

Subject: The Idols we worship in Christianity (No. 7)



Dear Saints

Last week Con encountered Professor Theo Logi Geek from the Department of Hoop Science at the University of Doubtrecht. He wore a black suit and tie, and was somewhat confused by strange arrows that he found in his research about the hoops. This is where we pick up the story ...

Enjoy!

Eben Swart

Arriving at the fifth hoop, Con couldn't believe his eyes. A small army of suit-and-tied men were assembled around this hoop - each carrying a clipboard and pen. In monkey-like fashion, everyone was studying the hoop in his own peculiar way: Some were scrutinizing the hoop with magnifying glasses, some were on ladders, taking pictures from unusual camera angles, and some were climbing the poles or clutching the hoop. Some were taking parts of the hoop assembly apart, and others were putting them together again. One was even tunnelling underneath it! Another was taking small samples of wood, plastic and perspex and carefully putting them into small plastic zipper bags for further analysis. A small team of men were erecting scaffolding around the hoop. Others were crawling around on all fours - looking to find objects or patterns in its immediate vicinity. A couple of men were even studying the tracks that the other men had made. Some distance from the hoop some others were sitting in camping chairs, spying out the whole business with binoculars!

All data obtained was carefully annotated onto the clipboards.

Con walked over to the men in the camping chairs. One middle-aged man rose from his chair as Con approached.

"Good day. I'm Professor Wes Lee from the Hoopla Department at the University of Systems. Please be seated."

"And I'm Con Demt. What on earth are you guys doing?" Con sat down in an empty camping chair. "Why are you all studying this hoop?"

"The hoops are the only things we can ever have as objects of objective study. Academic study should always be objective. We research everything about all the hoops objectively and scientifically."

"But why do you STUDY the hoops at all?"

"Well, it's a long story," prof. Lee said with a sigh. "At first the hoops were simply employed to find Dr. Good - and that was easy. But after a while people started to argue about how to interpret the road signs - the hoops. So we took it upon ourselves to study the hoops to find the correct way of interpreting them."

"But do you really need to go into so much effort and detail?"

"Well, the hoops have been studied for SO many years, and SO many books have been written about them - it's hard nowadays to find anything new to say or write about them." Again prof. Lee let out a deep sigh.

"But why don't you then stop examining them now?"

"Well, that's a long story as well. We feel we don't yet know everything there is to know about the hoops. And the Find-dr-Good system needs professors of Hoopology. Without us everything that's been built up over many years will simply fall apart."

"Well - I simply follow the perspex indicators. Is that the right way to do it?" Con asked anxiously.

"Well, if your only aim would be to find Dr. Good - that's fine. But that's a rather simplistic and naïve way of interpreting the hoops. There's a LOT more to them. More than meets the eye."

"Have YOU ever been to Dr. Good, prof?"

"Yes, long ago - when I was still a school boy. Those were great years. Many of us had tracked down Dr. Good. But I was never healed."

"Why not?"

"Well, you'll still meet Dr. Good. He's an excellent doctor, but extremely nosy. He wants to know your entire medical history and you have to mention every past illness. And expensive! He charges EVERYTHING you have as payment. You may physically keep it, but he wants you to transfer it onto his name - and then to manage it on his behalf. And then he wants to wash you in a bath of water!" Prof. Lee shrugged. "I guess I'm just not that kind of person."

"And?"

"And now I study the hoops. I like the intellectual stuff. And I teach others how to study the hoops. And how to interpret them - that's extremely important for getting to Dr. Good."

"What do you know about THE VOICE, prof?" Con couldn't believe he'd asked that. The thought had just suddenly popped into his mind. Prof. Lee's eyes suddenly narrowed as he leaned forward towards Con. "Don't you dare ask me that question, young man!" he hissed through his teeth. "What makes you think that THE VOICE would speak to YOU? Who do you think you are?"

"Well, I've met some people along the way whom THE VOICE seems to speak to!" Con insisted. "I'm not going to let this opportunity slip by!" he thought by himself.

"Do you mean the noisy lot? Never mind! Don't take them too seriously. They're nice people, but they know very little about their own hoop. The VOICE business is a rather subjective business, and I prefer not to get involved with that!"

"In that case - I guess - I'm wasting my time here. I need to be off." Con rose from his chair.

"No, you're not wasting your time at all! Hoopology - you'll someday realize - is the very essence of finding Dr. Good. Hoopology will provide you with the framework into which you'll be able to fit everything we know about every single hoop, as well as everything we know about Dr. Good."

"And THE VOICE? Does THE VOICE also fit into the Hoopology framework?" Con could hardly conceal the deliberateness in his voice. "Well, yeah. In Hoopology we've made a rule that THE VOICE may never say anything that does not correspond to our interpretation of the hoops. We've also devised a rather credible system of watertight rules in terms of which we interpret the hoops. We call the system Hoopetics. If a person had never studied Hoopology or Hoopetics, he might merely GET to Dr. Good by profanely jumping the hoops, yes, but you will never be able to correctly interpret any hoop." Prof. Lee coughed dryly.

"So all Hoopologists, as well as THE VOICE need to submit to Hoopology and Hoopetics for everything to work out neatly?"

"You're right on the money, young man! If any Hoopologist would disregard the agreed on rules, we simply shun him. And whenever THE VOICE would say anything that does not agree with our rules, we simply know that it had never really spoken. In that way, everyone toes the line." Prof. Lee had a satisfied grin on his face. "Hoopology and Hoopetics serve as the watchdogs of our knowledge about Dr. Hoop - sorry, I meant Dr. Good."

"But haven't the hoops been erected in the first place simply as a means to find Dr. Good?"

"If you view them profanely, yes. But there's SO much more to them: The plastic, the signs, the wood, the knots, the foundations, their history, their age - there's SO much to study!" Prof. Lee was elated. "I wrote my doctorate on the recurring theme of a minute, but discernable sulphur deposit on top of each suspending pole. It was SO unexpected! Today my thesis enjoys worldwide recognition as a breakthrough in worldwide Hoopology."

"Well, for a start I think simply finding Dr. Good 'profanely' would be good enough for me!" Con replied as he stretched out his hand.

"Thank you for your informative conversation, sir!"

As he turned and walked off, two final questions shot into his mind. He turned back to Prof. Lee.

"Do you shun THE VOICE also when it speaks inappropriately?"

"Who can shun THE VOICE? Who could ever know whether it had spoken at all? Who can know whether it really exists? There are many who claim they've heard THE VOICE, but that whole idea is simply based in circumstantial and experiential evidence. And that constitutes a rather thin and subjective mandate - to say the least. If THE VOICE would really exist, it would speak through what we find in the hoops. The hoops - and studying them - is objective. And that's all we'll work with in Hoopology. Else there's no control. And if there's no control, Hoopology will cease to exist as a credible discipline. And that would be an utter disaster."

"And have you ever thought about informing terminally ill people about Dr. Good and the hoops?"

"Well, yes. But that's not my job," Lee replied. "That's for the guys in the marketing department of Hoopology. They're a rather narrow-minded lot. They don't know half as much as proper Hoopologists, and spend most of their working hours trying to convince simple, weak-minded people to look for Dr. Good. That's not for me. I like to work with concepts and ideas and interacting with folks who thoroughly understand the structure of Hoopology."

Irritated with Lee's smugness, Con turned around and walked off. He elbowed his way through the army of suits and ties and quickly jumped the hoop. "Ouch!" he exclaimed as he went through. Then his head started to spin as his physical power suddenly left him.

Without warning, a black darkness enveloped him - before his limp body dropped to the ground.

To be continued ...

Next week:

Con hears THE VOICE ...

(If you are too curious to wait for next week, you may read the rest of the article on our website: <http://trumpetcall.co.za/articles.php?id=35>)

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