

4-1996

The Philosopher's Stone

Philosophical Discussion Group, Armstrong State University

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Recommended Citation

Philosophical Discussion Group, Armstrong State University, "The Philosopher's Stone" (1996). *The Philosopher's Stone*. 43.
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Volume 1 Number 4 / April 1996

The Philosopher's Stone

The Newsletter of The Philosophical Debate

Religion and Religious Institutions

Some things to consider. . .

Have the messages that the religions of the world hold changed over the centuries? Does the message that a church is founded on carry when it is passed from person to person, or must it be achieved individually? Churches are created to carry the messages gained by individuals, such as Buddha, Jesus, and Moses, but does that make the institution the same as the message?

Messenger vs. Message?

Have some of the churches and organized religions of the world begun to confuse themselves with the message that they are carrying throughout the ages? Is a church an institution, spreading the messages it carries, a community of people practicing their religion together, a collection of teachings gathered by the founder, or something else? Is a religious institution holy because it carries a holy message? Are the messages that the oldest religions carry today the same messages that they started out with, or has time changed them?

Highlights from the last meeting. . .

In previous debates, the Debate group examined whether technology would, or even could, replace religion. In this meeting, the subject shifted to the nature of religion. What is religion? Why do religions form? The group discussed the shift from early magic, the attempt to communicate with and control supernatural powers, to

religion, waiting for supernatural powers to contact and enlighten you. In recent times, however, it seems that people are beginning to become disillusioned with major religions. New religions are being created at an extraordinary rate, and a new interest is growing in older religions.

Religion provides a way for people to seek a higher power than themselves, whether it be God, Nature, balance, or something else. In this sense, technology may be replacing the trappings of religion, the institutions that provide means to enlightenment, but can an impersonal, technological world ever provide people with true religious fulfillment?

Religion provides people with the ability to contact something greater, and more mystical than they are themselves. Can technology, a system grown entirely from human reason and logic, ever provide more than the illusion of fulfillment? Technology provides people with power, both in physical senses and in terms of information, but can technology fulfill our dreams and desires?

Join Us!

The Philosophical Debate Group will meet on Tuesday, **May 21 in Gamble 109, at 8:15 p.m.** The topic of discussion will be: What is consciousness? Everyone is invited to join our discussion. Bring your own ideas topic suggestions, and/or literature that you would like to have read and would like to share. Our purpose is to gain insight into current issues in and to learn from one another. If your schedule prevents you from attending our discussions, or you would like more information concerning the Philosophical Debate group, You may contact us through the Learning Support Office, C/O Tiffanie Rogers, student tutor, or e-mail us at: nordener@pirates.armstrong.edu. We will be glad to publish some of your questions and our responses in our newsletter.