

Sylvia Browne and Novus Spiritus

Introduction:

Sylvia Browne described herself as a psychic and spiritual medium.

Some of her predictions sound reasonable, yet others stretch the limits of even the most robust imagination. For example, she predicted that Atlantis will begin to show itself by 2023 and be fully visible by 2026, and Aliens will start to appear in the year 2010. She says “they will not harm us, they simply want to see what we are doing to this planet. They will teach us how to use anti-gravity devices again, such as they did for the pyramids.” [www.sylviabrowne.com/g/The-Next-100-Years/172.html] **She also claimed to have seen fairies—“with wings and all!”— in Ireland (loc. cit. 62) and to have seen and talked with a tall extraterrestrial from planet “PX41,” located “beyond the Andromeda galaxy” (loc. cit. 99).** (from Joe Nickell, Ph.D., and Senior Research Fellow of the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (CSI) and "Investigative Files" Columnist for Skeptical Inquirer. [http://www.csicop.org/si/show/sylvia_brownes_latest_ghost-written])

Browne said she got assistance with her psychic powers from the imaginary playmate of her childhood named “Francine” who is now her “spirit guide” (*Secrets & Mysteries of the World* by Sylvia Browne, page 11).

A documented three-year study listing her 115 predictions about missing persons and murder cases shows that “Browne has not even been mostly correct in a single case,” though she claims to be correct over 85 percent of the time. (Skeptical Inquirer 34(2):38-42, 2010 [www.csicop.org/si/show/psychic_defective_sylvia_brownes_history_of_failure]; Jon Ronson, The Guardian, Saturday 27 October 2007 [www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/oct/27/usa.jonronson]) **“Her documented track record is one of nearly 100 percent failure rate instead of 100 percent success. Browne’s confidence in her body of work is baffling, and her claim that her flawed visions were “one human error” is an amazing understatement.”** (Skeptical Inquirer 31(3):May/June 2007 [www.csicop.org/si/show/sylvia_brownersquos_biggest_blunder])

Her character was also questionable. In 1992, Browne was convicted of investment fraud and grand theft in the State of California [<http://stopsylvia.com/articles/peoplesbrown.shtml>] **where she convinced investors that her psychic powers would make them rich. She had also been married four times.**

Her new religion

In April 1986, Sylvia Browne founded an organization called the Society of Novus Spiritus (meaning New Spirit) whose adherents refer to themselves as “gnostic Christians.” Early Gnostics believed that *gnosis* (knowledge) is the way to the salvation.



(The quotes that follow are taken directly from the Novus Spiritus website [www.novus.org/home/ovlong.cfm] unless otherwise stated)

Sylvia Browne's god.

Browne believed that there is both a male and female god. The male god she called "Om," the female god is "Azna". After having her existence suppressed for 2,000 years, Novus Spiritus is educating people on the existence of "mother god."

Here's what she says on her website:

"The exact number of gods is uncertain, but Novus accepts at least two: Om - the Father God, and Azna - the Mother God. We believe that the Gods are paired male/female just like all of creation. . ."

"How did the name Azna come about? Easily, through Francine, Sylvia's Spirit Guide. Francine reports that the Mother God is a vital and active force in the daily affairs of our world. In fact, Azna is the one to petition when you need Divine intervention to resolve problems."

"Anytime we use the word "God," please understand that we imply both the Male and Female Gods. For together They made our world and are the loving Parents of humanity."

Sylvia Browne says "there are multiple gods. The exact number of gods is uncertain." She claims that there are "Male and Female Gods". And that together "They made our world and are the loving Parents of humanity." Yet the Bible unambiguously tells us that the exact number of gods IS known; there is only one true God.

Isaiah 45:5-6 5 "I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. . . there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other."

Isaiah 44:6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.'"

Isaiah 43:10-11 10 "You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me. 11 I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me."

In the Old Testament God Himself says he knows of no other god but Himself. There is only one first and one last, and God says He is both. There was no god before or after Him. No other god has ever been formed.

The New Testament also states that there is only one God. Jesus says,

Mark 12:29-32 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' 31 The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other

commandment greater than these." 32 The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM;"

Note: Jesus is telling a religious leader what the *foremost* commandment is. Jesus DOESN'T say there are many gods, or a "god pair." He says that the foremost commandment is to believe that God is ONE LORD and we are to love HIM with all your heart, soul, and mind.

Paul believes the same thing and he even identifies the one true God as the Father, not the "mother" or "father/mother".

1 Corinthians 8:6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

James agrees.

James 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

Even demons know there is just one God.

CONCLUSION: The Bible makes no mention of heavenly parents or a mother god. I would think that since the Bible's purpose is to reveal the true God, if there were a "mother god" or "heavenly parents" that would come out somewhere in the Bible's 31,000 plus verses. It doesn't. Not even once.

According to Sylvia Browne "mother god" is pretty important. She says that "Francine" told her that "Azna is the one to petition when you need Divine intervention to resolve problems . . ." **Yet when asked how to pray, Jesus didn't tell His disciples to pray to Azna when they had problems, or even our "heavenly mother."** He said "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven . . .'" (Matthew 6: 9).

So to whom do we pray? Do we pray to the "mother god" of Sylvia Browne or to the Father whom Jesus taught us to pray to? Are we to assume that for thousands of years Christians and Jews have been praying to the wrong god? Are we to disregard the testimony of the 40-plus authors of Scripture who constantly refer to God with masculine pronouns (He, Him) or call Him "Father" because "Francine" tells us that a female god is out there?

Sylvia's god is simply the creation of her imagination. She has rejected the true God and Christ.

John 17:3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, AND Jesus Christ whom You have sent."



Sylvia Browne's Christ.

On her website Sylvia Browne states that Novus Spiritus does not believe "that Christ was God, nor that he died for our "sins," nor that he rose from the dead."

They also believe that Christ "was crucified but did not die on the cross and went on to live out His life in France with his mother and Mary Magdalene, his wife." [TENETS OF NOVUS XX]

Although the scope of this paper will not allow us to refute all of these false claims, to most, these are so blatantly anti-Christian they hardly need to be refuted at all. In fact, there are so many verses to the contrary it is hard to choose from among them. Here are a few.

CHRIST IS THE SAVIOR:

1 John 4:14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

In the birth narrative, an angel of God testifies to Joseph about Mary saying "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

Later the angel announced His birth by saying "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:10-12)

Jesus said of Himself in Matthew 18:11, "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost."

1 Timothy 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

Romans 5:9-10 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

If we were enemies of God *before* we were reconciled to Him through the death of Christ, then the failure to acknowledge His death and salvation means that we remain enemies of God. So where does that put Sylvia?

CHRIST DIED AND ROSE FROM THE DEAD:

John 2:19-22 19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

Mark 8: 31 And He (Jesus) began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Luke 24:2-8 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; 5 and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? 6 He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, 7 saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." 8 And they remembered His words,

Luke 24:38-40 38 And He (Jesus) said to them (His disciples), "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 14:9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 15:12-17 12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

Paul's argument is that if there is no resurrection, then Christ didn't rise from the dead. If Christ didn't rise from the dead, then all of the New Testament writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James) and others would be false witnesses of God because all of them testified that God DID raise Him. Furthermore, if Christ didn't rise from the dead, then our faith is useless and we are still in our sins.

CONCLUSION: Again, we are faced with a set of complete contradictions. Should we believe Sylvia Browne who lives 2000 years after the fact, or the words of Jesus, the angels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul who were around when it all happened?



Although it is heartbreaking to watch anyone be deceived, it shouldn't take us off guard, for the Bible predicts in numerous places that false teachers will come and mislead people.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:24-25 24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. 25 Behold, I have told you in advance."

2 Peter 2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

Acts 20:28-30 28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them."

1 John 4:1-3 1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

1 John 2:18-23 18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. 21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.



Although the teachings of Sylvia Browne are unique in their own way, they fit into the typical pattern of any cult. Josh McDowell in his book *Understanding the Cults* lists the following 9 characteristics of most cults.

- 1) **NEW TRUTH** - Revelation from God is continuing and THEY have it in their own writings
- 2) **NEW INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE** - Cultic writing is key to understanding the mysteries of the Bible. *Reinterpret Scripture to fit cult doctrine*

A classic example of “reinterpreting Scripture to fit their doctrine” is on her website. Ironically, Sylvia Browne quotes one of the most damning verses against her belief system that could be used, but she is completely unaware that she has done so!

On her web site she says “We agree [emphasis mine] with Christ when he said (John 14:6): “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me.” Since Christ equates himself to “the way, the truth, and the life,” a logically equivalent statement is: “No one comes to the Father but through the way, and the truth, and the life.”

Hence, if you follow the teachings of Christ then the doors of heaven (the eternal Home) open.

Notice how Browne twists what the text actually says to fit her own doctrine. First she says “Since Christ equates himself to “the way, the truth, and the life,” a logically equivalent statement is: “No one comes to the Father but through the way, and the truth, and the life.”

In a logical formula we would write it out like this:

1. Jesus is _____ the way and the truth and the life
2. No one comes to the Father but through _____ the way and the truth and the life
3. Therefore no one comes to the Father but through _____ Jesus.

However, instead of concluding that “no one comes to the Father but through Jesus” she concludes “Hence, if you follow *the teachings of Christ* then the doors of heaven (the eternal Home) open.”

But notice that Jesus didn’t mention His teachings at all. Jesus didn’t say “My *teachings* are the way the truth and the life” or “No one comes to the Father but by following My *teachings*”, He said HE is the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but through HIM. He is the only one who makes access to the Father.

What He is saying is that any religion that does not accept Jesus as the Way to the Father does not make it to God. That rules out Judaism. That rules out Islam. It rules out Hinduism, Taoism, and Buddhism too. And it most definitely rules out Sylvia Browne!

As Jesus said in John 5:39-40 39 "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; 40 and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life."

3) NEW JESUS - He is less than God or man is elevated to His level as "gods"

We have already seen that Novus Spiritus does not believe "that Christ was God" (above) **but the tenth Tenant of Novus is** "Let no one convince you that you are less than a God."

4) NEW CHRISTIANITY - Church is fine but not enough. New organization with new knowledge

Sylvia Browne and Sylvia's spirit guide "Francine" says "Fortunately, God sent many prophets to this world. And every one of them espoused the same basic philosophy of Christ. This, of course, allows all of God's children to find their way home. And God, in His mercy, has a way for every one of His people to return home. The paths are many, and all people will be saved. Francine said it very well: "This philosophy will not save your soul, but it will make your soul worth saving."

Well, "Francine" was at least half right - that philosophy won't save your soul. The Bible says "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

As Paul says in Galatians 1:6-9 6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

And what is the gospel that Paul preached?

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

Notice how clear Paul is. The gospel is that Christ died for our sins and that He was raised on the third day. He says in verse 2 that it is by THIS gospel that you are saved – unless your faith was empty ("you believed in vain"). Then he says to let anyone or anything that says anything to the contrary be accursed.

5) NEW LANGUAGE - Good sounding words for public consumption vs. a private language that is very different

6) NEW GOD - replacing Triune Godhead with someone or something else; satan, spirits, gods or goddesses or even man himself

7) NEW THEOLOGY - no absolutes, lip service to the Bible but reinterprets it

Both are true of Novus Spiritus. They say of themselves “. . . we always say: "Take what you like and leave the rest behind." Yet the truth of Sylvia's words will become manifest of their own accord.”

Sylvia says of the Bible: “Novus views the Bible as a marvelous book of learning and hope for a (then) tired world. The message of hope is the New Testament, with wonderful truths from a Master. And the Old Testament provides a diary of the path to perfection that awaits every person.”

Is the Bible the unaltered word of God? No. It simply cannot be, due to the centuries of social, political, language, and geographical changes. In fact, the current Bible is not even complete. Many books have been deleted in order to preserve the church's power.”

“We absolutely reject the Book of Revelations and the Apocalypse.”

(Ironically, the group that prides itself in “knowledge” doesn’t realize that the Book of Revelation doesn’t have an “s”.)

To say, “The Bible is a marvelous book . . . full of errors and deletions,” can only be described as lip service.

In contrast, Jesus believes “ . . . until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.” (Matthew 5:18).

So once again we need to ask, who do we believe, Sylvia or Jesus?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

If the Bible is full of errors, how do we separate what is error from what is true? In Novus Spiritus it seems to be pretty simple - anything that does not agree with Sylvia is seen as an error and needs reinterpretation.

On her web site she states “We *agree* [emphasis mine] with Christ when he said (John 14:6): "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me." (see discussion under **NEW INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE** above) **Then in complete contradiction, she says in her study guide “Journey of the Souls (I)”** “You see the tragedy is that the Bible misquoted Christ. Christ [actually] said, ‘Our father in Heaven says, I am the way, the truth, and the light. And only until you come to Me will you know what true salvation is.’”

She goes on to say, “The word ‘salvation’ is a strange word. If you break the word up it means “salve;” it means “balm to the soul.” And that only meant nothing more than to ease your soul, to rid of all the brier patches of life, and they attributed that phrase to Christ.”

An honest seeker of truth would ask, How does she know what Jesus said when all we have is the written record in the Bible that says something entirely different? Where does she come up with this meaning of salvation? I tried hard to figure it out. “Salvation” in both Hebrew and Greek (the original languages that the Bible was written in) most often means “deliverance,” “help,” or “salvation.” The English word is related to the Old French *sauvacion*, from Late Latin *salvātiō*, from Latin *salvātus* saved, from *salvāre* to save. There is no answer to these questions – as far as I can tell she

just made these things up!! She gives lip service to the Bible and then reinterprets it to fit her own beliefs. This is actually worse – she REWRITES it to fit her beliefs!

8) NEW LEADERSHIP - strong leaders with unique access to God; total dependence on man, not God

9) NEW SALVATION - emphasis on works/ritual to do or follow; salvation only in the cult

CONCLUSION: It is baffling that anyone would follow Sylvia Browne. It is worse that her church calls themselves Christian. But that is the nature of deception of which Satan is a mastermind.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

However, instead of just feeling hostile toward people who are trapped in deception, pray that God would call them out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

