

# Church Universal and Triumphant

By Rick Branch

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**Founder:** Mark Prophet

**Founding Date:** 1958

**Official Publication:** *Pearls of Wisdom* is a weekly publication. *Heart* is a quarterly magazine.

**Organization Structure:** Information from the Great White Brotherhood is given to the leader which is then given to the members.

**Unique Terms:** The word *chela* means follower of the Church Universal and Triumphant theology.

**Other Names:** Church Universal and Triumphant is sometimes abbreviated as CUT, and is called Summit Lighthouse or Summit University.

## HISTORY

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An offshoot of an offshoot of a modified theology is the best way to begin to understand the historical analysis of the Church Universal and Triumphant (CUT). In the 1930's Guy and Edna Ballard drew from sources such as Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's Theosophy, the writings of Baird Spalding and William D. Pelley as well as from their own inspiration. This resulted in an eclectic approach which the Ballards called the I AM.

Breaking away from the I AM, Thomas Printz, in 1954, founded the Bridge to Freedom. This group taught much of the same theology as the I AM, including the need for followers to

purge the soul of karma, the consequences of evil done in former incarnations. To accomplish this end, students invoke the Divine Presence 'I AM' through decree, rhythmic breathing and monthly Transmission Flame Classes, when the power of a particular ascended master is available.<sup>1</sup>

Born in December 1918, Mark Prophet began receiving revelations at the age of 18 from what he would later call the Great White Brotherhood. Elizabeth Clare Wulf was born in April 1940 and rejected traditional Christianity early in her life as well. Being former members of the Bridge to Freedom, they met in 1961 at Boston University and began studying the mystical teachings of these ascended masters.

From this initial meeting the Church Universal and Triumphant grew. CUT's headquarters would move several times, including stays in Colorado and California. In 1973 Mark Prophet suffered a fatal stroke. As with any group basing its teachings on a single instructor, when the leader dies there is a sudden vacuum.

As Robert Burrows writes, "After Mark Prophet's death in 1973, Elizabeth had to contend with a number of staff who began receiving dictations, thus threatening to

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undermine her authority as the Great White Brotherhood's sole representative. The threat was averted through a number of timely dictations from key ascended masters who condemned Elizabeth's rivals as false prophets."<sup>2</sup>

With her position now firmly secured, Elizabeth Clare Prophet (Guru Ma and World Mother), was ready to move CUT forward into its next phase Camelot! This campus, formerly Claretville Seminary in Santa Monica, had become "today's thrust of the Great White Brotherhood" and therefore her thrust.<sup>3</sup> It would, according to Prophet, "open (the) door of salvation for millions of souls." At Camelot, "the chela's own ascension into the I AM THAT I AM" could be obtained.<sup>4</sup>

The only thing that stood in their way was finances. In 1978, CUT sent a booklet to its chelas. After describing the glories of Camelot, the bottom line was given. That bottom line was \$7 million needed by July 1980.<sup>5</sup> It was a goal that was never to be met.

After several other problems, CUT moved near Corwin Springs, Montana next to Yellowstone National Park. However, even in this secluded area, CUT still had troubles. One problem was Prophet's predictions of a coming holocaust which would result in the need for bomb-shelters and weapons.

"Church officials and members won't say much about the bomb-shelter project, but CUT's copy-righted publication Pearls of Wisdom says the Soviet Union is getting set to launch a first-strike nuclear attack on the United States and church members should 'prepare to survive underground.'"<sup>6</sup> In preparation for this catastrophe, CUT built several underground shelters. These shelters have resulted in court injunction by Federal authorities due to their environmental impact.<sup>7</sup>

CUT encountered further tensions due to their weapons build up. "The Church Universal and Triumphant has been keeping stockpiles of weapons as far back as 1974, claims a former CUT member who says he once hauled a load of guns and ammunition to Montana for the church."<sup>8</sup> These weapons included "several military-type weapons," some ".50-caliber assault rifles, several other military weapons, (and) 120,000 rounds of ammunition."<sup>9</sup>

In 1990, Prophet made national news with statements which many chelas believed signaled nuclear war on April 23.<sup>10</sup> Two to three thousand followers flocked to the fall-out shelters in Montana.

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## DOCTRINE

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**Trinity:** According to Mark Prophet,

When we speak of the Creator and His Consciousness, we must include in our awareness the concept of the Father-Mother God, of a Being that is both masculine and feminine in nature, whose oneness is found in the perfect balance of the energies of Spirit and Matter. If God is Father-Mother, what, then, is the Trinity? When we refer to God the Father, God the Son, and God as Holy Spirit, we are actually referring to God as He is found in Spirit and in Matter, thus recognizing that His Being and Consciousness appears in the Persons of the Trinity according to the level or plane in individual awareness.<sup>11</sup>

Simply stated, CUT's doctrine of the Trinity is "All of life is God. All of being is God. All of consciousness is God."<sup>12</sup>

**God the Father:** Mark Prophet went on to write, "God in the Person of Father includes the Mother principle, for He is forever the Androgynous Whole."<sup>13</sup>

**God the Son:** CUT makes a distinction between Jesus the man and the impersonal Christ consciousness. In *The Lost Teachings of Jesus* the Prophets explain,

Jesus was both the actual and symbolical representative of this Christ Self. Jesus was the example, the one who self-realized the Christ Mind and was at one with it at all times. Jesus himself was not the only begotten Son of the Father. The Christ of him was and is the only begotten Son of the Father; and Jesus was the pure vessel of that Universal One. He was the One Sent, chosen from among the Sons of heaven to embody the Christ on earth as the avatar, the exemplar for all to follow for the two-thousand-year Picean cycle.<sup>14</sup>

**God the Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is seen by CUT as an impersonal essence or force. Mark Prophet declared, “The essence of the Holy Spirit is dispersed throughout Cosmos as vastness of creative potential that can be measured only in light-years. The Holy Spirit is the energy man uses either to expand Good or to expand an energy veil.”<sup>15</sup>

**Man’s Destiny:** Through the various I AM Flame ceremonies, the chelas are to realize their own Christ consciousness, thereby becoming one with the ascended masters. Mark Prophet, quoting one of these masters, explains, “To make you one with us in all planes of being is the goal of our communication. And our love for evolving humanity is so great that if it were possible, we would lay down our very life for the salvation of all.”<sup>16</sup>

Even Jesus could not overcome the cosmic law of Karma. Mark Prophet explains, God the Father did not require the sacrifice of his son Christ Jesus, or of any other incarnation of the Christ, as an atonement for the sins of the world; nor is it possible according to cosmic law for any man’s sacrifice to balance either the original sin or the subsequent sins - the karma - of the one or the many.<sup>17</sup>

**Scripture:** The Bible is not believed to contain all the teachings of Jesus, hence the need for modern instructions from the ascended masters.

**Ascended Masters:** The Ascended Masters are a group of spiritual leaders, including, but not restricted to: Jesus, Buddha, El Morya, Saint Germain and Mark Prophet. How does one become an ascended master? Mark and Elizabeth Clare Prophet explained Saint Germain’s journey—

Saint Germain said that his salvation, his ascension whereby he became an Ascended Master, was the result of two million right decisions that he made. Now, if you stop and think about that from a mathematical standpoint, you will see that it would take a man quite a few lifetimes to make two million right decisions.<sup>18</sup>

**Reincarnation:** Reincarnation is a central doctrine for CUT. Its necessity is explained in a passage by Elizabeth Clare Prophet in which she is speaking about Jesus’ titles Son of Man and Son of David. She states,

Both refer to the soul (solar) identity that reincarnates again and again until it reunites with the individual Christ Self, referred to in much of the Old Testament scripture as Adonai, meaning ‘Lord,’ or ‘Master.’

The Christ Self, then, has communication with the Father who in both Principle and Person is the Presence of God, the I AM THAT I AM, or the I AM Presence. Thus we find that the soul of David, endued by the Holy Ghost, addressed his own Christ Self, the archetype of the Messiah, and received of him the report that God the Father, his own beloved I AM Presence, had addressed his own Christ Self, saying ‘Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.’<sup>19</sup>

**Christ Consciousness:** The I AM Flame ceremonies consist of seemingly endless monotone chants and rhythmic breathing for the purpose of gaining Christ consciousness. Through these ceremonies, Prophet teaches, each chela can find their own Christ Self which can in turn communicate with their Divine I AM Presence (as was discussed under reincarnation).

**Karma:** Law of Karma is the cycle of good/evil which must be worked through during endless reincarnations.

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## BIBLICAL RESPONSE

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1) God is not all, He is separate from creation (Gen. 1:1, John 1:3, Col. 1:16). God is never referred to as a "Mother."

2) Jesus is Christ at birth, not obtained later in life (Matt. 1:23, Luke 2:11). Jesus is the only begotten (John 1:14-18, 3:16-18).

3) The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal essence, but is a personal being (John 16:13-14, Acts 5:3, 13:2).

4) Man's sinful nature is forgiven only through Jesus atonement (Acts 4:12, Rom. 3:25-26, 1 John 2:2).

5) Reincarnation is false (Hebrews 9:27).

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## RECOMMENDED READING

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*New Age Spirituality: A Christian Perspective*, This Watchman Fellowship documentation guide and cassette tape provides an overview of the New Age movement. While CUT is not directly mentioned, many of its doctrines (e.g. Karma, Reincarnation, etc.) are discussed.

*The Lure of the Cults* by Ronald Enroth. This 140 page book mentions CUT and some of its teachings. It is indexed, well documented and discusses related topics to CUT. Soft back.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, Vol. 2, 159.

<sup>2</sup> *Church Universal and Triumphant: The Summit Lighthouse*, SCP, 1984.

<sup>3</sup> *Chamelot: A Thrust for a Purpose*, 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>6</sup> *Missoula, MT Missoulian*, 7 May 1989.

<sup>7</sup> *The Billings Gazette*, 19 January 1991, 4-B.

<sup>8</sup> *Bozeman, MT Daily Chronicle*, 12 July 1989.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *New York Times*, 15 March 1990.

<sup>11</sup> *Climb the Highest Mountain*, 321.

<sup>12</sup> *Cosmic Consciousness*, 29.

<sup>13</sup> *Climb the Highest Mountain*, 321-322.

<sup>14</sup> *The Lost Teachings of Jesus*, 241.

<sup>15</sup> *Climb the Highest Mountain*, 132.

<sup>16</sup> *Cosmic Consciousness*, 31.

<sup>17</sup> *Science of the Spoken Word*, 87.

<sup>18</sup> *The Lost Teachings of Jesus*, 138.

<sup>19</sup> *Mysteries of the Holy Grail: Archangel Gabriel*, 217.



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