



May 2020

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

You probably already know that **God is not who or what most people think**. Most people have learned and internalized a twisted picture of God. *In spite of God's deliverance from slavery and in spite of the fact he miraculously caused the Red Sea to part so that the Egyptian army would not kill them all, the Israelites at Sinai preferred a golden calf rather than the one, true God.*

The Israelites then were like so many people throughout history—they tried to reduce and shrink God into a manageable size. When God in Christ incarnated himself as a human, he was not diminishing his divinity, he was not shrinking or reducing his grace and love.

The Incarnation means that the invisible God, whom no man has seen, has been revealed to us in the person of Jesus—in his life, his ministry, his character, his values and all his attributes. If we want to know more about what Father God “looks” like then we study and read all about the life and teachings of Jesus—we consider his birth, life, death, crucifixion and resurrection.

The oh-so-human mistake, spurred on and encouraged by Christ-less religion, is to make God into our image. When this happens, God becomes one of our gender, our race, our nationality, our denomination...even our political party! This god, whom we have transformed in our image, looks just like us—he likes what we like and he hates what and who we detest.

Of all the twisted and corrupt ideas about God one of the worst is the warped notion that he is filled with wrath and anger. This god puts up with us far more than he cherishes and loves us. We are far more of a bother and a nuisance to this god than we are a beloved child.

This god of wrath is a distant, unapproachable god who is so holy that he cannot stand the sight or smell of us—in order to convince him to at least tolerate us the “god of wrath” folks believe we must spend our lives working and producing so that, at least at the very end of life, he will relent and say “Oh, all right, you really worked hard so I guess I will let you into my house.”

Many people within Christendom believe God's house, unlike the home the Prodigal Son left, is surrounded by a fence on a high, lofty, remote, unapproachable and inaccessible mountain. Those who worship a distant and detached god of wrath believe that Christianity amounts to our efforts of climbing that terrifying mountain in order to reach the holiness and perfection of heaven.

Many people within Christendom believe in “separation theology”—simply stated, they believe that our sin separates us from God. I am sure you have heard that, but is it correct?

According to “separation theology” when we sin the god of wrath **MUST** turn away from us. He is holy and pure and cannot be contaminated with our sin. “Separation theology” says our sins are so despicable and we are so depraved (yes, they actually use that very word), that God literally cannot stand the sight of us—our spiritual filth repels him and makes him nauseous.

According to “separation theology” when we repent, act right or believe the right things—if we

turn to him, God will turn to us. God will then reach down, wash and cleanse us and welcome us into his house. However, Paul says:

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels or demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39)

Here's the plain truth: God never separates himself from us or turns his back on us. Of course, we can feel alienated from him if we stop looking to Jesus as the focus of our faith. We can experience the real effects of our alienation, even though the Father never disowns us. The Prodigal Son decided to leave his father's house and go to a far country. Yet the Father's love and forgiveness followed his son out the door on the very day he left and remained with him in that "far country."

The gospel truth is: we cannot begin to imagine *how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ...* (Ephesians 3:18).

- The Living Water will always flow down the mountain to the lowest possible point.
- The Good Shepherd will always leave the flock to go in search of one that is lost.
- The Father will always be on the porch of his house, waiting for the wandering child ... which would be you, me, and everyone else on this planet.

If we feel alienated from God, it's because we have hidden our faces from the One who never turns his face from us. We can allow guilt and shame to overwhelm us so that we feel condemned, as if God doesn't love us anymore. But our feelings do not change the eternal and forever love of God. *How you and I feel about who we are and what we have done does not change the way God feels about us.*

The gospel of Jesus Christ dogmatically insists that God is not now nor has he ever been separated from you and me. The gospel is all about the grace of God that for humans seems just too-good-to-be-true. Twisted and corrupted ideas about a god who separates himself from us because of our sin are not the gospel—they are Christ-less religion.

Those who believe our sins separate us from God perceive God's house on the top of his unapproachable, remote and inaccessible holy mountain to be surrounded by a fence—yes, they believe Jesus came down from that mountain to open a gate in that fence for us. But they insist the separation persists and that you are "out" until you believe or behave properly. Ultimately, they believe it's still up to us to earn our entrance through the gate Jesus opened and thus "get" to heaven through our dogged determination to climb that mountain.

Their beliefs are illustrated by slogans like "God helps those who help themselves." But the problem with "separation theology" is that our success in climbing the mountain to be with God still depends on you and me. Jesus may have opened the gate, but we have to climb the mountain? We can only enter through the gate if we do enough good things? Think very carefully about this twisted theology: If God only helps those who help themselves—if God only rewards those who prove to him that they deserve his love—then the whole system of salvation depends on human effort. It's called performance-based religion.

Apart from Jesus, climbing the mountain to get to God's house is impossible. Any system that insists that salvation and eternal life is gained through human effort is diametrically opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Instead, **God in Christ descended from the mountain to find us, even in our lowest place and he raises us up with and in himself.**

The gospel is good news—the good news is that God in the person of Jesus has come down from the eternity, purity and holiness of heaven to become one of us. Jesus not only opened the gate to eternity, he opened wide the door of God’s house, welcoming all to enter! ALL!

The real impediment to embracing the grace of God, to accepting his loving invitation, is human pride. God does not separate himself from us, but we humans are often too proud to accept his charity. Spurred on by religious propaganda humans resist God’s grace. Christ-less religion doesn’t want a handout, it wants to preserve its pride and ego and live in its own make-believe world deluded into thinking it deserves all it receives.

- Christ-less religion doesn’t love God, it loves itself—its traditions, beliefs, icons, prayers, ceremonies and rituals.
- Christ-less religion doesn’t want the gift of God’s grace—“after all its done for God”—it wants a paycheck for its performance.

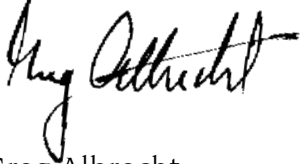
Eugene Peterson is one of my favorite authors—he once said:

There are a thousand ways of being religious without submitting to Christ's lordship, and people are practiced in most of them. We live in golden calf country...what we really want is to be our own gods...

My dear friends, let us not attempt to shrink God into our own image. Let us not be confused or deceived or brainwashed into thinking God is filled with wrath. Let us embrace the grace and fullness of the love of God!

Always remember: No matter how great we might think God’s love, grace and mercy to be, it is more and greater! Give that some thought, and prayer!

Your brother in Christ,



Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

Breaking News—CWRpress and Brad Jersak Receive Second Gold Medal!

In 2016 *A More Christlike God*, by Brad Jersak, published by CWRpress in 2015, received the Enduring Light Gold Medal from Illumination Book Awards.

Now, in 2020, *A More Christlike Way*, also by Brad Jersak, published by CWRpress in 2019, once again received the Enduring Light Gold Medal from Illumination Book Awards.

Dr. Jersak’s *A More Christlike God* has been published in three languages so far, with enthusiastic readers all over the world regarding it as a life-changing book. *A More Christlike Way*, the highly anticipated follow up to *A More Christlike God*, is already receiving high praise and promises to impact the lives of readers in a similar way. Students and seekers of Jesus will be thrilled with the transforming insights in both of these Gold Medal Award winning books.

Both volumes are available at Amazon.com in hard copy and digital formats, as well as audio.

CWR/PTM Prayer List—May 2020

These requests for prayer represent just a few of the thousands we receive and pray for. We invite you to join us in praying for these and the others that space does not permit us to include here. Thanks for joining with us as a CWR/PTM Prayer Partner.

Please pray for God's healing of the neuropathy in my feet.—New Hampshire

Please pray for me as I am struggling with a persistent cough and fluid in my lungs.—California

I've been battling a respiratory infection for several weeks. Please say a prayer for me.—Georgia

Thanks for your prayers for my wife's neck surgery. God blessed her and the doctors with a good outcome. Please pray for her comfort and complete healing.—Oklahoma

My sister has diabetes, kidney trouble and other health problems. She may soon need to start dialysis.—North Dakota

Please pray as I struggle with my own health problems and I watch my husband's Parkinson's grow worse. I find comfort knowing that so many people are praying for us.—Virginia

Please pray with me that your ministry will continue to help countless others see God for who He really is—love. And pray that the true gospel would soften the hearts of many held captive in legalistic strongholds.—Wisconsin

Please pray for relief from serious pain in my hips, knees and back.—Florida

Please pray for my brother who was in a bad car wreck and for my sister who is bleeding internally. Please also pray for my son who is hooked on meth and for my cousin who has colon cancer.—Georgia

Please pray for my grandson who has kidney problems. Thanks for your prayers and concern.—California

I have bone cancer, which is very painful. Please say a prayer for me.—Ohio

Please pray for our neighbor who has been dealing with back and knee problems.—Oregon

I'm requesting prayers for a successful cataract surgery on my left eye.—Minnesota

Please pray for me as I am stepping away from an abusive and neglectful relationship. Pray that I will be able to find a loving partner who will treat me in a loving and godly way.—Australia

Please pray for a friend who needs healing of blood cancer.—Maryland

I request prayers for my daughter, who has cancer and pneumonia.—North Dakota

Please pray for me, my wife and our 8-year-old daughter. We have multiple health problems and endless stress.—Georgia

My community suffered a terrible storm that washed out roads & bridges and greatly damaged our area.—New York

Please pray for my friend who has ALS. He is 80 years old and is a retired school teacher.—Pennsylvania

Please pray for me that I will feel better and find a way to get more rest at night.—Florida

My sister-in-law passed away after her hip surgery from fluid buildup around her heart. Thank you for all your prayers and please pray for my brother who is taking this very hard. His health isn't good.—Louisiana

Please continue to pray for my niece and her husband who have taken such good care of their foster child. They have taken him to all of his doctor appointments and therapy sessions. They still want to adopt him.—Tennessee

Our Father in Heaven: We thank you for your grace, mercy and love. You love each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our suffering servant who heals us, in whose name we pray—Amen.