

On Wednesday, October 27, 2021 the US State Department issues the first gender neutral, Gender X, passport. The US now rejects objective cues for reference to the traveler's nature. This event marks the advancement of a social constructionist (SC) worldview that denies the existence of absolute, objective, moral knowledge: FEELINGS ARE FACTS. Preferences without basis in objective fact represent the rise of imagination against a mind informed by natural and spiritual revelation. In other words, The SC model represents an anti-God, anti-Christian system which with enmity, contempt, and extreme prejudice condemns as HATE any truth claim that denies consensus narrative. The rise of subjective absolutism confronts the church with a test for loving Jesus in a SC society. Will you keep my commandments?

in this issue >>>

The Tragedy of Namelessness p.1
The Name of Jesus p.2
Identifying as a Christian p.3
Jesus' Name: A Strong Tower p.3
Small Church Advantages p.4
Calendar of Events p.4
Prayer & Praise p.4

A LIVING WORD FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

Worship with us Sunday 10:30-11:30 at 3102 Baucom Rd. Charlotte, NC 28269

HELLO
MY NAME IS

What's in a Name?

November 2021



Name

A word or phrase that constitutes the distinctive designation of a person.

Social Constructionism

- A Theory of knowledge
- Shared assumptions about reality
- Develop meaning in coordination with others not separately within each individual.
- Replace transcendent subject with concept of society that is descriptive AND normative.
- What about brute facts?
- Strong social constructionism undermines the foundation of science.
- Feelings replace facts and cannot be falsified or denied.

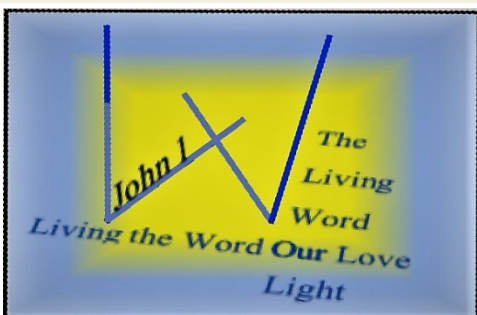
The Tragedy of Namelessness

“Trade in your name—which really has nothing to do with you—and take all of me in exchange”

Shakespeare's Juliet immortalized the muse, “What's in a name,” as she pined for a way to overcome social class stigma represented by her Romeo's name. Character matters more than name. “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” In the passion of her true love, Juliet casts aside identity as inconvenient, problematic, and unnecessary. “What is a Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot, nor arm, nor face, nor any other part belonging to a man.” What tragedy follows separating language from object and name from substance? Today, the American heart and mind finds itself in a civil war between facts and feelings a direct consequence of philosophical systems that exclude the idea of an absolute, objective, moral substance. This anti-metaphysical bias underlies the dominant narrative which presents body and behavior as free from moral assessment. This renders the heart and mind incapable, in fact, immoral for objectifying behavior as beneficial or destructive.

Social justice millenials see themselves as a social revolution under the guise of anti-capitalism, anti-colonialism. This revolution defies the absolutism of life's biological underpinnings. *It wants the right to rule with imagination not instruction, to govern ethics with preference not principle, to refute biological facts like life begins at conception or xy chromosomes define gender as fascist, and prosecute rebuttal as a hate crime.* Tyrants rule by ideology not by objectivity.

The church by nature presents a countercultural revolution to a SC society. The word of God that caused the church to exist by entering into this world from another realm commands it to contend for the Faith. The Faith contends for an absolute, objective, moral knowledge of Jesus the Christ who, as a matter of fact existed in history. This fact along with the one contending for it cannot coexist in a SC society's worldview. **The church must know what is in the name of Jesus, the name of Christianity, and how to find safety in that name if it wants to love Jesus and live with hope in a social constructionist anti-God society.**



The Name of Jesus

Shakespeare's expose' of societal bigotry illustrates a social constructionist phenomenon. Society constructed an opinion of a person not on merit but on a dominant consensus narrative. In God's redemptive narrative, no other name exists but one of immutable meaning, heritage, and character. Jesus transcends construction. He exists independent of imagination, and he reveals truth about his father by conveyance not construction. True facts not feeling or consensus empower a knowledge of Jesus.

We learn about the meaning of Jesus' name from the angel's announcement to Joseph: "You shall call his name Jesus: For he shall save his people from their sins" (Mt.1:21). Matthew and John reference prophecy and Old Testament writings to signify the miraculous nature of Jesus. Matthew cites Isaiah who called the virgin's son, "Emmanuel," which means "God with us" (1:22-23). John recognized that Jesus knew and glorified God with a unique first-person intimacy as one sent as God from God (1:14, 18). John equates Jesus with God: "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God" (1:1). The name of Jesus means God with us to deliver us from the wrath of God

"Thou shalt call his name JESUS for he shall save his people from their sins"

Matthew 1:21

and workers of iniquity.

Peter understood humankind's need for a Christ, Messiah, divine deliverer. He reminds the faithful that God promised to destroy both this world corrupted by sinful acts and lawless ones who propagate the sinful acts (2P.2:4-5). John marvels that the Word embodied in Jesus delivered the Apostles from the darkness and vanity of their own imaginations: "God is light and in him no darkness" anyone who denies this gospel testimony lies about, lives in, and loves the notion of their own inherent goodness (1J.1).

This name Jesus means God, savior who transforms the church from lawlessness to righteous and forgives the church of her sinful marring of his kingdom. Jesus' name, inseparable from the essence of the person bearing it, empowers life in the church by grounding her in the truth about his nature and finished work. Only the forgiven, the ones confessing faith in the name of Jesus, possess implicit experiential knowledge of the nature of truth. John ascribes this knowledge to

"But the anointing which you have received of him abides in you . . ."

1 John 2:27

HELLO
MY NAME IS

Jesus

Almighty Alpha & Omega
Angel of the Lord Bread of Life
Counselor Creator Door Emmanuel
Good Shepherd I Am King of Kings
Man of Sorrows Teacher The Way
The Truth The Life

What is in Jesus' name? Immutable truth and fellowship with God because of Jesus immutable nature and his redemptive victory anoints us. We also know what is in Jesus name by observing his lineage. Would his lineage like Romeo's disqualify Jesus from smelling like a rose? Jesus' lineage consists in people of faith but people who, like all humankind, fall short of meriting God's favor (Mt.1:1-17; Lk.3:23-38). In fact, when God called Abraham to father a great nation, the Lord made explicit that he embraced Abraham ("I have known Abraham") for the purpose of revealing God's justice and judgment to and through his lineage (Ge.18:18-29). God's word purified Abraham's soul when by faith Abraham believed God's word (Ga.3:6).

Continued on p. 4



A CHARLIE BROWN THANKSGIVING LUNCH



*Sow
Gratitude
Reap
Generosity*

Sunday November 7, 10:30 to 12:00

Join with the Living Word Fellowship as we reflect on an iconic symbol of American nostalgia complete with Snoopy's meal and some of our own fixins.

Several of us gathered for a fall activity 10/16 for the maze at Awshucks farms. We enjoyed warm weather. Good humor edeared us to the not so amazing maze. But the antique train, old country store, petting zoo, apple cider, and candied apples made the fun complete.

LWF A-Mazing Activity at Awshucks Farms

Identifying as Christian

The Truth Works from hear to here *Doctrine for a Christian Lifestyle*

In the weeks before his passion, death, and departure, Jesus prepared his disciples with some intensive training. This training began with Jesus' test question, "Who do men say that I am?" What is the consensus opinion about the son of man? Peter's response, "You are the Christ," confirmed that the seed for the Church had taken root. Peter confessed not the consensus of society but what the Father had revealed from heaven about Jesus.

Matthew records Peter's historic anti-consensus confession to make an unequivocal statement. This church Jesus promised to build originated as a distinct spiritual, covenant entity answerable to him alone. A fact that concludes Matthew's gospel when he testifies of Jesus' commission to the church, "All power is given unto me..." (28:18). Jesus' authority extends to the church as an agency empowered to make disciples of all that he commanded.



8 Foundational Doctrines

The Bible
God
Christ
The Holy Spirit
The Trinity
Sin
Salvation
The Church
The End Times

The name of Jesus conveys all that Jesus represents and in the Christian movement became synonymous with and grounds for absolute authority, unity, and love. The name of Jesus grounds the church in absolute, objective, moral authority. When Jesus told his disciples that they hold the keys to the kingdom, he affirmed their authority to adjudicate truth-claim tests. Confessing Jesus' name means keeping his commandments as the grounds of true fellowship.

To Ephesians, Paul appeals to "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (4:5) as the grounds for "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (4:3). Walking worthy of the Christian vocation means fellowship organized solely around Jesus' word. When opinions, sectarian, or identity issues differ, the name of Jesus calls the faithful to transcend earthy cultural narratives and unite in behavior instructed by the way.

Finally, Jesus' name grounds the Christian church in love when the church defines love as Jesus defined love. Jesus defined love in terms of covenant hearing and keeping his word. In Exodus God offered covenant with Israel on the condition, "if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you will be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine" (19:5). Peter applies this motif to the church when he writes, "be you holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, 'Be you holy for I am holy'" (1Pe.1:15-16). The name Christian finds grounding in the love of God when and only when that love consists in keeping Jesus' commandments and loving one another according to his commandments.

The Counseling Corner

The truth works from hear to here in **the next step**

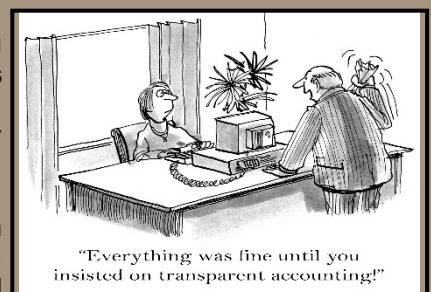
Jesus encouraged his disciples to comfort their apprehension about how to function in his absence by focusing on their belief. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (Jn.14:1). Belief in this context conveys more than a mental exercise of holding onto a testimony. Belief more accurately means commitment. The name of Jesus strengthens love and hope for following the truth through activating behavior consistently in the right direction. In this way, the name of Jesus secures the believer's faith.

The Sage describes the name of the Lord as a strong tower to which the righteous run for safety. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous run into it and are safe" (Pr.18: 11). A strong tower refers to an impenetrable fortress. The name of the Lord as with the name of Jesus refers to the commands and by extension the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. The righteous refers to the ones trusting solely in the word of the Lord as their grounds for absolute, objective, moral knowledge.

In other words, confidence for loving Jesus and hope for following truth in a SC society comes from a commitment to practicing the facts of what the word of God teaches. Notice that the sage focuses not on a feeling mechanism but on a faith mechanism. The righteous find safety in the moral grounding provided by the facts. The name of the Lord is a strong tower not for the anxious or fearful but for the one who lives life as directed by historic revealed, not constructed, redemptive narrative.

Loving Jesus--which means living according to his word--which means submitting any and all imagined doctrines to the test of his absolute, objective, moral standard keeps the heart and mind secure. Even if one loses everything, the name of the Lord provides a reason to love and to hope because *faith attaches to the Lord as the reward in the present and in anticipation of the future life.*

The sage challenges the rich as we might challenge those constructing a reality derived from their preferences. What happens when the isolating effect of illness and impending death overrule the safety of material wealth and intrude into the virtue-signaling, consensus-dependent conscience? Death makes consensus with no one. Death takes all regardless of equity because death respects no one. Death feels no remorse if accused of supremacy, partiality, and a hate crime. Death dominates the narrative of life because death operates beyond consensus and imagination. Death is real and only real truth overcomes the fear of it.



"Everything was fine until you insisted on transparent accounting!"

"Like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth fruit in season; whose leaf also shall not wither, and whatever s/he does will prosper" Ps.1:3



The Name of Jesus (continued)

Jesus' name, John declares, makes faith possible and only he makes righteous the ones who confess sin—even the sins of the whole world should it confess them (1J.2:1-2). Jesus' name therefore conveys truth and its salvation when referring to the unique individual who identified as God and delivered redemption as promised by God. Jesus' name conveys a solidarity with the race of humankind. He identifies with those least worthy of God's favor. Jesus identifies with humankind and embraces his church. As God embraced Abraham to make him righteous so Jesus embraces and embodies his church to make and mature her in His righteousness (Ep.4:1-15).

Yet, Jesus' name also conveys holy character. The witness of Hebrews testified that Jesus learned love and hope through suffering, not despite it. "Though he were a son yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect (i.e. mature in righteousness) he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (He.5:8-9). Jesus loved God. The world despised God. He submitted his natural reactions to the words in the law and the prophets. Every step Jesus took involved setting aside natural rights and divine prerogative (i.e. his imagination) to activate God's instruction through obedience "It is written."

Jesus, not imagination or consensus, gives us a perfect model for understanding what "If you love me, keep my commandments" means. Jesus presented this model to his disciples while preparing them for his departure. He paralleled his faithfulness to the Father with the disciple's faithfulness to him. He conditioned joy upon embracing his facts as he in fact embraced the Father's: "If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (Jn.15:10-11).



Advantages of a Small Church

Family Feel
Quick Integration
Simpler Systems
Interactive Study
Mutual Shepherding
Adapts to Change

We share our current events.
We segue into prayer & praise memos.
We pray before our study of the word.
We interact with the message:

- Raise questions
- Make observations
- Give insights

We invariably draw our hearts and minds together around the word.
We may get through the outline or pick up next week where we left off.
But we always leave with a takeaway relevant for activating our faith during the week.

40 % of churches
in America have
0 to 49 in
attendance.

LWF at the Michael W. Smith WORSHIP FOREVER concert



PRAYER AND PRAISE INCLUDE: Prayer for healing of nerve pain; easing of breathing difficulty; energy, enthusiasm, tranquility in work role; elderly mother's heart & lung problems; niece battling cancer; police officers laboring under increasingly authoritarian conditions; siblings working with hospice for elder parent; increase social and political tensions over vaccine mandates; Harper's visa challenges; LWF additions, pastor. Praise for remission of relatives' cancer; easing of nerve pain.

Coming Up at LWF

- 11/6 Church Clean-Up TBA
- 11/7 Charlie Brown Thanksgiving Lunch
- 11/7 Message: *Sow Gratitude*
Reap Generosity John Liebner
- 11/14 Message: *Praise works in blessed endurance when God disciplines faith with the stress of social injustice.*
John Liebner
- 11/14 Communion
- 11/18 Prayer Meeting 7:00 pm
at B. Huggins
- 11/21 Message: *Sign-Posts Along the Way.* Lyle Austin
- 11/28 Message: Series "*The Acts that Changed the World*" John Liebner

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