

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Christian In Name Only

(Jerry Fite)

**T**he the word “Christian” describes one who “belongs to Christ”. Those following Christ as learners of him were called Christians early in the history of the church which Jesus established (Acts 11:26). Centered in Christ’s authority, a Christian lives according to Jesus’ principles revealed in His Word, even when such devotion creates persecution (*1 Peter 4:16*).

The word “Christian” is used quite loosely today. Since most profess Christianity in our country, we are called a “Christian nation”. Since when does a majority claiming to belong to Christ, as opposed to Jews, Muslims, etc. determine a nation as being Christian? Jesus said, “*And why calleth me ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not the things which I say*” (*Lk. 6:46*)? Shining the light of truth on many professing to be Christian manifests a glaring fact: Christianity in name only is in the headlines.

For example, President Obama recently revealed that his administration will continue to enforce established law defining marriage as the union between a man and a woman, but they will not defend it. In a Chicago Daily

Tribune interview, Mr. Obama said, “I’m a Christian. And so, although I try not to have my religious beliefs dominate or determine my political views on this issue, I do believe that tradition, and my religious beliefs say that marriage is something sanctified between a man and a woman.” From a political point of view, President Obama has been consistent in fighting discrimination which he feels exists when marriage is only between a man and a woman. He appears to be sincerely committed to correct what he sees as injustice.

However, when he is willing to sacrifice what God calls marriage on the altar of “fairness” or a less honorable motive, “political gain”, one ponders, is he truly a Christian? Jesus clearly took listeners back to the beginning when he established what marriage was to be: “*Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female . . . the two shall become one flesh*” (*Matt. 19:4-5*). Jesus also says, “*He that is not with me is against me and he that gathereth not with me scattereth*” (*Luke 11:23*). When you can no longer defend who Jesus says God exclusively joins together in mar-

riage (male and female), you certainly are not with Jesus. “Marriage” loses its sanctity, and like the word “Christian”, becomes something in “word only.”

Jesus says unless you put Him first in your life, you cannot be His disciple. Jesus says, “*If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me*” (*Matthew 16:24*). One does not take his “Christian hat” off when entering the various arenas of life, but lives his or her life as a Christian. The will of the Lord should permeate the Christian’s life, not just be regulated to a “religious belief”.

President Obama expresses marriage between a man and a woman as a “tradition” he believes in. But apparently his idea of “tradition” is something that can be changed. Paul writes, “. . . *hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours*” (*2 Thess. 2:15*). Traditions of man change, but traditions handed from the Lord to his apostles are to be permanently held (*2 Tim. 2:13*). Let us “be” Christians and not become merely “Christian” in name only.