

WHAT IS A TRUE CHRISTIAN?

By Denver Cheddie

Throughout history, the church has done a poor job of elucidating true Christianity to the world. There is an enormous misunderstanding among the unsaved in this regard. For example, Islamic militants recently massacred over a dozen members of a Pakistani church because they saw the America vs. Taliban war as one of Christianity vs. Islam. Even secular writers treat Christianity as a religious institution, a political movement, or a social sect rather than a personal way to God through Jesus Christ. In this article I seek to alleviate some of the confusion concerning Christianity and to reveal what Biblical Christianity is.

Nominal Christianity

In a discussion with an unsaved person in which I was attempting to explain what Christianity really was, I was telling him that the majority of people who call themselves Christians are not Biblical Christians. He then asked me, "What kind of religion is it that the majority of its adherents do not practice it?" Many people consider a Christian to be anyone who claims to be such, who attends a church, or ticks off the Christian box when filling out a form. This is called nominal Christianity – where a person is only a Christian in name, not essence. Unfortunately many churches today are inundated with nominal Christians. They know nothing of Jesus or the Bible, but have

attached themselves to an institution and by default wear the name of Christ. This is not the Christianity the Bible depicts.

Institutionalized Christianity

It is common to hear secular writers claim that Christianity is a warlike religion because of the Crusaders and the Roman Catholic church of the Middle Ages. Anyone with a basic knowledge of the Bible would seriously question the authenticity of the claim to Christianity of the above mentioned groups. Even America today is called a Christian nation. The truth is that USA has no dominant religion. Even if it did, a Christian nation is only a name. Christianity is an individual issue and not a national, social or political one. When the Bible speaks of teaching the nations (Matt. 28:19) and judging the nations (Matt. 25:32), it is clear from the contexts that it is individuals constituting the nations that are being referred to. Man has always had a tendency to institutionalize religion, but Christianity by nature, cannot be institutionalized.

True Christianity

True Christianity is a saving relationship with God through personal faith in Jesus Christ. The proper terminology for a Christian is "believer". Relationships cannot be institutionalized. Individuals must have the free choice to accept or reject the gospel. Well what about those Christians who

forced others to join their religion? That is why I mentioned them under a different subheading. They were not true Christians. The following is what Biblical Christianity entails:

1. the knowledge that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world as a man (John 3:16; 1 Tim. 3:16),
2. the belief that in His sacrificial death, He satisfied God's righteous demands for sin (Rom. 6:23),
3. the trust that through Him and Him alone, salvation is provided from the condition of being lost (John 14:6; Acts 4:12),
4. the assurance that because of His grace, our faith in Him guarantees that we will spend eternity with Christ when this life is over (Rom. 8:16; 1 John 5:13).

No law keeping is required nor good work necessary for salvation since salvation is a free gift God gives to us (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8,9). Many people erroneously associate the 10 Commandments with Christianity. The 10 Commandments were given to Israel to maintain civil law and order (1 Tim. 1:9) until Christ came (Gal. 3:24,25). God never intended for people to live by them (2 Cor. 3:3-11; Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38). He intends men to have a personal relationship with Him, which is through Jesus Christ, independent of our own goodness. The very reason God sent Jesus is that man in his fallen state could not consistently keep the law, and violation of one law renders one guilty of breaking the whole law (James 2:10). (See my article on [The Alleged Works Salvation Scriptures](#).) Jesus kept the law perfectly and this qualified Him to satisfy God's demands. He paid the penalty which was due for us. This is why it is only through Him we

can enter. It is already established that of our own we could not accomplish it. Christianity differs from other religions in that it portrays God reaching down to man rather than man reaching up to God. Christianity is about a personal relationship with God, not following rules and regulations.

In summary, a Biblical Christian is one who has come to a saving relationship with God solely through Jesus Christ. No one else can claim to be Christian and be Biblical at the same time.

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