

PAGANISM & THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

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Now Does Archaeology Help?

- ▣ Illuminate ancient worldviews
- ▣ Melting Pot
- ▣ Paganism – Oldest and Most Prominent
- ▣ Learn from Snapshot
- ▣ Characteristics of Paganism
 - Practices
 - Beliefs
 - Worldview
- ▣ How does this relate to the Christian Worldview?

Word of Warning

- ▣ How can someone believe this stuff?
 - Spiritual encounters
 - Situations where the ends appeared to be the result of the means
- ▣ Solving questions

Paganism

- ▣ *Paganus* (Latin)
 - *Pagus* – meaning a village or country district
 - Rural or rustic
 - One not enlisted through baptism as a soldier of Christ
- ▣ Perform rites or cult acts, but profess no creed or doctrine
- ▣ Not strongly committed to revealed belief
- ▣ Not exhorted to faith – state of uneducated

Paganism

- ▣ No heresy
- ▣ Cult Act, not belief was all that was required
- ▣ Yet...
 - Action implies intention, motive or purpose, thus underlying beliefs existed while not dogmatically.

How Does Paganism Answer the Worldview Questions?

What is the Nature of
Ultimate Reality?



Persephone/Kore – Queen of the underworld, spring, fertility of vegetation

G R E E K

Hades (Pluto – Roman) –
God of the underworld,
defeated Titans





Hermes – Messenger of the gods, trickster, intercessor between mortals and divine, protector of travelers, herdsmen, thieves

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Nemesis – divine retribution, vengeful fate, revenge



EGYPTIAN

Set (Seth) – desert, storms,
disorder, violence, foreigners



Osiris – afterlife, underworld, dead



What is the Nature of Ultimate Reality?

▣ Paganism

- Polytheistic
 - ▣ Some recognized a supreme god, but worshipped the lesser god(s) also
- Characteristics
 - ▣ Fickle/Changeable
 - ▣ Limited power
 - Location oriented
 - Operation oriented
 - ▣ Impersonal
 - ▣ Finite

▣ Christian

- Monotheistic
- Characteristics
 - ▣ Unchanging
 - ▣ Omnipotent
 - ▣ Omniscient
 - ▣ Omnipresent
 - ▣ Personal
 - ▣ Infinite
 - ▣ Timeless

What is the Nature of Material
Reality?

G R E E K & R O M A N



Gaia – The earth (emerged at creation, along w sea, air, sky),
Great mother of all

Jupiter – sky god, chief deity of
state religion, divine witness to
oaths, symbolized trust and
justice



EGYPTIAN

Nut/Neuth – sky goddess



Ra – sun god, creator



What is the Nature of Material Reality?

▣ Paganism

- Nature as Theophany
 - ▣ Manifestation of divinity
 - ▣ Material is ultimate
- Worship the material rather than creator of material
- Chaotic
- Subject to the gods
- Temporal

▣ Christianity

- Nature as Creation
- Worship the creator of the material
- Fallen
- Maintained by God
- Temporal

What is a Human Being?

Egyptian Creation

Humans are the accidental result of Atum's tears of joy over finding his children



Greek Creation



Man
created to
amuse
the gods

Babylonian Creation

Out of bloodshed, humans were created to take over the unfavorable tasks of the lesser gods



What is a Human Being?

▣ Paganism

- Creation
- Insignificant
 - ▣ Servants
 - ▣ Happy accident
 - ▣ Amusement of gods

▣ Christianity

- Special Creation
- Image bearers of God
- Fallen
- Loved by God

What Has Gone Wrong?



What Has Gone Wrong?

▣ Paganism

- Ultimately - Nothing
- Misfortune, Pain and Suffering the result of
 - ▣ Chaotic world
 - ▣ Mischievous or angry gods
 - ▣ Mistakenly not pleasing a particular god
 - ▣ Curse by another

▣ Christianity

- Sin entered via transgression against God
- Misfortune, Pain and Suffering the result of
 - ▣ Nature and humanity bearing the mark of the fallen state

What is the Solution?

Forms

- ▣ Curse Tablets
- ▣ Human Sacrifice
- ▣ Cult Prostitution



Thoth – maintains universe,
arbitrates godly disputes,
magic, writing, science, judge
of dead

E G Y P T I A N & G R E E K

Hecate - Goddess of witchcraft,
night, new moon, ghosts,
necromancy



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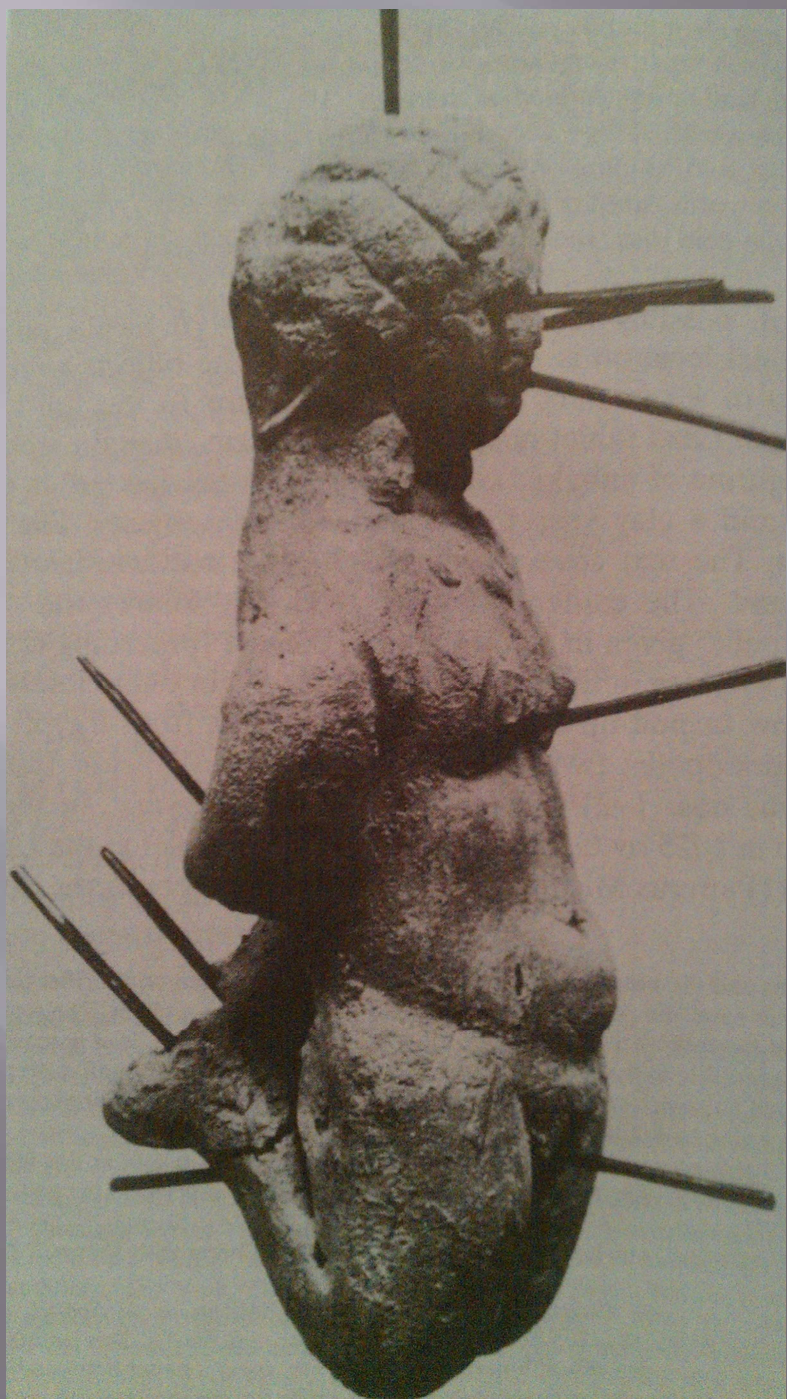
Cronus/Kronos – Titan, father of Zues, patron of harvest



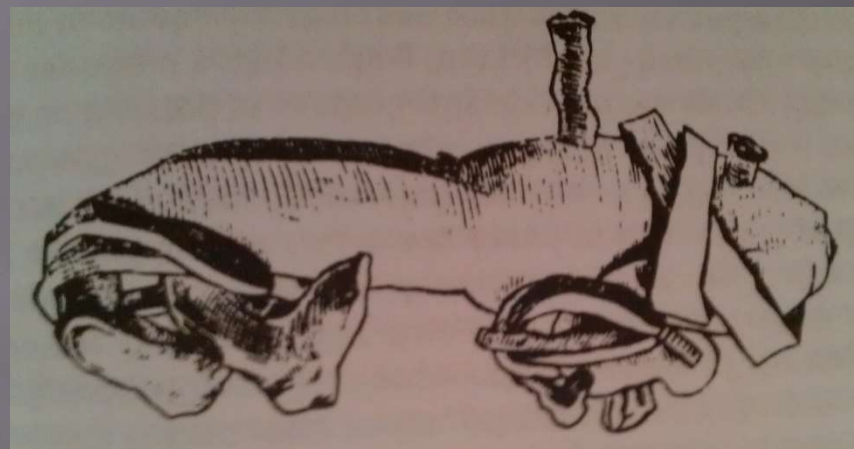
Hermes – Messenger of the gods, intercessor between mortals and divine

Magic thru Curse Tablets

- ▣ Harm to Others or Bring Object of Desire
- ▣ Mystical Words
- ▣ Deity Selection
 - Local custom and belief
 - The curse recipes available by local experts
- ▣ Types
 - Direct binding (“I bind X”)
 - Prayer formulas appealing to supernatural (“Restrain X”)
 - Persuasive analogies (“As this lead is cold and useless, so may X be cold and useless!”)

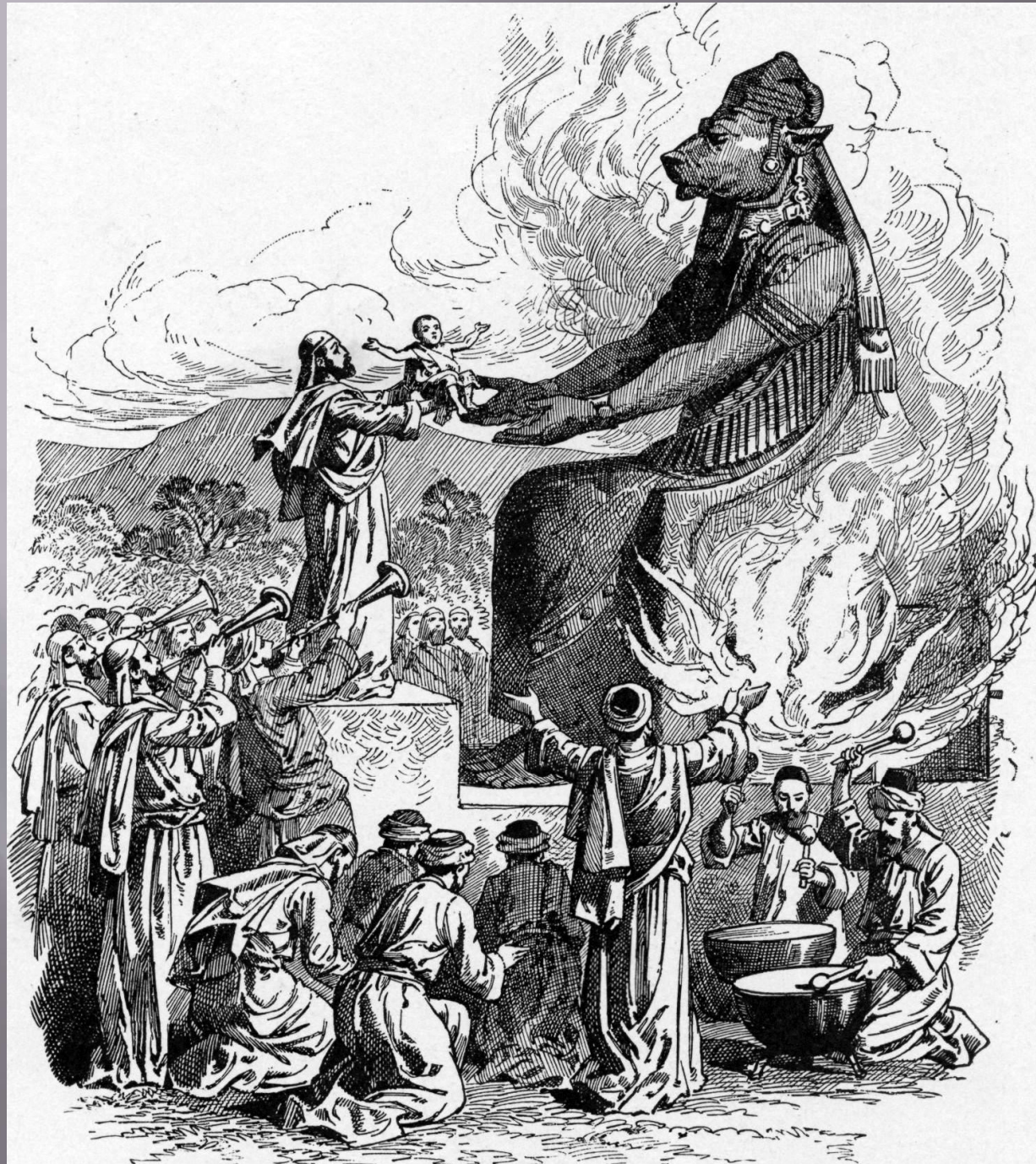


F I G U R I N E S



Sacrifice

Moloch (Molech) –
Child Sacrifice



What is the Solution?

▣ Paganism

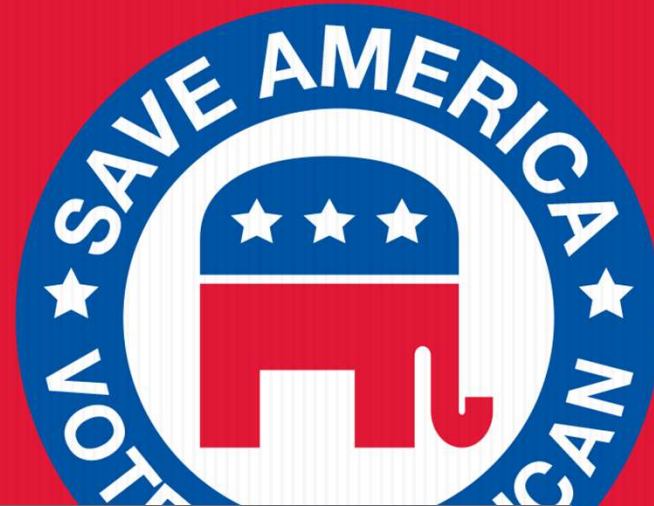
- Make the best of life by
 - ▣ Manipulation of surroundings for personal gain
 - ▣ Magic
 - ▣ Placation of gods via cult acts
 - Sacrifice
 - Ceremonial Worship
- Humans bring about solution

▣ Christianity

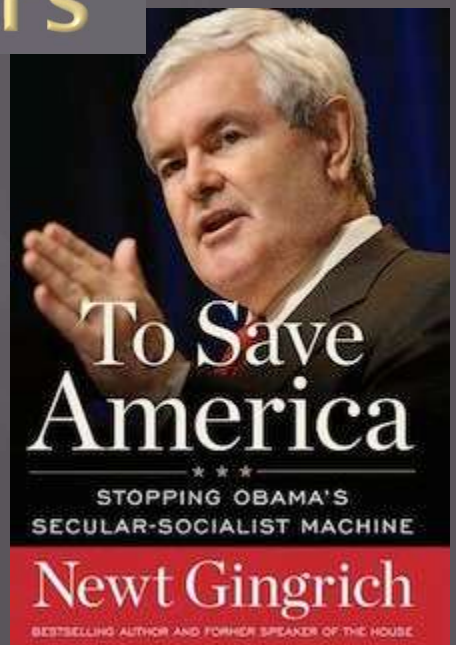
- Restoration of humanity's fallen state
 - ▣ Christ's death on the cross
 - ▣ Human acceptance and recognition of Jesus as Lord and Savior
- God brings about solution

How is Paganism Resurfacing in Modern Culture?

**POD SAVE
AMERICA**



Limited Beings with
Supernatural Powers





Do you think God prays? If so does he pray to himself?

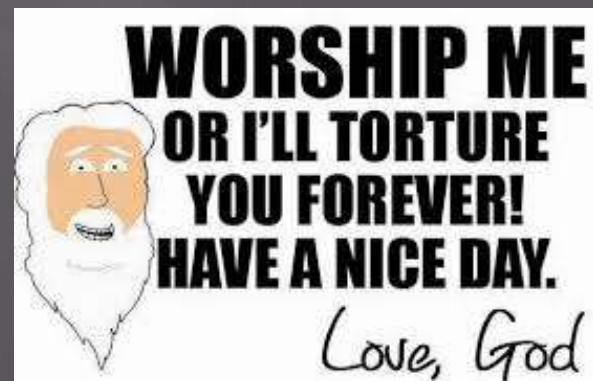
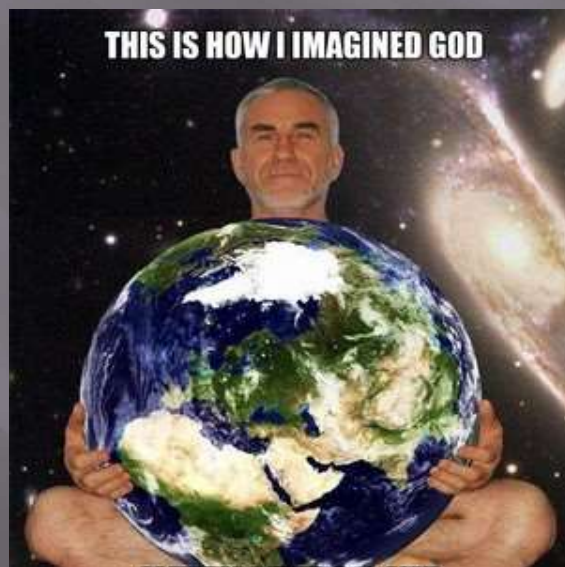
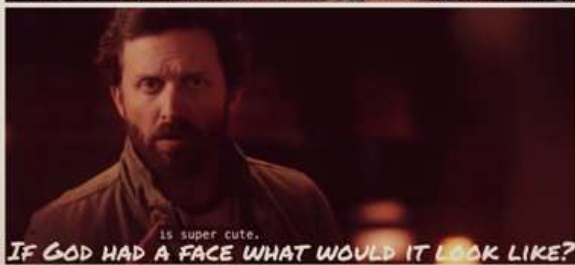


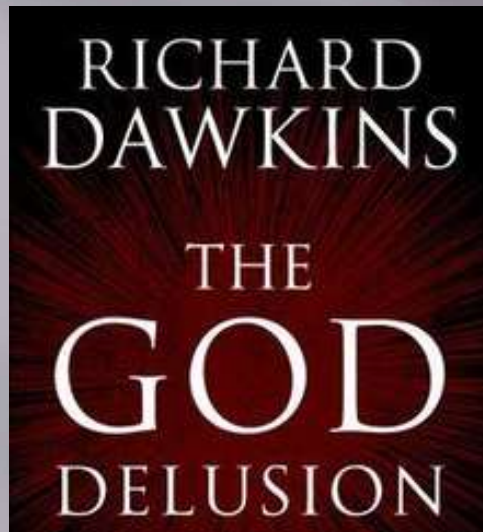
If so, does that make him a narcissist or schizophrenic?



Mark Jacobson
Karen Kuehn

Limited Beings with Supernatural Powers





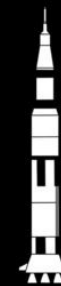
“The lack of understanding of something is not evidence for God. It’s evidence of a lack of understanding.” *Lawrence M. Krauss*

Atheist Republic .com

Material is Ultimate



Science
flies you
to the
moon

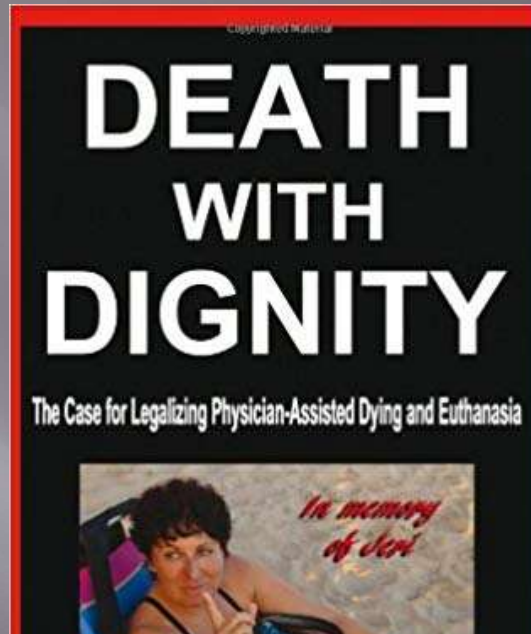


religion
into
skyscrapers

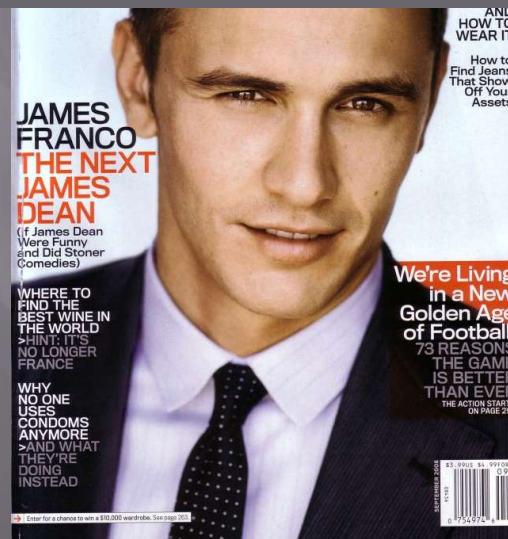


Material is Ultimate





Humanity is Insignificant



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meg RYAN the surprising thing she loves about being a single mom
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STOP YOUR STRESS 21 smart strategies

Nothing is
Ultimately
Wrong

So...

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Best Out of
Life

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Where Do We Go From Here?

Lessons from the Early Church

- ▣ Hope is not lost!
 - Christianity started with 500 people and became the official religion of Rome within 300 years.
 - If the tomb is empty, ANYTHING is possible!

Lessons from the Early Church

- ▣ Obedience and Right Belief are Important
 - First Christians did not have *faith* in the facts. They reported what they *KNEW* because of what they saw.
 - ▣ Their faith was in the *implications* of the historical event (that it atoned for their sin).
 - We need to **KNOW WHY** Christianity is true and we need to **KNOW WHAT** Christianity is (and isn't).

Lessons from the Early Church

- ▣ Evangelism is Everyone's Job!
 - Don't leave it to the pastor, elder, Sunday school teacher.
 - Tell everyone you know about what Christ has done in and through and to you!

Lessons from the Early Church

- ▣ Meet People Where They Are
 - Feed the hungry
 - House the homeless
 - Take care of the widows and orphans
 - Love the homosexual
 - Take care of the woman who had an abortion
 - Befriend the transgender
 - Have coffee with your political opposite
 - Lend a helping hand to the sexually unrestrained
 - AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THEM!



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