

# RELIGION WITHOUT THE TRUTH

What is religion without the truth? It is like trying to start your car without fuel. You keep turning the ignition key until there is no spark left in your battery. Very frustrating indeed! Many people have stopped going to a place of worship simply because they are sick and tired of going through the motions of a dead religion. Christianity without Christ is very boring. Thousands of people have left churches in Europe and these buildings have become historic sites and an attraction for tourists.

Surveys show a sharp decline in church attendance and religious practice in most European countries. A series of Euro barometer surveys since 1970 in five key countries (France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Italy) shows that regular church attendance fell from about 40% of the population to about 20%. Western Europe, the cradle of modern Christianity, has become a "post-Christian society" in which the ruling class and cultural leaders are anti-religious or "Christophobic," writes George Weigel, a Catholic columnist.

A fierce controversy over any mention of Europe's Christian heritage erupted in 2004 when officials were drafting a constitution for the European Union, Weigel notes.

Any mention of the continent's religious past or contributions of Christian culture would be exclusionary and offensive to non-Christians, many argued. Former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who presided over the process, summed up the dominant view: "Europeans live in a purely secular political system, where religion does not play an important role." Among the consequences of Europe's abandonment of its religious roots and the moral code that derives there from is a plunge in its birth rates to below the replacement level. Abortion, birth control, acceptance of gay marriage and casual sex are driving the trend. Europe is "committing demographic suicide, systematically depopulating itself.

Why are churches not making an impact on society? The reason is that for the most part they worship and talk about a historic Christ, Christianity without Christ. Instead of sharing the very life of Jesus Christ right here and now with all the limitless resources of deity available, the people are simply engaged in a struggle for existence and survival. They experience frustration, disappointment and stress and seek solutions and ways to overcome stress and frustration.

The Lord Jesus gave the solution when He called out, "*I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME*".(John 14:6). The fundamental characteristic of truth is consistency: it must fit every known and unknown fact and situation, and is absolute. Jesus is the key to the understanding of all things and Jesus is the final explanation of all things.

The Bible teaches that a Christian is completely at one and in harmony with the Lord. We receive Jesus Christ as personal Savior by faith (John 1:12) and by faith He lives His life in and through us (Galatians 2:20). The life of a Christian since conversion is "not I but Christ". Not striving to work for Christ but letting Him work through them. I am in Christ and Christ is in me. The Lord Jesus said: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). God has planned a victorious life for each Christian, an exciting new life. As God's Word says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*" This is not a life of frustration, stress and worry but a life of freedom from bondage, a life of joy and peace. A life of trust in God.

**Christianity is Christ.** The Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit has entered the life of the believer and this constitutes a spiritual new birth. We are born into the family of God and become His children, and it is the presence of the Holy Spirit within the human spirit which leads us into all truth. *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”* (Romans 8:15). If you have received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Redeemer, then the Holy Spirit has come to take up residence within your human spirit and you have been born again. But if that old Adamic human nature, the flesh, still dominates your soul and monopolizes your personality by controlling your thinking and causing selfish ambitions, then you are a worldly Christian. You are an infant in Christ and the Holy Spirit will be grieved.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3, *“Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly--mere infants in Christ... You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?”*

Many Christians are confused in their Christian experience. They know they are converted. They have believed and received Jesus Christ as Savior. Yet they experience no victory over sin and are burdened down with frustration, worry and stress. Some say to themselves, “I need a new church home”, or other say “I need a new environment”. So people move to another church or move to another country. But still they experience no victory over sin and the stress is still there also. Others say, “I have been too busy with my work. I need to slow down and take it easy.”

Today a new morality has taken over from the absolute standards of God in His Word. “New morality” makes immorality acceptable to society. Sometime new morality is identified with culture. Everybody is doing it so it must be OK. One example is the rampant corruption practiced nearly at every level of society in Indonesia. I have been in Indonesia since 1960 and have seen and heard 6 presidents promising to clean up corruption. But it is still almost impossible to get your drivers license, immigration papers, a work contract or a signature of your document without paying some extra “administrative fees”. The African soccer players in our church are facing a high level of corruption in trying to secure a football contract.

Major Ian Thomas explains in his book “If I perish, I perish” that we cannot trust our conscience any more. It has become a conscience of convenience and has been seared, distorted, colored and twisted by tradition, culture, and circumstances. It is no more a final authority. Wrong becomes right and right becomes wrong. On the other hand the conscience of conviction based on God’s Word is absolute – as absolute as God Himself. The first thing that the Holy Spirit does when He comes to take up residence within the spirit of men is to establish again those absolute standards of righteousness with the moral conscience which reflect the nature and character of God Himself.

The Lord Jesus taught His disciples that *“you all perish if you don’t repent”*. (Luke 13:3). The Holy Spirit brings about the deepest work of repentance within a man’s life subsequent to conversion. The Holy Spirit begins to reveal to man the wickedness of his sinful human nature. The Holy Spirit is like a man with a lamp entering a dark and dirty room and what you have learned to live with becomes repugnant and disgusting in the light. You will begin to cry out with the psalmist...

*“Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.” Psalm 51:9-11*

**What can be done to this wicked sinful human nature?** Can it be fixed, repaired, reformed, changed or healed? Are you able or capable to modify this sinful nature to make it acceptable to a Holy God? The answer is NO! Here we have a hard and difficult lesson to learn. We must

realize that there are certain things we cannot fix. We are unable to deal with our sinful nature. So we must die to our own ability to deal with sinful nature. You cannot crucify yourself. That is God's work. In Romans 6:6, 7 the Lord deals with dying to self.

*"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.*

To walk in the Spirit is to have complete confidence in Him that you first seek His instructions, then ask no further questions but just do as you are told. The Holy Spirit is fully able to deal with your sinful nature and to put it and keep it in the place of death. Death to all that you are in your own inadequacy is the only gateway through which you may enter into the fullness of all that Christ is, so that you may live miraculously in the power of His resurrection.

*"Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. ((Matthew 16:24, 25)*

Denying to self means dying to selfish ambition and sinful desires. Willingness to die is the price that you must pay if you want to be raised from the dead and live and walk in the power of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ on earth as described in Colossians 3:1-4:

*"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."*

If you are not wholly convinced that Jesus Christ is willing and able to take over, then you will hang onto your old life. Many Christians are very dedicated in their desire to serve God so the whole concept of a Christian life which is nothing more and nothing less than Jesus Christ Himself in action is baffling and mind blowing. The principle involved was perfectly enunciated by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who for 33 years allowed the Father to be in Him and function and through Him. And it was Jesus who told His disciples, "as the father sent me so send I you".

The life of Jesus Christ within you makes human circumstances irrelevant. To share His life now as He once shared His Father's life on earth then, is to know as He did that Someone else is taking care of the consequences. All we need to do is follow His instructions. Upon this basis Abraham could afford to tell Lot to choose the best land for himself. God's covenant was still with Abraham.

**A moment of truth** will come for you when you realize that the old sinful nature is treacherous, wicked, worthless and without any salvageable content. It is fit only for crucifixion. You will realize that there can be no compromise with that sinful nature and that peaceful coexistence with evil is hostile to the law of God. You realize that it was never God's purpose to improve, re-educate, tame or Christianize your sinful human nature. It stands condemned before a holy God, sentenced and was crucified with Jesus Christ. It must be left buried and replaced by the resurrected life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul described this clearly in his concern for the Ephesians Christians in Ephesians 3:14-17

*"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."*

When the Lord Jesus Christ died for you, He did not only paid the price of your redemption but identified with Him there and nailed to the cross was that old sinful nature that for so long has dominated your soul and frustrated all your hopes.

God wants you to know, always remember and never ever forget and praise His name for ever...  
*“That our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.”* (Romans 6:6)

Not only does the Lord Jesus Christ live by His Holy Spirit within your human spirit but He now controls your mind, your emotions, and your will. His life and likeness are expressed through you. People around you become aware that your life is changed and that *“you are participating in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desire”* (2 Peter 2:18).

I encourage you to pray the following prayer: “Dear Lord Jesus Christ, Thank You for Your Holy Spirit to whom I yield my human spirit, and by whose gracious presence I share Your life, and share Your victory. I know that I cannot deal with the principle of sin within me, not put the sinful nature into the place of death, but I thank You that You can, and that You did, when You died upon the cross and I died with You. Thank You for Your Holy Spirit who alone can make this real in my experience, mortifying those deeds of my body which have their origin in Satan. I am willing for You to ENTER my soul, to control my mind, to control my emotions and to control my will, so that every decision within my soul will be in perfect harmony with my spirit and my spirit in perfect harmony with You, so that my whole being may declare your praise. Amen.”