

The Grumpy Disciple #9
Miserable Christians

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The more I research the history of Judaism the more I find miserable Christians – making Jews miserable. Then again, I find Christians making each other miserable, too. Those Christians rarely set out to just make Jews simply grumpy. (Jews could handle grumpy.) In fact, for some Jews, grumpiness is like a foundational undercurrent they are born into. An exile here, a holocaust there, etc.

Jews and others find Christianity troublesome. One thing most disturbing about Christians is...Christians. The New Testament, in John's Gospel, 13:34–35 reads, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." That's Jesus talking. Every translation says pretty much the same thing. Love. Love. Love! Quite an impressive telltale sign. Remember, not a *request* but a "command." From what I know, it would be easier for Christians to heal a leper or raise the dead than obey this command! Sadly, Church history proves this out.

Christians loving each other, and on top of that, like Jesus loved them. Wow! C'mon, talk about high expectations! We all figure God to be a high-achiever – creating the world in six days an' all (and what was the hurry?). What would explain the tremendous, miserable failure of love-lacking 20 centuries have produced? Extreme? Just do some scoutin' out of church history. Or, look at current headlines. Why doesn't the Pope pick up snakes like them nice Christian folk in Kentucky? Clearly, the preferred indicator of Jesus' followers has perpetually slipped through the cracks, and I do mean cracks. Honestly, I think his disciples, the Church, have done a better job at loving and caring for those *outside* of Christianity – that ol' charity thing.

How about this updated version of mine? "A new commandment I give to you, that you find as many reasons as possible to oppose, disagree and criticize one another! By this all men will know that you

are My disciples, if you hate, condemn and contradict one another. Oh, and consider hypocrisy, imprisoning and killing one another, for such will drive the point home. Divide! Split! Divide and never, never stop!”

Ahh, yes! Now we’re talkin.’ We can recognize the “church” rather easily. Okay, I’ll admit, not all churches house his followers, and not all followers attend church. Personally, I feel sorry for Jesus and the obvious letdown of his followers. Worldwide, there are over 40,000 sizes and shapes of Christian denominations (Google it). I don’t sense a lot of love there. (No group hugs.) That’s quite an odometer reading for 2,000 years and counting. Who’s right and who’s wrong? In America, you can dig deep into that figure and come out with hundreds or thousands of Christian groups – it all depends how they slice the pie. Is this evidence of an impassioned, zealous, yet perverse drive to move on and attend a better, truer-to-scripture church? With these constantly shifting puzzle pieces (church-goers), no wonder “men” cannot see Jesus’ picture of “love” coming together like the sanctified box top shows. Are any followers or their leaders preparing appropriate apologies for when they face the one who loved them? *Not a bad idea.*

So, are believers miserable in their doctrinal combat? (Misery does love company.) Perhaps every foxhole is upholstered with tailored consolation? I figure that willingness to die for someone else (Jesus’ big act of love) is not high on the generic believer’s list.

Oh how significant our world would be if the over 1.5 billion Christians did indeed follow the ancient heart’s desire of their Savior. “Love one another as I have loved you.” It wouldn’t hurt.

These Things Make Me Grumpy...