

WBNP #17 - What is a Christian?

Good Evening. A Puritan's Mind brings you the old time radio program *The Wild Boar News Podcast* from Sunny South Florida. Welcome, I'm Dr. Matthew McMahon.

I have before me a partial list of names that all have something in common. Let's take a quick test. See if you, the astute listener, can figure out what all these people have in common. Are you ready?

Jacob Arminius
Remonstrant University Teacher in the 17th century

Karl Barth
Neo-liberal theologian

Billy Graham
Arminian Evangelist to millions

Harry Emerson Fosdick
Liberalism's popularizer

G.K. Chesterton
Roman Catholic essayist, poet, and writer

T.S. Eliot
Modernist poet

William Miller
The Founder 7th Day Adventism

Ignatius of Loyola
Roman Catholic Founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits)

Catherine of Siena
Religious Mystic and political activist

Walter Rauschenbusch
Champion of the social gospel

Tell me, keen-eared listener, what do all these people have in common? They are, according to *Christian History Magazine*, of the top 131 Christian people everyone should

know about. That's right, Walter Rauschenbusch, who is the Champion of the social gospel, and T.S. Elliot modernist's great poet, and Rome's founder of the Jesuits - Ignatius Loyola, are among those *Christians* that Christian History Magazine says *you* should know. Shame on you if you didn't get the answer right to this little quiz.

It seems, however, that the term "Christian" simply means someone who in Religious History has done, or accomplished something noticeable by a great many people. They wrote a book people read, or a poem, or preached a sermon, or even founded a cult. It seems that the word "Christian" has lost its biblical derivative - *those that actually follow Jesus Christ and His teachings.*

The 21st century modern church seems to thrive on its inclusivistic nature, where, on the other hand, Christ was always the opposite. Christ was an exclusivist. The Gospel He preached was exclusive, given to a few, given to a remnant of chosen people, chosen by God, to receive the implanted Word. Yes, many are called, but few are chosen.

The modern church of our era has it quite backwards. Christians are not simply people who write religious books, or quaint poems, or even preach to a congregation of listeners each Sunday. Doing something noticeable and drawing attention to one's work is not the criteria for being called a Christian. Otherwise, when little 2 year old Johnny throws up on his mother's Sunday blouse during the morning sermon, we'd have to call him a Christian too.

This is Dr. Matthew McMahon signing off.