Introduction

Deep trance can dramatically alter one’s perception of reality, whether occasioned by traditional hypnosis, meditation, prayer, long term fasting, hypnotic religious rituals, or walking for miles in the hot desert. A popular misconception about hypnosis is that it involves a sleeping state, in which the subject is covertly forced to adopt thoughts and behaviours for which they would otherwise harbour an
aversion. The trance-state is usually induced via hypnosis while the subject is wide awake; this state is known as the ‘waking trance’ and it is the most common form of trance. Under this waking trance, it is unlikely that hypnosis alone can cause the subject to think and behave in a manner that is contrary to their moral constitution, for it is incapable of making a subject more gullible than they are when not in trance.

Subjects under hypnosis will usually remain acutely aware of their surroundings and may not even know that they are in the hypnotic state. The trance-state is a relaxing, slightly altered form of consciousness, which is very natural and commonly experienced by everyone, every day. During our favourite TV shows, driving down a long stretch of highway, or while washing the dishes, we all go into trance daily and we are seldom aware that we are in trance. Have you ever been in a daze while being asked questions by someone and you ended up asking them what you had just agreed to? Have you ever walked into a room to get something and then forgotten why you had entered that room, or what it was you were looking for? Because trance is so regularly experienced, it makes it hard to tell when we are going in and out of it. It is familiar to all of us.

Before discussing hypnosis and how it is employed in the church service, I must offer a brief qualification. I will be using the terms ‘unconscious’ and ‘subconscious’ interchangeably, although they are, strictly speaking, not the same thing. The unconscious mind is best described as a deep level of consciousness, in which, near-inaccessible thoughts are housed; whereas the subconscious mind refers to that level of awareness just below the conscious mind. The best way to distinguish between the two would be to say that a repressed memory, say, a traumatic one, exists in the unconscious mind, whereas a friend’s telephone number, which sits just below the level of the conscious mind before it is requested, is stored in the subconscious; it can be consciously recollected if required. The reason I am able to use these two conceptual constructs interchangeably is because I am using them informally with regards to awareness.

What is Hypnosis?

Hypnosis involves the production of a state of mind usually induced by a procedure known as the hypnotic induction. The induction commonly involves a long series of preliminary instructions and suggestions. Hypnotic suggestions may be delivered by a hypnotist in the presence of the subject, or may be self-administered (“self-suggestion” or “auto-suggestion”). The words ‘hypnosis’ and ‘hypnotism’ both derive from the term ‘neuro-hypnotism’ (nervous sleep) coined by the Scottish surgeon James Braid in 1841. Braid based his practice on the earlier work of Franz Anton Mesmer, whose name represents the etymological root of the word ‘mesmerized.’ In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Mesmer developed a practice known as ‘Mesmerism’ or ‘animal magnetism.’ He was influenced by the earlier work of Father Maximilian Hell, a Catholic Priest who had been using magnets and prayer to hypnotize subjects, and he was alleged to have had some minimal success in healing hysterical conditions, such as hysterical blindness and other psychologically rooted conditions. Contemporary research suggests that hypnosis is a wakeful state of focused attention and heightened suggestibility, with diminished peripheral awareness. This heightened state of suggestibility is the primary focus of this chapter.

The 5 Stages of Hypnosis

A typical hypnotherapy session contains five stages:

1. Introduction
2. Induction
3. Deepening
4. Suggestion and;
5. Awakening. 

It is the contention of this author that all of these stages can be found within most Christian church services, although they vary from service to service. The hypnotic techniques employed during church sessions have served to further entrench Christian beliefs into the minds of Christian subjects, and such manipulation underscores, at least in large part, the mentally manipulative package offered by the Christian religion. According to professional hypnotists, the subject’s mind must contain four primary criteria in order for hypnosis to be effective. The acronym is known in the profession as B.I.C.E:

1. Belief
2. Imagination
3. Conviction and;
4. Expectation [7]

These elements are frequently found in abundance in the mind of the true-believing, church-going Christian. Generally speaking, those who
When Nobel prizewinning physicist Richard Feynman was at graduate school he volunteered to be hypnotized. I am going to quote a bit from his book *Surely you’re joking Mr. Feynman!* (Vintage 1992) so that we can have a firsthand account of what it feels like to carry out a posthypnotic suggestion. “He [a hypnotist] started to work on me and soon I got into a position where he said, ‘You can’t open your eyes. ‘I said to myself, ‘I bet I could open my eyes, but I don’t want to disturb the situation: Let’s see how much further it goes.’ It was an interesting situation. You’re only slightly fogged out, and although you’ve lost a little bit, you’re pretty sure you could open your eyes. But of course, you’re not opening your eyes, so in a sense you can’t do it. “He went through a lot of stuff and decided that I was pretty good. “When the real situation. You’re only slightly fogged out, and although you’ve lost a little bit, you’re pretty sure you could open your eyes. But of course, you’re not opening your eyes, so in a sense you can’t do it. “He went through a lot of stuff and decided that I was pretty good. “When the real demonstration came he walked on stage and he hypnotized us in front of the whole Princeton Graduate College. This time the effect was stronger; I guess I had learned how to become hypnotized. The hypnotist made various demonstrations, having me do things I couldn’t normally do, and at the end he said that after I came out of hypnosis, instead of returning to my seat directly, which was the natural way to go, I would walk all the way around the room and go to my seat from the back.
All through the demonstration I was vaguely aware of what was going on, and cooperating with the things the hypnotist said, but this time I decided, 'Damn it, enough is enough! I'm gonna go straight to my seat.' “When it was time to get up and go off the stage, I started to walk straight to my seat. But then an annoying feeling came over me: I felt so uncomfortable that I couldn’t continue. I walked all the way around the hall." [10]

He sums up the primary points encompassed within the above example by saying:

“There are a number of things that come out of this account. One is, of course, that at NO time was Feynman unconscious of what was going on: though he clearly was not in quite a normal state of mind, but rather “fogged out”. (You will find that there is a very common misconception that hypnosis involves a total loss of awareness of proceedings.)

The second is that subjectively the thought in his mind was that he was choosing to comply with what the hypnotist suggested.

But the third thing – and the thing that impressed him and is one of the things we associate with hypnosis – is the fact that when there became an issue of conflict – when he consciously willed something at variance to what had been suggested – then he found his body doing something against his conscious will. [11]

Post hypnotic cues are established upon psychological principles of compliance and also upon what is known as a ‘pre-established automated suggestion response.’ This pre-established response gains increased effectiveness through repetition. Regular church attendees have this post-hypnotic programming deeply ingrained in their mind and every time they enter their church, the effects of the post-hypnotic cues increase. It is simply a matter of repetitive mental conditioning. The routine of going to church will also aid a faster trance induction, as repetitive behaviours tend increase access to the subconscious mind. Take experienced drivers for example, they might go off into a light trance while driving, causing them to miss an exit or a turn, because their mind had wandered off for a while. [12] This also occurs when we are engaged in other simple and monotonous tasks that require little concentration. [13] The conscious mind is distracted and takes us on a little journey into our thoughts, leaving our subconscious mind at the wheel.

For the regular church-goer, the routines associated with going to church become monotonous and almost automatic. Perhaps they wake up, have their Sunday breakfast and watch a little morning TV, or not. Then they might have a shower, or not. Following this, they might adorn their special church going clothes, or just their regular clothes. In some Christian churches, like the Pentecostal church, women are forbidden from wearing earrings, so these women might take out their earrings on this particular day, or wear a slightly longer dress than usual. Finally, perhaps, the church-goer might get into their family car and go to church, or walk. This may or may not be representative of any church-goer’s routine, however, one thing is almost certain, and that is, they will have a routine. Human beings are creatures of habit. Whether it is visiting the same places for lunch or going for walks on the same routes over and over, we tend to partake in repetitive activities. This often results in a kind of monotony-induced trance, which is the result of automatic behaviour that side lines the conscious mind for varying periods of time. Whilst at the surface, the subconscious mind is more prone to external suggestive forces. [14]

Returning to the issue of rapport, most Protestant churches usually have someone at the door to greet arriving church members and new comers. It might be the preacher, the preacher’s wife, his children, an elder of the church, or just someone on the greeting roster. The introduction at the door, or even being greeted by fellow parishioners, helps to make the attendee feel comfortable in the church environment. As mentioned, a new comer to a church might be approached by the Pastor’s wife or the pastor himself, and asked whether this is their first time. Following this, they may engage in some introductory chit chat. This is the same technique employed by hypnotherapists to gain rapport with their subjects, establish trust, and make them feel at ease. These church greeters are not consciously trying to establish rapport so they can hypnotize a new comer or regular attendee, they are just doing what is normal. It is just good manners to introduce yourself and welcome fellow church-goers and new comers to your church. There is nothing at all sinister about this. However, this does not mean that it does not achieve the task of the first stage of the hypnosis session. Once the parishioner or congregant is settled and comfortable, they are ready to begin their session.

As an aside, quite often there will be music playing as people enter the church. This music is quite often accompanied by a drum beat ranging from 45-72 beats per minute, the average rate of the human heartbeat. This melodic and rhythmic music has the effect of soothing and relaxing the attendee, preparing them for the mental state required to receive suggestions in a less critical manner. Further, the lyrics in most Christian songs are very repetitive and serve as good trance inducers. As the attendee walks in they may see people with their hands raised and their eyes closed, swaying to the music. This creates an atmosphere conducive to trance, by increasing the “religious tension” or atmosphere in the room. This atmosphere, coupled with the rhythmic beating and repetitive lyrics, sets the subject up for the next stage of the hypnosis session. Before we look at the second stage of the hypnotic church session, I would like to take a moment to highlight the important role played by the environment itself.
Has Anyone Seen my Church Hat?

Any given environment, be it school, work, home, church, or a sports stadium, carries with it a different set of cultural expectations for behaviour. That is to say, we wear different hats in different environments. Generally speaking, one wouldn’t behave at church as they would at a football match, nor would someone behave the same way at work as they do at home. In my experience, I have only met one person who almost completely ignores the expected norms associated with different environments and she, I am happy to boast, is my wife. Regardless of the few exceptions, like my wife, our environment commonly impacts upon our behaviour, which in turn, influences our thoughts, moods and feelings. These social-environmental expectations (norms) produce in the church-goer, the right frame of mind for the church experience and from the outset, they procure the attendees’ compliance.

Milton Erickson, a renowned hypnotherapist, would have his clients perform trivial tasks for him upon entering his room. For example, he might have asked them to shut the door behind them and then requested that they move their chair closer to him, anything that would get the subject responding to him without them being consciously aware of his motivation for doing so. This technique establishes a pattern of compliance-based behaviour in the subject, which results in them being more prone to suggestion during the session. Similarly, the church environment sets out its own list of compliance-based behaviour patterns, giving it the ability to increase suggestibility during the service.

The Building Itself

Frank Viola and George Barna, in their book ‘Pagan Christianity,’ discuss this issue in the following words:

Every building we encounter elicits a response from us. By its interior and exterior, it explicitly shows us what the church is and how it functions.

To put it in the words of Henri Lefebvre, “Space is never empty; it always embodies a meaning.” This principle is also expressed in the architectural motto “form follows function.” The form of the building reflects its particular function.

The social setting of a church’s meeting place is a good index of that church’s understanding of God’s purpose for His body. A church’s location teaches us how to meet. It teaches us what is important and what is not. And it teaches us what is acceptable to say to each other and what is not.

We learn these lessons from the setting in which we gather—whether it be a church edifice or a private home. These lessons are by no means neutral. Go into any given church building and exegete the architecture. Ask yourself what objects are higher and which are lower. Ask yourself what is at the front and what is at the back. Ask yourself in what ways it might be possible to “adjust” the direction of the meeting on the spur of the moment. Ask yourself how easy or hard it would be for a church member to speak where he is seated so that all may see and hear him.

If you look at the church building setting and ask yourself these questions (and others like them), you will understand why the contemporary church has the character it does. [15]

Viola and Barna go on to say:

The disjunction between worship and everyday life characterizes Western Christianity. Worship is seen as something detached from the whole fabric of life and packaged for group consumption. Centuries of Gothic architecture have taught us badly about what worship really is. Few people can walk into a powerful cathedral without experiencing the power of the space.

The lighting is indirect and subdued. The ceilings are high. The colors are earthy and rich. Sound travels in a specific way. All these things work together to give us a sense of awe and wonder. They are designed to manipulate the senses and create a “worshipful atmosphere.”

Some traditions add smells to the mix. But the effect is always the same: Our senses interact with our space to bring us to a particular state of the soul—a state of awe, mystery, and transcendence that equals an escape from normal life.”

We Protestants have replaced some of the grander architectural embellishments with a specific use of music intended to achieve the same end. Consequently, in Protestant circles “good” worship leaders are those who can use music to evoke what other traditions use space to evoke; specifically, a soulful sense of worshipfulness.” But this is disjointed from everyday life and is inauthentic. [16]

Gabriel Moser and David Uzell, two environmental psychologists add:

Understanding and designing the environment for human activity can be achieved only when both the environment and the user are considered together as one transaction.
I think it is fair to say that most people can relate to the experience of entering different environments, and the impact that these environments have on our thoughts and behaviours. We don’t usually walk into a funeral drinking beer and cheering, unless of course that happens to be your way of expressing grief, or the person being buried is someone you possessed a strong disdain for, but usually the environment will tell us what it wants from us by its layout and its socially recognized purpose. The church environment, with its architectural and interior design, its set of cultural expectations, the greeting at the door or idle chit chat with fellow congregants, the melodic music upon entry, the atmosphere created by people already slightly entranced by the “spirit,” along with the post hypnotic programming/cues, creates a powerful introduction that paves the way for a seamless transition into the hypnotic ‘induction.’

Once again, I must stress that variations exist, but whether the building is designed to elicit the introduction and induction effects, or whether it is the music, style of worship, or a combination of these elements, all churches, and even mosques, synagogues and Buddhist temples for that matter, emit a hypnotic influence over worshippers.

**Stage 2: The Induction: Removing the Filter**

The purpose of the induction stage is to have the subject enter a trance-state. A trance-state, as mentioned above, is more often than not a state of mind that does not involve deep sleep, nor a complete alteration of the mind. It is marked by a slight, almost imperceptible change in focus, accompanied by a feeling of relaxation. Listening to one’s favourite music can induce trance, along with other activities such as driving a car, washing the dishes, watching TV and many other mundane daily activities that require little participation from the conscious mind. Once the conscious mind is dismissed from the activity, the subconscious mind is brought closer to the surface. In the same way a key unlocks a door, the induction stage is concerned with accessing the subconscious mind via trance. In their book *Unlimited Selling Power*, Donald Moine and Kenneth Lloyd discuss the trance associated with everyday activities in the following words:

> Self-hypnosis occurs frequently in everyday life and can be found in such diverse activities as day-dreaming, jogging, prayer, reading, listening to music, meditation, or even driving the freeways. Once in the self-induced hypnotic state, suggestibility is greatly heightened. Psychological barriers and defenses are lowered, and the person’s unconscious becomes more receptive to new programming.[18]

As mentioned, the trance-state brings the subject’s subconscious mind to the surface. Subsequently, the subject in trance is more prone to receiving suggestions in a less critical fashion. The ease of suggestion-acceptance is occasioned by the absence of the analytical conscious mind, which questions and assesses information more rationally and critically, or as William Hewitt in his book *Hypnosis for Beginners,* puts it:

> The conscious mind does not take suggestions well. It is most useful for thinking, reasoning and putting into action those things it already knows the subconscious mind, however, is like an obedient slave. It doesn’t think or reason. [19]

Another fact about the subconscious mind that makes it useful for maintaining silly superstitious beliefs, is that it has difficulty distinguishing between fantasy and reality, which is why our dreams seem real while we are having them. In the dream, the unconscious mind is not critically evaluating the likelihood that we are actually flying over a house in pink underwear while being chased by a vicious dog with wings; it is happening now and it is real! Only upon waking do we realize it was all just a silly dream, but what happens when we don’t wake up from the fantastic fictions of subconscious fantasy? To answer in a word, religion. One could view the subconscious mind as the gateway to our conscious mind, allowing it to be manipulated in to believing things which it would otherwise see as irrational. The ‘Encyclopedia of Psychology and Behavioral Science,’ sums up the effect of hypnotically induced manipulation upon the subconscious mind:

> Hypnosis appears to diminish the ability to discriminate between fantasy and reality, and of course it involves enhanced responsiveness to suggestions. [20]

Accessing the conscious mind via the subconscious is a little like commissioning a mutiny aboard a ship. The conscious mind is the rightful captain, steering the ship and making calculated and rational decisions on behalf of the drunken and rowdy crew. However, when the captain or conscious mind is bypassed, the crew are given the power to alter the course of the ship. It is, however, the captain alone who possesses the necessary skills of navigation and engineering, so when the crew are directly accessed and given authority over the captain, the ship can be navigated in any direction, which can often result in the ship being steered off course. All of a sudden, ISIS are beheading journalists, the Westboro Baptist Church is picketing funerals and spreading toxic hate, the Islamic Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is lashing and
imprisoning innocent humanists for questioning tyrants, young girls are being shot in the face for seeking an education, and Pakistanis are unjustly imprisoning non-Muslims for alleged blasphemies, along with every other example of religion-inspired atrocity from the dawn of that psychological virus to this day.

I have already discussed factors that may help induce the trance-state, such as the monotonous nature of everyday activities, post-hypnotic programming, the environmental impact on our state of mind, and melodic music, so now I would like to focus more on the role of music in inducing trance, as it is a common element in almost all church services, and it possesses a tremendous power to illicit an emotional and automatic response from the listener.

Music and Trance Induction

Music is an effective instrument for inducing trance. It has the power to inspire, relax, and manipulate our thoughts and emotions. It is designed to engage us at both the conscious and subconscious levels. It can make a person angry, sad, happy, sleepy, or even inspire the listener with confidence before a big event. The military uses it to entrance their soldiers and get them ready for battle, and so do nations with their national anthems, which inspire an almost religious feeling in some. Members of the Voodoo religion in Haiti use it to evoke trance-states, Islam uses it to entrench the Qur’an into the minds of the Islamic masses, and the religions of antiquity would also use music to invoke the “spiritual experience.”

Left Brain Lyrics and Right Brain Rhythm

Both neuroscientists and psychologists have noted that the left hemisphere of the brain is the dominant hemisphere, involved in conscious thought processing, while the right hemisphere houses our creative and intuitive functions, responsible for interpreting music. Referring once again to the Encyclopedia of Psychology and Behavioral Science:

*The dominant (most often left) cerebral hemisphere is associated with information representation and processing, which is sequential or in series, digital, and abstract. It is characterized by analytical and logical processing that deals with detail. It plays a major role in the processing of verbal information, and in particular digital or abstract linguistic representation. Of the two cerebral hemispheres the dominant one is considered to be involved with consciousness, especially self-consciousness.*

*The minor (most often right) cerebral hemisphere is associated with information representation and processing, which is simultaneous or in parallel, analog, and holistic. It is characterised by Gestalt, analogical, and integrative processing, which deals with more spatial and global information and with novel (creative) or unfamiliar information. It plays a major role in the processing of naturomorphic or imagistic representations and in particular the processing of nonverbal and emotional information, spatial and pictorial information (symbols), and music and other non-language sounds.* [21]

Thus, music accompanied by lyrics targets the listener’s left and right hemispheres of the brain, simultaneously. It is little wonder that songs and hymns have been playing an increasingly central role in Christian worship, especially amongst Protestant, born-again, evangelical and so called charismatic or ‘new seeker’ churches, as these churches commonly lack the awe-inspiring architecture of their Catholic counterparts. In an article posted by the Unity Christian Church called ‘Suggestions for an Effective Order of Service,’ they reveal the following:

*Music has a powerful ability to move our thoughts and feelings. 80% of our theology is learned in the songs we sing. Songs can be chosen that define and apply structure in the worship service so that congregants are more completely engaged in and inspired by the message of the church’s ministry.* [22]

If one reads this with a knowledge of hypnotic trance induction, it becomes apparent that what they’re proposing is a more effective method of completely entrancing and evoking an emotional acceptance of the church’s ministry. This is not a technique indicative of an organization that is concerned with teaching, but indoctrinating; it is a technique aimed at overcoming the left brains’ rational and critical faculties, in order to hijack the psyche, or ship. The Unity Christian Church also suggest the following for an effective service. Please pay particular attention to the amount of music recommended:

*Here are some suggestions for music as part of a Sunday service and how to use and place other elements of your service.*

- **Prelude music** – usually instrumental. Prelude music sets the atmosphere you desire; sacred or upbeat. Usually 5 – 10 minutes while people enter. Prelude can also be used to teach the congregants new songs that will be sung during service. [23]
Notice they recommend that the prelude music be used to “set the atmosphere” while people are entering.

- **Gathering song** – Or Invocation. Sung by the music team and the congregation as a call to worship or to bless the space and the service. Usually sung every week, this song can be a church “theme song” about why people enjoy coming there. [24]

The dictionary definition of the word ‘invocation,’ describes, among other things, the use of magic to conjure up spirits from other worlds. [25] The truth is, however, “invocations” do little more than have the subject enter into a trance-state, so that they might perceive spirits as a result of the hypnotic induction and suggestion, which is further bolstered by the subjects’ established beliefs.

- **Congregational singing** – a mix of classic, and contemporary songs with new, message-oriented choruses sung together by the music team and congregation to support that week’s theme and establish unified presence and energy. [26]

This use of the musical induction is quite clever, as it involves suggestions that will later be reinforced in the ‘suggestion stage,’ or sermon, and so the congregational singing would have a two-pronged effect. Firstly, it would induce trance and secondly, it would act as the foundation for repetitious suggestions.

- **Recognizing visitors** – this can be done at the beginning of the service as a welcoming. Usually underscored with instrumental music. [27]

Here we have the entanglement of introduction and induction, with new comers made to feel at ease and comfortable whilst the beginnings of trance induction are underscored with instrumental music.

- **Lord’s Prayer** – many churches still use the Lord’s prayer as a familiar touchstone for visitors and those from other faiths. Unity is a Christian based faith so it is appropriate. There are many versions of the Lord’s Prayer with updated words more appropriate to our theology. The Lord’s Prayer can be sung or spoken. It is effective leading into or out of meditation…Prayer, meditation, Lord’s prayer – contemplative music played under prayer/meditation, Lord’s Prayer can be sung by congregation with music team. [28]

This induction is recommended to occur right before the ‘deepening stage’ of hypnosis, or ‘meditation,’ as it is called by many Christians. Both prayers and meditation can be used as effective deepeners, as well as inductors, discussed a little later on.

- **“Special Music” solo or choir song** VERY focused on the ministerial message of the day. Energy is thoughtful and specific. The song can be familiar, but needs lyrical content and musical style carefully chosen to set up the talk. The song can segue into the talk. [29]

Once again we observe the use of repetition and in this case, the music is being cleverly employed as a segue into the sermon, which will then repeat the same message. If we are told something over and over, we may not necessarily be convinced of its truth, although Bush’s repetition of the phrase, “Iraq has weapons of mass-destruction” had this effect, however, if one possesses an established belief and the repetition is aimed at reinforcing that belief, it will cause the subject to mentally agree with the repeated suggestion, over and over, causing an almost subliminal rhythm-based submission. This is what most Christians might refer to as “submitting to the spirit,” but in fact, it is nothing more than submitting to hypnotic suggestions that reinforce their established beliefs.

- **Minister’s message** – many ministers incorporate the song lyrics into the message or pick up on an idea from the song that was just performed to “embed” the idea more deeply. You may even want to build your message around a great song’s theme or lyrics. [30]

Here they are even using hypnotic language by proposing that the minister’s message repeat the ideas in the song lyrics so as to “embed” the idea more deeply into the mind of the believer. It does not take a genius to figure out that this technique represents the perfection of mental manipulation.

- **“Offering Song”** designed to uplift, entertain and remind congregants of the topic of the day. It’s the post-message de-programming, and doesn’t have to include an actual “passing of the plate”. [31]

I think an appropriate way to describe this part of the service would be to call it the hypnotic snatch-and-grab. In many services music will be played while the collection plate is being passed around. During this time, the speaker might be saying something like, “give to god” or “give to Jesus,” repeatedly. Needless to say, and as shocking a revelation as this might be for some Christians, Jesus does not get the money. With believers already in a highly suggestible state, the peer pressure and repeated suggestion, “give to god,” places both conscious and subconscious pressure on the congregant to pay the church. Not all churches pass around a collection plate, some just have an envelope in front of the pew so that the church goer can donate anonymously, but the collection plate is common enough to mention.
look again at the order of worship. Notice that it includes a week. And for the last five hundred years, few people have questioned it. and every time they saw these signals, they would unconsciously respond with the appropriate action. the entire class. Also, throughout the class I had certain hand signals and gestures that I used to elicit responses from my students, and each play a TPR game. These two techniques, when employed in conjunction with one another got the children responding to my instructions for start of every class, I would begin with a song accompanied by a set of actions that my young students had become familiar with, and then physically respond to commands that are either given verbally, or that have been learned in response to certain situations, or cues. At the start of every class, I would begin with a song accompanied by a set of actions that my young students had become familiar with, and then play a TPR game. These two techniques, when employed in conjunction with one another got the children responding to my instructions for the entire class. Also, throughout the class I had certain hand signals and gestures that I used to elicit responses from my students, and each and every time they saw these signals, they would unconsciously respond with the appropriate action.

with some minor rearrangements, this is the unbroken liturgy that 345 million Protestants across the globe observe religiously week after week. And for the last five hundred years, few people have questioned it. Look again at the order of worship. Notice that it includes a threefold structure: (1) singing, (2) the sermon, and (3) closing prayer or song. This order of worship is viewed as sacrosanct in the eyes of many present-day Christians. There are many denominations of Christianity, each with their own slightly unique order of service, however there are commonalities between most Christian services and these commonalities are designed to mentally manipulate the participant via trance induction so that their silly beliefs about a probably non-existent god never come into question. The example above illustrates some of the typical elements of many Protestant Christian services.

looking up to the preacher and the cross

In the nineteenth century, the aforementioned father of modern hypnosis, James Braid, created a technique of trance induction called the ‘eye fixation technique.’ This technique utilizes eye strain to increase the effectiveness of trance induction. It involves holding an object in front of the subject just above their eye level in order to cause the eyes to strain, which results in pupil dilation and subsequent trance induction. This technique alone does not necessarily result in trance, however, if used in conjunction with other hypnotic techniques, such as those discussed above, it becomes an effective component of the induction. According to the ‘Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology’:

it can be safely stated that nine out of ten hypnotic techniques call for…optical fixation followed by eye closure. But how is the eye strain technique utilized in modern Christian church services? The preacher is almost always standing on an elevated stage with congregants having to look up to watch him speak for a prolonged period of time. There is a practical, non-sinister reason for this. Everyone needs to be able to see the speaker from their chairs. This is no different from any other public speaking forum, yet it, along with emotionally provocative rhetoric and N.L.P (Neuro-Linguistic-Programming), does go a long way to explaining why crowds of people can be whipped-up into emotional frenzies by good speakers. Over the course of twenty minutes to two hours, depending on the length of the sermon, the elevated visual fixation upon the preacher will create a very subtle strain upon the eyes. This is why if you observe those members of the congregation who are really into the service, you may notice that their pupils will possibly be a little dilated, and their eyelids may even look a little droopy. In many churches there are either candles at the front of the room or a crucifix hanging on the back wall, these are also excellent objects to fixate upon whilst the preacher is delivering his sermon, or whilst the choir/congregation are singing the induction songs.

Total Physical Response (TPR)

Having spent many years as a language teacher, I have learned from experience that there is no better way of gaining automatic compliance at both the conscious and subconscious levels, than by way of TPR. Total physical response refers to the technique of having the subject physically respond to commands that are either given verbally, or that have been learned in response to certain situations, or cues. At the start of every class, I would begin with a song accompanied by a set of actions that my young students had become familiar with, and then play a TPR game. These two techniques, when employed in conjunction with one another got the children responding to my instructions for the entire class. Also, throughout the class I had certain hand signals and gestures that I used to elicit responses from my students, and each and every time they saw these signals, they would unconsciously respond with the appropriate action.
TPR techniques can also be found in Christian churches across the world. The Catholic Church is especially good at having its parishioners respond to TPR cues. They go through a kind of automatic ritual upon entering the church and know when it is time to kneel, say something like “and peace be with you,” or touch their forehead and nose. They are a lot like my young students. The Protestant churches also have their rituals and physical responses, like standing to sing, bowing to pray, responding to verbal cues given by the preacher or pastor – Say Jesus!

In a book called ‘Mastering Hypnosis – The Stage Performers Guide,’ the author discusses gaining compliance via TPR and advises the aspiring hypnotist to:

Get subjects into an early pattern of compliance. Voluntary responses to instructions increase acceptance to involuntary suggestions later. In other words, when you tell a subject to sit or stand, hold out his arm in a certain way, etc., the uncritical way in which the subject complies will often carry over to hypnotic suggestions as well. [36]

This technique is associated with the N.L.P technique known as the ‘yes set.’

The ‘yes set’ and similar techniques establish a kind of rhythm of compliance in the listener. Needless to say, breaking a rhythm we have become engrossed in is quite difficult without the aid of the conscious mind. The subconscious mind is happy to go on repeating the rhythmic behaviour. You may notice this in yourself when you haven’t had enough sleep and become involved in rhythmic activities like tapping your leg or monotonously repeating a few words of a song. In his ‘Deep Trance Training Manual,’ Igor Ledochowski describes the ‘yes set’ in the following words:

A “yes set” is an agreement frame: you get the person used to agreeing with you by making simple remarks that cannot be denied or by requesting small, reasonable acts on her part. The principle is simple: once you get a person to agree with you three or four times, she is more like to agree with or accept the next suggestion. This was the power behind the Socratic method (a questioning technique that would lead students to the specific outcome required by the questioner) and applied successfully by many public speakers, such as Dale Carnegie. [37]

Moreover, the former President of the American Board of Hypnotherapy, Dick Sutphen, enunciates and demonstrates the ‘yes set’ in the following words:

Assume for a moment that you are watching a politician give a speech. First, he might generate what is called a “YES SET.” These are statements that will cause listeners to agree; they might even unknowingly nod their heads in agreement. Next come the TRUISMS. These are usually facts that could be debated but, once the politician has his audience agreeing, the odds are in the politician’s favor that the audience won’t stop to think for themselves, thus continuing to agree. Last comes the SUGGESTION. This is what the politician wants you to do and, since you have been agreeing all along, you could be persuaded to accept the suggestion. Now, if you’ll listen closely to my political speech, you’ll find that the first three are the “yes set,” the next three are truisms and the last is the suggestion.

“Ladies and gentlemen: are you angry about high food prices? Are you tired of astronomical gas prices? Are you sick of out-of-control inflation? Well, you know the Other Party allowed 18 percent inflation last year; you know crime has increased 50 percent nationwide in the last 12 months, and you know your paycheck hardly covers your expenses any more. Well, the answer to resolving these problems is to elect me, John Jones, to the U.S. Senate.” [38]

Once again, techniques like the ‘yes set’ and TPR are all about creating unthinking compliance, by establishing a rhythm of unconscious agreement. Many believers are manipulated by similar techniques for the entire span of their lives without ever catching on. They partake in the same rituals, answer the same requests, respond the same way to the same cues for a lifetime, and due to a variety of social and psychological factors, they never examine the manipulative nature of this arrangement.

You can sleep when we get there!

There are certainly exceptions to the following, however, it can be said that the most common time for church is in the morning. It just so happens that morning time is the best time for church. Why? The subconscious mind is closest to the surface and at its most vulnerable upon waking and just before going to bed. [39] In the morning, the conscious mind of the church-goer is still in the process of waking up from a deep sleep as they walk into a trance-inducing environment. Another good time for implanting suggestions is late at night, as the subject is tired and ready for bed. [40] But don’t sleep just yet, it’s Christmas and midnight mass is about to begin, well for billions of Catholics anyway. Here is where the bedtime story of Jesus is implanted and reinforced into the believers’ mind just before bed and more importantly, just before the major ceremony of the year. On Christmas, many Christians will attend church, fill up on Christmas cake and other fatty and sugary goodies that alter the nervous system and subsequently affect their moods, feelings and thoughts. [41] They will be
bombarded with Christmas paraphernalia and symbols, and their subconscious and conscious minds will know how to receive these symbols via early childhood programming.

Early in the morning and just before bed are the best times to implant suggestions into the mind, for sleep has either just occurred or will soon occur, and the subconscious mind will be virtually free to steer the ship toward credulity.

**Stage 3: The Deepening**

The aim of the deepening stage is to deepen the relaxation by increasing the intensity of the trance-state and bring the subconscious mind closer to the surface. There are hundreds of techniques for deepening trance, but they all share a common characteristic, they are all intended to prepare the subject for the open and uncritical acceptance of suggestions. As mentioned, bypassing the conscious mind is an effective method of having the subject believe and receive data without question. This is most certainly the goal of the Christian service, and religions in general.

…blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.  
*John 20:29*

**Praying (preying) on the mind**

Prayer may be used as both a trance inducer and a trance deepener. The subject will usually have to relax, close their eyes and bow their head. Meanwhile, they are either formulating their own prayer internally, which requires the subject to engage their imagination, or they will be listening to the church leader pray, much like the hypnotherapy subject, who is asked to relax, close their eyes and listen to the hypnotherapist. Closing one’s eyes is a good technique for engaging the imagination. Closing one’s eyes blocks out visual stimuli, allowing internal visual representations to be engaged, thus bringing the subconscious or unconscious mind closer to the surface. Moreover, praying in a room full of people doing the same thing will more often than not enhance the “spiritual” (trance) experience. This is due to the influence exerted over the believer by the surrounding atmosphere created by both the group and the environmental pressures mentioned earlier.

**I Am the Alpha and the Theta**

Brainwave activity has been measured by the EEG (electroencephalograph) at five different levels of consciousness: delta, theta, alpha, beta and gamma. Delta is the level of complete unconsciousness, at which the brain’s frequency range is between 0.5-4 Hz. [42] The theta level is the next level up, with a frequency range between 4-8 Hz, and it is the level at which deep trance occurs. Next is the alpha state, which has a frequency range of 8-13 Hz, and is the primary level at which hypnotic trance occurs. The Beta state has a frequency range from 13-25 Hz, and represents focused and conscious awareness. The fifth wave cycle is known as gamma, but this wave is irrelevant to the discussion at hand, as it primarily relates to the grouping of populations of neurons to accomplish a specific cognitive or motor function.

As mentioned above, alpha is the predominant state in which hypnosis occurs. [43] In a study conducted in 1969 by Dr Herbert Krugman, a renowned psychologist who generously lent his expertise in manipulating public opinion to various corporations, he discovered that partaking in passive activities like watching TV, stimulates alpha waves. [44] His findings supported the earlier hypothesis of William James, who discovered that our awareness is dualistic in nature. That is to say, we take in information both voluntarily and involuntarily. [45] When we switch off, even for a brief moment, our unconscious mind is still listening and collecting information involuntarily, which bypasses our rational left brain and enters straight into the heart of our uncritical unconscious mind, without our conscious mind’s consent. Passive listening and or watching, be it at home in front of the TV, or at church in front of the preacher, causes the listener to take in information, both voluntarily and involuntarily, thereby increasing the suggestibility of the church-goer.

The trance-state occurs at both the alpha and the theta levels and it has a remarkable impact upon how the mind receives information. Thus, the deepening stage of hypnosis is primarily concerned with having the subject’s brain slow down to the alpha and theta states. Achieving either of these states will help the preacher deliver suggestions to the subjects in a way that will be accepted with little to no critical resistance. Of course, the preacher’s true power lies in the fact that his suggestions are aimed at the subject’s established beliefs, and thus the achievement of having the parishioner or congregant enter either one of the above mentioned brain states, alpha or theta, embeds the belief deeper into the believer’s mind, leaving little to no room for intellectual intervention by the rational faculties of the mind.

**Stage 4: The Suggestion**

*What distinguishes a suggestion from other kinds of psychical influence, such as a command or the giving of a piece of information or instruction, is that in the case of suggestion an idea is aroused in another person’s brain which is not examined in regard to its origin but is*
Now that the first three stages of hypnosis have been accomplished, it is time for the main course, the sermon. Implanting suggestions is what it is all about. The trance induction is the means and the suggestive state of mind achieved by the trance and subsequent implantation of suggestions is the end. This is where both the hypnoterapist and the preacher go to work. “You will find smoking unpleasant from now on.” “Jesus died for your sins.” “Your body is completely relaxed.” “Being a good Christian means believing with all of your heart that Christ is the son of God who died for your sins.” “You will feel more confident in social situations.” “You don’t want to go to hell, do you?” Well, you get the idea. This is the stage where the information is given to the subject in a way that bypasses the critical functions of the mind, allowing the suggestion to be embedded directly into the depths of the believer’s mind.

Suggestions are not mere utterances, or information passed in a dry and uninspired manner, they are cleverly constructed statements and questions that carry a persuasive subtext. They frequently involve ideas that conform in some way to the subject’s established cognitions, or frames of reference. In other words, if you were to hypnotize a Muslim and try to imbed the suggestion that Christ was the actual physical son of god, the suggestion would probably be rejected, even under hypnosis. However, the situation may change over a prolonged period of exposure to a Christian environment, with Neuro-Linguistic-Programming and rhetoric-laced sermons, which have the power to rearrange the very structures in the subject’s mind.

The most powerful forms of suggestion, however, are those aimed at the subject’s established beliefs, in which case, the effect will be compounded by the intrinsic pressures associated with belief itself, discussed in the first volume. The established belief will be bolstered by the targeting of the subconscious, and the subject will generally experience an emotionally charged response to such suggestions. This emotional response is further compounded in a church setting by the hyperactivity of dopamine transmitters produced in the subject’s brain as a result of the religious rituals performed in such a highly charged setting. In addition, these stimulated dopamine transmitters found in abundance in the true believer’s brain have been linked by neuroscientists to a heightened susceptibility to hypnotic suggestion. Neuroscientist Dr Patrick McNamara discussed the association of the enzyme, Catechol-O-methyltransferase (COMT), responsible for metabolizing dopamine with the high susceptibility to hypnotic suggestibility, saying:

There are consistent correlations between genes that code for DA (Dopamine) or serotonergic activity and various measures of spirituality and religiousness. For example, an association was found between hypnotic susceptibility and the catechol-O-methyltransferase (COMT) polymorphism (Lichtenberg, Bachner-Melman, Gritsenko, & Ebstein, 2000). Hypnotic susceptibility, in turn, is associated with a range of religiosity measures. COMT is an enzyme that has a crucial role in the metabolism of dopamine…[47]

Is it any wonder that billions of Christians around the world become so convinced that there is a god, and that their religion is the one and only true means of communing with this god, who, by all rational accounts, appears to be little more than the psychological projection of a frightened and ignorant species? When we consider that the emotional nature of belief itself is being further stimulated by the manipulation of both neurological stimuli in the form of dopamine stimulating rituals and psychological stimuli in the form of persuasive rhetoric and subconscious-targeting-suggestions, we begin to understand how this manipulation works, and how religion, not just Christianity, is maintained amongst a species evolutionarily prone to compulsive and credulous beliefs. Let us now briefly examine the outline of the average sermon in light of this manipulation. One must keep in mind that there are many varieties, styles and forms of sermons, but the fundamental components that underscore successful sermons are usually quite similar. Most effective sermons contain varied combinations of the following eight primary components.

1. Introduction
2. Background (relating to the subject matter)
3. Reading and propositional statement (key to the Sermon)
4. Word study – Theological explanation of certain words
5. Transitions
6. Illustrations
7. Application
8. Conclusion

● The Introduction-Opener

“Everything must have a beginning, a middle, and an ending,” said Aristotle. This is not only true of life, but it also relates to good speeches and sermons as well. The introduction is possibly one of the most crucial aspects of any speech or sermon, as it serves both to whet the appetite of the listener and fixate their attention on the words and suggestions to come. The Calvary Bible Church has many great tips on how to structure and deliver a great introduction, advising that:
Openers and introductions are stories, current events, illustrations, anecdotes, rhetorical questions or comments at the beginning of your sermon used to focus people’s attention on the message to be preached. People often have distracted and wandering minds. For this reason an opener helps arrest their attention and create in them a desire to listen to what is being preached. Pastor Steve Lawson has said that your introduction should be so engaging that if you only give that and drive home, your introduction should compel your congregation to follow you home for the rest of the sermon. [48]

They go on to recommend five basic techniques that can be used to introduce a sermon. These techniques are designed to enthrall the listener so that they might remain mesmerized by the preacher’s words throughout the whole session, advising:

**Below are some different kinds of openers and introductions that might be used to secure people’s attention:** [49]

1. **Current events** – Current events that everyone knows about, or which may be interesting to them can be used to create interest and focus attention on what will be preached. [50]
2. **Stories used at the beginning of a sermon or talk are also very effective.**

**People love stories and don’t want to miss any part of them. Even short stories cause people to listen very carefully and focus their attention on the preacher or speaker.** [51]

The first two tips involve storytelling, a devise also employed by hypnotherapists. The story is a powerful medium for delivering suggestions to the subconscious mind, as the details of the story and its plot distract the conscious mind, whilst the implications of the stories, the subtexts, feed suggestions directly into the subconscious. The two men responsible for establishing the relatively new area of research into communication, N.L.P, psychologist Richard Bandler and linguist John Grinder, in their book ‘Frogs into Princes,’ explain the power of storytelling and its ability to covertly change the cognitions of the listener:

In our actual private practice….we tell stories. A person will come in and I don’t want them to tell me anything. I just tell them stories. The use of metaphor is a whole set of advanced patterns which is associated with what we’ve done so far….I don’t have to listen to client’s woes, and I get to tell very entertaining stories. Clients are usually bewildered or infuriated by paying me money to listen to stories. But the changes they want occur anyway…..You do things so covertly that they don’t have the faintest idea what you are doing, and the changes they want occur anyway. [52]

The story has the power to distract the conscious mind so that the latent aspects of the mind have a chance to be opened and rearranged. Stories that involve shocking or fantastic details, like many of the stories found within the bible, possess the ability to “depotentiate habitual frames of reference,” or to put it simply, these stories have the power to manipulate the convictions of the audience. This technique is useful for a variety of reasons; it can bolster the established convictions of the faithful, reaffirm the beliefs of a church-goer who may be going through a “crisis of faith,” as well as convert new comers. The next tip for a successful sermon introduction is a clever one, also employed by hypnotherapists around the globe. It involves the use of rhetorical questions to engage the mind of the listener and is recommended by the Calvary Bible Church for the following reasons:

**Rhetorical questions promote thought, focus attention, and make people think about what you are preaching. It makes people answer the question asked in their mind and if they don’t know the answer it makes them want to know the answer. Example: “Do you think you pray too much? Do you think God wants you to pray more? If you answered, “Yes,” what are you going to do about your insufficient prayer life?”** [53]

Rhetorical questions come in two primary forms. Some are ‘open-ended’ and others are ‘leading.’ Open-ended rhetorical questions engage the listener’s imagination, which, as discussed, is an essential component of hypnosis. The latter kind of rhetorical question, the leading question, is also commonly employed in sermons, speeches and sales pitches, and it is designed to foment the beginnings of compliance in the mind of the listener. Leading rhetorical questions cause the listener to internally respond in agreement. Having explained this form of manipulation, you now see through such base and contrived manipulation, don’t you? Rhetorical questions which inspire internal agreement are useful devices for establishing habitual compliance. Habitual compliance, as explained above with regards to the ‘yes set,’ describes the compliance occasioned by repetitive agreement, which, as also mentioned, causes the subject to be increasingly prone to adopting further suggestions made by the speaker. This makes it easier to implant suggestions into the trance-induced mind of the compliant listener. Mental compliance is essential to the success of persuasion, thus, when the audience is silently agreeing to statements or questions that are impossible to disagree with, the beginnings of a submissive relationship are formed between the pacified and submissive audience and the persuasive speaker.

Here are some examples that could inspire agreement in most people’s minds:
1. Do you want to be as happy as you possibly can be?
2. Would you like to live comfortably for the rest of your life?
3. Do you want to feel good?
4. I imagine you wouldn’t want to live your whole life in debt, would you?

Here are a few examples that inspire agreement in the mind of a Christian:

1. Do you think god wants you to pray more?
2. Jesus died for our sins, didn’t he?
3. There is one place we would all like to go, and that’s heaven, right?
4. Why would you want to go to hell, you wouldn’t, would you?

Whether the rhetorical question is geared toward engaging the imagination of the listener by utilizing scenarios that have multiple or even abstract answers, or whether they seek to establish mental compliance through simply and repetitive agreement, they are always working to carry suggestions to the subconscious mind. For this reason they make great openers to any form of persuasive speech. The next tip given by the Calvary Bible Church for a good introduction is what many in the field of N.L.P would recognise as a very powerful trance-inducer:

Shockers are extreme illustrations, statements, or stories designed to shock people into paying attention. Shockers are sometimes necessary when speaking to youth at camp who have not had very much sleep for several days. Example: “The president of the United States was just shot!” (pause) These were the words heard all over the world on November 22nd, 1963.” [54]

The renowned psychotherapist Milton H. Erickson developed a series of unique techniques aimed at inducing trance and rapidly transforming a person’s cognitions, and shock was one of them. As mentioned above, shocking and fantastic details within a story help to “depotentiate the listener’s habitual frames of reference” by interrupting their usual patterns of thought. Shock alone can also produce this effect, allowing suggestions to be directly implanted into the subconscious mind before they have had a chance to be filtered and analysed by the conscious mind.

In Erickson and Rossi’s book, ‘Hypnotherapy,’ they discuss the benefits of “depotentiating habitual frameworks of thought” via shock tactics, stating:

…belief systems are more or less interrupted and suspended for a moment or two. Consciousness has been distracted. During that momentary suspension latent patterns of association and sensory-perceptual experience have an opportunity to assert themselves in a manner that can initiate the altered state of consciousness that has been described as trance or hypnosis. There are many means of depotentiating habitual frames of reference. Any experience of shock or surprise momentarily fixes attention and interrupts the previous pattern of association. Any experience of the unrealistic, the unusual, or the fantastic provides an opportunity for altered modes of apprehension. The authors have described how confusion, doubt, dissociation, and disequilibrium are all means of depotentiating patients’ learned limitations so that they may become open and available for new means of experiencing and learning, which are the essence of therapeutic trance. [55]

Shock-tactics are an effective means of creating momentary suspensions of the conscious mind, inducing a trance-state, which brings forth the subconscious mind and exposes it to the direct influence of a given suggestion. If the speaker is a competent one, he or she can extend the period of time in which the conscious mind is suspended, allowing them to implant suggestions with relative ease. The final tip offered by the Calvary Bible Church has already been discussed with regards to the four-fold criteria (belief, imagination, conviction and expectation) of the hypnotic state of mind, so I will cease the discussion here and simply allow the reader enjoy the manipulative advice provided below:

Appealing to the imagination is also very helpful at the beginning of a sermon. You appeal to people’s thoughts, experiences, and feelings by asking them to imagine, consider, or remind themselves of something they have or might be able to imagine experiencing. Example: “Imagine how painful it would be to put your finger in the flame of a candle for 15 seconds! Imagine how long it would seem to have your entire body thrown into a fiery furnace for 15 seconds. Imagine how terrible it would be to be thrown alive into molten lava, never to be pulled out, never dying, always alive and fully aware of all of your senses, suffering the torments of burning pain for ever and ever. We will discover that hell is worse than that.” [56]

The sermon is designed to persuade new congregants to adopt new beliefs, as well as assist seasoned ones in rationalizing and reinforcing existing ones. It is not designed to enlighten, question, challenge, or openly seek new possibilities with regards to the truth, but to covertly convince, convert and persuade listeners to adopt and or maintain Christian beliefs, beliefs which we have seen in the previous volumes,
were built upon sandy foundations. The sermon achieves its goal of persuasion by using various rhetorical and linguistic devises, one of which is the subtle delivery of suggestions. As previously stated, this persuasion involves both the implanting of new belief-based suggestions and the reinforcement of established ones. The latter kind of suggestion is not only potently powerful, it is also the most common, taking place in churches around the world and on almost every day of the week.

You can read the rest of this chapter in my book ‘I Am Christ: Vol. 3’

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**End Notes**


2. New Definition: Hypnosis, Division 30 of the American Psychological Association


7. Louise Watts. The British National Register of Advanced Hypnotherapists. [http://www.nrah.co.uk/articles/articles-applications.htm](http://www.nrah.co.uk/articles/articles-applications.htm)


10. Ibid. p. 43.

11. Ibid.


16. Ibid. p. 74.


21. Ibid. p. 165.

22. unity.org/.../pdf/SuggestionsforEffectiveOrderofService.doc

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.


26. unity.org/.../pdf/SuggestionsforEffectiveOrderofService.doc

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.


3 thoughts on “The Church & Hypnotic Manipulation – Sunday Morning Hypnosis”
I've been studying how some churches hypnotise people. Our church is boring in comparison and didn't even ask for money.

I used to think God wasn't real because my Christian parents divorced, and I never wanted that to happen to my kids. But then the day came after years of arguing & mention of divorce, I asked God what happened to our love?

I felt compelled to watch our wedding video, not wanting to see our happy selves at all, but compelled. It was a miracle I even found it on seconds in that messy office. I heard a Bible verse, “Love is patient, love is kind,… Blah blah blah,… Love never fails” 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Oh yeah, Lord, well OURS did. WHAT are you TALKING about!?!?

Then I felt compelled to get the dictionary & look up its definition of love.

Hmmm…emotions… Hormones.. No commitment. AHA! That’s IT! Epiphany! I have the wrong kind of love in me. Lord, I want your kind of love in my heart to give to my husband.

And I received absolute unconditional love to give. I became a conduit of God’s love that never fails. We called off the divorce and learned to love each other more like Ephesians 5 and 1 Cor 13, and the kids are so happy we stayed together, while their friends parents broke up because of the doomed love we are all born with the first time.

I’m sorry so many see false Christianity and give up on church or God, but my God is the source of love that never fails, the Jesus of the Scriptures, KJV. The word charity is used, because it is the highest form of love that gives without expectation of return on investment. You’d like our church. You wouldn’t be impressed with the building or pastor’s salary though, LOL. Love never fails, it’s the true God’s promise.

Besides, evolution says the first accidental cell had a fully functional reproductive system from the first moment of life. Seriously? And God made them male & female and said they were very good. I agree, when we follow his plan for romance that He invented.

Without this God of the Bible, my life would be a painful mess. Just what if everyone on planet Earth would obey Jesus’ teachings entirely? God promises to help, to make it easy. I like that. The Bible is not just a big guilt trip, it’s a love story. God loves us, and we can then love too, and be spared a LOT of unnecessary pain & wasted time. Parenting goes better too.

That’s my story.

As an atheist for decades I engaged an expert, experienced, certified hypnotist to see if I could believe in God. I had to sign some forms as she stated that this “project” was, otherwise, unethical. It took many, many sessions but, though knowing what was happening all the time, I have a very strong belief that God absolutely exists (she also included a lot of suggestions to affect a strong resistance to the contrary). Note that this was buttressed by the exact procedures outlined in this article as I concurrently attended a Roman Catholic Mass every week (and this became several times a week as I found great joy in attendance over time).

The amazing thing of it all for me is that, even though I’m aware of the hypnotic affects, I don’t mind at all. In fact, some of the hypnotic procedures detailed here are welcome to me now, whereas before I’d have been thoroughly bored, or worse. I thought it would have been impossible for me to ever reach this state of belief and practice but it happened.

Oh, it was a bet and, yes, I lost, at least the money but I feel it was worth it.