

SAME MISSION

(Reflections from the message on Sunday – July 10, 2016)

*“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory – glory as of the only-born from the Father, **full of grace and truth.**”*

John 1:14 DLNT

According to James Emery White (from his book, *The Rise of the Nones*) the world longs to hear something life altering. The Pew Forum Study revealed the views of the “religiously unaffiliated” with these characteristics:

- 30% believe in a spiritual energy in physical objects and in yoga as a spiritual practice.
- 25% believe in astrology and reincarnation.
- 60% say they have a deep connection with nature and the earth.
- 30% have felt “in touch” with someone who is dead.
- 15% have consulted a psychic.
- 16% are atheists (a matching statistic on the opposite end of the spiritual spectrum of the 16 % who are adamant about their faith (all faiths)).

So, why are so many people (68% main-line Protestants and Catholics) drifting away from the institution of the church? The church has not kept pace with a world of slowly fading values. Because of the gap of truth and reality (bad things do happen to good people) the church has not been able to lead people past the heart-ache of this life into a life of fulfillment and joy as promised – they want it now, not later. So, **the creed of the spiritual but not religious** includes the following:

All organized religions offer only partial glimpses of God; God is everywhere and in everything; sin and evil are illusions; and perfect happiness is available right now.

We are not only to discern truth for ourselves from the facts at hand, but also to create truth for ourselves despite the facts at hand.

Reality is determined by majority vote, such as when astronomers voted Pluto off their list of planets.

To avoid calling ourselves sinners, we’ve become mistakers; to turn everything we do into a virtue where lust becomes “sensuality”, and anger is just “being honest with your emotions”.

Now, what do we do (Christ followers) to engage the “spiritual but not religious”?

What does Jesus tell the disciples to do in **Matthew 28:19**?

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In essence we become missionaries in our own neighborhoods. Three things that a missionary does:

1. Learn the language – understanding people so we can relate to people in an effort to respond to their needs.
2. Become a student of the culture – and operate effectively within it without surrendering to it.
3. Translate the gospel – so that it can be heard, understood and applied.

However, the greatest advantage we have is the life of Christ within us – **GRACE AND TRUTH**.

<p>Grace alone but No truth</p> <p>(Universalists Unitarianism) “Licentiousness” – a license to any lifestyle or perspective. Almost anything goes.</p>	<p>Grace And Truth</p> <p>(Jesus Christ – the Only Son of God) Unconditional love – acceptance with a challenge to live sin free in a relationship with Him.</p>
<p>No grace No truth</p> <p>(Hinduism and Buddhism) “Karma” – cause and effect</p>	<p>No grace But Truth alone</p> <p>(Islam – any fundamental right dogma) “Fundamentalism” “Legalism” Rules, regulations, laws and legalities – and no room for error.</p>

“Grace and truth together is the one thing that separates authentic Christianity from all other religions.”

- C.S. Lewis, *at the British Conference on Comparative Religions*.