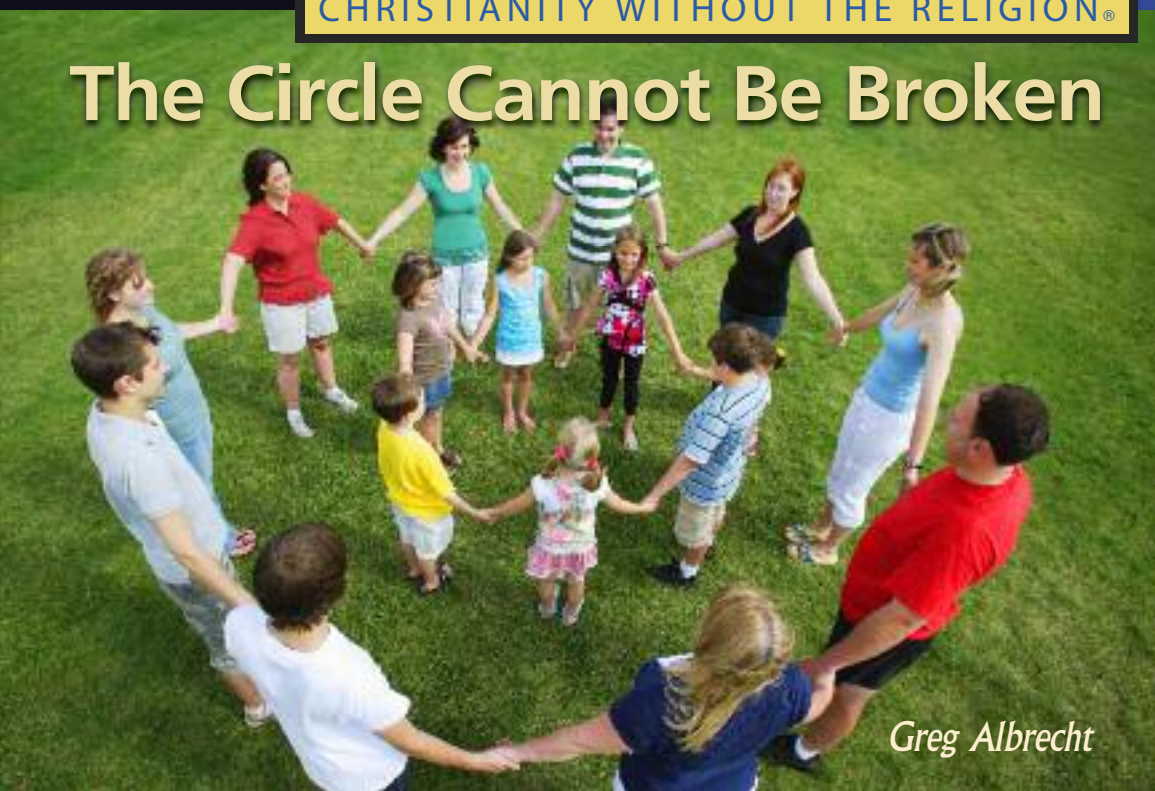


PLAIN TRUTH[®]

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION[®]

The Circle Cannot Be Broken



Greg Albrecht

God is a circle that cannot be broken, and because love is the essence of God, defining and identifying who and what God is, therefore God's love is also a circle that cannot be broken.

Dear Heavenly Father, Like a circle, you have no beginning nor do you have an end. Like a circle, you enclose and surround all creation, seen and unseen. Like a circle, you move and revolve around, in and through all creation, seen and unseen, and at all points and times you are accessible and available to all humanity, whom you love. You are the very definition of love—love is at the center, the heart and core of who you are. You are endless and so is your love—enlarge our hearts and our minds, help us to see and look beyond the here and now, beyond our fragile, mortal, limited life—seeing a glimpse of your eternity, your endless love and grace.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Some pastors and priests routinely begin and/or end their sermons and homilies with and in the one name of the Triune God. The Triune God is one God who is plural and united in the three distinct, divine Persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are *co-essential, co-substantial and co-equal*, eternally *co-existing* in harmonious, perfect love.

The Triune God is specifically defined by the Apostle Paul in the benediction to his second epistle to the Corinthians—"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14).

In the final directives Jesus gave to his disciples, as recorded by Matthew, he told them to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Jesus

says the one God is three divine Persons, yet their name (their essence, their identity, their unity) is one.

Thus God is plurality, yet he is also perfect unity.

There is only one God, yet he reveals himself to us in three distinct divine Persons. In the Father we find that God is FOR us, in the Son we discover that God is WITH us and in the Holy Spirit we experience God IN us.

Many complain that the formulation of God as Triune is mysterious—and it is. But there is nothing we see in the natural revelation of God in all of creation, or nothing revealed in the written revelation of the Bible that suggests the totality of who God is and how he is can be fully comprehended by the finite mind—in fact many biblical references say God is above and beyond our human understanding.

The fact that it is impossible for humanity to comprehend the fullness of God speaks to the truth that we are the created and he is the uncreated—he is beyond and apart from all that we can know and experience on this tiny speck in the universe we call planet earth.

The Trinity is a mystery and a conundrum—it attempts to get at the very nature and essence of God, and that nature and essence are beyond our limited capacities, being captives of time and space on earth.

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How Does 1 + 1 + 1 = 1?

The name and essence of God is irrational and illogical—it does not make sense to our human minds.

When we count one plus one plus one we arrive at three. So Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three distinct divine Persons with names—so far so good. But the Bible insists that God is one—that these three divine Persons are distinct, yet they are co-equal, co-essential, co-substantial and co-eternal—and that they are harmoniously one, perfectly united in a way that our human minds cannot fathom.

God is a circle that cannot be broken. Father, Son and Holy Spirit exist in perfect harmony and unity and love. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three distinct divine Persons and *they have three names, yet they also have one name*—they are all God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the Triune God, existing in perfect harmony and love, in perfect relationship to one another, existing in an eternal circle where ALL THREE ARE ONE.

The love of God and the essence of God are perfectly harmonious—as circles they do not overlap but they are perfectly concentric. After all, **the love of God has little significance unless there is an object of that love.** Divine love is directed away from the giver, toward another divine or human person. If the Triune God did not exist before the creation, does that mean that God was not love until the creation of humanity?

God said, “Let **us** make mankind in **our** image, in **our** likeness... (Genesis 1:26). Jews and others who do not accept the Son and Holy Spirit as God argue that the plurality of “us” and “our” is not a reference to the Godhead as plural, for God might have been speaking of the angels or he might have been using the first person “royal” plural—as a monarch might speak of himself or herself as one and the same as all their subjects. However, the next verse speaks of male and

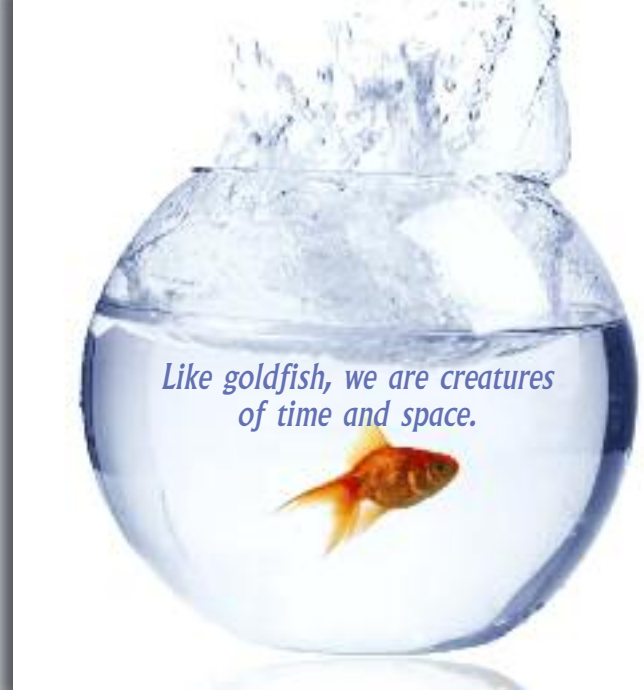
female humans being created in God’s image—so that it seems clear that the plurality of the divine Godhead is *for* and *by* and *through* love, and ultimately for the plurality of love in marriage.

The Godhead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a unity in plurality that has no perfect comparison in our physical world. God is an eternal, transcendent community of his own, dwelling together in perfect love and unity within an unbroken circle.

The plurality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit—three distinct divine Persons—the sum total of one plus one plus one equals three—makes sense to us. The unity of the Godhead who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit—one God who is co-essential, co-eternal and co-substantial, even while being three distinct divine Persons, also one God—that doesn’t make any logical sense at all, does it?

Therefore, we can either whittle down and devalue the very nature and essence of God to a definition that fits our minds (wouldn’t that be something like making God in our own image?) or we can admit that the very nature and essence of God is outside of our abilities to fully comprehend. We cannot fully understand or grasp God in a way that is fully satisfactory to our limited minds because we cannot fathom all of his dimensions.

God exists in a way and place where our mortality and our limited thinking and logic cannot go. And that’s a good thing—*any time God can be “found” and discovered by human effort and cognition alone, then what has been found and discovered is not fully God.* God by his very nature must be revealed, and that full revelation was behind the incarnation of Jesus—God in the flesh—the God-man—who came to reveal the Father. “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the



Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matthew 11:27).

Goldfish in a Bowl

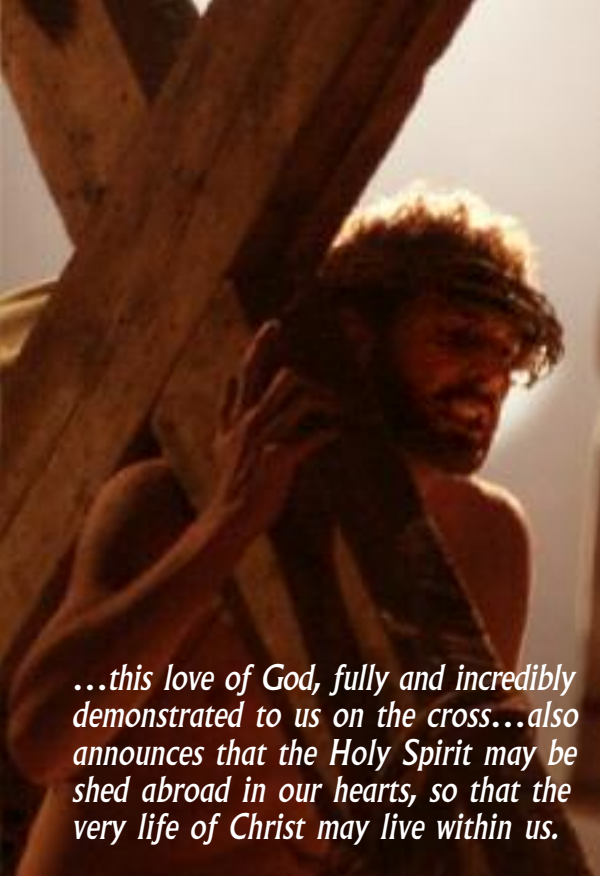
Think of a goldfish, living inside the limitations of a goldfish bowl. The goldfish can of course only swim to the edge of the bowl, and no farther. But how far can a goldfish see? What does a goldfish know?

Some experts believe that goldfish may be able to recognize different humans who are close to the goldfish bowl, but, assuming the bowl within which the goldfish exists is transparent and clear, like glass, still I have never read or heard that goldfish can see all the way across the room.

Let’s assume that the goldfish we’re talking about lives in a glass bowl, and while he of course can only swim to the edge of the bowl, let’s assume he can see ten feet beyond where his bowl has been placed.

Assuming a goldfish can see across the room, most of us believe that goldfish can’t see around the corner into the next room, nor can the goldfish see or even imagine the world that lies beyond the front door of the apartment or house where he exists.

The goldfish can’t see or imagine what lies down the sidewalk or driveway, on the other side of the street or road, or all of the places to which that street or road will lead.



...this love of God, fully and incredibly demonstrated to us on the cross...also announces that the Holy Spirit may be shed abroad in our hearts, so that the very life of Christ may live within us.

Goldfish have boundaries like we do. Goldfish are confined and restricted, like you and me. Of course we humans inhabit a far bigger world than a goldfish—we can walk out of the room where the goldfish lives in his goldfish bowl and we can walk out the front door. We can get in our car and go shopping or go on a longer trip. We can get on an airplane and travel thousands of miles away.

But, like goldfish, we still are creatures of time and space. And try as we might, we cannot gaze too far into the eternity of God without our fuses blowing. But just because the dimensions God eternally inhabits don't make sense to us—simply because we cannot fathom God's eternity, his harmony, his unity, his love and his grace—*our inability to comprehend does not mean that we are authorized to redefine or rename God, does it?*

Take your Smart Phone over to the goldfish bowl and ask him if he understands it (for that matter, show it to me and ask me if I understand it!). The fact that the goldfish doesn't and won't understand your Smart Phone doesn't mean the Smart Phone

doesn't exist. Because Father, Son and Holy Spirit are both three and one seems illogical to us, but that does not invalidate the Triune nature of God, which is revealed to us in the Bible.

How Can God Love Us No Matter What—and Why Should He?

God's love seems irrational, absurd and silly to us.

Our mortal limitations and dimensions are frail and fragile. We make promises and commitments that we intend to honor and keep. But as hard as we try, sometimes we fail to keep and honor those promises and commitments—because we are flawed, broken and imperfect, we will inevitably fail in many ways.

God, on the other hand, not only makes promises and commitments that he intends to honor and keep, he also has all the power in heaven and on earth to honor and keep them. God will never fail us, because he does not live in a broken and flawed environment.

Once again: **God is a circle that cannot be broken**, and because love is what God is, because love is his very nature, **God's love is also a circle that cannot be broken.**

We live in a limited world, a world that can be broken—*but God's circle of eternity can never be broken.* Our lives are fragile—they can end at any time, by accident or disease or an act of violence. We love, but we know that we are incapable of perfectly loving another—and we know by sad experiences that another person is incapable of perfectly loving us. We know that. Limited love makes sense to us.

But God's love as a circle that cannot be broken seems too-good-to-be-true—it seems silly and even preposterous. After all, no one we know loves like that. God's love is perfect—he loves us no matter what we do, he loves us without condition. He loves us as much right now as he ever has or ever

will. We can't do anything to cause, encourage or make God love us more. God will always forgive us—always. That makes no sense because it seems to us that it makes God into someone who willingly allows himself to be taken advantage of. **God's love is a circle that cannot be broken.** No matter how bad and how messed up and screwed up your life is or has been, you are incapable of breaking the circle of God's love.

In yet another dimension we cannot fully grasp how God, in the Person of the Son whom we know as Jesus, came into our world, and while not ceasing to be God, added humanity to his divinity.

The circle remained unbroken, even while Jesus became incarnate. Jesus actually became one of us—for the sole purpose of revealing the love and grace of God to us, the love and grace that flows within and from the unbroken circle that defines the Triune God.

And this love of God, fully and incredibly demonstrated to us on the cross, as Jesus poured out the love of God, also announces that the Holy Spirit may be shed abroad in our hearts, so that the very life of Christ may live within us.

By the unbroken love of God, which eternally exists within the unbroken Triune Godhead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we are invited to embrace the grace of God and come into a reconciled fellowship with God, in which we become his adopted sons and daughters, heirs of his kingdom.

“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Our Loving Heavenly Father, we fall on our knees, astonished and amazed to know that you are a circle that cannot be broken and that your love is part of that same unbroken, eternal circle. We are truly grateful for all that we know about you and all that we do not—you are God and we are not. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. □