

## Fighting for My Freedom

From an early age, as far back as I can remember, I seemed to be aware that I was in a fight to keep from being brainwashed. Somehow the idea that adults would break the spirits of children was something that I found horrifying. I can't tell you where it came from but it was a time when World War II had been recently won and the Nazis and the Communists were very much on the minds of everyone. It was the evil threat where we had freedom and they didn't and if they won we would become the slaves of the evil government and forced to become part of something terrible. Being raised Jewish I heard about the concentration camps and I saw Jewish adults with numbers tattooed on their arms who were in Hitler's camps. So it was Freedom vs. Communism and that was something I could relate to and I was clearly on the side of freedom.

But the way my desire for freedom manifested itself was not what most people would have predicted. I remember seeing children on television of communist countries and they were wearing uniforms and they were told what to think and forced to do state ordered rituals like marching and saluting and it was all depicted as the form of ultimate oppression. I understood that they were being brainwashed from childhood so that their humanity would be suppressed and they would become mindless drones who would do evil things because there are ordered to do it. So I knew I must never allow adults to do anything like that to me.

Then I would see the Catholic kids and like the Communists they were wearing uniforms, lined up and marching into class, and forced to perform mind altering rituals which included worshiping idols. So in my mind being Catholic was half way to being a Communist. So since the Jews were the victims of the Holocaust, the Jews had to be the good guys. But anything that looked like forced mind control was the roots of becoming a Nazi. And I would die before I became one of those!

My family was "different" from all other "normal" families in the neighborhood. In comparison we had a lot less money than people around us. So we couldn't afford the stuff other kids had like baseball and football equipment. So if you didn't have a glove you couldn't play baseball. So although I still did a lot of other things I was a semi-outcast. My parents fought a lot, screaming to the point where neighbors were calling the cops, and we were occasionally beaten, but never disciplined. I was sort of left out in the wild to raise myself and spent as much time outside as possible to avoid home life. And since other kids had to be home on a schedule I spent a lot of time alone which allowed me to spend a lot more time thinking than most kids did. And I had a lot more freedom than anyone else. Not that I was granted freedom, but my parents were to preoccupied to take freedom away from me.

Sunday mornings were especially interesting times for me. Everyone would go to church except for me. It was like I had the whole world to myself. Yes it was awkward for me to be "different" like I was out of place and that I somehow should be doing something like everyone else did, but it was a time of absolute freedom and meditation where I could wonder around and explore the world. I think this transformed me in a way that allowed me to form patterns of thought and an appreciation for independent thinking that most people never learn. It's something that I consider to be extremely valuable and defines who I am as a person. It forms what I would call the spiritual basis for what I envision for the Church of Reality.