

The **GO**SP**EL** *without* **RELIGION**

By Charles Pinkney

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GWR 04

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Religion: A Dividing Force A House Divided Can Not Stand

What Subtle Spiritual Forces Work to Separate us from the Gospel Truths?

There are [two active spiritual forces](#). The first bears the influence of the Kingdom of God, of which Yeshua (Jesus) is Lord and ruler. The other bears the influence of the kingdom of darkness which has another ruler, Lucifer or Satan. Satan is called 'the deceiver' of the brethren', 'prince of the powers of the air', 'the lord of this world', and 'the enemy of our souls'. The Lord of heaven, Jesus, is a gathering power. He gathers together, restores the broken-hearted, delivers the captive, brings liberty and hope. He saves. He heals. He delivers. Satan, conversely, is a dividing force and a devouring force. His strategy is to divide and conquer as well as deceiving and destroying. Satan is continuing at work to cause strife and division among the people of God. It is Satan's purpose to also divide us from enjoying peaceful relationships with one another. The devil beguiles and encourages self will and vanity. This was the sin that brought him into condemnation. Every human soul remains separated from God until the time when we call upon God to rescue us from our own chosen destruction. The un-redeemed person habitually serves self in vanity and ultimately whether we will cease to follow the self directed life which keeps us from knowing God.

For many, in a time of God's choosing, our life's purpose and orientation reaches a certain place and we begin **to experience God**. These God-ordained times are of special significance (Gr. *kairos*) in God's timetable. At such times God's hand reaches forth in [grace](#) and begins to strengthen a man or a woman and raise them up with a testimony and a voice that bears witness of redemption. Until such times we remain in a kind of inertia both as individuals and as institutions.

There are times of spiritual **revival** that occur when men or women of God are [empowered by the Spirit](#). At these times there is a break through in the malaise of tradition. Men and women receive something from heaven. The fire of God begins to consume their spirits. They break forth proclaiming that *God truly rewards those that seek him*. In the face of such revival a sleeping church awakens to refresh the world in hope. Religious belief systems are probably born in a time when spiritual power was in evidence, widely experienced first hand. Then, eventually in the course of time people become complacent and God's presence in a real sense departs.

A person growing up in a religious tradition has been told that there is a God but they personally have Not experienced Him. They may have been told that God answers prayers, but they've never experience answered prayer. They are told that God once spoke to people but he doesn't speak anymore. But, God is a God of the living not of the dead. God is a right now being. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Religious traditions tend to turn the reality of God's "now-ness" into God's "then-ness." Religion for all intents and purposes becomes a kind of "oral tradition," and no

more.

So we also see the situation where one group's understanding of the practice of Christianity comes in conflict with others and the house divides further. And thus we have come to a place where hundreds of denominations or sects contend for their own view of the truth. Professing Christians are for the most part, divided from others in the body. My experience with traditional denominations is that few enjoy the "now-ness" of God; and even fewer who see themselves as the true and valued "disciples" for whom Jesus prayed for in John 17 when he commissioned us all to be as He is in the world.

**Fellowship is bonding power of unity.
Agreement is the power of faith.**

Fellowship is the bonding power of unity among any community. Agreement is the power of faith. Everyone has an area of interest or interests. It is natural to seek those who share your interest, whether it be an interest in playing cards, playing golf, collecting stamps, fishing, or drinking beer at a honky tank. We seek people who like what we like. We are stretched when we are around someone who shares nothing in common with our interests. We all crave fellowship, belonging and acceptance.

We see that religion of any sort divides humanity. How unfortunate that there is such pervasive division among Christians. Division weakens and hinders the purposes of God to partake in his Kingdom. Jesus prayer for believers is recorded in chapter seventeen of John's Gospel asks for unity among all that the Father has given him. This prayer is prayed for all his disciples, and disciples in coming generations who also will know him as Redeemer and Deliverer. This prayer is the specific will of God and the road map of ministry for those who believe and follow him in generations to come. Even the Jew and Gentile were eventually to be one, perfectly one in Himself.

Oneness (unity) in Jesus Christ means to have the same fellowship with the Father as Jesus knew and experienced. In addition, Jesus also prayed that we should partake of the same glory which had been given to him. Later in the prayer, the Lord expresses that it is his will for us to share in His commission and ministry upon the earth. He Jesus, foresees in his prayer that he be replicated in each disciple to continue his own life and ministry. This charge to serve (minister) that Christ received from the Father was turned over to the **disciples**. Every petition in Jesus' prayer were expressed with the assurance that the Father would answer and bring it to pass. Everything Jesus prayed was in the Father's will. After the resurrection and the launching of the 'church age' we see these principles restated and amplified by the writing of the apostles in the epistle writings (the epistles of John, Peter, Paul, and Lukes account of the Acts of the apostles.)

Most religious tradition contradicts the intentions spoken by Jesus in his high priestly prayer. Today most of us are instructed by our human religious mentors in matters of faith and living our lives. We have as much or as little of the truth of the Gospel as is understood by our mentors or expositors of our tradition. The apostle Paul exhorts us *not to be ignorant about Spiritual matters but you are brought forth into this idolatry by our leaders - - (1 Corinthians 12:1 paraphrase)* .

We have been mentored not to practice the dynamic life of disciples in practice of the Christian faith. Thus we can not avail ourselves of the spiritual life or have faith to move into these dimensions though they are established as spiritual promises in the Word. Any and every believer *is an inheritor of all of God's promises*.

NEXT CHAPTER

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[The Gospel *Without* Religion](#)

E Book 2:
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E Book 3:
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Resources: Understanding Home Fellowships

<http://churchinthehouse.org/>
[Frank Viola Interviews a typical church-goer](#)
(Discussion of Open Church)

Frank Viola
"Who's Your Covering"
"Rethinking the Wineskin"

Sid Roth Guest,
George Barna
"Moving beyond the established church"
Barna's Book: "Revolution"
Interview 2/20/2006 <http://www.sidroth.org>
Sid Roth Guest:

Tim and Katie Mather
Subject: Open Church
<http://www.sidroth.org/radio.htm>

Sid Roth Guest: Guest:
Jim Rutz
Author of Book: "Megashift, "
"Experiencing the fullness of God
outside of Institutional Religion"
Subject: Open Church
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