

Is Christianity a Crutch for the Weak?
(Rev. Dr. John Bartol)

*Jesus said, "I came that you might have life, and have it in all its fullness
(John 10:10).*

Sigmund Freud, the pioneer of psychology, considered religion as a crutch for emotionally needy people. According to Freud, many people are afraid of the wild world around them and the wild urges within them. So, they yearn for a "father figure" to protect them. This in turn motivates them to believe in God.

No doubt Freud was onto something when he pointed out the power of "wishful thinking." Sometimes we try to make ourselves believe what we want to believe. But, when it comes to God, wishful thinking can be pro or con. Some find it more convenient to be an atheist than to believe in a God who could limit their independence or disapprove of their behaviour.

For example, Aldous Huxley, author of A BRAVE NEW WORLD admitted that his unbelief was **not** the result of scientific research or philosophical reasoning. He and his friends denied the existence of God because they were so eager for their own wills to be supreme that they found God's reality to be unbearable.

If ours were a perfect world and we were perfect people, there might be no need of religion. But such is not the case. If we are honest, all of us need a prop at some moment of life. Our lives are fractured by envy, deceit and selfishness. Just glance at a newspaper or watch the TV news.

Today, crutches are far more common than we recognize. Millions depend on alcohol and drugs to help cope with the terrific pace of modern life. We turn to tranquilizers to overcome anxiety and sleepless nights. Other props are less obvious. To bolster our deflated egos, we engage in the mad search for fame, beauty, wealth and power over others. But our makeshift crutches will not bear our weight.

So, is Christianity another prop? In one sense, it is. Christianity is for people who do not pretend to be invincible but know they have something broken. When rightly understood, Christianity is very realistic about life. Accidents happen, mistakes are made, things break down. Others may turn away, but God promises to be there when we turn to him for help.

Christianity is unashamedly a rescue religion and it contains the best of news. God sent his Son into this broken world to share our deepest pain and pick up the tab for our debts. He can mend our broken hearts if we are willing to give him all the pieces.

I like the picture of Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth, taking the wood of His cross to make for us splints, props and crutches so that we can stand and walk again. Let us exercise our power of choice and turn to Him for the healing and wholeness that only He can bring.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble”
(Psalm 46:1)