

True Christianity Is NOT A Religion

**A series of articles that looks at Christianity
in a simple and practical way, from a different viewpoint
than you may have had in the past.**

Dictionary references showing the usage of the word religion:-

1. A state of life bound by monastic vows.
2. Action or conduct indicating a belief in reverence for and desire to please a divine ruling power.
3. The exercise or practice of rites or observances.
4. A particular system of faith and worship.
5. Recognition on the part of humans of some higher unseen power as having control of their destiny, and as being entitled to obedience, reverence and worship.
6. Devotion to some principle.
7. The religious sanction or obligation of an oath.

To classify Christianity to the above descriptions is to miss the very central object and heart of a Christian way of life.

Christianity is a way of life based on relationships.

Genesis 1:26 [NIV] *“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”*

Why did God decide to do this, create human beings?

1 John 4:7-8 [NIV] *“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because **God is love.**”*

The Greek word translated here as “love” is “*agapé*” which describes “*a spontaneous love, irrespective of rights or response of the recipient.*”

Such love describes the Great Creator God who gives and sustains the lives of all human beings.

Such a nature demands other beings to be the objects of this love.

This love demands relationships.

Relationships that begin at a certain point in our lives and then mature over a period of time.

This is the heart of Christianity.

God created human beings because He desired children with the same approach to life as Himself, the same character. Children who would come to love Him as He loves them.

How was God going to do this?

Character cannot be created, character is “*caught*” just like an infection through personal contact.

But if God revealed Himself, as He is, mere humans would not only be terrified but would evaporate in His glory and brightness.

Also this loving relationship that the Creator God desires with human beings cannot be forced, cannot be based on fear.

How was God going to overcome this problem?

Let us first consider a physical example of similar difficult situation.

God’s **Handbook For Life**, the Christian Bible, suggests that this is the way we should start to seek understanding of the unseen spiritual world.

Romans 1:20 [NIV] *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”*

The physical creation points us towards the spiritual unseen divine nature of the Creator God.

Let us then consider a parallel physical example.

A powerful, sovereign king of a small nation, when out hunting with his couriers, saw a peasant girl working in a field and instantly fell totally in love with her.

After that first sight He constantly thought about her and loved her passionately.

He desired to woo her and to cause her to love him, but how would he do this? How would he bridge the enormous culture gulf that was between them?

If he rode into her village with all his retainers, the poor girl would be terrified. If he spoke to her in his magnificent clothes, she would quake with fear.

Even if he told her that he loved her, it would **not** make any sense to her.

Her fear of him might cause her to go along with whatever he as king wished, but this would **not** cause her to love him.

The problem was that the king did **not** want to seduce her, nor intimidate her, or make her his obedient slave.

The king loved her and wanted her to love him; nothing else would do.

How would this king overcome this relationship problem?

There was only one way.

The king had to disguise himself, leave behind all his grand courtiers and fine clothes and come to live in this girl’s village as a wandering tradesman.

The king then had to hope that when this girl he loved so much sees him, and gradually gets to know him, she would come to love him.

If she does, then that love will be free; she will love him for himself and not for any ulterior motive.

There are, of course, risks to this approach.

The young girl may not like the king and may reject him and prefer another.

This is a risk that true love takes.

True love can never be forced and it must risk rejection and disappointment.

The parallel to this love story is the relationship that our Creator God desires to have with us, His created children.

God came to live with human beings in the form of a man, his name is Jesus.

We all know the account of His human birth; Christians tell this story each year at Christmas time.

But most people do not know why Jesus Christ was born nor the reason for His coming.

1 John 4:9-11 [NIV] *“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”*

God in the human form came to earth to tell all human beings that God is love and desires nothing more than a free response by all of us to that love.

Only by responding to this offer of love from our Creator God can we start on the relationship He desires that will develop into an eternal relationship.

God always allows our freedom to be preserved, He will never force us to respond to His continual love for us. God’s love for all humans is a love that was willing to suffer and die for each of us to experience that love He has for us.

John 3:16 [NIV] *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

God desires that all humans can experience an eternal loving relationship with Him.

Romans 5:6-11 [NIV] *“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, **Christ died for the ungodly.** Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: **While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, **we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son,** how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”*

It is only through accepting the offer of love from God illustrated in the life and death of Jesus Christ that we can be reconciled to our Creator.

Why do we need this reconciliation?

How do we accept this act of reconciliation?

These questions will be addressed in future articles on this website.