His Team

As most people now know, I am a tragic Fremantle Dockers Afl fan.

I love footy and love watching the game, I really enjoy tv coverage but its best shared with friends and fellow Dockers supporters, and in my house, I am alone in supporting this team. My favourite games are those that I can go to the stadium or games like the derby that I can share with other fans and interacted with others.

Recently a Collingwood supporter made the news for his abuse and verbal attacks on the umpires. Now if I asked you to describe a Collingwood supporter what would you say they are like…



Maybe you said no teeth.

Or maybe a bunch of yobbo’s

Maybe you said doctors, lawyers and prominent business and community leaders … or maybe not



If I asked what football team you support, I think ½ the church would nominate west coast a ¼ would say Fremantle we would have a few hawthorn, a few Carlton, Adelaide, Port Adelaide fans we have at least one gap toothed Collinwood supporter maybe a WAFL team Clermont and/or a few other teams may be supported. But someone will always seem to say I support the Rabbitohs or the panthers or Melbourne storm or some NRL team (wannabe Football)

A picture containing person, posing, group, track and field

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or worse they support Perth glory or Sydney FC or another club in the soccer/ football league (not real football)

A picture containing grass, person, athletic game, sport

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even worse you might tell me you support Manchester or another fa cup team (Not Football Not Australian…)



When I talk about football what I mean what I am thinking about is AFL football and for most here it is probably the same Yet for others it is quite different,

What does footy have to do with Church or with us as Christians. Besides that song “ God is better than football god is better than beer God is better than cricket Cause he’s here all the year

Why have I spent the last few mins going on and on about footy.

Today I would like to challenge you on what/who is a Christian.

What do they look like?

What do they do / how do they behave?

What country do they come from, how old are they are there more men than women or the other way around. If you picture in your minds eye a typical Christian what do they look like.

When I googled “Christian” in google images I got a lot of crosses people holding bibles people kissing crosses and a few images of Christian bale.







What does the person on the street think when they hear the word Christian? For some its almost a dirty word: a bigot, a hypocrite someone out to exploit you or someone being exploited. For others it can be a source of hope or joy. The word Christian can offer excitement happiness relief or fear.

So, what is a Christian how do we define one and why do we have so many varieties of flavours of Christians out there.

Phil shared some of the recent history of the modern western church. How some in the name of Christianity watered down the gospel till we had Woke Christians with no substance but still using the name Christians still calling themselves a church.

My story.

How many people were saved in this church? How many by a Baptist church? I think a lot may have been saved in evangelic churches some in home churches some in traditional or angelical others in independent churches. We may even have people saved from Mission gatherings or crusades. Then some have been saved in other places as well

I started going to church in a small independent church. My brother had been invited by his friend at school and My mum thought we need a good dose of church, so we all started going. The pastor was a former Baptist church minister who had left the Baptist union in the 80’s like a few ministers after the rise of “Liberal evangelism” and the extreme beliefs of the unions president at the time.( by the way our current president and head of Morelling collage is a wonderful person who has solid beliefs and the local contact Mark Wilson is a fantastic Christian )

BB our pastor was a wonderful man and during the hardest time of my life, he supported both me and the members of my family. As a lost child he showed care and compassion something that a poor emotionally defunct child has never seen before.

BB taught my early instruction in Christian faith and one lesson I quickly learnt was that there was no bigger danger to my faith than the Baptist churches of WA. For many years I was very wary of Baptist churches and now knowing the history and the small period of trouble that did occur. I understand why I was warned away from Baptists by a former Baptist minister. But for many years I could not get the idea that a Baptist is a real Christian.

There will be people this morning that probably feel the same way about a different denomination and likewise those from other denominations who feel that Baptist are not real Christians.

So back to our question what is a Christian.

A dictionary definition of a Christian would be “a person professing belief in Jesus as the Christ or in the religion based on the teachings of Jesus.” While this is a good starting point, like many dictionary definitions, it falls somewhat short of really communicating the biblical truth of what it means to be a Christian. The word “Christian” is used three times in the New Testament ([Acts 11:26](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2011.26); [26:28](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2026.28); [1 Peter 4:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%204.16)). Followers of Jesus Christ were first called “Christians” in Antioch ([Acts 11:26](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2011.26)) because their behaviour, activity, and speech were like Christ. The word “Christian” literally means, “belonging to the party of Christ” or a “follower of Christ.”

Unfortunately over time, the word “Christian” has lost a great deal of its significance and is often used of someone who is religious or has high moral values but who may or may not be a true follower of Jesus Christ. Many people who do not believe and trust in Jesus Christ consider themselves Christians simply because they go to church or they live in a “Christian” nation Or even call themselves a Baptist or Anglican because mum sent them to church when they were young. But going to church, serving those less fortunate than you, or being a good person does not make you a Christian. Going to church does not make you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you an automobile. Being a member of a church, attending services regularly, and giving to the work of the church does not make you a Christian.  
  
The Bible teaches that nothing we do even all or good works cannot make us acceptable to God. [Titus 3:5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus%203.5) says, “He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” So, a Christian is someone who accepted that they are a sinner then has been born again by God ([John 3:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.3); [John 3:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.7); [1 Peter 1:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%201.23)) and has put faith and trust in Jesus Christ. [Ephesians 2:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%202.8) tells us that it is “…by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.”  
  
A true Christian is a person who has put faith and trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ, including His death on the cross as payment for sins and His resurrection on the third day. John 1:12 tells us, “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” The mark of a true Christian is love for others and obedience to God’s Word (1 John 2:4,10)A true Christian is indeed a child of God, a part of God’s true family, and one who has been given new life in Jesus Christ.

If you have not made that step if you need to trust God to take your sins then now is the time and you must speak with one of the church leaders today. And yes the Baptist churches are real churches and real Christians.

The Baptist union statement of faith is:

**Building healthy churches**

A group of people smiling

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*Jesus Christ is the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct in the life of both churches and individuals.*

**Statement of Faith**

**Baptists of Western Australia hold that:**

1. Jesus Christ alone is head of the Church.
2. The Church is the community called into being by God. In both its universal and local expressions, it consists of persons who have personally and knowingly accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and have pledged themselves to worship, follow and serve him as a priestly community.
3. By his high-priestly ministry, Jesus Christ has opened the way for every believer to approach God the Father directly through him.
4. Jesus Christ is the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct in the life of both churches and individuals.
5. He has given to all churches and to every individual the right and responsibility to understand and to do God's will. Therefore, being accountable to God, Christians are not to despise their fellow believers but to accept one another as Christ's servants, allowing each other freedom of conscience. God has given to human governments the right and responsibility to promote what is just and good but not to coerce belief or practice contrary to conscience.

**In common with many other Christians, Baptists of Western Australia also hold that:**

1. There is only one God. He is infinitely good and great, and has revealed himself to be personal and triune in essential being, eternally existing as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. God speaks to us through the Bible, the sixty-six Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Being God-breathed they are fully trustworthy and supremely authoritative in all matters of faith and conduct.
3. God created the heavens and the earth and all that exists in them. He continues to care for and govern his creation, working out his purposes for all he has made.
4. God created humans in his image, male and female, intending that we live in fellowship with him. However, tempted by Satan, God's adversary, the first man and woman disobeyed God. As a result we all sin, falling short in our responsibilities to love God and neighbour and to care for the world.
5. Despite our sin, which alienates us from God and rightly deserves his judgment, God, because of his grace and great love for all people, sent his Son into the world to save us. The incarnate Son, Jesus of Nazareth, was conceived by the virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit. Fully human and fully divine, he lived on earth a sinless life of perfect obedience. He died on the cross as a sacrifice on our behalf and in our place, redeeming us from the penalty and power of sin and triumphing over Satan. He was raised bodily from the dead and ascended to his Father's presence where he lives forever as our great High Priest and reigns as Lord of all.
6. The Gospel, the good news concerning Jesus Christ and his reconciling work, is God's powerful way of bringing salvation. All who respond in repentance and faith God sets right with himself, forgiving and cleansing them from sin, giving them his Holy Spirit and eternal life, and incorporating them into his church.
7. The Holy Spirit gives new life to all believers and resides in them permanently. He makes them holy, and enables them to grow into the likeness of Christ. Through his Spirit God empowers all his people for life and witness, granting them various gifts for the well-being, functioning and mission of the church.
8. While all believers belong to the universal church, God gathers them into local churches which exist to worship and serve him. Jesus Christ, the head of the church, has established both baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion of believers on their profession of faith, an act of identification with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It involves commitment to a life of discipleship in fellowship with his people. In the Lord's Supper, believers remember Christ's sacrificial death, share in fellowship with their risen Lord and with one another, and look forward to his return.
9. All Christians are commanded to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and their neighbours as themselves. We discover what love means in practice through searching the Scriptures, which reveal God's character and will. Such love includes the responsibility of every Christian to participate in the proclamation of the Good News throughout the world.
10. Jesus Christ will return visibly and victoriously from his Father's presence to gather his people to himself and to complete his conquest of sin and evil. All people, both believers and unbelievers, will be raised bodily and be judged by God. Believers will enjoy eternal blessedness in God's presence, while unbelievers will suffer the eternal punishment of exclusion from his presence. The whole creation will be so transformed that righteousness will characterise the new heavens and the new earth for ever.

**Concerning congregational life, Baptists of Western Australia hold that:**

1. The will of Christ for each church is to be found as the Holy Spirit brings direction and conviction to that congregation gathered to seek his will in the light of the Scriptures. On this basis the members' meeting is the final authority under Christ for a congregation. Finding Christ's will through the members' meeting involves mutual counsel through the exercise of the members' gifts and learning from the experience of other congregations.
2. Christ gives leaders to his Church. It is the duty of the local church through the members' meeting to recognise and affirm Christ's call to such leaders, and to set them aside to serve, thereby charging them with the responsibility to lead and delegating prescribed authority to lead. Mutual accountability is to operate between leaders and church.
3. While not in any way diminishing the autonomy of the local church, it is appropriate for Baptist churches to cooperate in a Union of Churches in which it is essential for all member churches to practise mutual care, support, and accountability.

So why are there many different denominations.

# I have taken the answer to this question from

https://www.gotquestions.org/

To answer this question, we must first differentiate between denominations within the body of Christ and non-Christian cults and false religions. Presbyterians and Lutherans are examples of Christian denominations. Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses are examples of cults (groups claiming to be Christian but denying one or more of the essentials of the Christian faith). Islam and Buddhism are entirely separate religions.

The rise of denominations within the Christian faith can be traced back to the Protestant Reformation, the movement to “reform” the Roman Catholic Church during the 16th century, out of which four major divisions or traditions of Protestantism would emerge: Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, and Anglican. From these four, other denominations grew over the centuries.  
  
The Lutheran denomination was named after Martin Luther and was based on his teachings. The Methodists got their name because their founder, John Wesley, was famous for coming up with “methods” for spiritual growth. Presbyterians are named for their view on church leadership—the Greek word for “elder” is presbyteros. Baptists got their name because they have always emphasized the importance of believers’ baptism. Each denomination has a slightly different doctrine or emphasis from the others such as the method of baptism, the availability of the Lord’s Supper to all or just to those whose testimonies can be verified by church leaders, the sovereignty of God vs. free will in the matter of salvation, the future of Israel and the church, pre-tribulation vs. post-tribulation rapture, the existence of the “sign” gifts in the modern era, and so on. The point of these divisions is never Christ as Lord and Saviour, but rather honest differences of opinion by godly, albeit flawed, people seeking to honour God and retain doctrinal purity according to their consciences and their understanding of His Word.  
  
Denominations today are many and varied. The original “mainline” denominations mentioned above have spawned numerous offshoots such as Assemblies of God, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Nazarenes, Evangelical Free, independent Bible churches, and others. Some denominations emphasize slight doctrinal differences, but more often they simply offer different styles of worship to fit the differing tastes and preferences of Christians. But make no mistake: as believers, we must be of one mind on the essentials of the faith, but beyond that there is great deal of latitude in how Christians should worship in a corporate setting. This latitude is what causes so many different “flavours” of Christianity. A Presbyterian church in Uganda will have a style of worship much different from a Presbyterian church in Australia, but their doctrinal stand will be, for the most part, the same. Diversity is a good thing, but disunity is not. If two churches disagree doctrinally, debate and dialogue over the Word may be called for. This type of “iron sharpening iron” ([Proverbs 27:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2027.17)) is beneficial to all. If they disagree on style and form, however, it is fine for them to remain separate. This separation, though, does not lift the responsibility Christians have to love one another ([1 John 4:11-12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.11-12)) and ultimately be united as one in Christ ([John 17:21-22](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.21-22)).

Back to football like Afl there are many different teams in Christ church we need to identify what is a real football team ( a denomination)and what is not ( cults and other religions)

I may not support Westcoast Eagles but we are both fans of the game understand the rules and want the game to grow I may disagree with you between holding the ball and a push in the back but overall we both can enjoy a game together

There are Fremantle supporters who do not represent the game we love and the same for the Westcoast or many other teams unfortunately these are the ones that get air time and I’m sure there is a Collingwood supporter who is not a gap tooth bogan out there somewhere.

Foot ball of course is just an analogy

We need to be sure what a Christian is

Are we a Christian.

Do we represent Christ to the world?

Our church has a very strong statement of faith and Jim sparks has preached on it before but I challenge you to look to your own personal statement of faith

What do you really believe? Do you live out that belief and can others identify that core belief in you.

1 Corinthians 1:12-13

New International Version

**12**What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3A12-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28376a)]”; still another, “I follow Christ.”

**13**Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Be Honoured to call yourself a Christian be excited to be a Baptist and welcome all Christians who believe We must remember as Christians we don’t compete against each other for a premiership cup we work together to bring others out of sin and darkness and into the light

That was basically the end of my sermon I covered a relevant issue facing us as Christians as we interact with the rest of the world but… God put more on my heart. After finishing my sermon God started prompting me more, I lay awake thinking and thinking tossing an idea back and forth then finally remembering to pray.

What about this team here in wattle grove? What about this church?

Do we represent God in our lives in our work in our ministry?

What is the mark of a truly successful football team. Is it the number of fans or maybe the number of memberships? Is it growth in the club the numbers growing regularly? Maybe the financial results mark a great team. Or is the number of premierships?

What attracted you to what ever sporting team you follow,

What attracted you to this church.

Christianity has so, so much to offer Christ has so much to give, what is stopping us from being the team that we are called to be.

Like the different congregations I spoke about today we have quite a diverse selection of Christians in our church. Many ages many nationalities different background different educations, yet in all this a hallmark of this congregation is its love and welcomeness .

This is a church that has made many feel welcome, has and will show love to those in need and helped many people discover and grow in the love of Christ.

But We could do better

Every Christian is a human, made complete and redeemed by God but a human

Humans have a habit of not always getting along.

Christians and the church have also found this problem

1 Corinthians 1:10-13

New International Version

**A Church Divided Over Leaders**

**10**I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3A10-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28374a)] in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. **11**My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. **12**What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3A10-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28376b)]”; still another, “I follow Christ.”

**13**Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

1 Corinthians 12:12-15

New International Version

**Unity and Diversity in the Body**

**12**Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. **13**For we were all baptized by[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+12%3A12-15&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28648a)] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. **14**Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

**15**Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

We as a church face these same problems and we will face these problems as we seek a new pastor as we deal with post covid life as new people enter into his service.

God has given us all different gifts different skills different strengths.

He wants us to use those gifts.

We as a church love to see you serve and help out in different ways and if you want to be used more or have a gift to share please speak with Ron and we would love to have you join in

we often have a lot of quite achievers who run in the background but the roles they play are vital ( I liked Phil’s story of the older gentleman at uni) as a fellowship lets enjoy our diversity and work together in unity

how do we do this?

The next chapter in Corinthians is probably one of the most famous passages it is often shared at wedding services but it was a reminder to the Corinthian church on what really mattered and how to run a church

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

New International Version

**4**Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. **5**It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. **6**Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. **7**It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

This theme runs throughout the bible if we return to love and loving each other it should be our guide to our life and it’s the defining characteristic that jesus wanted on his Team

John 13:35

**35**By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

[**Romans 12:16-18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A16-18&version=ESV)

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honourable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

A group of people outside

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A picture containing person, food, table, plate

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