

THE NEW NAME OF OUR CALLING

By David Lee Burris

**HELLO
I AM...**

A CHRISTIAN

"And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians." (Acts 11:26)

The Classic Calling. “A *classis* was a ‘summoning’ or ‘calling out’ of the Roman people for action. When the Romans assembled in this way, they arranged themselves in groups (*classes*) which were distinguished according to the resources and pride of lineage of their members. The adjective *classicus* thus came to mean ‘of or pertaining to class’ in a general way, but most often it referred to things associated with the upper classes. **From this it acquired the general sense of ‘first-class’ or ‘of the highest rank’.**” - Bruce Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, page 160

Called-Out Church. “Understanding the definition of *ekklesia* (and its alternate spelling *ecclesia*) is an important component of understanding the church. *Ekklesia* is a Greek word defined as “a called-out assembly or congregation.” *Ekklesia* is commonly translated as “church” in the New Testament. For example, [Acts 11:26](#) says “Barnabas and Saul met with the church [*ekklesia*]” in Antioch. And in [1 Corinthians 15:9](#) Paul says that he had persecuted the church [*ekklesia*] of God.” The “called-out assembly,” then, is a congregation of believers whom God’s called out of the world and “into His wonderful light” ([1st Peter 2:9](#)). The Greek *ekklesia* is basis for our English words *ecclesiastical* (“pertaining to the church”) and *ecclesiology* (“the study of doctrine concerning the church”).” – *Got Questions?*

We’re Called Disciples. Names distinguish the people of God by designating some of their peculiarities. These peculiarities were found either in the relations which they sustained, or in the character which they exhibited to the world. The first relation which attracted the attention of the world, as they followed Jesus from place to place, was that of teacher and pupils. This suggested the name *disciples*, or *learners*, by which they were first designated, and which is the most common designation in the gospel narratives.

From the fact that there were disciples of John, with whom they might be confounded, they were, at first, styled "disciples of Jesus." But when John had decreased, and Jesus had increased, the limiting words were dispensed with, and the term disciple was appropriated, so that, standing alone, it always meant a disciple of Jesus. In the four gospels the limiting words are commonly employed; but in Acts, where Luke is giving some of their history as a great people spreading thru the earth, after once calling them "disciples of the Lord," at the time Saul starts after them to Damascus, he drops the limiting words, and thence throughout the whole narrative he calls them simply the "disciples."

– J. W. McGarvey

We're Called Saints. By this time the disciples exhibited to the world a well-defined character. It was such as identified them with those who, in the Old Testament, were called *saints*, and this suggested the use of this term as one of their appellations. The persecutions which they were enduring still further identified them with the holy "prophets who were before them." This name occurs first on the lips of Ananias when he objected to approaching Saul of Tarsus. He says to the Lord, "I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he has done to thy saints in Jerusalem." In the Epistles this name is used more frequently than any other. – J. W. McGarvey

We're Called Brethren. When the disciples assumed a new relation to their teacher, it necessarily brought them into a new relation to one another. From the nature of moral lessons which they were learning, and which they were required to put into immediate practice, this relation became very intimate and very affectionate. It gave rise to their designation as "*the brethren*."

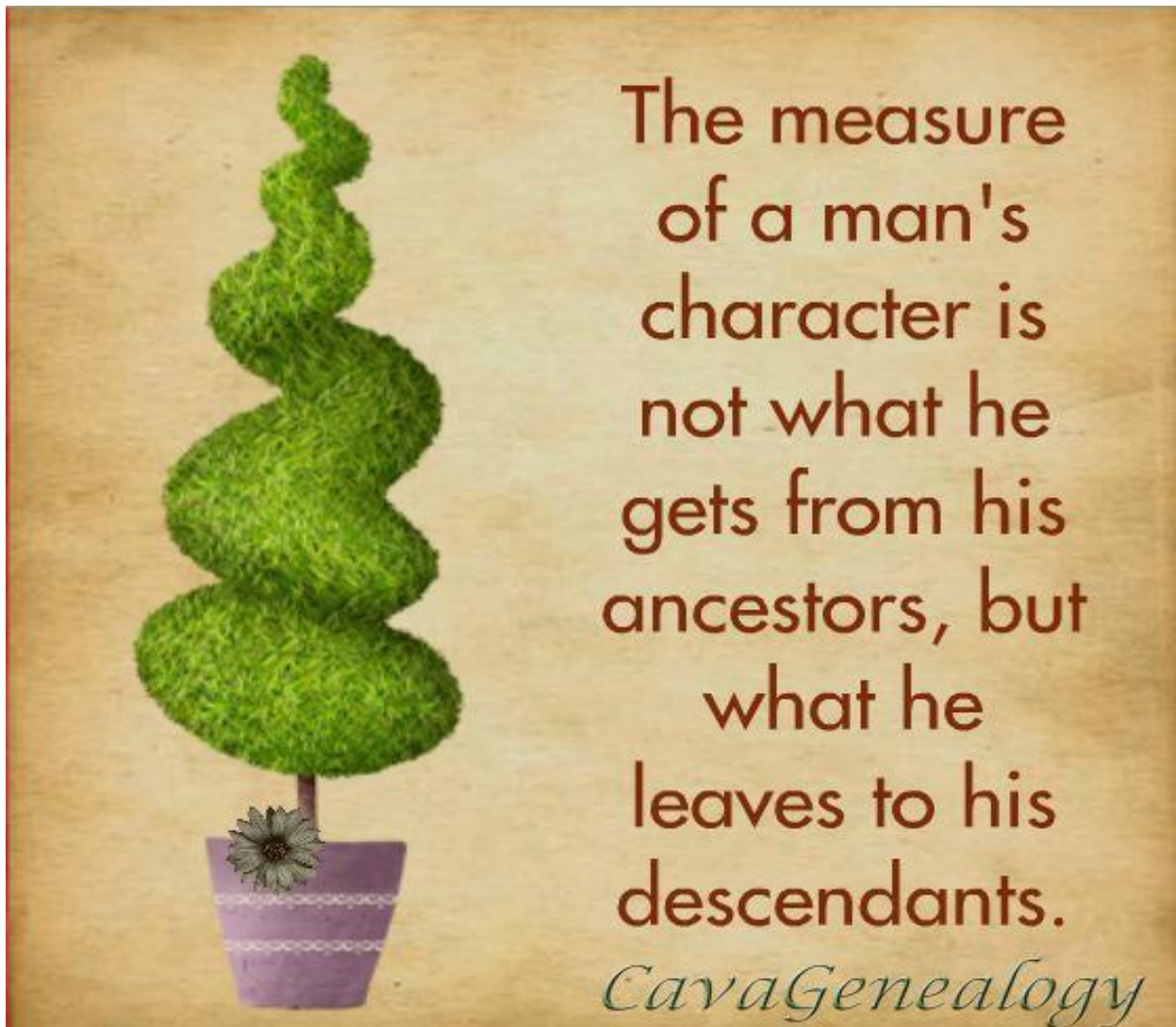
They were so styled first by Jesus, saying to them: "Be not called Rabbi; for one is your teacher, and all you are brethren." This term, however, as a distinctive appellation of the whole body, is used only once in the gospel narratives, where John says of the report he wouldn't die: "This saying went abroad among the brethren." In Acts it frequently occurs in this sense; but still more frequently in the Epistles. The latter being addressed to the brethren, and treating of mutual obligations, this term most naturally takes precedence in them, and the term disciple, which is used in speaking of a brother rather than to him, is as naturally omitted. This accounts for the fact that the latter term is not once found in the Epistles. – J. W. McGarvey

We're Called Children. *This increasing currency of the term brethren in the later apostolic age is intimately associated with the introduction of another name which came into use in the same period. Jesus frequently called the disciples his own brethren, and taught them, in praying to say, "Our Father, who art in heaven;" but the title, "children of God," which grew out of the relation thus indicated, was not applied to them during this early period. It is not so applied in any of the gospels but John's, and in this way only in two instances, where it is evident that he is using the phraseology of the time in which he writes rather than of the period of which he writes. This appellation, as a contemporaneous and current title, is found only in the Epistles, being brought then into use after the disciples had obtained more exalted conceptions of the many blessed privileges & high honors which God had conferred upon them. It extorted an admiring comment from John, in his old age: "Behold, what manner of love the Father bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" – J. W. McGarvey*

Parental & Sibling Call of Family Is Followed by the Call of Heritage.

Sometime about my twentieth birthday my father - David Paul Burris - gifted me with a plaque engraved with "BURRIS" that reads as follows:

"YOU GOT IT FROM YOUR FATHER, IT WAS ALL HE HAD TO GIVE. SO, IT'S YOURS TO USE & CHERISH, FOR AS LONG AS YOU MAY LIVE. IF YOU LOSE THE WATCH HE GAVE YOU, IT CALL ALWAYS BE REPLACED. BUT A BLACK MARK ON YOUR NAME SON, CAN NEVER BE ERASED. IT WAS CLEAN THE DAY YOU TOOK IT & A WORTHY NAME TO BEAR. WHEN HE GOT IT FROM HIS FATHER, THERE WAS NO DISHONOR THERE. SO, MAKE SURE YOU GUARD IT WISELY, AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE. YOU'LL BE GLAD THE NAME IS SPOTLESS, WHEN YOU GIVE IT TO YOUR SON."



Christian Relationship: Not Title Or Brand Change But New Family Identification

"Whenever we read Bible stories we can't help but notice an important event that happens over and over again. People who have had a significant experience with God that transformed their life, more times than not they ended up with a name change. When Abram was called to leave his family & become the father of a great nation, his name was changed from Abram to Abraham. When Jacob wrestled with the angel & is blessed at the end of the battle, that blessing is signified in the change of his name from Jacob to Israel. When Simon confesses Christ on the mountain in Caesarea Philippi, his name is changed from Simon to Peter...

That is why it is significant that one of the first things that happens when Daniel and his friends are taken into exile in Babylon is that their names change. Each one of their original names has a significant connection to God. Daniel means "God judges." But when Daniel and his friends are renamed, all the references to God are lost.

It should be interesting for us as believers to pay attention to how the world would name you. To those who would see you as the end product of evolution, you are simply the next step in the process -- a conglomeration of proteins and water and carbon. To Madison Avenue we are consumers, targets to be separated from our money. To politicians we are voter groups who have significant key issues or points of interest, or agendas.

That is why it is so significant for us to remember who we are in Jesus Christ. We are indeed, rejected by the world but chosen and precious by Jesus (1st Peter 2:4). We must understand who we are - because - what we do comes directly out of who we believe ourselves to be. If you believe your life is not worth anything, then you will make choices that reflect that lack of value. If you believe that you are created in the image of God and are called according to His purposes, then your behavior will reflect that basic belief.

Many of us complain about **living in a world where we're called numbers.** [Or a workplace nickname of physical or behavioral caricature.] It's more than just a rude way to be addressed by corporations. It is a basic loss of our humanity. The Gospel is good news because it restores our broken relationship to God, and in doing so restores our humanity. Today as you pray, confirm within you the name that He has given you, and that you will live in the freedom of knowing who you are. Then you simply won't respond to a world that calls you by a wrong name." - *Michael Duduit*

Living Up To The Family Name

CHURCH OF CHRIST

OUTSIDERS CALLED CHRIST FOLLOWERS: PEOPLE OF THE WAY

Acts 24:14

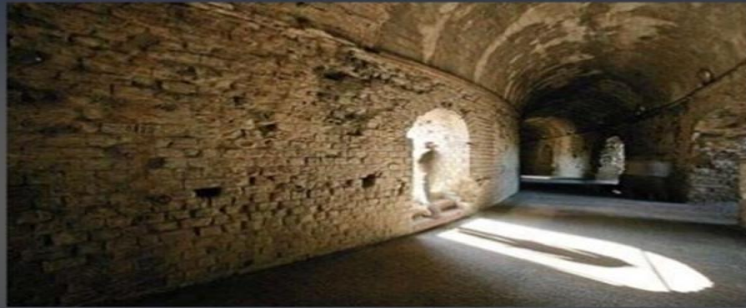
[14] “But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets;

Acts 24:22

[22] But Felix, having a more exact knowledge about the Way, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case.”

The People of The Way

Image from: www.freerepublic.com



1) They have a special relationship with God.

The People of The Way

Image from: www.freerepublic.com



2) They have a special relationship with each other.

The People of The Way

Image from: www.freerepublic.com



3) They have a special mission from Jesus.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

Acts 11:26. *and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch*] It is most probable that **this name was given them by the heathen in ridicule**. The disciples of Jesus never give it to themselves, and as the use of it would imply that those who bore it were the followers of the Messiah, the Christ, it is certain it would not be given to them by the Jews.

The reason for a new distinctive term is apparent. When these new Gentile converts were joined to the Church of Antioch, none of the former distinctive appellations would embrace the whole body. They were no longer only of the Nazarenes or the Galilæans or Greek-Jews, and as to the people of Antioch they probably seemed a strange medley, they would not be unlikely to apply to them such a hybrid form as "Christian," a Greek word with a Latin termination.

The name is probably **used in mockery by Agrippa** ([Acts 26:28](#)), "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian," but in the only other and later instance of the use of the name in the N. T. ([1 Peter 4:16](#)) we can see that what had been at first a taunt had soon come to be a name in which to glory, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed."

A New Name

The Gospel having gone forth from Jerusalem, and the Gentiles having been incorporated into the same body of Christ as the Jews, Isaiah asserts that the Lord Himself would instigate the use of a new name. It is notable that God's people throughout Bible history were designated by several names that characterized their relationship with God and with one another. For example, both Old & New Testament devotees of God were known among themselves as "believers" (*pistoi*) or those who "believed" (*episteusin*; e.g., Ex. 4:31 [LXX]; Acts 5:14), "brethren/brothers" (*adelphoi*; Psalm 133:1; Acts 15:23), "disciples" (*mathetai*; e.g., Isaiah 8:16 [Hebrew]; John 9:28), "saints" (*hagioi*; e.g., Psalm 34:9 [LXX]; Romans 1:7), "servants" (Isaiah 56:6 [LXX]; Acts 4:29; 16:17), "elect" (*eklektoi*; Isaiah 45:4 [LXX]; Colossians 3:12; 2 Timothy 2:10), and simply "the Church" (e.g., Acts 14:27). They were also identified as those of "the Way" (Acts 19:9,23; 24:14,22). Those more hostile to Christianity labeled them a "sect" (Acts 28:22) and "the sect of the Nazarenes (*Nazoraion*)" (Acts 24:5), and even "Galileans" (Acts 2:7). Yet in this prophecy Isaiah seems to anticipate a **new** name that had not been characteristic of God's people in either testament.²²

ISAIAH 62:2 = ACTS 11:26

The Name “Christian”

by Dave Miller, Ph.D.



Christendom is conspicuous for the myriad of names worn by individuals & churches—from “Catholic” & “Protestant” to Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Episcopalian, and an innumerable host of others. Those who employ these terms to identify their religious orientation also would claim to be “Christian” — as if the secondary terms are simply further refinements or clarifications of the broader, more basic designation of Christian.

Whence did these names arise? History answers this question for each name. For example, “Catholic” simply means “comprehensive” or “universal.” The Catholic Church therefore wishes to emphasize it constitutes the universal church. “Baptist” is connected to the Greek word for immersion, and thus represents the wearer’s conviction that baptism is by immersion. A “Baptist” is an “immersionist.” “Presbyterian” comes from the Greek word *presbuteros*, which refers to the form of government by which the church is to then be organized. A “presbyter” in the New Testament was one of a plurality of elders who functioned as the leaders or overseers of the local congregation.

“Pentecostal” refers to the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to speak in tongues. Thus a “Pentecostal” is one who believes in the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. All other names, terms, and the designations by which people who claim to be Christian refer to themselves may also be explained on the basis of some doctrine or feature of Christianity that historically came to receive special emphasis among a specific group of people.

What does the New Testament have to say about this state of affairs? Does Christ sanction the use of differing names and terms to identify individuals and churches? Perhaps the place to begin is in the Old Testament when the messianic prophet Isaiah predicted that the day would come when God would implement a “new name:”

For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest,
Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns.
The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory.
You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name (Isaiah 62:1-2).

This fascinating prophecy contains four points that merit close consideration: (1) Righteousness/salvation would go forth from Jerusalem; (2) the Gentiles would see this righteousness/salvation; (3) a new name would be given; and (4) the Lord Himself would bestow that new name.

One must go to the New Testament to find fulfillment and clarification of these marvelous assertions. A number of names are used to refer to God’s people in the New Testament, including believer, disciple, saint, servant, and brother. But all of these terms were used previously in the Old Testament (Exodus 4:31; Isaiah 8:16; John 9:28; Psalm 106:16; Proverbs 2:8; Leviticus 25:46,55; Nehemiah 1:2). They were not new. Isaiah’s inspired prediction allows us to pinpoint the precise occasion on which a **new** name was given. His first indicator was that righteousness or salvation would go forth from Jerusalem. Here is an apparent allusion to the commencement of the Christian era on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 30, described in detail in Acts 2. After His death and resurrection, Jesus instructed for His apostles to go to Jerusalem and there await the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4,12). They did so, and the Holy Spirit, as predicted, empowered the apostles to present the Gospel message and to launch Christianity and the church of Christ (Acts 2). Indeed, on that auspicious occasion, just as Isaiah predicted, the means to salvation went forth as brightness, and proceeded to go forth from Jerusalem even as Jesus predicted (Acts 1:8). The first point of Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled.

However, the throng gathered on Pentecost was composed entirely of Jews (Acts 2:5). In fact, though about 3,000 were converted to Christianity on that day (Acts 2:41), and several thousand thereafter (Acts 4:4; 5:14; 6:1,7), all the converts were Jewish. Samaritans (half-Jews) were eventually incorporated into the Lord's church (Acts 8:5ff.). But it was not until perhaps eight to ten years later that the first Gentiles obeyed the Gospel and were added to the church. This momentous event occurred when Peter, at the instigation of a heavenly vision, agreed to go to the home of a Roman centurion to preach the Gospel to him, his family, and close friends (Acts 10:24). They, in turn, became the very first Gentile converts to Christianity as a result of hearing the preached message and submitting themselves to water baptism (Acts 10:47-48; 11:14).

But look back at Isaiah's prophecy. The second action that Isaiah anticipated would occur, after salvation went forth from Jerusalem, was that the Gentiles themselves would be the recipients of this same righteousness/salvation and likewise bask in the glory of the Lord. The conversion of Cornelius and those with him in Acts 10 constitutes fulfillment of the second criterion of Isaiah's prediction. Incredibly, immediately after the conversion of the Gentiles in Acts 10, in the very next chapter, Luke reported that Peter was confronted by hostile Jerusalem Jews who had heard about the inclusion of Gentiles into the Christ's church. These Jewish Christians insisted that he give account of his actions. He did so in Acts 11:4-18, recounting sequentially the events of Acts 10. Upon hearing of these astounding events orchestrated by the Holy Spirit, the hostile Jews melted, backed off, glorified God, and conceded: "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life" (Acts 11:18). This was an amazing concession that further cleared the way for Gentile missions.

At this point in his inspired narrative, beginning in Acts 11:19, is where Luke proceeded to clarify the full significance of what had just occurred. The very persecution that drove Jewish Christians out of Jerusalem (Acts 8:1-4) forced them to travel into predominately Gentile areas. However, these same Jewish Christians had refrained from imparting the Gospel message to Gentiles (Acts 11:19). But with the conversion of the household of Cornelius, the Gospel now began to be presented to the predominately Gentile population in the city of Antioch: "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:21). Aside from Cornelius' own household, Antioch thus became the first Gentile church of Christ in all of human history. The church in Jerusalem immediately sent Barnabas to go to Antioch to confirm the reports, who in turn (quite logically) went to Tarsus in search of the "apostle to the Gentiles," Paul, to introduce him into the mix at Antioch. Together, the two men spent an entire year meeting with the church and teaching many people.

In line with the prophecy of Isaiah, the first two preconditions to God imparting a new name had now been met. If the application of Isaiah's prophecy is correct, one ought naturally next to expect the bestowal of the new name. We are not disappointed. The next statement by Luke is simply: "And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). What an earthshaking statement! Astonishing! Isaiah was absolutely accurate—dead on! Consider the following three observations about this astounding moment in human history.

First, observe that from the inception of Christianity (Acts 2), converts were called "disciples." **They were not called Christians** on the day of Pentecost! Though thousands had converted to Christianity, and now belonged to Christ and were therefore followers of Christ, they nevertheless were not called **Christians**. Unlike Judaism, one of the central features of New Testament Christianity is its international application — with absolutely no consideration given to ethnicity. In this sense, the church of Christ reached its full existence only when Gentiles were incorporated into its membership (*also to the Greek* in Romans 1:16; 2:9-10). This circumstance came only with the conversion of Cornelius and the commencement of the Antioch church of Christ. Thus, we do not read what we would full well expect to find: that "the disciples were called Christians **first** in **Jerusalem**."

Second, Luke included a grammatical feature worth considering. He said the disciples "were called." The term he used (*chrematidzo*) is typically used in the New Testament in relation to those occasions when God is the specific One Who does the calling: "to appoint, warn, nominate, by Divine direction" (Clarke, n.d., p. 772; cf. McCord, n.d., 2:311). The term occurs nine times in the New Testament: Matthew 2:12,22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; 11:26; Romans 7:3; Hebrews 8:5; 11:7; 12:25 (Moulton, et al., 1978, p. 1011). In every case, divine calling, warning, or admonition is contextually self-evident (cf. Thayer, 1901, p. 671; Robertson, 1930, 3:160). In fact, several translations indicate this use of the word by inserting "by/from/of God" (KJV, ASV, NASB, RSV), or "divinely" instructed/warned (NKJV) in some or all of the passages.

Third, observe the final feature of Isaiah's prophecy: "which the mouth of the Lord will name" (Isaiah 62:2). Church historians insist that the name "Christian" arose as the result of persecution wherein the enemies of Christ originated the name as a term of derision. However, they are mistaken. Isaiah predicted that **God Himself** would be the author of the name. And so He was. The name Christian is, indeed, so special that it occurs only three times in the New Testament and each time flags a critical aspect of the name.

In addition to Acts 11:26, where the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy spotlights the magnificent inclusion of the Gentiles in the church of Christ, the word occurs again in Acts 26:28. In that setting, Paul strove ardently to convert King Agrippa. Agrippa indicated his awareness that Paul’s purpose—his mission and goal in life—was to make people **Christians**. He endeavored to make people followers of Christ—not followers of Moses or any other religion.

The final occurrence of the word Christian in the New Testament is Peter’s use of the term in a context dealing with suffering that is inflicted on God’s people by their enemies: “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter” (First Peter 4:16). “In this matter” in the NKJV is a rendering of the literal Greek phrase “in this **name**,” i.e., the name “Christian.” **Peter insisted that the suffering that is heaped upon a follower of Christ ought to be borne under the name Christian — not some other religious appellation.**

Writing over 200 years ago, Rice Haggard recognized the extreme importance of the name “Christian” in the divine scheme of things, when he wrote: “[I]t is **but a due honor to the Lord Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, that they who profess his religion, should wear his name**” (1804, p. 14).

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BLACK SHEEP HYPHENATE THE FAMILY NAME

FIRST PROTESTANT & EARLY MARTIN LUTHER:



“I pray you leave my name alone, and call not yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. I have not been crucified for anyone. How then, does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of God? Cease my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions: away with all; and let us call ourselves only Christians.”

ANGLICAN BISHOP ANDERSON:



“God never made Protestant Episcopalians, nor Presbyterians, nor Congregationalists, nor any other sectarian name. He made Christians, and they chose to call themselves by less lovely names.”

METHODIST ADAM CLARK:



“It appears that CHRISTIANS was the first GENERAL appellative of the followers of our blessed Lord; and there is presumptive evidence that this appellative came by DIVINE APPOINTMENT. How very few of those who profess this religion are satisfied with this title.”

***The church that
Christ founded is***
PREDENOMINATIONAL
NO
**Denominations existed when
Christ founded His church**
Matt 16:18, Romans 16:16

“Denominations Are Sinful”
by - Garland M. Robinson

❖ “Since the words *denomination* & *denominationalism* are not found in the Bible, they must be defined from other sources. A denominational body is defined as ‘a part of a whole or one of a series of units.’ Webster defines denominationalism as: ‘devotion to denominational principles/interests. The emphasizing of denominational differences to the point of being narrowly exclusive.’ ‘An act of denominating, a value or size of a series of values or sizes (as of money), a religious organization whose congregations are united in their adherence to its beliefs and practices.’ ” *

* **“Seek The Old Paths” Newsletter April, 2009**

NASU

“Denominations Are Sinful”

by - Garland M. Robinson

- ❖ “A quarter is a denomination (a part) of a dollar, but not the whole dollar. Each denominational church claims to be a part of the whole, but not the whole church. Many sincere and devoted people are involved in denominationalism. They are trying to go to Heaven and expect to get there in and through a denominational church.”
- ❖ “A most appropriate question to ask is: are denominational churches just different ways of going to Heaven? **No they are not.** The Bible teaches that denominationalism is wrong and sinful. God’s word condemns denominationalism, which is division.” ✨

* “Seek The Old Paths” Newsletter April, 2009

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“Denominations Are Sinful”

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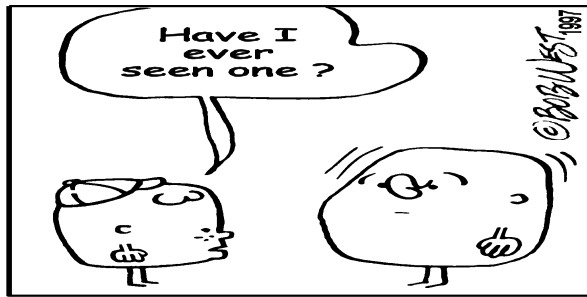
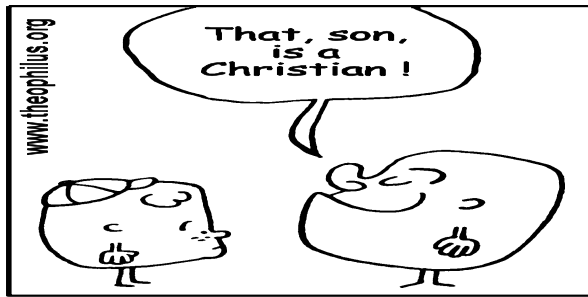
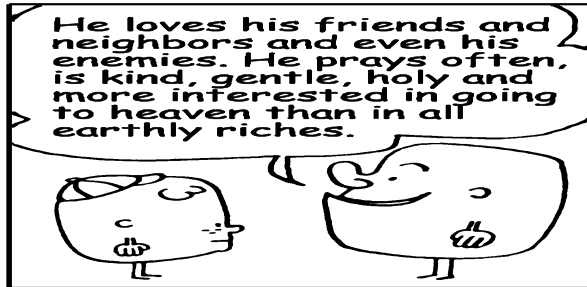
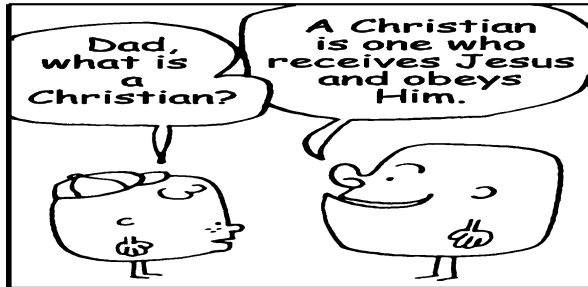
- ❖ “Denominationalism contradicts and condemns the Lord’s Prayer for unity. On the night in which Jesus was betrayed, He prayed for His apostles, saying... ‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be **one**; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be **one** in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be **one**, even as we are **one**: I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in **one**.” {JOHN 17: 20 – 23} ✨

* “Seek The Old Paths” Newsletter April, 2009

NASU

THEOPHILUS

A Rare Breed



A Great Truth

Tom Wolfe

There are only 2 reasons people don't become Christians

1. They've never seen a Christian
2. They have seen a Christian

NAME — a label or designation that sets one person apart from another. But in the Bible a name is much more than an identifier as it tends to be in our culture. Personal names (and even place names) were formed from words that had their own meanings. Thus, the people of the Bible were very conscious of the meaning of names. They believed there was a vital connection between the name and the person it identified. **A name somehow represented the nature of the person.**

This means that the naming of a baby was very important in the Bible. In choosing a name, the parents could reflect the circumstances of the child's birth, their own feelings, their gratitude to God, their hopes and prayers for the child, and their commitment of the child to God. The name Isaac reflected the "laughter" of his mother at his birth (Gen. 21:6). Esau was named "hairy" because of his appearance. Jacob was named "supplanter" because he grasped his brother Esau's heel (Gen. 25:25–26). Moses received his name because he was drawn out of the water: "So she called his name Moses, saying, 'Because I drew him out of the water' " (Ex. 2:10).

A popular custom of Bible times was to compose names by using the shortened forms of the divine name El or Ya (Je) as the beginning or ending syllable. Examples of this practice are Elisha, which means "God is salvation"; Daniel, "God is my judge"; Jehoiakim, "the Lord has established"; and Isaiah, "the Lord is salvation."

Sometimes very specialized names, directly related to circumstances of the parents, were given to children. The prophet Isaiah was directed to name one of his children MaherShalal-Hash-Baz, meaning "speed the spoil, hasten the prey." This name was an allusion to the certain Assyrian invasion of the nation of Judah (Is. 8:3–4). Hosea was instructed to name a daughter Lo-Ruhamah, "no mercy," and a son Lo-Ammi, "not my people." Both these names referred to God's displeasure with His people (Hos. 1:6–9).

The change of a name can also be of great importance in the Bible. Abram's name was changed to Abraham in connection with his new calling to be "a father of many nations" (Gen. 17:5). God gave Jacob the new name Israel ("God strives") because he "struggled with God and with men, and prevailed" (Gen. 32:28; 35:10).

In the giving or taking of new names, often a crucial turning point in the person's life has been reached. Simon was given the name Peter because, as the first confessing apostle, [this] was the "rock" upon which the new community of the church would be built (Matthew 16:18). Saul was renamed Paul, a Greek name that was appropriate for one who was destined to become the great apostle to the Gentiles.

The connection between a name and the reality it signified is nowhere more important than in the names referring to God. The personal name of God revealed to Moses in the burning bush—"I AM WHO I AM"—conveyed something of His character (Ex. 3:14). According to Exodus 34:5–6, when the Lord "proclaimed the name of the Lord," He added words that described His character. The name of the Lord was virtually synonymous with His presence: "For your wondrous works declare that your name is near" (Ps. 75:1). To know the name of God is thus to know God Himself (Ps. 91:14). For this reason, to "take the name of the Lord your God in vain" (Ex. 20:7) is to act in any way that is inconsistent with the profession that He is the Lord God.

The New Testament writers also emphasized the importance of names and the close relationship between names and what they mean. A striking illustration of this is Acts 4:12: "For there is no other name under heaven . . . by which we must be saved." In this instance the name is again practically interchangeable with the reality it represents.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Hallowed be Your name" (Matt. 6:9). Christians were described by the apostle Paul as those who "name the name of the Lord" (2 Tim. 2:19). A true understanding of the exalted Jesus is often connected with a statement about His name. Thus, Jesus "has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name" than the angels (Heb. 1:4). According to Paul, "God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9).¹

¹ Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., & Harrison, R. K., Thomas Nelson Publishers (Eds.). (1995). In [Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary](#). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.

The Children of Adoption

Long ago God told Abraham, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Genesis 22:18). The significance of this statement could be misleading to some, for some men actually feel that unless you are of the actual Jewish race, this passage has no real meaning to you. They place emphasis on the words, “Thy seed” when in reality and of a truth, they ought to place the emphasis on the words, “all nations.”

The apostle Paul later describes the significance of the statement God made to Abraham when he wrote, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:26-29). The simple point Paul is making is this: You don’t have to be the literal seed of Abraham in order to enjoy the promise and be an heir, but you must of necessity be Christ’s! If you are Christ’s, then you are the sons of God.

In the very next chapter of the same letter, Paul mentions the divine adoption procedure and says, “But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law (the Jew) that we (both Jew and Gentile) might receive the adoption of sons.” (Gal. 4:4-5)

Realizing how, not by being the literal lineage, but by being Christ’s, we by the process of spiritual adoption, are the sons of God, we should rejoice! We are heirs and have just as much right to be called his sons and daughters as did physical Israel long ago. - *Robert Wayne La Coste*

**WE ARE CHRISTIANS:
DURING THE OLD TESTAMENT
DISPENSATION WE WOULDN'T
HAVE BEEN EVEN ALLOWED TO
MENTION 'YAHWEH' BY NAME;
WHILE WE LIVE UNDER
THE NEW TESTAMENT
DISPENSATION WE'VE
BOTH THE OFFER OF
OUR ADOPTION & THE
INVITATION TO SHARE
IN THE FAMILY NAME.**

When my Savior calls I will answer

D7 G

When He calls for me I will be there

When my Savior calls I will answer

D7 G

I'll be somewhere listening for my name

C

I'll be somewhere listening

G

I'll be somewhere listening

D7 G

I'll be somewhere listening for name

C

I'll be somewhere listening

G

I'll be somewhere listening

D7 G

I'll be somewhere listening for my name

If my heart is right when He calls me

D7 G

If my heart is right I will meet Him

If my heart is right when He calls me

D7 G

I'll be somewhere listening for my name

Repeat #2

If my robe is white when He calls me

D7 G

If my robe is white I will hear

If my robe is white when He calls me

D7 G

I'll be somewhere listening for my name