

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

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GOD’S IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN

By *KEVIN PRESLEY*

For all of the times that we hear it used today, you would think that the Bible would be filled with the mention of the name ‘Christian.’ After all, Christianity is based on the teachings of the New Testament. But the name ‘Christian’ is only found in the Bible three times. Now, what a Christian IS is found all throughout the New Testament, but the name itself only occurs three times, and those three times are after the return of Christ to His throne in Heaven, and the establishment of the church. Those three verses that contain the name ‘Christian’ are very interesting. They reveal to us what a Christian is, and who can rightfully be called a Christian.

God says this name would be given after the Gentiles would come to see the glory of God. It would be a name specially designated to them by God. After the conversion of Cornelius, the Italian Gentile (recorded in Acts 10 and 11), the scripture tells us what that name would be:

Acts 11:26 “...And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”

It has been said that the name was given to the disciples in derision by the enemies of Christ, but as we’ll see in a few moments, the name was also ascribed to the church by the Holy Spirit Himself. This shows us it was a name that was chosen and approved by God. It is a wonderful name because it denotes the ownership and lordship of Jesus Christ. It is a special name, not to be taken lightly or carelessly ascribed. Simply having some kind of religious affinity or affiliation doesn’t make a person a Christian. Merely calling oneself by that name does not make him/her a Christian. Being the descendant of someone who is a Christian or living in a country that is dominated by people who think of themselves as Christians, even going to the assembly of the church from time to time—none of these things give one the right to be called a Christian. In this article we will discuss, what is God’s idea of a Christian?

There are three occurrences of the name ‘Christian’ in God’s Word. All three are found in the New Testament,

and they each tell us something different and unique about the name and what it means to wear it. These three verses give us a complete picture of what God’s idea of a Christian is.

Let’s look first of all at the very first time the name is used. Up until the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7, the primary work of the gospel and of the church had focused on Jerusalem. After Stephen was martyred, that changed, and the disciples of Jesus were scattered as far away as the city of Antioch, which was past Samaria, up into Syria, near where Turkey is today.

Acts 11:19 “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice...”

The word “scattered” that Luke uses is a Greek word meaning “sown about or the scattering of seeds.” That was exactly the effect because these people took the gospel with them and the seed of the kingdom was planted in those far-flung places. In the city of Antioch in particular, the gospel took hold and what a wonderful work took place there!

Acts 11:21 “And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number of people believed, and turned unto the Lord.”

In other words, the gospel made a BIG impact on that city, and the church there was a tremendous success. It became a beacon of truth and influence among the churches of the first century. Barnabas was sent there to preach and he brought Saul (the Apostle Paul) to Antioch. The Bible says that they spent a year there, working with the church and preaching the gospel. Then Luke tells us this:

Acts 11:26 “...the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”

The word ‘Christian’ simply means ‘a follower of Christ.’ Notice that it doesn’t say that they were first called Baptists at Antioch, or Methodists or Episcopalians or Presbyterians or Pentecostals or Catholics at Antioch. Those names weren’t given by the Lord and they didn’t exist in the first century. Rather, the Bible says they were called Christians. There were no denominations to be

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Editorial

IT REALLY DOES TAKE A VILLAGE

By JOE NORTON

Even though the original intent of the expression “It Takes a Village” was to emphasize that many factors and individuals come into play in the success of children in the U.S., it is an easy jump to see it in the light of the success of a congregation of the Lord’s church in reaching out to save the lost. That book carried the theme that we don’t live in a vacuum in the world-success and survival depend on our living and working in harmony. And so it is in the church.

The village represents a congregation, and those who impact the lives of others represent individual church members.

The scriptures give us an absolute imperative to reach out to help save those who have not come to a knowledge of the truth or to help recover those who have left the fold. And that responsibility lies not only with an evangelist or a church leader but with every member of the body. In view of this scriptural imperative, we might just look at each other and say, That Means You.

This has to be Paul’s meaning when he admonishes the Ephesians: “...we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-Christ-from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:14-16).

Not only in this passage but also in Acts, it seems that many Christians in the first century felt that imperative and reached out to influence those around them. If we could only influence each member of a congregation to think “What can I do to help the church today” or “What can I do to save the lost,” we would see a dramatic change in the number of people added to the body.

The task is not easy. It takes all of the positive influence we can muster to get just one person to pause long enough to talk with us about the scriptures. And when we do find that rare individual, it is even more difficult to convince him or her that we must actually do what the scriptures teach.

Our task is even more daunting since the world teaches that the scriptures are just stories written for people in a different age. But with each church member, working cooperatively, and with the Lord’s blessing, we can successfully fulfill this awesome responsibility. It really does take a village.-OPA

QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: When a confession is made by someone who has sinned, and they correct their sins, is it right for people to bring up the past which has been forgiven? Should the penitent individual go to those who continue to bring these matters up and confront them?

Answer: Jesus said “if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly father forgive your trespasses” Matthew 6:14. Anyone who continues to hold things against someone who has made the situation right, sin themselves. “Then Peter came to him and said, Lord how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times? Jesus said to him, I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” Mt. 18:21-22 Holding people accountable for things of which they have repented and made right is sinful. Such behavior belies an attitude foreign to God’s children. Reasonable men are aware that we all make mistakes and often approach God in prayer asking to be forgiven. God, however, will not forgive us when we fail or refuse to forgive another person. People who hold grudges or withhold forgiveness play a very dangerous game. They burn the very bridge they must cross to be forgiven themselves. Bringing up the past that has been forgiven not only demonstrates an attitude foreign to the scriptures but actually leaves the individual without divine help. Regarding the latter part of the question, the scriptures teach that if an individual sins against me, “I am to go to him and tell him his fault between you and him alone...” Mt. 18:15-17. It seems to this writer that those who continue to bring up matters already confessed and forgiven need to be approached about their failure to forgive. If they repent of their sin, the matter can be settled. If, however, they continue to fail to forgive and persist in spreading the matter abroad, then they need to be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-17 with the church taking appropriate action in the matter.

Question: Does a congregation have the right to tell an individual that they are no longer welcome to attend there, and they need to go somewhere else?

Answer: I find it difficult to understand why a congregation would make such a request. I know of

no scripture that would suggest such action based on grounds of scriptural discipline. In 1Corinthians five the church was commanded to have no company with the immoral man so that he would be ashamed of his sin and repent. They certainly did not recommend that he go to another congregation for worship. If an individual is causing trouble in the church, that individual should be warned that if the behavior responsible for the trouble is not stopped it will then be necessary for the church to proceed with withdrawal of fellowship Romans 16:17. If the individual is asked to leave and attend elsewhere, at the very least it seems that the church should warn (in writing) the congregation to which the individual goes that this person is a trouble-maker. If the problem is serious enough to warrant asking the person to leave, then it is serious enough to warn other churches about the conduct of the individual. Asking a person to leave a congregation and attend elsewhere, in the view of this writer, is a very poor excuse for eradicating problems and helping a brother or sister reach spiritual maturity. In 1Corinthians 12, Paul deals with the relationship between the members of the body. He writes “And the eye cannot say to the hand “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet “I have no need of you.” No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.”

Rather than asking these weaker seemingly less important members of the body to go elsewhere the apostle commands that they be given recognition for the service that they render. He concludes by saying “there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.” It seems to me that if there is no clear scriptural disciplinary action involved in asking this person to leave those who made such a request were wrong in so doing. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. box 14352 Springfield, Mo 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

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HERE AND THERE

By Rick Martin

When it comes to using Scripture as a guide for life, the most common question is not why to use it, but how to use it.

Many people use the “hop, skip, and jump” method. In other words, they wait until a crisis hits and then they try to flip through their Bibles quickly for answers. They want the answers to jump off the page. Sometimes the answers may be found immediately.

However the Word of the Lord should be our sustenance and source of direction on a daily basis, not just as an occasional source of comfort when the going gets rough. Romans 12:2 explains how we can make the Bible part of our daily support. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”.

Renewal is not an overnight process; the word implies an ongoing process of development. When we study and dig deeper into the Word of God we will understand its principles better and be better prepared to be led by God.

Heretics are a great danger to the truth. In many cases the heretic begins his false teaching in people’s homes. The NKJV says that the heretics crept into households; 2 Timothy 3:6 “For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts.” The heretic usually doesn’t do his damage at worship assemblies. He waits until the flock has scattered, and no one is around to provide protection. A heretic loves to sit at one’s kitchen table and talk because he knows he has the person in a comfortable situation and can begin to spread his falsehoods.

A heretic will often agree with you in the beginning to try to gain confidence and build trust. But, little by little and visit after visit, the old paths will be torn down and demolished. By repeated discussions, the heretic will gradually purge former beliefs and replace them with ‘new truth’ as they call it. He will convince you that all he wanted to do was to have a Bible study in your home. Little by little, admiration for the faithful men and women of the church will be turned to suspicion and criticism and you will be taught that the church preached a host of lies. Beware of the heretic; He will begin his false teachings in your home.

Paul spoke of a time when some would “not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned aside unto fables” 2 Tim. 4:3, 4. There is no

combination more dangerous to the truth of God than church members with “Itching ears” and preachers (and teachers) who are ready to supply the tickling they desire.

Brother Phillip Prince will be holding two singing schools this year: June 8-12 at the Martin Luther Methodist College in Pulaski, TN; July 13-17 at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, TX. Why not begin making your plans to take your children to one of these if possible? You can get in touch with Phillip about enrollment at; Phillip G. Prince 12025 Turkey Road Jacksonville, FL 32221 904-781-2486 (H) 904-537-6105 (C) philpgp@gmail.com

Faith, courage and loyalty are three things worthwhile, hang on to them. That’s all for now; pray for the brotherhood. -OPA

Pages From the Past

This month we are presenting an article from the pen of Brother Ervin Waters, who at the time these words were written lived in Lawrenceburg, TN. We are unsure what the year was but the subject was, and still is, excellent and timely. Read it carefully and profit by it. DLK

WHAT NAME SHOULD THE CHILDREN OF GOD WEAR TODAY?

By J. ERVIN WATERS, Lawrenceburg, TN
Evangelist of the Church of Christ

I. NAMES IN OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

Usually the children of God have either worn his name or one which he gave them. In the beginning God created one family and gave them one name. “Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and gave them one name Adam, in the day when they were created.” Gen. 5:2. That significance may be attached to a name is evident, for God changed Abram’s name to Abraham (Gen. 17:5) and Sarai’s name to Sarah (Gen. 17:15). God also changed Jacob’s name to Israel (Gen. 32:28) and consequently the natural descendants of Jacob are not known as Jacobites but as Israelites. In being called “Israel” they were called by the name of God, “Thy people are called by thy name.” Dan. 9:19. “Israel,” according to the etymology of the word, means “He who prevails with God.” The suffix “El” is an abbreviation or contraction of the Hebrew word for Lord. “Elohim.” Jerusalem, the Holy City and the place where Israel worshipped God, was called by the name of God, “The city which is called by thy name” Dan. 9:18. Jerusalem means “Jehovah send peace.” The prefix “Je” is a contraction of the Hebrew word for God “Jehovah.” If God’s people and His holy city wore His name then, is it a wonder that the people of Christ and His church. are required to wear His name today?

II. PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE NAME.

Isa. 56:5, "Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and daughters: I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." Notice that the name was to be given in the house of God. What is the house of God? "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Tim. 3:15. Since the house of God is the church, the name could not be given until the church was established. The prophecy said that the name would be "an everlasting name" and would not "be cut off." Hence it is in existence today and we should wear it. That is why all earnest people should strive to ascertain by the scriptures what name was given.

Isa. 65:15, "And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servant by another name" The name "Israel" has been left as a curse as all who have studied the history of that persecuted race, the Jews, can testify. National Israel is no more, having been slain, and now there "is neither Jew nor Greek" (Gal. 3:28) in Christ. This prophecy also shows that the Lord's servants would be called by "another name."

Isa. 62:2, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness and all Kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." The Gentiles did not "see righteousness" until the household of Cornelius was converted and then Peter said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts 10:34-35. All kings saw glory. Now we look for the fulfillment of this prophetic utterance. The name was to be a "new name," one unknown to past sacred and profane history. It was to be given, not by man, but by the "mouth of the Lord," which may denote inspiration.

III. THE NAME "CHRISTIAN" IS GIVEN.

Paul, the apostle, is to bear the name Acts 9:15, "Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and children of Israel." At Antioch in Acts 11, after "Gentiles saw righteousness" in Acts 10, we find both Jews (verse 20) and Gentiles (verse 21), and many representatives from Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Cyrene. Paul, too, who was to bear the name (Acts 9:15), was present (verses 25 and 26). Could we find a better place for inspiration to give the name? "And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" Acts 11:26. Thus the "new name" was given in the "house of God."

IV. WE CAN BE SAVED UNDER NO OTHER NAME. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is NONE OTHER NAME under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. It is then impossible for people to be saved under other names. Why don't all of us take the name Christ gave us? CATHOLIC means universal

and the church of Christ is a universal church, but we cannot be saved under this name. CONGREGATIONALIST, as a name, signifies that the people who wear that name believe in the autonomy of the congregation. We believe in that, the Bible teaches it, but this name was not given us. PRESBYTERIAN signifies that those who wear that name believe in elders as church officers. The Bible teaches that we should have elders, but we cannot be saved under that name. EPISCOPALIAN means evangelistic and the church should certainly be evangelistic, but God didn't give us this name. METHODIST means that those who wear that name believe in using methods in church work. All scriptural methods should be strictly followed by the church, but we cannot be saved under this name. BAPTIST means one who baptizes. We believe in baptizing people, but we cannot be saved under that name because God gave us another one. HOLINESS is a virtue all Christians must possess, but where did God authorize us to wear that name? We cannot be a NAZARINE unless we live in Nazareth like Jesus did. The Bible teaches a FULL GOSPEL, but not that we should wear that name. The church was established on Pentecost, but its members were never in the Bible called PENTECOSTALS. The Scriptures inform us of the ADVENT of Christ, but not that we should wear such a name. The name CHRISTIAN we find, but not the name CHRISTIAN SCIENCE. Dear reader, will you lay aside denominational titles and take the name of Christ only?

Paul reproved the Corinthians for wearing different names, "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ," 1 Cor. 1:12. Thus there were Paulites, Apollosites, Cephasites and Christians at Corinth. Paul propounded a question that needs no answer, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" 1 Cor. 1:13. Paul, although he was an inspired apostle, did not want any one to wear his name. Notice this reasoning-

(1) To wear different names is carnality. 1 Cor. 3:4, "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"

(2) Carnality is death, Rom. 8:6, "For to be carnally minded is death."

(3) Therefore, to wear different names is death. Reader, will you not wear the name Christian only and have life?

V. A GROUP OF SCRIPTURES.

1. The name of Christ is above every name. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name," Phil. 2:9.

2. We are baptized in his name. "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," Acts 2:38.

3. Salvation in his name. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," Acts 4:12.

4. All activities to be in his name. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Col. 3:17.

5. Blessed when we meet in his name. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Matt. 18:20.

6. We are happy to be reproached for His name. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye." I Pet. 4:14.

7. We are not ashamed to suffer as a Christian. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on his behalf." 1 Pet. 4:16.

8. Some blasphemed this name. "Do not rich men oppress you and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called? Jas. 2:6-7.

9. There is safety in His name. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." Prov. 18:10.

10. His name is one, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: and in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one," Zech. 14:9.

11. The whole family in heaven and in earth is named after him. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and in earth is named." Eph. 3:14-15.

12. Christ blesses a church for wearing his name. "Thou hast kept my word and hast not denied my name." Rev. 3:8. "Thou holdest fast my name." Rev. 2:13.

13. A king almost was persuaded to wear this name. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Acts 26:28.

14. The disciples wore it. "And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." Acts 11:26.

After reading the above scriptures, reader, will you blaspheme the name of Christ by saying that there is nothing in a name? If a husband thinks there is nothing in a name, why should he object to his wife changing her name? If there is nothing in a name, why does a man want his name on his bank account and on his deeds to property? Will you try to excuse yourself by saying, "We are all Christians, anyway, but we call ourselves something else." One may call himself a Christian and not be a Christian, but if he calls himself SOMETHING ELSE he certainly is not a Christian. Friend, will you help us have unity by wearing the only scriptural name and being a member of the "Church of Christ," (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:16.)

"At the name of Jesus bowing,
Falling prostrate at his feet;
King of Kings in heaven reigning
As we stand in him complete."

**THE BATTEY-KNIFFEN
"OPEN BIBLE STUDY"
ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE**

By CLINTON DE FRANCE

Saturday, March 14, 2015, this writer was privileged to attend and to moderate a discussion on the divorce and remarriage question between brothers Malcom Kniffen, of Waco, Texas, and George Battey, of Seminole,

Oklahoma. The discussion focused particularly on the exception of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 – permitting the remarriage of the innocent party who has put away a spouse "for the cause of fornication." Malcom Kniffen represented the "No-Exception View", contending that Jesus teaching in the Gospels was a repetition and commentary on the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 24:1-2), and has no authority in the Christian Dispensation. George Battey argued that the teaching of Jesus on divorce and remarriage, especially the exception of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, is for the New Covenant, and that it is authoritative for Christians. The "exception/no-exception controversy" has divided the church for decades, and it was clear from this study that the division remains strong. In the opinion of this writer, a discussion like this was long overdue and was indeed a very good work.

The Discussion

The discussion was structured, not as a debate, but as an "Open Bible Study." Each speaker had thirty minutes to present his view and thirty minutes to respond to questions from the audience. Brother Malcolm Kniffen spoke first. His speech was bold and at times quite compelling. He appealed primarily to Paul's metaphorical comparison of the Church and Christ with human marriage. Kniffen's primary contention was that Christ is forgiving and patient with the "adulterous Church", and that the Biblical mandate to follow Christ's example of forgiveness and longsuffering precludes any possibility for divorce and remarriage. Brother Kniffen briefly intimated that Christ could not have taught New Law while living under the Law of Moses, and to do so would make him a transgressor. Kniffen contended that Deuteronomy 24:1-2 is essentially parallel to Matthew 19:9. Kniffen's final statement was that Christ, unlike any one else, did not write his last will and testament, or even express it – He left that task to the executors of the Will: the apostles and prophets of the Church.

In this writer's opinion, Brother Kniffen's most compelling argument was his appeal that Christian marriage should follow the example of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:22-33). However, on closer consideration it is evident that Kniffen and his fellows push the metaphor too far. First, Jesus will put away congregations guilty of spiritual adultery (Rev. 2:5)! Second, to try to make something out of the point that Jesus doesn't remarry after putting away an unfaithful church is absurd – there is only one church, so there is no one for Him to remarry! All Bible readers must be cautious to make more out of a metaphor than the Holy Spirit Himself did. Many false doctrines are born in this way.

George Battey argued that prophecy and the claims of Jesus affirm His role as Lawgiver and declare that he would and did teach New Law during His personal

ministry. Battey explained how laws could be announced and discussed long before they become forceful and active. He then showed the disharmony between Jesus' teaching and Deuteronomy 24:1-2 (i.e. Jesus gave women the right to divorce/the Law of Moses did not; Jesus forbade the "put away" person from remarrying/the Law of Moses permitted it). In this writer's opinion, one of the most impressive points was brother Battey's demonstration of the exception in the writings of Paul (namely, 1 Cor. 6:15-18). In his typical form, brother Battey was well prepared for the discussion and provided a tremendously helpful booklet that covered the material he could not address for the sake of time. All readers are encouraged to order "No-Exception" For Divorce (Is This True?) by George Battey and God Hates Divorce by Irvin Barnes.

The Reception

The discussion was well attended, drawing in over 250 people from across the United States. After the discussion, this writer interviewed many in the audience to see how people felt about the discussion. Any time there is passionate disagreement, there will be tension, and this discussion was no-exception (no pun intended). However, the consensus was that more studies like this need to occur in the future. In this writer's opinion, there is no other way to resolve this dispute than to change views. Divorce and remarriage is a reality, and God's standard must be upheld. The division between us does not result from one group simply rejecting that God's standard of morality should be followed; it is a division based on different interpretations of the scripture, and that gives hope for resolution. God help us to continually pursue peace, holiness, and unity.

Some Thoughts on Fellowship and Hope for the Future
As stated above, the only real hope for unity on this subject is that we all "speak the same thing and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). The Bible can bring us to that point, but certain attitudes must change. This writer noticed two troublesome things about the "No-Exception" Brethren. First, Malcom Kniffen claimed that the reason our congregations are divided over this issue is that people are getting divorced. The idea was that if there were no divorce we might be able to get past our different interpretations. But this is not what Kniffen's brethren practice. In the Philippines, divorce is illegal, and yet the No-Exception brethren have bitterly divided the Church in that country. This is terribly inconsistent. It appears bitterness is driving this division even more than doctrinal disagreement and that must change if we are ever to have unity.

A Challenge to the "No-Exception" Brethren

This writer was authorized by brother George Battey to extend a formal, written challenge to a longer debate on the exception/no-exception controversy. The "Open

Bible Study" only allowed the surface to be scratched. One of the most uniform comments from the audience was that so many questions were left unanswered. This writer proposes a formal debate lasting between 2-4 nights. Brother Battey would be willing and ready to defend the case for the exception. Brother Malcolm lamented the time limit. This new format would give an opportunity for more discussion. If brother Malcolm Kniffen would not debate the issue, perhaps someone else can find backing to do so?

George Battey is working on propositions, which will be published later in the OPA.

If you are interested in participating in a discussion like this, please write – Clinton De France, 5429 Flo Dr., Wichita Falls, TX 76302 or cdefrance87@yahoo.com



GOD'S IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN....continued from page one

delineated then. There was just one church, as the Lord intended, united in faith, doctrine and practice. They were called Christians, or followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a reason they were called the followers of Christ. Notice what Luke calls them. He says, "the disciples were called Christians at Antioch." The very fact that they were disciples of Jesus led the people to look at them and call them the followers of Christ. These people were following Jesus and His teachings and His life. They were His disciples.

If the name 'Christian' describes someone who is a disciple of Jesus, then perhaps we need to ask, what does it mean to be a disciple? Are you truly the Lord's disciple? Do you suppose the 2,000,000,000 people on earth who presently call themselves Christians are really disciples of Jesus? After all, what is a disciple? The word means 'to be a follower of and an adherent to the teachings of another.' It means to accept and assist in the spreading of the message of another. A person is not a Christian in name only. He doesn't just claim some form of religion and then have the right to put on the title 'Christian.' Rather, the name 'Christian' is to describe what a person IS and what he believes and the kind of life he lives. What did Jesus say about being a disciple? Luke 14:26-27 "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:33 "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Being a disciple means a lot more than just claiming the name. It means following, at great cost and great effort. Jesus said, John 15:8 "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." What

kind of fruit are you bearing? Do you really have the right to be called His disciple? There is a big difference between knowing about someone and being their student or disciple. For example, you may be a great student of history, and there may be people who made a mark on history, for good or for bad, that you know a lot about. Their lives may be of great interest to you and you may devote a lot of time reading books about them and studying their lives. But that doesn't mean that you're their disciple. To be their disciple, you have to accept and adhere to their teachings, and make them your own beliefs and practices. Just knowing about Jesus, or empathizing with Jesus, or saying that you love Jesus—those things don't make you Jesus' disciple. Jesus Himself said: John 14:23 "...if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." So, being a disciple of Jesus means being a follower of Jesus, a student of Jesus' teachings, an imitator of Jesus' life. It also means being a member of His church. Many people try to tell us that being a Christian and being a member of Christ's church are two different things. The Bible doesn't make that separation. In fact, when the disciples were called Christians in Antioch, that is referring to the church that had been planted there. How does one become a disciple? That's a good question. If I can answer that question, then I can, at the same time, learn what I must do to become a Christian. Do you suppose that the Bible tells us how those first-century disciples became disciples? Surely it does!

Do you remember when Jesus gave the great commission just before He returned to glory? Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..."

So, there it is! What happened when the gospel was preached and people decided to become disciples of the Lord Jesus? The disciples who were later called Christians, how did they become disciples? Jesus said for the apostles to go and teach them and baptize them. Now look at what happened when they went out and did what Jesus said for them to do. In Acts 2, Peter was preaching Christ to the Jews on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, and they became convicted of their sins and they believed what Peter was preaching. Acts 2:37 "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

In other words, they wanted to become disciples of Jesus. Peter was preaching in order to try to make disciples of them. Peter answered their question in the following verse: Acts 2:38 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:41 "Then those who gladly received the word were baptized;

and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." Added to what? Acts 2:47 "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Peter and the others were told to go preach and make disciples. He preached Jesus, he commanded them to be baptized in order to receive the forgiveness of their sins, and the Lord added them to the church when they were saved. That's how they became disciples; disciples, who therefore are Christians. That means that a Christian is a baptized member of Christ's church. He is a daily cross-bearing follower of the Lord Jesus.

We also see that the name 'Christian' appears a second time in scripture. This time, it was spoken by a king, to whom the apostle Paul was preaching; a great ruler by the name of Agrippa. Before Paul was taken as prisoner to Rome, he was given the marvelous chance to stand before this great ruler and make his appeal for the gospel. Paul made a fervent and heartfelt appeal to the king about not only who Jesus is, but what Jesus had done for him. I imagine that Agrippa was probably sitting on the edge of his seat as Paul told the story of the Damascus Road, and all that had happened to bring this former arch enemy of Jesus to become His disciple. Paul knew Agrippa, and that Agrippa had heard about the prophets of Israel. As he said, this wasn't done in a corner (Acts 26:26). This great movement that had erupted in Jerusalem a few years before, Agrippa had heard about that. So, Paul looked at Agrippa and asked him: Acts 26:27 "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." Acts 26:28 "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Most scholars point out that in the original text, what Agrippa was saying was more of a question to Paul. That is, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" Or, "Do you think, by your speech, that you're going to make me a Christian?" Agrippa understood something important about becoming a Christian, and that is, that it is a matter of the conscious choice of a person to become or not to become a Christian. Christianity must either be accepted or rejected by each of us. The preaching of the gospel puts that choice before every person who hears it. What that means is, a person is not born a Christian. A person is not a Christian because he is born to parents who are Christians. He's not a Christian because he was born in America or any other country that is made up predominantly of people who claim the title of Christian. A baby cannot be taken and christened or sprinkled in order to make him/her a Christian. God's idea of a Christian is someone who decides to follow Jesus and who renders obedience to Him. It is a gross misuse of the name 'Christian' to apply it to people who have not been baptized into Christ, and who are not members of Christ's church, and who are not following Him in daily discipleship.

There is one more time that the Holy Spirit places this name 'Christian' in holy writ. I Peter 4:15-16 "But let

none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

Peter tells us something important about what it means to be a Christian. The name 'Christian' doesn't come cheaply. It isn't to be worn cheaply, carelessly or flippantly. Rather, it comes at great cost. Not only does it require that we figuratively bear our cross in daily living, as Jesus said of the disciple, it means that we are willing to suffer for it. Isn't it interesting that of only three times that the name is used, one of the times tells us that we will suffer as a Christian? That means that being a Christian means more than just going down to the assembly of the church twice a year. It means much more than conveniently identifying as a Christian where it may be socially acceptable. Being a Christian is a called out and sanctified life. It is a life that is totally offered in service and sacrifice to the Lord Jesus.

Are you a Christian? Are you REALLY a Christian? Have you been baptized into Christ? Are you a member of HIS church, that same church that existed in Antioch a long time ago? Are you a member of the church that we read about established in the New Testament, that believes, preaches, practices and worships according to God's Holy Word? Are you a daily disciple of the Lord Jesus, taking up your cross and following Him in daily living? Are you willing to suffer for His great name? Are you willing to CHOOSE to forsake the things of this world and make Jesus your Lord and your Master and to bow before Him and let Him take your life and make out of it what HE wants to make out of it. That's what the Bible is talking about when it speaks of a Christian. If you will obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus you can become a Christian. The Lord will make you His follower, His disciple, and He'll add you to His church. -OPA

Our Departed

Our dearly beloved Sister in Christ, Helen King, mother of one of our finest evangelist and foreign missionary workers, and publisher of this journal, Don L. King, passed away on March 2 at the age of 95. Her memorial service and burial took place in Lodi, CA on March 5 attended by many of her dear Christian brothers and sisters, and friends, as well as her family that she loved so much. A number of gospel preachers were there to help lend a hand in comforting those who remain. Sister King was born November 3, 1919 in Lebanon, Missouri. On April 27, 1938 she was married to the publisher of the Old Paths Advocate, Homer L. King who preceded her in death. Sister King did what she could to help her husband to faithfully mail out regularly and on

time each monthly issue that was so well received by the brotherhood and was the forerunner of much of our foreign missionary work. Sister King worked for the State of California as a Psychiatric Technician for 20 years. Sister King is survived by her son, Don L. (Pat) King. Grand -Daughter, Kris (Bob) Baker, Grand-son Lance (Kelly) King, Great Grand-sons Landon Baker and Colton King, great grand-daughter, Nicole King, and sister, Bonnie Ervin. She was preceded in death by her husband, Homer L. King, parents, brothers and sisters. Joann and I considered her a special friend. I was honored to speak at the chapel service and at the committal service. Her works will follow her and she will be missed by the church of Christ in Stockton where she was a faithful member for many years.

Announcements

THE FOLLOWING NAMES ARE THOSE WHO ARE OPPOSED TO CARNAL WARFARE.

Shane Wilks 7989 St Rd 446
Norman, IN 47264

Megan Wilks 7989 St Rd. 446
Norman, IN 47264

Leah Wilks 2388 N. Co Rd 1250W
Norman, IN 47264

Ryan Cole 4259 S. U.S. Hwy 231
Greencastle, IN 46135

Alex McCutchen 249 Sunny Slopes Circle
Bedford, IN 47421

Lindsey McCutchen 249 Sunny Slopes Circle
Bedford, IN 47421

Andrew Wilson 1424 Fairveiw/Mundell Rd.
Heltonville, IN 47436

Gabriella Wilson 1424 Fairveiw/Mundell Rd.
Heltonville, IN 47436

Michael A. Cupp 6809 W. Co. Rd. 600N.
Brazil, IN 47834

Field Reports

Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com In the recent past we have been privileged to be with a number of congregations in our area as well as the 84 Highway church in Brookhaven, MS Feb. 8-15. The annual study in Columbia, MO this year was very profitable. A number of preachers from various places presented informative lessons on a variety of topics. If you have never attended this study, I highly recommend it. Clint DeFrance and Shahe Gergian under the leadership of the Columbia, MO church conduct it each year and it is worthy of being a part of your calendar. I was privileged to attend the open Bible study between Brothers George Battey and Malcolm Kniffen on the divorce and remarriage issues. Both men were well equipped to represent their side of the controversy. Such studies, we believe, are profitable and needed. The Lord willing I will be in meetings at Ada, OK April 12-19, Wichita Falls, TX April 22-26, and Paris, TX April 29-May 3. We hope to see many of you there.

Eric J. Stone 94-371 Ikepono St. Waipahu, HI 96797 ericstone101@yahoo.com 18 Mar. 2015: Aloha Brothers and Sisters in Christ, There seems to be a noticeable change in the congregation since the beginning of the year. Lately especially, everyone is making a noticeable effort to concentrate and focus their energy during the worship services, and there is a real focus and reverence when God's word is being preached. There have been more follow-up questions and discussions after sermons, and I am very glad for it. The spiritual growth that is taking place is a beautiful thing to see. The brothers have also been having regular meetings and have been working together to make goals for the future. We are very joyful to announce that our Brother Philipe Bayani, after being away from the church for many years, and our Sister Filipinas Corpuz have each returned to the fold by making confession of fault. Many tears of joy were shed that Lord's day. Brother Melvyn Ventura has hosted a few dinners with his extended family and each time we have taken advantage of the opportunity and had singings with the whole family. Many of his family members were members of the church years ago. We have been laboring to pave the way that they may all return. May the Lord give the increase! Our congregation also welcomed a new baby girl Sabrina, healthily born to Rodell and Carolyn Garcia. We have been having regular bible studies with this family,

and pray that Carolyn will soon obey the gospel. Brother Bayani has been struggling with his health and has been hospitalized a couple of times in the last month due to strokes. He continues to fight and we would greatly appreciate your prayers for him. We do our best to stay connected to the rest of the brotherhood. Cody and I have been attending online Bible studies with others from around the country led by Duane Permenter. I'm thankful to say that Brother Permenter has recently taken an interest in me and we have been studying and talking weekly. I really appreciate his help and mentorship very much. We have planned our own local gospel meeting for April 3-5 in an attempt to reach our local community. Brother Edimar Daguio, Cody Stone, and I will be speaking, and are hoping to tackle such topics as, whether we can trust the bible, and whether we can identify the kingdom today? The congregation has already started distributing meeting flyers and tracts. I have been very impressed with everyone's willingness to get involved. Preparing for this meeting has allowed me some very valuable study time with Brother Edimar in preparation, and it has helped us grow even closer. I am so thankful for that. We have been very fortunate to have many visitors. We had 74 visitors logged in our guest book last year. No doubt we had more than that but most are visitors from the mainland. We are working to reach more locally. Since the beginning of the year we have had brethren from California, Texas, Oregon, and Missouri. In my last letter I asked for your prayers since I was due for hernia surgery. Thank you for that. All is well and I have been healing nicely. I am almost at the point where I can start lifting heavy loads again. Other than the surgery, we have also had quite a few health concerns. There have been waves of sickness that have gone through the congregation, mostly colds and flus. Yes, even in Hawaii we get colds. This year's "winter" season has been unusually cool and long, although it is nothing compared to what everyone else has been through this year. Last week we cancelled our Wednesday evening worship due to all the men being sick... not to mention some of the ladies too. Even so, we are doing quite well and should all be feeling better soon, Lord willing. If God permits our plans to succeed, we plan to see our family this summer and hopefully go to the 4th of July meeting in Springfield, MO. Already, a few congregations have sent help for us to travel. My family and I are unable to begin to find words that seem adequate to thank all of you for your love, support, and care for the Lord's work in Hawaii and for our family. May God bless you all richly, Mahalo!

Douglas T. Hawkins 409 Worthington Pl. Richmond, KY 40475 (859) 353-2538 - douglast69@bellsouth.net - Brethren, far too much time has passed since my last writing. May we remain faithful and diligent in the Lord's work. I concluded my leadership study with the congregation in Indianapolis in December. I truly enjoyed being with the brethren there over the course of 2014. I trust that this effort helped in their growth and direction. Many wonderful families constitute the church there. I started this same leadership study with the congregation at Chapel Grove where brother Duane Permenter lives. I am really looking forward to being with him and the church there throughout this year. We have meetings upcoming throughout 2015 and hope that if you are in the area can make your plans to attend. May the Lord bless you in his service.

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820 cmjthebackpage@gmail.com Mar. 9- We just concluded our 39th annual March Weekend Meeting here in Ada, and it was a good one. The meeting was well-attended and the six young speakers did an excellent job of preaching. Matt Barnes did a good job of conducting the services. We recently conducted a meeting in Shreveport, Louisiana which marked the 100th year of the congregation's existence. Wayne Fussell and the brethren obviously worked hard to prepare for a successful meeting. Folks came from all over to help us with the services, including preachers Cullen Smith, Jerry Dickinson, Bobby Cunningham, and Glen Ballard. My schedule for the next few months includes the following confirmed dates: Birmingham, AL (Crescent Ridge Mar. 29-April 5), Lexington, OK (Apr. 22-26), Clovis, CA (May 3-10), San Angelo, TX (June 7-14), Deer Park, TX (July 19-26), Joplin, MO (Leawood Village Aug. 5-9), Shawnee, KS (Mill Creek Sept. 11-13), and Lee's Summit, MO (Oct. 4-11). Ronny Wade is scheduled to conduct our spring meeting in Ada (Apr. 12-19), and Don King is scheduled for our fall meeting (Sept. 20-27). Please pray for us and may God continue to bless our every effort to glorify His name.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, March 11, 2015, email old_paths@juno.com Soon after our arrival home from the Philippines we made our way to Bakersfield, CA. Brother Darrell Brewer had passed away while Bro. Brancato and I were overseas and we were asked to preach his funeral. It was a sad, and difficult, time for all. On Lord's Day I was privileged to preach morning and evening at the Planz Rd. congregation

to a large crowd. Here at home we are preparing for our first meeting at the new Livermore location with Joe Hisle. We anticipate a great meeting and hope to see many of our friends and brethren then. Our brethren have advertised extensively and we anticipate good crowds. We are blessed here to have folks who want to do everything possible for the Cause of Christ. The home congregation is doing very well with outsiders attending nearly every Lord's Day and some are becoming regulars. Lord willing, we are to hold a gospel meeting at Neosho, MO April 22-26. While we have been there before we look forward to a good meeting and pray good will be done. Sadly, my mother passed away just days ago and Brother Bennie Cryer preached her funeral in Lodi, CA. Many have sent cards to us and we thank you all for your kindness. God bless our efforts this year.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, March 4- In a few days I will be leaving for Columbia, MO to participate in their annual study. They have asked me to preach for them on the Sunday of March 8 and then I will speak on the topic of demonology the following Monday night. I wasn't able to attend last year because a meeting in California had conflicting dates, so I'm especially looking forward to it this year. 2014 ended with my wife, Judy, having emergency surgery on Nov. 10. She developed a hole in her colon, being unaware that she had a bad case of diverticulitis, and a colostomy was necessary. After recovering from that, a second surgery was performed on Feb. 20 to reverse the colostomy. Please remember her in your prayers that she will have a complete recovery. Judy is my "rock" and has been a great preacher's wife, which can be challenging at times, and I'm thankful that she has done well through this whole ordeal. Lord willing, she will have this behind her in a few months. I am looking forward to the following meetings: May 20-24 at Deer Park, TX (with my brother, Jerry), June 14-21 at Cave City, AR, and July 22-26 at Cleburne, TX. Incidentally, my mother, Jimmie Dickinson, is now recuperating from hip surgery due to a fall. She was operated on yesterday (March 3) and will soon begin rehabilitation. It is my prayer that by the time May gets here, she'll be able to attend the meeting that her two sons will hold together at her home congregation. If I have accomplished anything in life, it is in great part due to my parents and the godly home I was raised in. Please remember Bill and Jimmie Dickinson in your prayers! Finally, we are looking forward to our Spring meeting here at Jamesville with Clint DeFrance on April 3-5.

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DO NOT FORGE THE CHECK

By CARL M. JOHNSON

On those rare occasions in recent years when I have heard prayers uttered in a public civil setting, the prayers almost invariably conclude without mentioning of the name of Jesus Christ. Whether it is a school graduation ceremony, a ballgame, or a city council meeting, the person leading the prayer usually parses his words so carefully and uses such politically-correct, benign phrases that the prayer could probably be led in good conscience by an atheist. I wince most noticeably, however, at the abrupt conclusion to the prayers with no mention of the name of Christ. Such prayers are little more than an exercise in futility.

For two thousand years faithful Christians have been closing prayers with the formulaic saying, "in Jesus' name," or, "for Christ's sake," or something similar. Up until the eve of His suffering, however, no one had ever offered a prayer to God in the name of Christ. On the eve of His passion Jesus says to His disciples, "Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (Jn. 14:13). He adds, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (Jn. 14:13).

Earlier, on two occasions Jesus gives His twelve disciples a model to help them with their prayers (Mt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). We often refer to the model as "The Lord's Prayer," or the "ABC's of all prayers." You notice, however, that Jesus does not close either version of the prayer with the traditional, "in Christ's name." At that point the Twelve would not have understood the meaning of the expression, nor would they understand it before Jesus' ascension to heaven and their baptism in the Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2).

It is only after His death, burial, and resurrection that God exalts Jesus, gives Him a name that is above every name, and confers upon Him all authority in heaven and in earth (Phil. 2:9; Mt. 28:18). After those events, Paul commands, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). Paul practiced what he preached for he says, "I thank my God THROUGH JESUS CHRIST for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8).

The words "through Jesus Christ" honor Christ's position as our one mediator. J.B. Coffman quotes a concisely summarized teaching of the New Testament on Christ's mediation: "The gifts of God all pass through Christ to us, and all our petitions and thanksgivings pass through Christ to God" (Commentary on Romans p. 14).

Paul explains further that Christ is our only mediator with God, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). Therefore, prayers offered to God that exclude or bypass Christ our mediator, or prayers offered through some other "mediator" such as Mary, "The eternal Virgin Mother of God," or various "saints" are futile.

I would be unable go to your banking institution and withdraw money from your checking account without any kind of authorization from you. However, if you were to write a check to me and authorize it by signing your name, I can withdraw the money from your account as easily and lawfully and you can.

So it is with prayer. I have done nothing to deserve approaching God and being heard and answered on the basis of my own name. I cannot plead my own merits. However, Christians can approach God with a name that is always acceptable. Jesus authorizes our use of HIS name. With it we can approach God with the assurance that He hears us and will answer us just as He would hear and answer Christ if Christ had prayed the prayer Himself.

The wonderful privilege of praying in the name of Christ also carries some sober responsibilities. Tacking the name of Christ to the end of a prayer does not mean we can pray for anything and everything we want. John cautions, "If we ask anything ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, he hears us" (1 Jn. 5:14). We obviously cannot ask for something we know to be against the will of God. We often do not know what is involved in our requests or whether those things asked for would truly serve the purposes of God in our lives, so we must make all our requests contingent upon the will of God (Mk.14:36).

Self-willed and self-indulgent prayers are just as offensive to God as prayers that ignore Christ as our mediator. Regardless of how intense and sincere the petitioner may be, all such prayers are as forged checks presented to the bank of heaven. God, however, is not going to cash ANY forged checks, and that is something you can take to the bank. cmjthebackpage@cableone.net