

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” - Psalm 119:105

December 23, 2007

What Is a Christian?

Bill Crews

When people use the word “Christian” today, it is often difficult to know precisely what they have in mind. To some a Christian is...

- anyone who lives in a nation that is classified as a “Christian nation.” It becomes a matter of citizenship and geography.
- anyone who believes in a go~ or at least anyone who believes in or acknowledges the one true God.
- anyone who acknowledges Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world.
- anyone who accepts the Bible as true or consents that the Bible is the word of God.
- anyone who reads the Bible from time to time.
- anyone who professes to be a Christian and sincerely believes that he is.
- anyone who belongs to any Catholic or Protestant church.
- anyone who is honest, sincere, moral, and charitable—anyone who seems to be a good person.

But what, really, is a Christian? The word denotes a follower of Christ, one who belongs to Christ one who is in Christ. It is something that one must become as a result of teaching, persuasion, and conviction (**Acts 26:28-29**; compare **Acts 18:4, 8** and **Acts 19:8**). It is a name given to those who were disciples (learners and followers: adherents) of Christ (**Acts 11:26**). And people became disciples of Christ as a result of being taught the will of Christ and accepting that will (**Acts 14:21**). Those became disciples of Christ who were instructed, received the instruction, and were baptized (**Matt. 28:18-19**). They remained disciples of Christ by being instructed to observe things that Jesus taught His apostles (**Matt. 28:20**). Christians in the New Testament sense of that word, were people who heard the word of the Lord, were pricked in their hearts, asked what they must do, were told to repent of their sins and be baptized for remission of those sins, and then continued steadfastly in the apostle’s teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers (**Acts 2:36-42**).

Have you become a Christian?.

"Christmas Wasn't Always Christian"

Troy Nicholson

The above title came from an article in last Saturday's *Tennessean* (12-15-07). The subtitle said, "Most U.S. churches rejected holiday on biblical grounds." Bruce Forbes, a religious studies professor at Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, said "that major American denominations – Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists – either ignored the holiday or discouraged it until the late 19th century." The article went on to say, "That rejection was rooted in the lack of biblical sanction for Dec. 25 as the date of Jesus' birth, and suspicion toward traditions that developed after the earliest days of Christianity."

Boston Puritan Samuel Sewell wrote on Christmas Day in 1685, "Some somehow observe the day, but are vexed, I believed, that the body of people profane it, and blessed be God no authority yet compels them to keep it." The church he was apart of 322 years ago continues today as Old South Church – with a decorated Christmas tree proudly displayed. Nancy Taylor, senior minister of the church, said, "We have loosened up a lot since then. We have changed and adapted, and I think that's part of why we haven't died out."

The United Church of God, which opposes the celebration of Christmas, says that "divine instruction, rather than culture and society, should determine whether the holiday is appropriate." Amen to that rule of determination in all matters. Just because Christ's name is a part of Christmas does not mean that His authority is. We should reject a religious observance of Christmas today on the same basis that most people did less than 200 years ago: the lack of biblical sanction. We have no right to loosen where God has not loosened, to change and adapt to the world instead of to Him (**Romans 12:1-2**).

University of Texas history professor Penne Restad said that Christmas became accepted as a family-centered holiday once it lost its overtly religious significance. "Christmas began its march toward dominance among holidays because of a change in culture, not theology." Nothing has changed since the first century – God still has not authorized a religious observance of Christmas. He has never put Christ in Christmas.

So what should we as Christians do about Christmas? Keep it the family-centered holiday that it has become.

"The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all."

– **Psalm 103:19**

Family News

A "rough draft" of our **2008 directory** is on the credenza in the back. Please make any needed changes.

Mary Burnett will be 98 years old on Thursday.

Metty Fain remains in Highland Manor Nursing Home; Room B2; 215 Highland Circle Dr; Portland, TN 37148. She is eating well and talking a little. Her bad leg from the broken hip is pretty stiff, and she will never be able to walk any.

Elmo Ferrell remains in room 101-A at NHC. He has good and bad days.

Baby **Brayden Grushon**, relative of Walter Boyd, is doing much better.

Earl Lanning is doing better and plans to be here for worship.

Carlyle Meador, Ame White's 87-year-old uncle, fell and suffered two broken ribs and a broken sternum. He is in the hospital in Bowling Green, KY.

Cotton and Nancy Reed are not doing well.

Jessica Stubblefield is back in DCS foster care after attempting to run away again. Jim and Tanya still maintain their parental rights.

Rita Tavarez, the grandmother of Edward Rangel whom we support in Puerto Rico, is critically ill and in need of our prayers.

Robert Wray is in room 406 at the Smith County Health Care Center, 112 Health Care Dr., Carthage, TN, 37030. He is doing well.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: Too many to mention.

New Reports from men we support: **Allen Malone** (Indonesia).

Note – If you have any news for the bulletin (out of town, sick, etc.), then please let me know by Saturday night. Thanks!
– Troy

Lakeview church of Christ

132 New Shackle Island Road

P.O. Box 514

Hendersonville TN 37077

Building: 615-824-1376

www.BibleSaints.com

Bible Call: 615-824-1310

If you would like to subscribe, unsubscribe, or change your address to this bulletin, then simply respond to this message and state your request.

Troy Nicholson
troyjenn@bellsouth.net

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).