 1885

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PSALM 34:11-16 [NLT]

- 11 Come, my children, and listen to me,
and I will teach you to fear the LORD.
- 12 Does anyone want to live a life
that is long and prosperous?
- 13 Then keep your tongue from speaking evil
and your lips from telling lies!
- 14 Turn away from evil and do good.
Search for peace, and work to maintain it.
- 15 The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right;
his ears are open to their cries for help.
- 16 But the LORD turns his face against those who do evil;
he will erase their memory from the earth.



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Posters from Disney Lucasfilm's "Mandalorian" Characters: the Mandalorian and Cara Dune. This week Gina Carano [Cara Dune] was fired for expressing political/social views online.

It struck me as ironic that the Disney Lucasfilm's "The Mandalorian" series chose that the followers of the Mandalorian code identified themselves by the statement "it is the Way". According to the storyline the Mandalorian people faced annihilation by the Empire [Star Wars] and so developed a code of conduct identified as "the Way". By the way [*pun intended*], after the events of this last week I have decided not to watch the Mandalorian or its spin offs, even though I was deeply enjoying it.

Acts 9:2

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ACTS 9:1-5 *2

1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest **2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.**

3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."



Victor Paul
Wierwille
[1916-1985]
The Way
International
[1942]

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PSALM 34:11-16

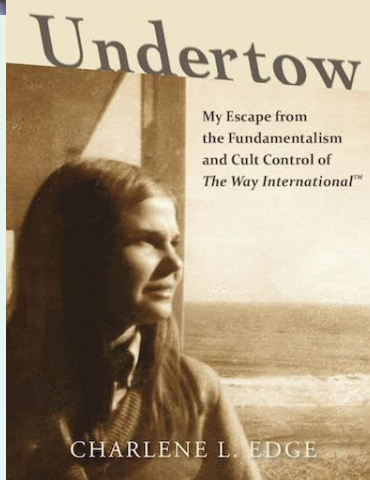
In the 1950s, a Christian cult developed under a charismatic leader Victor Paul Weirwille. He had begun a Bible Study organization called "The Way" in 1942. He began his career as an ordained minister in the *Evangelical and Reformed Church* [later the *United Church of Christ*]. In 1951 he began to develop doctrines that were distinctly unchristian. He renounced his biblical training in favor of new methods, supposedly learned from the Holy Spirit. Eventually he rejected the doctrines of the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ and the personhood of the Holy Spirit. In 1953 he started "The Way International" it would become one of the fastest growing religious youth movements of the 1960 and 70s.

They intentionally infiltrated campus ministries like Campus Crusade and Youth For Christ and targeted vulnerable people struggling with faith.

In 1970, 19 year old, Charlene joined this "cult". She left college to do missionary work for the cult and married a man in leadership.



"A brilliantly written and timely warning against falling into the trap of thinking we're the self-proclaimed 'chosen.'" —FRANK SCHAEFFER, AUTHOR OF *CRAZY FOR GOD*



Charlene Edge, In 2017 she authored the book "Undertow" about her experience.

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She and her husband though estranged moved up the ladder of

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For 17 years she and her husband, though estranged moved up the ladder of leadership in the organization. In 1953 while editing materials at their headquarters she was confronted by the dishonesty of Victor Paul Wierwille's writings.

In 1987 shortly after his death during the power struggle over a successor, she left the organization. She divorced her 1st husband in 1991. She remarried in 2001.

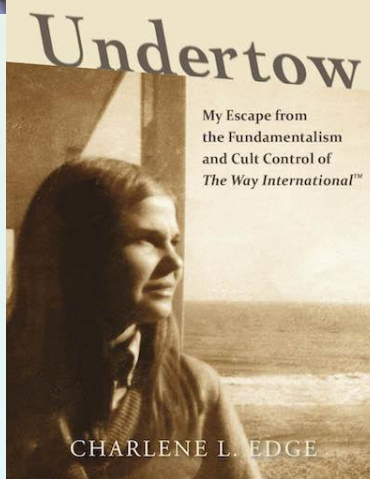
After Wierwille's death in 1985 the organization went through a serious power struggle but continued to grow. In 2000 its president, L. Craig Martindale, was accused of sexual abuse of members. It was discovered at that time that sexual abuse within the organization went back to its founder Weirwille. The organization since then has all but collapsed.

They intentionally play down their connection with both Wierwille and Martindale.

Charlene Edge does not claim any faith, nor is interested in renewing her Roman Catholic faith from childhood.



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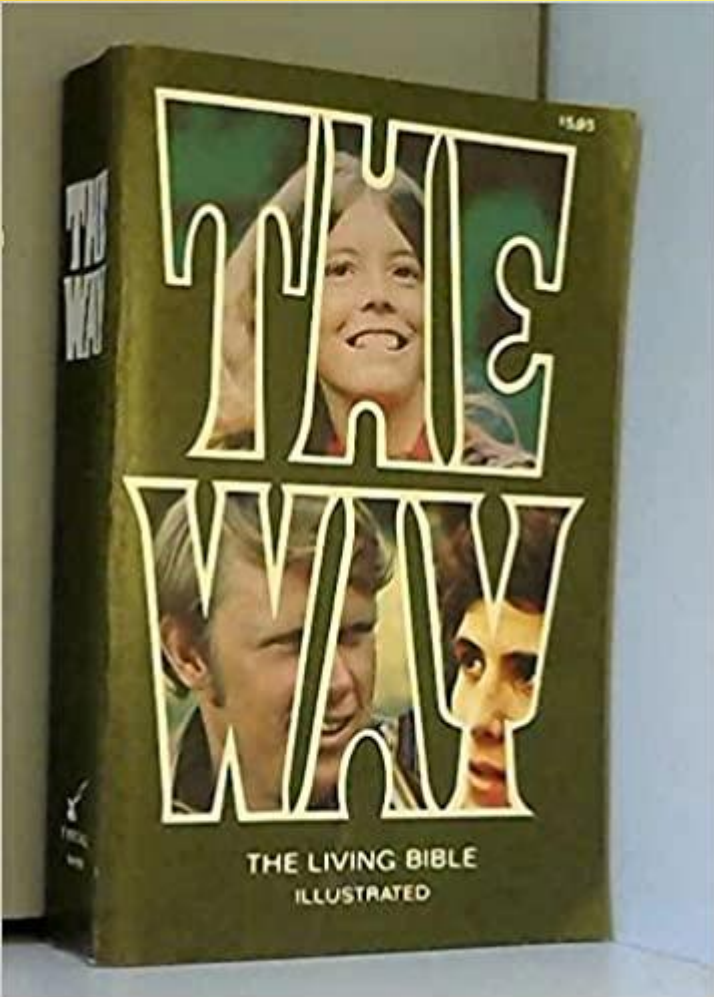
Charlene
Edge, In
2017 she
authored
the book
"Undertow"
about her
experience.

2 PETER 2:1-3

1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction.

2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.



The Way Living Bible was published in 1972, designed to reach the Jesus Movement generation.

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The Living Bible Paraphrase was completed in 1971. It was the work of Kenneth N. Taylor. Billy Graham read the Living Letters [Pauline Epistles] in the 1960's and became a promoter of the Living Bible Paraphrase. With its completion Tyndale publishers joined with the Billy Graham organization to produce "The Way" illustrated Living Bible. The Jesus Movement was at its height and this was seen as a means of making the Bible relevant to the this generation. The Living Bible became one of the best selling Bibles in the United States. It was criticized for sloppy translation so Kenneth Taylor and Tyndale hired scholars to revise the paraphrase.

Instead, they produced a new translation the New Living Translation was published in 1996. It underwent 2 revisions since and as of 2014 it was the 2nd most purchased translation of the Bible in the USA. Its appeal is the simplicity of the language and structure like its namesake the Living Bible.

Acts 18:24-26

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ACTS 18:24-26

24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John.

26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

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Melissa Dougherty and her daughter Jasmine [age 10] just began a series on speaking to your children about Biblical doctrines [at the present there are 3 videos in the series].

What Melissa has noticed is that this generation of Christian parents are uncomfortable with discussing their faith, Christian doctrine and hard Biblical topics with their children.

She decided with encouragement from Jasmine to tape some of their discussions to help Christian parents with these discussions.

Melissa Dougherty has her own Facebook page and a You Tube channel. I would encourage you to look her up.

2 Timothy 3:10-17 [2 Timothy 1:5]



Melissa Dougherty and her daughter Jasmine on the set of Melissa's You Tube channel.

2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17

10 But you, Timothy, certainly know what I teach, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance. 11 You know how much persecution and suffering I have endured. You know all about how I was persecuted in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra — but the Lord rescued me from all of it. 12 Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13 But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will deceive others and will themselves be deceived.

14 But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. 15 You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. 17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

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"Teaching The Scriptures" by
Sandy Freckleton Gagon,
2016 – Eunice trains her son
Timothy.

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In Psalm 34 David is facing the fear of being discovered and killed in the city of Gath. He pretends madness to avoid execution. When he is expelled from Gath he writes this Psalm as an expression of the lesson he has learned and the need to have a solid faith that helps you make good decisions.

In this psalm he lays down the principle that:
Spiritual instruction in our lives and
those of our children and
grandchildren must be intentional.

Jesus would say: "I am the Way"

John 14:6

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JOHN 14:6

5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

7 “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”