

# CHRISTIANITY UNPLUGGED

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## UNPLUGGED

*They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.*

- Colossians 2:19, TNIV

ERIC D. CANADAY

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The word “Christianity” does not appear in the bible. However, it has become a religious system of social order that provides regulations for moral conduct and rituals for worship. It is generally accepted that in order to be a good “Christian” a person must:

- Accept Jesus Christ as their savior
- Become a member of the local church
- Participate in weekly worship services
- Give tithes and offerings
- Volunteer
- Pray, read the Bible, live a moral life
- And invite people to church

This is not an all-inclusive list, but these are a few acceptable attributes of a person who has converted to the “Christian religion.”

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Since the Edict of Milan, our institutions have spent billions of dollars constructing edifices for worship. We have sent missionaries into the world to ask the “lost” to become members of our organizations; making it clear that their decision will save them from God’s judgment and impending wrath. To date, we have also established more than 38,000 denominational Christian sects in order to meet the diverse cultural needs of our ecclesiastical community. As a result of this effort, Christianity has become the largest religion on the planet, laying claim to over 2.1 billion adherents worldwide.

The challenge in all of this is that Jesus did not come to establish a new religious system. He also never told his followers to build temples so that we could fill them up with people who had converted to the Christian faith.

He told his followers to make disciples and show them how to follow one simple command. In John 13:34-36 Jesus said:

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*A new command I give you: love one another.*

*As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*

One of the core problems with Christianity is that Christians in general are not known for their love. The divisions in the Church based upon race, culture, class, dogma, and clergy power-politics indicates that collectively Christianity has lost its way. This hypocrisy undermines the credibility of Jesus' message and now is the time for change.

For much of my adult life my entire identity was wrapped up in the idea of being a "good church going Christian." Like many believers, I thought it was my duty to conform to this construct. But after studying the bible for myself, I discovered that I had become a Christian who had never truly become a disciple of Jesus Christ. I knew how to follow all of the clerical rules, but I knew very little about following Jesus or walking with him in the way of love.

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In my disillusionment with this truth, I started a blog and wrote the following post titled, "Tired of Church." It reads:

*What comes to mind when someone mentions the word church? For most of us a church is a building where you go to worship or serve God. Most people go to church to get the answers that they need to deal with their personal problems.*

*Participating in church related activities has always given me a sense of closeness to other believers and refreshing in the Lord. I am the first to admit that a good sermon can provide the perspective needed to overcome the adversity we face in life. I have lead praise and worship, served as a deacon, taught Sunday school, and performed in several church plays. However, I have a confession to make... I am tired of what we call church.*

*Before I get too far along in this article I need to make it clear that I am not recommending a mass exodus from traditional*

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*"churches." God has called us to unity and the last thing that I want to do is add to the damage that has already been done. However, Church is not a building, a Christian social club, or a registered non-profit corporation. It is a worldwide community of people who have committed their lives to sharing the love of Jesus Christ everyday!*

*I have spent the last 25 years "going" to church and I am tired of the routine. I long for something so much more. I want every member the body of Christ to know that they have the power to make a difference. I want them to find the courage to take action.*

*I want us to be the Church..."*

Shortly after posting the article I made a decision to unplug my life, my money, and my voluntary service from the system of religion known as Christianity. When I walked away, I felt like a weight had been lifted. That is, until a friend of mine confronted me about my article. He said:

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*Now that you have created this article; what will the solution be? Because you will be asked; also, how do we break the tradition of church? You and I know that Church is really about community, but so often churches grow larger than their communities. We have been taught to have faith rather than a realistic effort. What do we do to change that? You know some people believe more in tithing/giving 10% rather than living right. We need a solution Eric.*

My initial feeling was that we needed to go to the preachers and tell them to stop utilizing ordination and temple-based worship to mediate the relationship between God and his people. But that would be a ridiculous request because ordained clerics generate revenue for their organizations by teaching these principles. Asking them to do something this drastic would be like asking America to relinquish its dependence on foreign oil. Its not going to happen any time soon.

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After giving it some additional thought I came to the conclusion that Christianity cannot be fixed; but it can be transcended. Jesus Christ is not the founder of Christianity anyway. It is a political system of worship that proliferates only because 2.1 billion people agree to behave as if it exists (for details about the origins of Christianity I highly encourage you to read Pagan Christianity by Frank Viola and George Barna).

The solution lies in embracing the fact that we have God's permission to let go of a religion in order to follow his Son in the way of love.

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