

Church Authority Judged By Its Fruits

Criteria Of Fruits: "By their fruits ye shall know them".

A Response when asked if I have "accepted Jesus as my personal savior"?

I am sure you are a most gracious loving soul; that indeed you have been transformed (reborn) by the love of God in your life through what you truly believe is a "personal relationship with Jesus Christ" whom you proclaim as your "Lord and Savior". I am happy for you to have found; through active prayer, study and meditation; your indwelling personal relationship with the Father , of doing that which we were all created for," to recognize, know and to worship God".

Some clarification of intent may be in order here: Certainly, many have found a "personal relationship with God" within the confines of Christian pastoral guidance counsel, Baptism or Holy Communion. The issue "of fruits" is not whether it is possible for someone to be transformed within the context of a church fostered Christian belief and experience a true life changing event. To make that claim would be, in itself, putting a limit upon how God operates, of placing parameters upon the inscrutable Wisdom of the Almighty! Rather, the question of "by its fruits" refers to the organized Church, how the institution of men is truly serving humanity as a whole, how its actions and history compare with the teachings of love and acceptance extolled by Jesus as applied in the world wide arena.

Again, individuals may come to God within the fabric of liturgical based awareness and thinking; rather, should I say: God, in his Mercy and Grace, may enlighten, through the living waters of the Holy Spirit, the soul of the seeker; allowing the chosen to partake of the elixir of astonishment; the soul enraptured beyond what mere words can convey; seeing true meaning far beyond that expressed within a mere church service!

However, notice the principle reiterated here of an "indwelling personal relationship with the Father" as "*found through active prayer, study and meditation*". Stated within the "Hidden Words" of the Baha'i Faith we read, "**Love Me [God] that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant.**" This is an important consideration. The love of God can not enter and transform unless the heart is open to receive the blessing and the heart can not be opened unless it be cleansed from worldly afflictions. The big question is how much worldly affliction is brought about by social order, State...and the Church itself? In the Bible, Matthew in Chapter 7 warns, "**Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers'!**"

Clearly, without open minded searching one can never find the truth, be it of worldly matters or transforming rebirth in one's inner self. Without independent investigation, one is left with creeds and dictates requiring assumptions of blind faith in ancestral beliefs and ancient practices preached as the only allowable symbolic representation or embodiment of a covenantal relationship between God and mankind. Of course accepting ordained authority figures, as truly "called by God" into service and thus gifted with divinely inspired Biblical understanding, is part of the scenario of this doctrine centered, creed based, church condoned authorized relationship with God.

Faith based on such assumptions provides, in itself, questionable groundwork for widening horizons, of fostering an ever deepening scope of continual enriching awareness. No foundation is laid for extending the hand of respecting love, uniting in appreciation, recognizing validity in those calling upon the one eternal God of all through varied worship traditions, languages and names. There is little inner wisdom or revealing “spiritual growth” involvement. (*) [The “Bread of Life”](#) has been offered in the Sacrament of Holy Communion as liturgically “blessed” manufactured wafers but not much seems truly ingested nor is the Word often absorbed as everlasting food for the spirit; Just habitual acceptance without question, direction borne of status quo rather than true fulfilling rebirth. The inner eye is not opened to receive the light of truth from whatever source it may be found. It remains closed in slumber lulled in the sleep of tradition and satisfaction.

How much of our perceptual belief is framed by “conditioned response” and “formulated anticipation”? Are we limited by “blindness”, not allowing us to freely see, hear or be aware of discoveries, observations or philosophies deemed outside authoritarian imposed proscribed criteria; not looking beyond the road ahead as set forth by organized salvation/membership strategies? Do we not end up confining the Almighty within a “box” walled in by human design and expectation; possibly confusing the very love of God we seek with doctrinally determined experiences; a planned entertaining good time to be had by all; a congregational euphoria; becoming obsessed with vain imaginings of our own dreams and desires; caught up in the veils, trapped within our own walls, residing in a phantom of fantasy; categorically denying all but what we are conditioned to accept as valid and true?

In the Bible, in Matthew 7:7, we are encouraged to, **“search and ye shall find, knock and the door shall be opened”**. In Matthew 7:16 we read, **“By their fruits ye shall know them, A good tree cannot bear bad fruit nor a bad tree bring forth good fruit”**. Using these guidelines I have searched for the “good fruit” i.e.: bearing greater knowledge, understanding, appreciation, acceptance and unity; uniting hearts and souls in laying the foundation of an ever-advancing world civilization; battling the demons of ignorance and superstition while promoting the Kingdom of God on Earth as it is in heaven.

Many Church-Christians cautioned me not to search, look or even question what was taught by authoritarian orthodox Christian teaching, that to do so was “tempting deception by Satan”; “you will be led astray” ...etc. Well, I followed the advice of Matthew and looked, studied, prayed and searched. I attempted to cleanse myself of all forms of life-long social and doctrinal man-made “accepted” fashions and truths. I looked to science, astronomy, archeology, philosophy, anthropology, biology, art, music and, last but not least, read and meditated on the writings of other cultural faith traditions. In so doing, my inner appreciation and awareness of “the Beyond” was greatly enhanced.

When looked at through the criteria of universal humanitarian needs of fellowship, understanding, love, inner and outer peace, unity, spirituality and Communion with God; while cutting through the decadent mire of man-made traditions, dogmas, interpretations, literal thinking and more; it became apparent the pearls of knowledge, as taught by all the great teachers of the past, have become clouded, altered or very misunderstood by authority figures; have been rearranged to suit short-term social goals; have been edited and re-prioritized by popularity and fashion.

Friendships can be threatened, misunderstandings nurtured and understanding itself limited due to a misdirected misapplied church-fed fear of “being lead astray”. People often “parrot” back common clichés so often preached as street corner ministries proclaim,”

Only in the name of Jesus can you be saved". Only by the blood of Jesus...Jesus was a ransom sacrifice...your sins are paid for by His blood...only God knows what Hell is...you will be cast into the eternal lake of Fire!". And so it goes on; the fear, narrow-minded thinking; shrinking back into a well of superstition, denying all but the Bible (itself Canonized by the church) as a resource of Truth and turning away from all that is preached as "Satanic delusion" ...which is most everything outside of the Bible-only, Jesus-only paradigm.

Thus when I look at their fruits, I see little in the church that attracts me. A short study (way beyond the scope of this treatise) will reveal organized church history is not a pleasant one. Suffice it to say, great atrocities and torture have been done in the name of Jesus.

Yes, it is true. Many fine individuals can be found within the church gathered in fellowship and love nurtured within a common spiritually uplifting circle of faith. It is also true much wisdom can be learned from what may be presented in the sermons and studies of certain teachers and preachers. But overall; when viewed from the outside through the eye of world wide multicultural appreciation of art, science, literature, learning and historical perspective; I see Church orthodoxy as bearing the fruits of divisiveness, animosity, racism, misunderstanding, conquest of "soulless savages" as a divine right and even war.

Indeed, I do consider myself a Christian. I am a follower of the Christos, the Christ Spirit through which Jesus was anointed and instructed by God the words he was to say. Jesus gave us the Bread of Life; the same eternal truths seen in the Bhagavad-Gita, Quran, Zend-Avesta and other Holy revealed Writings. Jesus indeed gave his life; He submitted his will to the Will of his Father in Heaven. He lived the 1st Commandment which is to "Love the Lord thy God with all your heart and all your soul". Jesus was a perfect Muslim, a perfect Buddha. The word "Islam" means "submission to the will of God". Buddha means "Enlightened one".

As such, I find the truths, guidance and wisdom extolled by Jesus is not confined to only the church and to Christian held sources. The very concepts of "believer- non-believer, sinner-saved, Christian, non-Christian; any form of classification, stereotyping, prejudicial assumption, conjecture or judgment must be put aside. Instead let us look at humanity as the flowers of one garden; to appreciate different hues and styles of humanity world wide as one would view the myriad colors and shapes crafted together as designed by a master gardener; to be as waves of one sea, united in the ocean of God's love.

Abdul-Baha of the Baha'i Faith writes, "The nations and religions are steeped in blind and bigoted imitations. A man is a Jew because his father was a Jew. The Muslim follows implicitly the footsteps of his ancestors in belief and observance. The Buddhist is true to his heredity as a Buddhist. That is to say they profess religious belief blindly and without investigation, making unity and agreement impossible. It is evident therefore that this condition will not be remedied without a reformation in the world of religion. In other words the fundamental reality of the divine religions must be renewed, reformed, revoiced to mankind."

"Inasmuch as human interpretations and blind imitations differ widely, religious strife and disagreement have arisen among mankind, the light of true religion has been extinguished and the unity of the world of humanity destroyed. The prophets of God voiced the spirit of unity and agreement. They have been the founders of divine reality. Therefore if the nations

of the world forsake imitations and investigate the reality underlying the revealed Word of God they will agree and become reconciled. For reality is one and not multiple.”
(Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 225)

**I give you these words from the Hindu “Bhagavad-Gita”, “The Song Of God”.
“Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all sentient beings, I still appear in every millennium in My original transcendental form. Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice and a predominant rise of irreligion--at that time I descend Myself. In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium”. Bhagavad-Gita Chap 4:6-8**

And this: “Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the laws and the prophets”. ((Matthew: 22:36-40 KJB.)

And from the Holy Quran,”And the Jews say: Ezra is the son of Allah, [God] and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allah. [God] That is their saying with their mouths. They imitate the saying of those who disbelieved of old. Allah (Himself) fighteth against them. How perverse are they! They have taken as lords beside Allah their rabbis and their monks and the Messiah son of Mary, when they were bidden to worship only One God. There is no God save Him. Be He Glorified from all that they ascribe as partner (unto Him)! 32 Fain would they put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah disdaineth (aught) save that He shall perfect His light, however much the disbelievers are averse. 33 He it is Who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religion, however much the idolaters may be averse”. Quran: Sura 9 "Repentance [Islam](#)

Baha'u'llah puts forth this poignant plea to humanity” We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations -- that all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that all bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease and differences of race be annulled -- and so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the most great peace shall come. Is not this that which Christ foretold? Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.” (Abdu'l-Baha, Divine Philosophy, p. 10) [Baha'i](#)

Study and peruse with an open mind and spirit the many distinguished books and verses of Divine Will and understanding bequeathed to us from the Source of the Word, that very Word John refers to when he says,”In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not”. (King James Bible, John 1:1)

The following was written around 1912.

THIS RADIANT CENTURY

A time of change and reform, a transformation of metamorphosis into a new age of enlightenment, the dawning of a new age of maturity for all.

The following was written around 1912. Reflect, as you read this, how much more discoveries, new social issues, tools of living and communication have continued to exponentially impact and fundamentally change our ever-evolving world.

“What a wonderful century this is! It is an age of universal reformation. Laws and statutes of governments civil and federal are in process of change and transformation. Sciences and arts are being molded anew. Thoughts are metamorphosed. The foundations of human society are changing and strengthening. Today sciences of the past are useless. The Ptolemaic system of astronomy, numberless other systems and theories of scientific and philosophical explanation are discarded, known to be false and worthless. Ethical precedents and principles cannot be applied to the needs of the modern world. Thoughts and theories of past ages are fruitless now. All conditions and requisites of the past unfitted and inadequate for the present time are undergoing radical reform.

It is evident therefore that counterfeit and spurious religious teaching, antiquated forms of belief and ancestral imitations which are at variance with the foundation of divine reality must also pass away and be reformed. They must be abandoned and new conditions be recognized. The morals of humanity must undergo change. New remedy and solution for human problems must be adopted. Human intellects themselves must change and be subject to the universal reformation.

Just as the thoughts and hypotheses of past ages are fruitless today, likewise dogmas and codes of human invention are obsolete and barren of product in religion. Nay, it is true that they are the cause of enmity and conducive to strife in the world of humanity; war and bloodshed proceed from them and the oneness of mankind finds no recognition in their observance.

Therefore it is our duty in this radiant century to investigate the essentials of divine religion, seek the realities underlying the oneness of the world of humanity and discover the source of fellowship and agreement which will unite mankind in the heavenly bond of love.

This unity is the radiance of eternity, the divine spirituality, the effulgence of God and the bounty of the Kingdom. We must investigate the divine source of these heavenly bestowals and adhere unto them steadfastly. For if we remain fettered and restricted by human inventions and dogmas, day by day the world of mankind will be degraded, day by day warfare and strife will increase and satanic forces converge toward the destruction of the human race.”

(Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 228)

If you have read this far you may wish to check out the home site at

<http://onenessbecomesus.com>

(*) For “Bread Of Life symbolism” see <http://onenessbecomesus.com/eucharist.pdf>