

A few of the other reasons listed by Mr. Bufe include such things as —

- Christianity is based on fear
- Christianity preys on the innocent
- Christianity is based on dishonesty
- Christianity is extremely egocentric
- Christianity is anti-intellectual, anti-scientific
- Christianity has an exceedingly narrow, legalistic view of morality
- Christianity is homophobic

While many readers of *Diligence* may not see this fellow's opinion of Christians and Christianity as mainstream — those of you who work every day in the business world — or — have frequent contact with a wide variety of non-believing individuals, *know* that our Nation in general is not far removed from these views. In fact — our guess is that many of you have heard at least two or three of these things expressed by co-workers. It is an undeniable fact that Christians (and Christianity) have — in recent years come under ever increasing fire by those who oppose it.

So as Christians, we might be wise to take note of the words of Chaz Bufe. *Something* drove him to form those views of Christianity. What was it that caused him to *develop* such an awful view of Christians? Why would he be *so* adamant in these views that he would actually take the time and effort to publish them — both on the web and in a written pamphlet that can be purchased from the site? Of course, we'll never know for sure. We might speculate that he just doesn't understand Christianity — which is *true*. Or we could speculate that somewhere along the way, he had unpleasant experiences with Christians and Christianity. If that was the case — might there be a possibility that it could have been avoided — avoided by different words or actions of those Christians with whom he came in contact? Who knows? Only God knows for certain.

The purpose of this article is simply to raise awareness of the *possibility* that no matter how *pure* our intentions are to introduce Christ to those who have not accepted Him — over exuberance or completely uninhibited enthusiasm in professing our faith just *might* be the very thing that could drive an individual so far away from Christ that he or she will never again be open to even *considering* salvation through the blood of Christ. *None* of us want be guilty of such an awful sin. On the other hand, we must not shirk opportunities to be verbal and open about our salvation through Christ. The *dilemma* we face is being sure that we never become a tool for the Devil by crossing the line into Arrogant Christianity with those whom we meet. *That* requires wisdom.

*“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5 NIV).*

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# DILIGENCE

*“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.” — Hebrews 6:11*

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## Arrogant Christianity

The July 15<sup>th</sup> issue of *Diligence* was titled *Epidemic of Discontent*. In that article there were a few characteristics listed that we believe to be true concerning an epidemic of dissatisfaction and discontentment with many people today — both with those *in* the Church as well as the perception held by many of those who view — and often form opinions about Christians and Christianity from *outside* of the Body.

The sixth characteristic we mentioned in that previous article read this way:

“Sixth — proud Christians. The lack of humility that exists in many Christians is their most apparent personality trait. In the business world today there is an expression, “The bigger the cross the bigger the crook.” Simply stated, this means that those who are outside of Christ perceive “acting holy” or using “churchy” terms in an effort to identify oneself as a Christian to be a complete turnoff and an obnoxious trait. It is seen as phony and insincere — regardless of how honest and sincere the Christian might intend it to be. Many non-Christians do not see it as an individual giving credit to God. Rather, they see it as an arrogant attempt to bring attention to oneself as a “holier-than-thou Bible thumper.” (We plan to have an entire article dealing with this subject sometime in the near future).”

Well — the future is here — just not quite as “near” as we had *planned!*

We also mentioned in that previous article that the Devil is willing to take *every* opportunity he is given to lead Christians down *any* path that might make them less effective in the Lord's army. One of those paths that is often *appealing* to believers is the one that will provide an elevated level of self satisfaction as a result of practicing their faith. That desire for self satisfaction is *enhanced* when the devil leads Christians to believe *their* acts of kindness *should be recognized* by non-believers as something *Christians* do — unlike non-Christians — in service to Christ. While that is without a doubt, absolutely *true* — non-believers *may not see* it that way. They may see it as an arrogant *attempt* to bring attention to *oneself* in an effort to demonstrate just how “very kind and holy” Christians are.

Certainly, we are to do good works and show acts of kindness at every opportunity.

*“Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, (1 Timothy 6:18 NASB)*

So what are we to do?

A good place to start might be to *seriously assess* our *reasons* for feeling the need to *verbally* declare in various ways that we *are* a Christian. Are our verbal declarations intended to give honor and praise to God? — Probably! But if we *seriously* assess it — do we also get the benefit of a great deal of self satisfaction in the form of feeling that we have taken an opportunity to proclaim Christ to those who have not accepted Him? Perhaps. We need however, to be sure that the Devil has not taken us down the “happy trail” of seeking a form of self satisfaction that — in the view of the non believer — is *harming* the name of Christ by the very words *we* use to *advance* His name. As evangelizers, it is our responsibility to see *us* through the eyes of the non-believer — not our *own* eyes. Perhaps our *real* responsibility is to just *set an example* of kindness and Christ-like behavior rather than feeling the need to loudly (or — maybe — proudly?) make *certain* that the recipient knows that we are a Christian every time we do some good deed for one who is outside of the Body. While *our intentions* may indeed be solely for the purpose of giving credit to God and be of the purest nature, it might also behoove us to recognize that many in the world at large, just don’t “take it” that way. Could it be that Satan has devised a way for us to *think* we are being a *visible* Christian when in fact, he’s using us to turn people *off* to our Lord and Savior? “The bigger the cross, the bigger the crook????” — is *that* what we want people to think about us? Perhaps we should just give unbelievers the time or opportunity to figure out on their *own* that we simply *live* (all the time) a Christ-like life — without us having to *tell* them *every* — time — we do — something — *nice*— for them.

The belief that being a Christian will always provide one with a wonderful feeling of happiness, contentment and self satisfaction can easily cause Christians to *flaunt* the fact that they *are* Christians. Once the expectation to be *continually* happy has been implanted and accepted into the belief of an individual — its a *very* easy task for Satan to entice that person into pursuing *any* activity that will provide a feeling of more joy and contentment in his or her “Christian walk”— failing, of course, to *realize* that the rewards from such enticements are almost always temporary. As the individual then tires of whatever was the reason for such short term happiness or self satisfaction, he or she begins to look for some new and exciting way to make his or her “Christian walk” more appealing and “exciting” — always seeking a “bigger and better way” to practice his or her faith — maybe doing more and more acts of kindness *for the self satisfaction* that accompanies proudly proclaiming that he or she is a Christian simply serving his or her Master.

Each and every “good deed” done starts to become an *opportunity* to proclaim that one is a Christian and the “good deed” has been done *because* he or she enjoys a glorious relationship with his or her Lord and Savior. While that may indeed be (and probably *is*) true, this behavior is usually seen by those who are *not* Christians as arrogant and nothing more than an effort to be noticed — the “Christian” has done something great and wants everyone to *know* how wonderful *he or she* is — *because* of the “special” relationship he or she has with Christ.

Those who are outside of Christ more often than not, see it much like a spoiled child who wants *everyone* to know that the “good deed doer” is a Christian — and *that alone* is *somehow* supposed to make *that* good deed more important than the same good deed done by someone outside of Christ. The fact is — the *recipient* of the good deed benefits the *same* — whether it was administered by one who is *in* Christ or one who is *not* in Christ. There’s no difference from the *recipient’s* perspective — he or she *still* received the benefit of the deed. The fact is — a recipient who is outside of Christ *may* even look with *more* favor on the deed done by the non-Christian since it’s quite possible that the favor done by the one who feels the need to loudly *proclaim* his or her Christianity is perceived as a “requirement” of faith — *rather* than a heartfelt action. *Always* feeling a need to let others know that acts of kindness are a *result* of our relationship with Christ *might* actually defame the very purpose for which Christ died.

Attempting to give others the impression that if *they* were only in Christ the way *we* are, they could possibly get as much joy as *we* get out of doing those good deeds. *That* couldn’t be further from the truth since *many* of those who have no relationship *at all* with God do numerous good deeds and get great personal satisfaction from doing them. As we stated in the earlier issue of *Diligence* —

“Christians must be humble servants. They cannot win others to Christ while beating on their chest proclaiming their own greatness and exceptional desire to serve their God. *God* is great. *We* are his servants.”

There is a great risk that this article will be misunderstood and taken in a way that we do not intend. Let us once again state *clearly*, that as Christians, we are *expected* to do many good works and acts of kindness. To do anything less would be to slap God in the face and take the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for granted. What we are attempting to point out is the fact that many in the world do not always see the words and actions of Christians in the light they are intended. If they *did* — the phrase “the bigger the cross, the bigger the crook” would *never* have been said in the business world.

We recently discovered a web site that lists “20 Reasons To Abandon Christianity” written by a fellow named Chaz Bufe. Here’s an excerpt from the fifth “reason” on his list of 20.

“Christianity breeds arrogance, a chosen-people mentality. It’s only natural that those who believe (or play act at believing) that they have a direct line to the Almighty would feel superior to others. This is so obvious that it needs little elaboration. A brief look at religious terminology confirms it. Christians have often called themselves “God’s people,” “the chosen people,” “the elect,” “the righteous,” etc., while nonbelievers have been labeled “heathens,” “infidels,” and “atheistic Communists” (as if atheism and Communism are intimately connected). This sets up a two-tiered division of humanity, in which “God’s people” feel superior to those who are not “God’s people.”