

RELIGION versus THE WAY OF SALVATION

Religion Vs The Way of Salvation

(John 14:6)

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I will make a statement that you may not ever have heard: Human beings in their natural state are NOT interested in God or in pursuing spiritual matters. Our natural inclination is not to live in Godly ways! In fact the Bible declares that all human beings are born in the world in a "fallen state." Each one of us is born spiritually dead and totally incapable of anything but of self-serving and ungodly behaviors. Yet, among these natural men and women, yet many are reared in homes where "moral values" are taught, have received moral guidance through religious activities. Nevertheless without spiritual renewal, their instincts remain ungodly. We shape our lives into a mostly superficial veneer of morality through religious practices. The prophet Isaiah declares, We are all gone astray. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6) What or who can intervene to

remove the blinders to reveal the truth? Who can revive us to godliness and newness of life? Religious practices alone do not suffice.

When Christianity becomes "RELIGION"

What does it mean to be a Christian? Being a believer and follower of Jesus the Messiah is really simple; we need to know who he is and why we need his gift. Religion has made living the life of a believer difficult and formalistic. Religion has over centuries, developed a *church structure* that adds a burden of obligations and ritual formalities to ensure redemption." The protestant reformers departed only slightly from the formalities and structure of the Roman Church. Thankfully, Martin Luther and those who followed, opened the door to '*faith alone*' and '*grace alone*' and '*scriptures alone*,' but retained sacramentalism and sacerdotalism, the priesthood.

Jesus, Yeshua of Nazareth, did not come to establish a religion but a called-out supernatural priesthood of believers. The Gospels reveal Christ's identity as the Son of God, divinely begotten in human flesh. He was born to fulfill a single purpose, to be presented in due time as the Messiah and king of Israel while as God's sacrificial lamb, providing humanity with a transformative GIFT. Jesus brought the gift of REDEMPTION that was promised prophetically and prefigured from Genesis throughout the Old Covenant. This *gift* was prefigured in *the law*, *the prophets* and the Psalms. The Messiah of Israel through the wisdom of God, promised redemption for all of fallen humanity, to the Jews first and then the gentiles. This redemption when actualized would provide for human soul a Spiritual RE-CREATION for all those who believe on his name.

Today people have all kinds of ideas about what it means to be a Christian? This is usually connected with traditions of Christian sects or *denominations*. Some may believe they are Christians by virtue of faithful church attendance? Christians can be caught in the web of religious requirements, *sacramental laws* that are thought to guarantee God's approval and *eternal life*. Jesus advised the disciples to extend the body of believers by *making disciples*. Nevertheless, the officiating priest class has assumed the acceptable mode for instructing and maintaining the faith since the time of the first Christian emperor, Constantine. The so called protestant reformation did little to change Christian *religion*. The clergy (priest-overseer) still continues as the authority and headship over the laity. However, the reformation did make one important breakthrough, namely it gave common people access to Bible texts making it possible for anyone with the knowledge of reading to grow in the knowledge of God's Word of Truth.

Perhaps you are among those who have rejected Christianity because of the formalism and rituals so common to religious services. These can be routine, shallow and uninspiring to some while others find comfort in them. One can only imagine if God has any interest in what goes on in that church house, even though it is commonly called "God's house." There was a time when the Almighty did manifest his presence in the temple or tabernacle but those days are past. The new dwelling place is in a "temple not made with hands." (See 1 Corinthians C.3 and Chapter 6.)

God's presence was once the focus of praise and worship. It is rare to find that focus today among those leading worship. Good *performers* lead in praise. Christian performance varies little from worldly performance. Leadership, in my view, appears to seek ministry leadership who possess the performance skills needed to make a visitor to that "church" return. Selection values well-spoken and credentialed men or women who can promote a relevant message presented in a pleasing and entertaining way. Attending a church, temple or mosque for millions is a matter of "*we have this obligation, and have to go.*"

Searching For The Reality of God

After being thoroughly conditioned to the religious experience we were reared in, what need is there to pursue any more in the knowledge of God? Not everyone will show an inclination to search out the greater questions of life; *who are we?* where did we come from? and *where are we going?* This business of going on a **God Quest** is a tricky matter. It can lead us to many unforeseen destinations. It can lead you to India to search for an enlightened guru; It can lead you into a cult-like organization like the Jim Jones cult that ended with hundreds of the faithful, dead; you may discover a commune in a place like Antelope, Oregon where the faithful of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh lived in an unhampered *love-in* day after day. The New Age, with its siren call, extends the promise of divine revelation from the mouths of *Ascended Masters* who presumably are channeled by psychics and spiritists. These forms of godliness may offer something promising or fulfillment. Why not? Choose any that you like. It is after all, your soul. There seems to be many valid choices, so many ways to find the truth. But the Holy Bible tells us what Truth really is. It is a person, Jesus, the *Son of the highest*. Jesus declares with assurance that *none come to the Father accept through himself*. What will be the end result of your search? What will be the destiny of your soul? What effect will religious involvement or church attendance have upon your soul's destiny? We are faced with many religions. Will they lead us to God and "**Eternal Life?**"

Anyone who has ever entered a book store knows that there are thousands of books written to address the life-questions above. Hundreds of new books are written each year

increasing the already glutted archive called RELIGION. The motivations of such writers mostly support traditional doctrines while only sharing a new understanding. Actually, I guess the principal motivation to publish is to add to the author's bank account.

There are in the Christian world today those who have become *Christian Celebrities*. These are the headliners familiar to media and streaming platforms. They seem to have a new book title or teaching series out for consumption every month. The sale of *Christian knowledge* is a massive industry making many preachers rich. Outreach to spread the gospel is one thing but the acquisition of personal wealth and merchandising the things of God is quite another!

Blessed are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

I believe that what I will share here will echo some of the voices who are expressing a view that the "spiritual life" can exist and flourish outside of formal and institutional religion. But, make no mistake, by the grace of God I became a believer in Jesus and the Bible owing to a supernatural encounter with a Holy God. I am one more voice that testifies to a transformed life through the "**power of God**." I will add my voice to others who encourage you to believe in the "one name under heaven" by which we can be "saved," be born again and as such, to receive the promise of eternal life and the promises provided by Grace of Jesus Christ the Messiah of God. *Sadly, many church goers take offense at the notion that some Christians claim to be "Born Again."* As though they new more about God.

First I wish to say at the onset that traditional Christianity has indeed, been the sustaining foundation and moral backbone of this nation, America. America has been blessed by God and has stood *as a righteous nation* among the nations of the world. For generations the values and precepts of Christian teachings and beliefs have provided a positive moral framework and influence that elevated the United States. Clearly, the Christian Religion, even with shortcomings, has provided a social foundation endorsing morality, justice and human rights for millions. Children are best nurtured in a home where Bible based life values are practiced. Unfortunately the moral foundations provided by Christian values are rapidly dissolving through the onslaught of a secularism. A sentiment continually reinforced by public media with an anti-Christian bias. The secular, anti-Christian **United Nations** is now promoting the view that Christianity is actually a danger to society equivalent to terrorism.

Unlike the world of sixty years ago, today we are continuously bombarded with media music, imagery and stories that are an offense to morality. "*The thoughts and imagination of their hearts was only evil, continually.*" (Genesis 6:5) Church houses are losing membership.

Leaders seek new ways to attract congregants and doing so, move farther from the essentials of the Gospel. Today, tens of millions of nominal (religious) Christians remain 'faithful church goers,' but of these, fewer seem passionately interested in God? How many are so immersed in worldly views and interests to even have a set aside view of belonging to first to God's Kingdom. Few seek to know God without God personally drawing them by His Spirit. Elsewhere on this site, I share about how *God worked to transform my own life*. Information *about God* can not replace knowing God. ***The power of God** is transformative. Those who truly know God can testify that they have personally tasted the Grace and goodness of God through Jesus Christ the Messiah. **Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 2:5*

Testimony of Becoming a New Creation

Many, many believers have a story of how they experienced a supernatural God event; an experience of a *new and transformed life* that provided *an assurance of salvation*. I found God or should I say, **God allowed me to find Him** -at a time in my life when I was at an emotional low point with desperate needs. Emotionally depressed and spiritually empty I entered into the stage of readiness, a time when I was humbled enough to change my mind about all that I knew and believed. It is there that we can make our first **serious** effort to seek after God. It is a true that we will give little thought to God when things are going great. It is when fiery trials come then we call out to be rescued by some **power beyond ourselves**. This turning point of seeking God may also be the result of the prayers of others on my behalf. **Grace of God** is set in motion by these prayers. It is this Divine Grace (an enabling gift) from God that brings us to spiritual renewal, **awakening**. Once our hearts are prepared, it takes but a moment for God to answer our heart's cry and bring us from darkness into light. In my case, this preparation of my soul was slow in coming. Pride and idolatry is common to everyone. That is the first hindrance to address.

Transformed From Our Natural Fallen State Through the Power of God

God has always loved us. (*God so loved the world..*" John.3:16) He grieves the fact that humanity exists in a fallen state, with darkened minds and weakness. What we call *The GOSPEL* is how the Almighty in ages past has provided a way of retrieving humanity from its fallen and accursed state. The WAY is through His Son, Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah. It is God Himself, who provides the necessary '*measure of faith*' to enable those who seek Him. A supernatural transformation is available for those who come to believe the Truth. He rewards those who seek. This is "the *Gift of God*." If you believe in the **Gift** whose name is Yeshua (Jesus), God's Son, will open your eyes. He will speak to you through the Holy Spirit. (John. 9) His name "Yeshua" means "Jehovah is salvation." The Greek version, "Jesus" is the

familiar version. The Greek translated name *Jesus* does not immediately associate with "Salvation." (*Christos -Greek- means anointed one.*) I believe that title hinders some from understanding his correct title. In prayers of course he hears and responds to both names, He will act to let you partake in the gift and wonders of the **eternal life** to come. Through the Grace of God we may experience that *supernatural event*, a **miraculous** change in our spirits, called **regeneration** into **a new man (woman)*. With the regenerated spirit, re-quickened by the power of Almighty God, we are *inwardly impelled* to grow in the knowledge of the *Lover of Our Souls*. If only we choose to seize the life ring thrown to us, we can begin a new Spiritual life. We open the door to the *Kingdom of heaven* and begin gradually discovering our status as a **saint** and **disciple** of God. **2Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

New Believers are Tender Saplings Easily Bent

See link to "[A Disciples Handbook](#)." From this supernatural beginning new believers, are tender saplings that can be bent many ways: "**Baby Christians**" can easily be misguided, even taken captive by those who preach other gospels. In the beginnings of our faith we can be snared by a false or incomplete "Gospel" with competing definitions of Godliness. We eventually, recognize the spirit of Christ as possessing the spirit of liberty. The new believer needs mature mentors, and the more the better to guide us, gradually nurturing us in the *Word of Truth*. There is a whole new Spiritual world to discover and the body supplying their individual gifts and experience is the best way of doing that. Some institutions suppose that a six week 'discipling' class will meet that need. I dare say that is foolishness. There is a life to fulfill with blessing and hope to experience. (*2 Corinthians 11:3) Discernment from the Holy Spirit of Truth is in operation to provide discernment. Not all teachers or pastors possess the motives that are true or honorable. **The true GOSPEL is defined by the Right Jesus; the Right Gospel; and The Right Spirit.*

Three Guides in Discerning the Right Gospel

Judging whether a person is adhering to the RIGHT GOSPEL is not an easy thing. Often we do not gain that insight of a persons doctrine right away. We are charged by the original apostles of Jesus to make this judgment. **1. Believe in the right Jesus: Who is this Jesus?** What are his credentials? Is he just a teacher; just a prophet; or the sinless, virgin-born Son of God? **2. Understand if it is the right Gospel?** What are the attributes of the gospel? Are they obligations to perform under to earn righteousness and salvation? Is there liberty through grace; or a combination of law and grace? The tension between Biblical authenticity

and spiritual error (apostasy) has been ongoing since the days of the first apostles. **3.Discern is it of The Right Spirit** must be demonstrated by the members and their spokespersons of that gospel. Does it advocate behaviors that are worldly, sensual or devilish. Is the flesh exalted. Does it de-emphasize the finished work of the cross? (*2 Corinthians 11:4*)

The true Gospel of Grace hasn't changed but it has been dangerously distorted.

In some cases this gospel given to us to make disciples has been all but demolished by religious traditions. The *Gospel of the Kingdom of God* still remains as God's plan. Jesus taught his disciples to pray for (His) Kingdom to come and be established on earth, as it is in Heaven. Some believe that kingdom is already in place in the form of the Christian church. Others recognize that the kingdom will only be established when Christ returns to mete judgment and thoroughly destroy the domain of Satan. (*Daniel 2:44*)

We still await the day when the promised one, Messiah, Jesus, will sit upon the throne of David and physically rule over a transformed earth. He will reign literally in righteousness in this world. Jesus (Yeshua of Nazareth) was and is "King of the Jews" just as Herod inscribed on the cross upon which he bore our sin. He asked Jesus, "Are you a King?" Jesus answered, "You say it rightly, but *now my kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my people would fight, but now it is not of this world.*" We look for the day when The King will come in power and great glory. He will bring supernatural destruction upon those who chose to reject the Messiah's gift of salvation and have chosen **the lie** to serve and worship another *false messiah*. At *the second advent* Jesus will reign in righteousness *with a rod of iron*, and every knee will bow in recognition of that fact. The **gospel of grace** extends into the time of this writing as part of "*the acceptable year of the Lord.*" which we proclaim. (Isa.61) From the church age dispensation until the removal of that body we are and have been living in "the acceptable year of the Lord" or the age of His favor. The time of the Lord's favor extends to the end of the "church age."

My intent here in writing, is to restate and proclaim those first principles which were taught by the disciples of Jesus Christ. Jesus' half brother *Jude told us to 'earnestly contend for the faith once and for all given to the saints.'* (Jude vs 3) The writings which I share on this site, are presented in simplicity without motive of fame or gain. They are not subsidized by any religious body or denomination. It is up to the Holy Spirit to affirm the understandings shared here and also to **CALL in** those individuals who he draws to inquire about the any of the subjects offered on this site.

You will find the teachings I share are didactic, meaning that they are *presented as accurate and factual*, not theoretical opinions. This knowledge has not accrued from second hand accounts or through religious indoctrination, but from more than thirty years of serious scripture study. From time to time I will also share certain Spiritual experiences that **bear witness** to the realities of Christ and the "Kingdom of heaven" he rules. I always promote the study of scripture to illuminate the believer. The Holy Spirit brings light and understanding. (*Psalm 119*). *Commentaries on these pages are not the product of religious indoctrination*, nor of any denominational slant. I believe these precepts and understandings reflect the same truths revealed by the first apostles who proclaimed the *True and Living Way*. For my part, these writings are only a tiny sampling of the vast revelations contained in the Bible. Though incomplete, they are presented as valid. All Spiritual experiences, whether mine or anyone else's, must be validated by the Word of Truth. Believers must *"contend earnestly for the faith that was first (once and for all) delivered to the saints"*. (see Jude's epistle. vs.3)

This Present World; Worldly Viewpoints - -

link to: *Link to study of the attributes of the fallen world*

Today, according to theologians, we live in a new *post modern* world view that has grown to reject a world governed by absolutes in favor of a cornucopia of opinions. Any suggestion that truth is 'black and white' is rejected in favor of the 'nuanced' points of view. Today as I write, we are witnessing the perilous times spoken of by Paul. In his second letter to Timothy (2) chapter 3 and Timothy 1:4. Paul describes prophetically the devolution into darkness which will pervade in latter day's society. It is a time characterizing man's darkest nature. The demise of "truth" bears witness to a belief that any viewpoint is valid and the greatest virtue is to be tolerant of people whose *truth is different from our own*. Christianity today is viewed as the one religion that is characterized by *intolerance* to the degree that its followers must be surveilled and suppressed. Yet, strangely, Islam which holds that unbelieving *infidels* should die violently, is condoned, even given privilege by current government policy. The question Pontius Pilot asked Jesus is all the more relevant today, ***"What is truth?"***

The Gospel however, is not subject to redefinition or updating. Its proofs are borne out by first-hand experience. According to ancient law, the truth **is verified by the testimony of reliable witnesses**. These witnesses remain the Holy and long-standing voices of the Word recorded in Scripture. These voices are a more sure testimony and become the litmus test of any doctrine or experience that one might promote. The truth of G-d is known in varying degrees by many, though shockingly too few. The apostle states the reality that, "We know in part. "The masses have been victims of **religious paradigms** shaped by church-house

religion over the past 17 centuries. Church attendance provides a scarce amount of spiritual nurture and intends that the laity remains docile and tractable.

Yet, I believe there is a growing remnant today awakening to a desire to return to the roots of Christendom. The [paradigm](#) of religious formalism is now being challenged by many who gather in small **Spirit-led groups**. For these, there is a hunger for true spiritual fellowship that offers more liberty, more simplicity, more edification and more power. Traditions are being replaced with fellowships that experience the living presence of God. Simply being a spectator in a church service (program) is being replaced by a desire to participate actively as a true disciple of Christ and grow in the God centered life. This religious creature, is tenacious and any changes are always met with resistance. This is a creature of deeply invested interests. I anticipate that whatever I write here will be challenged by orthodoxy. Religious leaders, *experts*, theologians, academicians, are invested in the institutional church and profit from their doctrines and dogma. Truth, however, is the final arbiter and it is upon that basis that each of us will be judged for what we have done and said

The Calling Out Of The Saints: 1 Corinthians 1:26:

"For consider you who were called, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth." Every true disciple is called out of the world by God. This means that every young person, man or woman is God-chosen to be part of his Holy Family. The "church" is translated from the Greek *ekklesia*, meaning the called out ones. Those who God calls he anoints, and appoints and sees to it that they grow into the purpose for which they were called. It is never to be a passive bystander. No one can pluck from His hand those who are chosen. (John 10:28) Those who are not born of God exist outside of the Body of Christ. They have a form of godliness but these exist only in institutional religion and are subject to following *any wind of doctrine*.

How Do We Awaken to Faith and Belief?

Religion abounds in the societies of the world. It is inextricable in the cultures of every nation. It is a full time concern to many who see religion as a life style or a career path. My definition of religion is a codified belief system. It is the platform from which debates and disagreements are launched often with the result of becoming vehement, and even leading to genocide.

Thousands of books continue to be written of a religious nature. They purport to be revelations about God, and attempt to offer answers to those who are seeking a spiritual life. Subjects might range from World Religions, Comparative Theology, Biblical Study or Analysis, and of course prescribed pathways to enlightenment by self promoting gurus. [The Gospel without Religion](#) is not a book about theology. I am called to know the word but not as an academician or a theologian. I am therefore, another a small voice in the marketplace of ideas, another *voice, crying out in the wilderness*, So now I give thanks to God the Father for allowing me to experience His living presence and guiding hand. This is a testimony of God's interaction with the human race we call '**grace.**' Moreover, his love and grace have empowered me both to **seek** him and to **know him** and draw wisdom from His Word. Moreover, I believe that this message can encourage and aid those thousands who, like myself, were never given answers to deep spiritual questions but who remain hungry, asking, *"Is there is a God, and if He is, how can I get Him to notice me."*

Awakened From Dead Religious Tradition

My questions and spiritual curiosity were not answered by denominational churches that I attended from my youth through middle age. The services or ceremonies that were offered on meeting days revealed nothing of God's reality or demonstrated his 'presumed' love and power. It was however, God whom I ultimately met and who impacted my life, ***outside of religion***, personally and powerfully. I hope sharing these experiences bring hope and assurance to others.

Responding to The Call of Christ

As in any presentation of the gospel only a select few will feel the Holy Spirit stirring a response. "*Many are called, but few are chosen.* [Matthew 22:14](#)" Many are perfectly happy with who they are and respond with disinterest, or indifference. Many are convinced that their own church involvement or theological training hold them in good stead with the Almighty. There there are those few who have been looking for a spiritual life line, making God a reality rather than a myth.. These I believe, are those will receive this message with gratitude. The heart of this Jesus Gospel (*good news*) has always been predicated on being simple, gentle and peaceable, but none the less, it always meets with resistance and "offense" because of its ***spiritual*** nature. The '***god of this world***' has done his part to blind the eyes of those who he has nurtured in worldly thoughts and passions.

It is human nature is to fight to defend one's own beliefs. People have been fighting and dying over what they consider to be "right and true" for thousands of years. Opposing

belief systems especially religion does not give up without a fight. Our highly charged human egos are born and nurtured within the domain of materialism, worldliness, and self-serving, within the status-quo of its institutions. Religious institutions today, are imbued with most **attributes of worldliness**, worldly power, worldly recognition, earthly rewards. The world's religious systems have their own vested interests. To be blunt, religion as we know it represents a significant economic and political power. Christian theology today is becoming increasingly a repudiation of Apostolic doctrine. **Emergent Christianity** blends other faiths with Christian traditions and is quickly departing from the belief in Biblical Inerrancy. The simplest belief system is that God is good and he loves everybody and would not send someone who lived the best life he/she could to an eternal hell. This is universalism.

This book is written principally for unbelievers. However, I am aware that there is a world of "tares" who populate churches. There are unbelievers both in and outside of the church experience. Too many do not realize to what extent they have been blinded by church house traditions. For unbelief is the enemy of church people as much as for 'unbelievers.' For church house Christians, both laity and clergy it is a terrible thing to know only religion and not God! For the Lord has declared, *"Many will say in that day, Lord, Lord -, but I will say, "Depart from me I do not know you."* Matt. 7:23

Among all the billions of people upon the face of the earth, knowing God is ultimate priority. Everyone will eventually be confronted by this reality and I pray it will not be too late. As it is written, *"every knee will bow before Him, and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Lord."* For millions this knowledge will come too late and the door of life will have been closed. Part of the purview of this book is to point out the difference between knowing about God and knowing God.

The world of religion, Religious Disparities (Whose Truth do We Trust?)

What a world! Almost everyone is in their own particular place regarding a search for a personal belief system. How would we graph our place as a believer or an unbeliever? Do you know what you believe? Do you know why you hold these beliefs? Some have a belief in a **God** of some description, others may not. Some pray, some believe in an afterlife, while others have no faith in any God nor any life following this one. There are so many religions inside and outside of Christianity. There are so many named gods and paths to appeasing them. Within these myriad forms of belief or worship some have developed a set of moral values in accord with these beliefs. Indeed many of these values promote peace and brotherhood toward the greater community. Meanwhile, other religious beliefs may generate hatred and intolerance toward those outside of that faith. Now some religions compel its

followers to convert the world to their viewpoint and to, in a word, cause the whole world to believe according to that religion.

Religion may be an intellectual study for some, a mandatory career indoctrination for others. From an anthropologist's point of view, religion simply revolves around the belief in "spirits" as defined by Margaret Mead. Religions lead to wars and conflict The **crusades** were a terrible demonstration of **wrong Christian beliefs**. The inhumanities done were executed through a form of religion and not in conformity to the Gospel of Christ. The crusades and the inquisition were chapters in Catholicism that further demonstrated an ungodly abuse of power that is presumed when the *rule of God* on earth is already manifest in a *political* church on earth.

Christianity in the age of grace presents a message of love, acceptance and forgiveness. **There is no murder, violence or reprisal taught in the practice of Christianity.** It does not extend its membership through conquest and submission as Roman Catholicism has practice and Islam yet practiced. Destruction and judgment against unbelievers has never been a part of the true Gospel. Where this has occurred was not a conformity to Bible teaching. **In the Gospel of Grace**, there is an invitation to come freely and receive. We partake in the power of Jesus' love, and forgiveness. There is no sword to convert the unbeliever, but rather the demonstration of the supernatural power of God motivated by Love. It is this power that converts the heart and persuades each that there is a loving God in heaven. This is the loving Father who desires that no one dies under condemnation. "*God so loved the world* - - ," John 3:16 is the often quoted text explaining God's offer of redemption. Discernment reveals those who we can pray for. Condemnation never comes from the hand of a believer who is commanded to walk in the same love and forgiveness that Jesus modeled to all.

There is still great ignorance and confusion about Christianity. Christianity is something that has come to be viewed only within the limiting frame of institutional religion not its true spiritual aspect which is both simple and profound. The world knows Christianity as a system of belief but more than that as traditions and lifestyles which surround particular churches. America was founded as a Christian nation as our founding fathers made clear testimony. The United States has a history of goodness founded on the belief in, and **standards of Judaeo Christian Biblical truth**. But at the present time, if the truth were known, I believe that we would have far fewer who would qualify as Christians than census documentation reveals. Those who are called Christians in polls and surveys most often reflect an involvement with church organizations through membership and activities. This, I assert, is quite irrelevant to the nature of being or not being a Christian. Among those who profess to believe in Christianity I denote three distinct breeds:

Kinds of Christians

Political Christians: This category designates to distinguish them from other ethnic or cultural sects. We see these referred to frequently in the media to designate the sects within countries or political regions. Most of the time these are contrasted with contrary ideologies; often at war, or embroiled in strife with other groups. Typical of political religious rivalry such as that of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, which dates back to the factional disputes of the 15th century. Here are three ethnic factions, Muslims, Serbs and Croats, religious- political groups seemingly without any knowledge of a spiritual life and peace. In Ireland divisions remain after generations of religious and political strife, Irish Catholics in hatred and strife continue to war against Irish Protestants and Protestants against Catholics. In the decade prior to World War 2, so-called German Christians began to commit outrages against German Jews in the name of racial purity. For over 2 centuries 'Christian' crusaders waged Holy Wars against the Muslim Turks in the Holy Land and at the same time thought it was pleasing to G-d to torture and destroy any called Jews.

Religious Christians are actively involved with some form of institutional Christianity. Within this group are tens of millions of church-goers who fill the pews in hundreds of church congregations each week. Each of these religious 'churches' or denominations follows long-held traditions of their respective denomination. Christian denominations have extensive power and interests both social and economic. The *business* of religion founded in an orthodoxy that has at its heart a sense of morality and righteous principals.

Clergy as Spokes People

The clergy, religious leadership, has long been esteemed has a high and noble calling, although an occasional skeleton may turn up in the closet of some clergy person now and then. The lands and real estate assets of churches are immense. Each denomination builds great buildings as centers of worship and thoroughly train their clergy to act *as proper overseers of the faith*. The sad reality is that the denominations of today are little different from any ancient priesthood, the Scribes, and Pharisees of Jesus' day, of whom the Lord Jesus had little good to say. Clergy is generally chosen from those who have achieved the approval of religious training schools.

Today I believe that traditional forms of religious Christianity may be the single greatest hindrance to effectively experiencing God. In this nation as well as in all the

nations Christianity that is mostly formalistic has been exported. Let us not be confused to believe that the Gospel is a philosophy or an intellectual concept. It is discovering that the Gospel demonstrates the Power of God that will impact our lives at the deepest possible level. In its true operation it has the power to transform us into an adopted son or daughter of God. Church is not only a place where Christianity is practiced shared and administered by priests. Jesus called believers to become disciples who grow through shared life experiences with others (Ministry through the edification by/of the body.) Those who Jesus calls he also equips. How many who are active in leadership are called? Only Jesus knows. How many are equipped by the Holy Spirit to know and to minister the way? Sadly only a few. See Isaiah 1:9 - - *Unless the Lord of hosts Had left to us a very small remnant, We would have become like Sodom, We would have been made like Gomorrah."*

Religion: a metaphor: *It seems as though religious Christians have been injected with something, call it religious formalism, which seems to make them immune to experiencing the authentic Spiritual Life of the Kingdom of G-d. Let me hasten to say however, that there are believers among the denominations, these men, women and children have received the knowledge of G-d through the Lord Jesus Christ in a profound and intimate way, not because of their religious affiliations necessarily, but in spite of that affiliation. The kingdom and the power of G-d are not the privy to any brand of religion but work around and through it.*
[Third Category: Authentic Christians,](#)

What is A Christian? *Are we born Christians, Are we Christians because we were not born Buddhist or Muslim? Are we Christians because our parents were Christians? Are we Christians because of a religious rite?* The Bible reveals that we become Christians not by a religious rite, but by a spiritual encounter with G-d. G-d receives us in "friendship" and extends fellowship to us. This fellowship is granted in the name of **the** only *begotten son of G-d, Jesus, Yeshua of Nazareth.*

This knowledge is one thing but the actualizing power of Grace is quite another. The Gospel is a gospel not only conceptual fact but actualized in power. It is a life-changing, spirit-renewing power, that sets on fire the love and life of G-d within a believer. This life-changing encounter is central to what I hope to present in this writing, and I will cover it broadly in the following pages. A believer, in actuality, has no religious rites or obligations or rules to follow in order to win G-d's approval. A believer's job is to believe. Faith is choked by unbelief! Through faith we gain access to the scriptural promises of G-d. These promises are awesome and spectacular and when apprehended can lead us to experiencing the kindnesses of G-d and entering into our divine inheritance. That is the long and the short of

it. Religion in any of its many aspects has entered in obtrusively to complicate or confound the simple way and truth that Christ has declared and made known for all; that each man, woman, and child can know G-d and experience wholeness through Him.

My hope and prayer is - - that those seeking truth, both religious and non religious, Christian and non Christian, continue in the Word which will open the door to the Kingdom of God, with its power and glory of Eternal Life. May the God of all creation reveal Himself to you, draw you into His family, and bring forth His kingdom, love, and liberty in your life. (Luke 4:18)

A Reborn Human Spirit, the New Creation – Born Into The Body of Christ - *Spiritual Christians are authentic Christians.*

The True Christians are God-called and God Recreated: Authentic Christians are created in no other way than by Divine will and action. These constitute the membership of the Kingdom of God, without regard to any earthly institutional affiliation. *The true church is not a building or a piece of real estate.* It is a spiritual body, it is called the "Body of Christ. " This body is universal, apart from any designation of race, creed or nationality, it is without any denominational label and without sectarian or geographical boundaries. The Bible reveals that we become Christians not by a religious rite, but by a Spiritual encounter with the person of God. God receives us in "friendship" and extends fellowship of his family to us.

This fellowship is granted in the name of the only begotten Son of God, namely Jesus, Yeshua of Nazareth. He is the Messiah of Israel who is coming again to rule over the world. Mentally acknowledging this doctrine is one thing, but experiencing the transformative power of God, is quite another. The Gospel is a gospel not only of intellectual fact but of power. It is a life changing, spirit-renewing power, that sets on fire the life of God within a believer. Those who are born from above are transformed in an undeniable way. It does not have to happen in a church through a human mediator although this occurs often enough. One must believe and knows he believes and then ask for that gift from God. That is how it works. No one can force us to believe. It is a process that God guides within us.

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The Power of God Expresses the True Gospel:

Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Romans 15:19 - - by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; Ephesians 3:7 " - Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power."

Religion contains a mixture of some gospel teaching along with some human augmentations. This mixture serves to confound the simplicity and freedom that is in Christ. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all the sins of all humanity on the cross. He has made the way for each man, woman, and child to come to God and become a new kind of being in Him. (2nd Corinthians 5:17.) Jesus does not force us to believe. It is a choice to be made. We can continue to struggle to bear our own sins and grief. Or we can bring them to the One who promises to bear our burdens. An exchange awaits, hope for hopelessness, freedom from bondage, peace, joy and liberty in God's presence. My hope and prayer is that those seeking truth, both Christian and non Christian will continue in the life giving word which opens the door to the Kingdom of God. May the God of all creation reveal Himself to you in order for you to continue to bring forth His kingdom.

Searching For God - Highways and Byways in the Quest

Some of us, in our individual quest for truth, look for a religion that will accommodate our own world view or moral viewpoint, though in our natural state we are all morally distorted and unregenerate in nature. Some others search for a religious form which promises personal power and influence over others. This power quest has one end; corruption of the soul. Personal aggrandizement leads toward corruption and pride, the domain of the enemy of God, Lucifer. Power to control or influence others, power to get wealth for its own sake is as witchcraft, a rebellious snare. Some search for a religious program which accommodates fame, personal notoriety, adulation or self-worship. Self enhancement is acquired at the expense of coming under God's dominion. For others the search is to find personal healing or inner contentment to salve the aching of their souls. In Him we find solace, peace, love and wholeness. There are numerous motivations which lend themselves to religious choices.

While we say we search for God are we really sincere or insincere? In the final analysis it is we who must conform to God's book and acknowledge His rules and plan for ourselves and not visa-versa.

While we are shopping this smorgasbord of religion there are many choices. How will **you** choose? What are your resources and criteria to make these choices? Can we choose using our own intellectual equipment? Those who are proud of their intellectual achievements will probably choose wrongly; since they will choose to remain in control of their own lives through the exalted faculty of reason. The wise of this world say, "Only a fool denies reason."

Some religions make no demands upon us to give up anything, idolatries, pride, sin, hatred, etc. When we are well satisfied with who we are; when we are pleased with ourselves, with our name, rank, and achievements; When we are puffed up with our own sense of superiority, looks, talents or strengths; How can we choose to believe something which asks us to, "*deny yourself, take up a cross and follow me?*" How do we choose a belief system which states, "*In myself, I can do nothing;*" or " - *unless a seed falls and dies it abides alone, but if dies it brings forth much?*" Is there any beauty in sacrificing our selves? How can we as 20th, soon to be 21st Century beings, choose to decrease to ourselves and choose that which *is meek and lowly of heart*, not arrayed the outward trappings of finery; not displaying intellectual cleverness, nor personal flamboyance. "*He had no beauty that we should desire Him.*" (Isaiah 53:3)

So we seek. We shop and we look and we ask about. During this time we continue to have as much power and self control, self satisfaction, and personal liberty as any other human seeker. When does the seeking come to an end? Is there a priceless pearl to be found? What is the nature of this pearl which beyond price? How do I begin my quest for God?

Scripture asks this question, "***What does it profit someone to gain the whole world but lose his or her soul?***" (Mark 8:36) There is a risk associated with a search thwarted or the search incomplete. There is a risk associated with substituting the true with the counterfeit and the living with something tainted with corruption and death. There is indeed a true Gospel, having **the right Jesus**, the **right Gospel** and **the right Spirit**. (2Cor 11:3) There is also **a counterfeit gospel**, awaiting any who choose an alternative to the previous 3 criteria. Among these alternatives lies the way to deception or possible destruction. In this process of seeking, some who hear the message, come to believe in the Lord Jesus, Yeshua of Nazareth called the Messiah or Christ.) The Word of God declares, "Those who seek will find." Those who seek and continue seeking, will find that pearl of inestimable

value. It remains hidden to those who are lost. Great hunger is rewarded with satisfying '*manna*' from God and great thirst is rewarded with a satisfying drink that Jesus called 'living water.' Many others never come to believe in or profess biblical Christianity but another belief system. The way of the Christian life once discovered provides a feast for the body, soul and spirit, a feast that brings eternal satisfaction, the knowledge of the friendship of Jesus is thirst satisfying indeed.

The Way, however, remains a narrow one, it is self limiting. It does not accommodate those who wish to take their own intellectual baggage in, this burden of extraneous stuff must be unloaded. Who among the seekers is willing to do this? Who are really sincere and not looking on a superficial curiosity level. Jesus has counseled to walk the crucified life. Daily carrying our cross, dying to self, turning from the raucous cries that would distract us in this world.

I am reminded of the interview which King Herod of Judea attempted to have with Jesus on the occasion of Jesus' trial and Pilate's disposition of this matter of legality. What possible need or interest could this powerful, worldly, self indulgent, sensuous monarch have in questioning Jesus, the Messiah of the Jews? Herod had indeed heard of Jesus. He had heard of his influence upon the people and heard of the signs and wonders worked by his hand. Herod probably was reminded of John the Baptist whose head was the price paid for his stepdaughter Salome's sensuous dance performance. Vain curiosity was probably the motivating factor. Herod may have had some guilt or even fears associated with destroying the non conformist, unyielding, cooperative prophet, John the Baptist.

Herod Interviews Jesus: The World Against the Spirit

It was time for a confrontation, though perhaps not yet a showdown, It was a face-off between worldliness, sensual opulence, and temporal power and the veiled spiritual wonders of the Kingdom of God; it was flesh against the Spirit. What happened in this confrontation of flesh and spirit? How did Jesus respond to the queries of the coarse and curious Herod, did they share an intellectual discourse? Yeshua remained silent not a word was offered. What place has the kingdom of God with worldliness or idolatry? Jesus had not one word to share. There was no dialogue. There was no effort made to plead the case for a religious or political agenda. No. Jesus answered not a word! The kingdom of God and Herod's world were irreconcilable, worlds apart, kingdoms apart. You see, Jesus will not respond to those whose lives are filled with surfeiting, with self importance or with insincere curiosity. Jesus answered the worldly Herod, not a word! (Luke 23:8)

The Doorway of Repentance, Awareness of our Sinful Nature

Eventually in the course of our Spiritual quest we become aware of our need for a Savior and the gift of salvation. From that point we *change directions in our lives*. This is what repentance means. It does not happen over night. The grave clothes of sin and uncleanness fall off gradually. In my case, I had reached a crossroad in my middle years that brought me to 'an end of myself:' When my need was greatest I was reduced to desperation. I finally was willing to take the next step to cry out, "*Jesus, have mercy on me!*" So? Where the inquiry will take you. Will it be into the wilderness (outside of the distractions of worldly distractions, where intimacy with God is finally revealed? Or will you be lured into the another wilderness imbued with worldly values having no intimacy with God, having no power to fulfill Christ's hope and calling.

Contained in this writing "[The Gospel Without Religion](#)" is a series of commentaries compiled from this believer's study of the "Word of God" and his personal spiritual insights and experiences thereafter. I was not always a believer. What was I before I became a believer, before becoming a Christian? I was the same as many of you are. Before becoming a believer I practiced a *form* of godliness; **I too was religious**. I was actively involved in institutional forms of Christianity with its many traditions, forms, and flavors and yet without **knowing** Christ. Before becoming believers, we called ourselves by any of hundreds of denominational names, not realizing that Christ is One and can not be divided. In this state, we had no true witness of the reality of G-d; we had no true witness of our own spiritual nature and destiny. We may not have known that God is **real** or that He rewards those who seek him with wonderful gifts. Before becoming a partakers in the "*gift of God*", we **called ourselves Christians**.

Meantime, not knowing that being a Christian meant more than just attending church, more than learning a catechism, more than going through a rite of membership. **Being a Christian is not an intellectual assent to a doctrine or belief** where you can say, "Yes that sounds like it might be true, I guess I join up and become one of those. "You don't join an institution or a church to become a *Christian*, rather, you are "translated" into becoming a son or daughter of G-d. You are translated into a different kingdom and a different reality; You become a new order of being. You are translated from death into life, from darkness into light. We who once cared nothing for the life and properties of G-d now share in that life and are consumed by it. It is a work that G-d does in us and not one that we do on our own. The kingdom of darkness has this agenda; to steal, to kill and to destroy, *especially a believer*. The spirit of the world is a spirit of self exaltation and pride. Of course modern thought and psychology discredits belief in spirits as a primitive and obsolete belief system. However, it

is to be noted that Jesus the Messiah came to "*destroy the works of the devil*," Satan, the ruler of all fallen beings. It is God's ultimate purpose to restore the proper line of earthly rule under the dominion of Jesus Christ. In due time, nations will recognize him as the Holy One of G-d, appointed Lord of all things. Evil or wrong spirits include, pride, rebellion, witchcraft, defilement, sensuality, gluttony, drunkenness, etc.

A common Secular Argument: One god Equals Any Other

The *broad-minded*, ecumenical world would like to assert that any god is essentially on a par with any other. They declare that there are many paths and they all eventually lead us to the sublime higher *One*. Today, I am a Christian believer, but was not always so. Disillusioned by religion, sensing its superficiality, the hypocrisies, and lacking any proof in the God of the Bible I went on searching and doubting, and trusting that I was **good enough** not to fall into condemnation if and when I came face to face with my Creator. I had heard the term "Good News" referring the Gospel of the Messiah Yeshua (Jesus). But my experience in Christianity was valued only in a sentimental way. I had memories of church experiences with my family in youth. During these days I would have welcomed the experience of something that was real, powerful and persuasive. This, I believe, is exactly where so many seeking people are at today. Hopeful, wanting to believe, but without proof that God is real or reachable. My religious experience offered no proof of God's reality. I never was taught that any Gospel must be expressed as *the Power of God* and able to transform human life!

The Gospel, is denoted as ***the power of God***, (1Corinthians 1;2-5) powerfully persuades us to believe, in a God of love and a God who can impact human lives in remarkable life-changing ways that exist out of the realm of church life. This Gospel is not a shallow, tradition-ruled religion. Rather it teaches knowing God who reveals himself as Savior and sovereign of the universe. Even more amazingly, the Bible proves itself to be entirely believable and consistent in spite of its *progressive* detractors. Theologians who work continuously to discredit any belief in Biblical accuracy or consistency. Today when I hear of a God who walked with man in a spiritually perfect world, called Eden. I believe it; when I hear of a God who did wonders in the days of Moses or the prophets I do not doubt that fact for one moment; when I read the infallible prophecies of appointed men of God who declare the end from the beginning I have no doubt in the veracity of any of those words. God spoke through prophets with inerrant accuracy to declare the Messiah and his mission to redeem fallen humanity and all these prophecies came to pass. Jesus as the lamb of God came to close the divide between God and humanity. **The resurrection of Yeshua**, as irrational and scientifically unsound as it sounds on the surface, remains the foundation of Christianity.

Resurrection establishes the "Power of the Gospel" and enables any believer to partake in His divine nature.

Religions of the world may vary in name and beliefs but all seek to establish a worldly kingdom. They aspire to have a launching pad to promulgate those beliefs, even beliefs that are contrary to the Gospel. Christian religions sects, including, Catholicism, LDS Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and most of the protestant denominations distort the simple Gospel. They bring forth errant doctrines, formalism, and *human authority*. Roman Catholicism is notorious in having its traditions replacing Biblical Truth. (See the characteristics of Religion in book two; "The attributes of Religion."

Think about religion. What usually comes to mind? Churches, temples, mosques, buildings and their congregations have something in common; formal ceremony and ritual are practiced. It is here that we learn obligations or extraneous formalities that are thought to be necessary to worship and believe properly. Most of this is contrary to the original Gospel, e.g. the Apostolic epistles found in the New Testament. My prayer is that this teaching will take you further in experiencing the Almighty and his free gift of salvation.

C. Pinkney, 09-2025

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E Book 2:

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