

# Two Plus Two Still Equals Four



by Rolaant McKenzie

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*Nineteen Eighty-Four* (also stylized as *1984*), a dystopian science fiction cautionary tale authored by Eric Blair (1903-1950) under the pen name George Orwell, describes a futuristic superstate named Oceania under the totalitarian control of the Party, which is led by Big Brother. His rule of Oceania was reminiscent of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia. Through the Ministry of Truth, Big Brother's Party engaged in pervasive government surveillance, constant propaganda, and historical revisionism to stamp out individuality, independent thinking, and anything else contrary to Party doctrine and control.

The Party had three slogans: War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength.

The story is told from the perspective of Winston Smith, a diligent mid-level worker at the Ministry of Truth whose job is to revise news and historical accounts to make them conform to the Party's propaganda of the day. Eventually he secretly comes to hate his job, the Party, and Big Brother, and dreams of thinking and living as a free man. Smith purchased and kept a forbidden diary, covertly writing his thoughts in a corner of his small room not surveilled by the large flat screen television. In it he wrote, "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four."

Smith later learned about a shadowy resistance group called the Brotherhood. However, his contact with the Brotherhood turned out to be a Party agent, and he was arrested. Smith was taken to the Ministry of Love, where he was subjected to months of psychological manipulation and physical torture.

His chief tormentor, O'Brien, noting what he had written in his diary, would hold up four fingers and ask Smith how many fingers he was holding up. Whenever he would answer four, great pain was exerted on him. O'Brien was eventually able to get Smith to accept whatever he said the number of fingers he held up (whether three, five, or all of them at once), instead of the four he actually held up, and believe it in his own mind.

With this accomplished, O'Brien was successful in changing Smith's mind to believe in the impossibility of seeing reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party. Whatever the Party held to be the truth, was truth. Smith was released once his hatred of Big Brother and the Party was turned to love.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008), Russian novelist and historian, was one of the most famous of dissidents in the Soviet Union. He was arrested for a critical reference to Stalin in a private letter and sentenced without a hearing to eight years in a labor camp. His prison term ended on the day of Stalin's death in 1953, but he was placed in "perpetual exile" in Kazakhstan rather than given his freedom. In 1974 he wrote an essay entitled, *Live Not by Lies*, where he urged his readers not to participate in or cooperate with narratives that they know not to be true. Living by lies strengthens self-censorship and the power of tyrants to conform the thoughts of people to their control, even more than force or the threat of force. Noncooperation with falsehood is a kind of civil disobedience that breaks their power to control the mind.

The term *gaslighting* comes from the title of the 1944 American film *Gaslight*, starring Ingrid Bergman. It refers to a form of

manipulation and psychological control where victims are deliberately given false information with the intent of causing them to question what they know to be true or their perception of reality. Such manipulation often makes it difficult for victims over time to recognize the truth.

Satan, using today's vernacular, could be described as the first "trans" person. This fallen angel appeared as a serpent in the Garden of Eden to Adam and Eve, where he gaslighted them into believing that if they disobeyed God and ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would be like God, the sole determiner of what is good and evil (Genesis 3). Satan was able to persuade them that  $2+2=5$ . That is, reject the truth and reality of God's word, and bring death on themselves and the rest of the world.

Since that time to the present day, Satan transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) and manipulates society through his servants into believing things that should be self-evidently false. In a multitude of ways, he gaslights people into believing  $2+2=5$ .

Despite the observable intricate complexity of the universe, the world, and even our own bodies, we have been increasingly told by our educational and scientific institutions for more than a century that we are the result of random chance and evolution (Romans 1:18-32). Human beings are not the special creation of God, and so there is no intrinsic value to human life.

The result of this mindset can be seen in subtle ways, such as the transition in the workplace from calling staff *personnel* to calling them *resources*. The former term acknowledges the personhood and intrinsic value of employees as human beings. The latter dehumanizes them into mere tools that can be utilized or cast aside depending on its convenience to the corporation.

Other consequences of this belief have not been so subtle. It has led to ...

- The widespread practice of murdering babies in and outside of the womb (abortion) and calling it choice and reproductive health care.
- The promotion of suicide (euthanasia) by calling it self-deliverance.
- The advertisement and mandating of experimental genetic code medical treatments that cause mass injuries and fatalities worldwide while calling them safe and effective against an illness with a 99% recovery rate.
- Telling boys to be dissatisfied with their objective biological makeup and to undergo permanent genital mutilation to be a girl (or vice versa) and calling it gender-affirming surgery.
- The advancement of economic austerity, famine, and depopulation to “save the earth” and calling it warfare against human-driven global cooling/warming/climate change.
- The development of a slave class of people utterly imbedded with and controlled by technology (the remnant of humanity allowed to exist to serve modern-day feudal lords) and calling it the transhumanist dream of health and longevity for all.

Just as Adam and Eve were given false information by Satan with the intent of misleading them to question what they knew to be truth from God and separating them from Him, we are bombarded continually with these kinds of messages with the intent of achieving the same outcome. Without a firm foundation, the best and strongest of us would eventually succumb just as Winston Smith did in 1984.

Richard Wurmbbrand (1909–2001), founder of the ministry *Voice of the Martyrs*, was a Romanian pastor of Jewish descent. He preached at bomb shelters and rescued Jews during World War II. In 1948, Pastor Wurmbbrand publicly said in then-Marxist

Romania that there can be no reconciliation between communism and Christianity. He is remembered for his courage in standing up in a gathering of church leaders and denouncing government control of the churches. As a result, he was arrested and sent to prison by the Romanian regime, which promoted state-sponsored atheism.

Pastor Wurmbbrand experienced 14 years of imprisonment and torture. At any time, he could have surrendered to his tormentors and abandoned his faith in God, but he did not. He had something that Winston Smith lacked. His firm foundation was the Rock, Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:24-27).

We are constantly surrounded by propaganda broadcast by the prince of the power of the air, the devil, through his servants and the institutions they control (Ephesians 2:1-10) to keep us separated from God and lead us to destruction. The only effective defense against this is trust in Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6; Ephesians 6:10-17).

Jesus is the Giver of Living Water (John 4:10, 7:37-39), the permanent indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who washes away the masks of deception surrounding us so that we would avoid them for the pathways to destruction and death they are.

Jesus is the Light of the World (John 8:12), and for all who trust in Him He dispels the falsehoods of the father of lies, rescues us from the domain of darkness and transfers us into His kingdom that will last forever (Colossians 1:13-20).

In Christ we have peace with God that guards our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:6-7), and because of this no matter what comes at us we can unswervingly maintain that two plus two will always equal four.

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