



February 2022

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

I think good preachers should be like bad kids. They ought to be naughty enough to tiptoe up on their dozing congregations, steal their bottle of religious pills...and flush them all down the drain. The church, by and large, has drugged itself into thinking that proper human behavior is the key to its relationship with God. What preachers need to do is force it to go cold turkey with nothing but the word of the cross—and then be brave enough to stick around while [the congregation] goes through the inevitable withdrawal symptoms.—“The Foolishness of Preaching,” Robert Farrar Capon

During your lifetime, chances are you have filled and imbibed some prescriptions written for you by religious professionals. If you are at all like me, at some point in your past, you swallowed religious pills hook, line and sinker and you became addicted. I know many of you, formerly addicted to “*hollow and deceptive philosophy*”—to “*elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ*” (Colossians 2:8)—to “*observing special days and months and seasons and years*” (Galatians 4:10) have now, by the grace of God, gone cold turkey, kicked the habit and are free from religious fears and superstitions. Thank God for his grace that detoxes us!

The basic, common denominator ingredient in all religious pills is the assumption that human beings, by our efforts, can achieve spiritual righteousness, which of course we lack the ability to do. But if the religious pills create an impossible expectation, then why do people remain hooked on religious drugs?

The word “**control**” is one of the most important elements appearing on the side of the religious pill bottle that lists the active ingredients. It doesn’t take much of a sales job by big religious pharma companies to convince humans that we can **control** our lives without any help from God. We are low hanging fruit, ripe for picking.

Who wants to admit they need God? We are hard wired to insist on doing things ourselves. We would rather God be obligated to reward us for our good behavior than humbly admit that we can only receive his favor by his grace.

Of course, the doctors and pharmacists of Christ-less religion within Christendom know that the gospel is based on the grace of God, but they water it down and dilute it. They explain that grace is what God gives us when he calls us, but our obedience, compliance, moral behavior, good character and devotion is necessary to remain within God’s good grace(s). We are in control of our relationship with God, says Christ-less religion, and it keeps on dispensing pills to keep us addicted to this proposition.

Legalistic religion explains that God’s grace kick-starts our relationship with God, like a down payment, but it is necessary for us to keep up the weekly payments. God’s grace initiates our relationship with him, but it is up to us to maintain it—so they say.

Control opposes God’s grace. Christ-less religious institutions can only remain in business if they can **control** the inmates of their institutions. Many ecclesiastical institutions admit that **controlling** their members and followers is a priority. Religious institutions at large are at war with

grace because God's grace, if universally embraced, will put religion out of business. And one day it will!

Religious laws pretend to give spiritual slaves all they will ever need after the prisoners conform and comply. Christ-less laws are all about **controlling** members and constituents—keeping them in line. By contrast, the ministry and teaching of Jesus—his gospel—is all about freedom in Christ.

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.—Galatians 5:1

If you think I am being too hard on religious institutions, in an attempt to be fair, let me restate the issue. We humans invented religion, because we hate God's grace. Our nature is self-centered. We despise hand-outs. We want to be in **control**. We want to be masters of our own destiny, even if we must be addicted to religious pills to keep us medicated with the illusion of **control**.

We humans "invented" religion? "Now you sound like an atheist, Greg," some might respond. No, by the grace of God, now I sound like a Christ-follower. Christ-followers are men and women of faith, who solely rely on Jesus, who trust in him and follow him, accepting his goodness, rejecting anyone who suggests that they have the power to produce enough goodness and righteousness to please God.

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.—Romans 3:21-22

Week after week, at many religious addresses and buildings, people dutifully line up to get their "God-fix." Week after week, religious pharmacies dispense a week's supply of religious pills that keep the congregation deluded, sedated and "high" on the illusion they can **control** their destiny—they can please and appease God if they just work hard enough. They believe they can actually **control** God and what he will do for them if they can just run faster, work harder and do more.

After Robert Farrar Capon suggests that preachers be naughty and steal the religious pills that keep the congregation deceived and docile, he continues in the same context, explaining Christ-centered, grace-based preaching:

*"Unless the faith of preachers is in that [that is, in the grace and mercy of God] alone [as in **faith alone, grace alone and Christ alone**]*—and not in any other person, ecclesiastical institution, theological system, moral prescription or master recipe for human loveliness—they will be of very little use in the pulpit."**

In the quotation of Capon at the beginning of this letter, he insists that after stealing the religious pills the congregation relies on, the preacher should preach "the word of the cross" so that the congregation can go "cold turkey" and embrace the grace of our Lord.

The central message of the cross of Christ is that God does for us what we can never do for ourselves.

The central message of the cross of Christ is the once and for all forgiveness of all sin, past and future, by the love of God poured out on the cross.

The central message of the cross of Christ is that God, in Christ, accepted all human hatred and all human attempts to be good enough for God to love them. All human rejection of God, all human hatred of God, all human sin (whether immoral behavior or religious pride) burned itself out on the cross of Christ.

All that remains after the cross is an invitation, an offer, the outstretched arms of Jesus...

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.—Matthew 11:28-30

- *Jesus is not interested in controlling you.* He doesn't enslave you in a spiritual prison and throw away the key.
- *Jesus does not prescribe and dispense* religious sedatives and narcotics to keep you and me in a continual state of delusional addiction.
- *Jesus is the way and the truth and the life* (John 14:6)—rather than rituals, performances and ceremonies.
- *Jesus doesn't dispense religious pills*, he offers to detox us so that we will be free from religious slavery and bondage.
- *Jesus invites us to accept him* and leaves the decision with us.
- *Jesus will not force us* to follow him. Jesus does not intimidate or threaten us. Jesus' relationship with you and me is about love, mercy and grace—not fear, shame and guilt.

It is difficult to see, with any Christ-centered clarity, the fog that shrouds a life when a person is imprisoned by Christ-less religion. When someone is spiritually medicated or drugged, their spiritual vision is impaired. Spiritual toxins overload the souls of those in religious bondage, somewhat like intoxication or even hypnotism or perhaps, in the worst case, brainwashing.

This horrific predicament can only be seen from the outside, looking in. The New Testament speaks of spiritual blindness and healing and of the miraculous impartation of spiritual vision, the very mind and eyes of Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God for imparting spiritual vision that we may see Jesus, and follow him! Thanks be to God for his mercies, grace and love whereby we are delivered from the control of religion and its taskmasters, that we may rest in Christ and follow him...and him alone!

Your brother in Christ,



Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

CWR/PTM Prayer List—February 2022

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 my neighbor. She has a hole in her heart, and doctors say they can't do any more for her.—Arizona

My sister has cancer. Would you please pray for her? Thank you for your prayers.—West Virginia

Please pray for an end to all the violence in the world. I truly worry about what kind of world we're leaving for our grandchildren.—Colorado

May we all keep growing in our Father's love and wisdom, always being thankful for his great mercy.—South Dakota

My sister passed away recently. Please keep our family in your prayers for comfort and peace.—New York

Please pray for me. My legs and feet hurt, especially at night. Thank you for continuing to do the work Jesus has left for us to do.—California

Thank you so much for your prayers about my safety here in my apartment so no one will break in.—New York

Please pray that all the fires in North America will soon come to an end.—North Carolina

Thank you for your much-appreciated work! Your message of grace and truth makes a huge difference in my family's life. I pray for God's continued blessings on everyone involved with PTM.—Washington

Please continue to pray for me as I am still struggling with clinical depression and PTSD.—Tennessee

There are so many of us in need of prayer, so say a prayer for all of us needy children of our heavenly Father.—Colorado

*I'm planning to move in soon with my daughter and her husband, and my granddaughter will be moving into my house. Please pray that I can get everything changed over smoothly and that this move will work out for the best for us all.
—West Virginia*

*Please pray for my family who are coming to visit me. Pray for a safe flight and that they will not be infected by COVID.
— Minnesota*

Please keep my son in your prayers who is in Stage Four cancer. We are praying to God for healing.—Georgia

Please pray for my daughter who has edema and a lot of fluid buildup and discomfort.—Tennessee

Please pray for us. My wife is 72 and she just came home from the hospital after suffering a heart attack. I'm 74 and we've been married 52 years!—Florida

Please pray for me as my feet have started swelling. I am being tested for congestive heart failure. I thank God for teaching us the truth about Jesus through your ministry.—Alabama

*Please pray that God will have compassion on my daughter and she will be healed soon. She has been ill for many months.
—Illinois*

Please pray for my sister-in-law who has Stage Four cancer. Please also pray for my brother who is not well, but he is trying to take care of her.—West Virginia

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.