

YOUR
CHRIST
IS TOO
SMALL



Jurgen O. Schulz

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IS TOO
SMALL**

Compiled by
JURGEN O. SCHULZ

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to email it to friends,
you are encouraged to do so.

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Dedicated to my wife

*The woman who has followed me beyond
what is reasonable—and even further.*

*She has loved me more than I ever
deserved—and then some.*

*She lets God show up in her life,
and it is wonderful to behold.*

*She has walked by my side in the journey
of discovering that Jesus
is greater and far more wonderful
than we ever imagined.*

Beloved Wendy, this is for you.



Foreword

Years ago I read a quote that stuck in my mind: "The minute we begin to get away from Jesus Himself, we begin to cloud our theology." A profound truth, but one that took a lot of time to process in my life. For many years I was preoccupied with the peripheral. Many side issues grabbed my attention and I majored on one after another, before finally wearing each one out. I was focused on the fringe. Eventually God turned my attention away from the marginal back to the centre, and I rediscovered the majestic wonder of Jesus Christ. It was breathtaking. It was like coming home. My heart took flight, and I found myself, as the song says, "filled with his goodness, lost in his love."

The Bible affirms regarding Christ, "in Him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17). When we get our eyes off Him, not only our theology—everything falls apart.

Marriages end up on the rocks; churches go to pieces; life comes apart. The universe does not function well apart from Him. It is only "in Him" that things hold together.

I believe that God is calling His people back to the Centrality of Christ. We have been denomination centered, doctrine centered, experience centered. God's declared purpose is "to gather together in one all things in Christ" (Eph. 1:10). He would have us Christ centered.

The present book is compilation of quotes drawn from a wide variety of sources, authors and theological perspectives. However diverse, almost all the writers cited share a common focus and a mutual attraction to the core issue: The Lord Jesus Christ. They remind us that it's all about Him.

Oswald Chambers said, "I think if I have an ambition it is that I might have honorable mention in anyone's personal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ." Similarly, if the following material encourages some to turn their eyes to Jesus, I will feel well recompensed.

So read on. Reflect. Enjoy. And, as you do, may you find that everything else grows "strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."



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The Lord Jesus Christ

cannot be reduced to...

- **WORDS**

-The “unspeakable gift” is beyond description

- **DOCTRINE**

-His “unsearchable riches” defy definition

- **TRUTH**

-He is a Living Person, not a proposition

- **PRINCIPLES**

-He is the living personification of all virtue

- **MORALITY**

-Our standard is not a code but a Character

- **THEOLOGY**

-He is the Living display of God’s character

- **RELIGION**

-He did not come to bring religion but Life

- **SYSTEMS**

-All attempts to contain Him fail miserably

- **THE BIBLE**

-The written Word sheds light; He IS the light

1

Your Christ
is too
peripheral

*Everything comes from HIM;
Everything happens through HIM
Everything ends up in HIM.
Always glory!
Always praise!*

ROMANS 11:36 (The Message)



I think the
minute we
begin to get
away from

**Jesus
Himself,**
we begin to
cloud our
theology.

-Charles Schulz



Christianity
is Christ;
and we ruin our
religion if we
centre it
anywhere else.

-James S. Stewart



In the New Testament
Jesus upstages
everyone else. He is
not only the
center of the Gospel;
He is the **whole**
Gospel. He is the
Good News.

-Brennan Manning



Beware of
a religion in which
Christ is not the
first, foremost,
chief, **principal**
object,—the very
Alpha in the
alphabet of
your faith.

-J. C. Ryle



The message
of Christ is not
Christianity.

The message
of Christ is
Christ.

-Gary Amirault



The good
news of the
gospel is **not** an
announcement or
a proclamation,
it's a Person:
Jesus the Christ.
**Jesus is
the gospel.**

-Leonard Sweet



JESUS Christ . . . walked into time and quietly divided it into before and after—B.C. and A.D. He walked into the realm of thought and altered all our conceptions about God and life and destiny. He walked into our moral conceptions and codes, and now we are good or bad according to whether we embody His spirit or not. He walked into the chaos of human relationships and projected a Kingdom which is destined to gather all our chaos into cosmos, to be the goal and end of all human history.

-E. Stanley Jones



The central fact
of the universe and the
perfect encyclopedia
of all moral and
spiritual truth is
**in Christ, the
Incarnate Word,**
the Lamb slain, the
ascended King.

-Alexander MacLaren



Christianity
without Christ is
a chest without a
treasure,
a frame without
a **portrait,**
a corpse without
breath.


-John R. W. Stott



This is a **reason** for
much of the **power-**
lessness of our
churches today;
we have converted
people to the church,
to our doctrines, to
our projects and
organizations—
to almost
anything but
Christ Himself.

-Rick Joyner



HE Kingdom is all about a Person. The Bible says all the promises of God... are yes to us in Christ Jesus. Thus, God has nothing for His Church beyond who Christ is in Himself. He is sufficient, He is superior, He is sovereign, He is supreme, and He is the summation of all God has for us.

-David Bryant



IT IS THE
NATURE OF
CHRIST
TO BE THE
CENTER.

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer



THERE is nothing in the Gospels more significant than the way in which Jesus deliberately places Himself at the very centre of His message. He does not say with other teachers, "the truth is everything, I am nothing"; He declares, "I am the truth." He does not . . . suggest answers to the world's enigmas; He claims to be the answer — "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." He does not offer the guidance of a code or a philosophy to keep men right through the uncertainties of an unknown future; He says, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."


-James S. Stewart



Christianity
does not exist
for a moment
or in any respect
apart from
Christ.

-Karl Barth



HE story is told that when Ghatama Buddha was dying . . . some of his disciples asked how they could best remember him. He told them not to bother; that it was his teaching, not his person, that mattered. Such is the basis of religion — ideological, philosophical, educative belief-systems. Such is not the case with Jesus Christ and Christianity. Everything centers in Him. Everything is inherent in Jesus, His Person and His continuing activity. Everything functions only by the dynamic of the risen and living Lord Jesus Christ.

-James A. Fowler



FUNDAMENTALLY, our Lord's message was Himself. He did not come merely to preach a Gospel; He himself is that Gospel. He did not come merely to give bread; He said, "I am the bread." He did not come merely to shed light; He said, "I am the light." He did not come merely to show the door; He said, "I am the door." He did not come merely to name a shepherd; He said, "I am the shepherd." He did not come merely to point the way; He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

-J. Sidlow Baxter



HE was asked once by a Hindu professor what it was that he had found in Christianity, as he put it, that he had not found in his old religion. “I have found Christ,” said Sadhu Sundar Singh. “Oh yes, I know,” said the professor rather impatiently. “But what particular doctrine have you found or principle that you did not have before?”

“The particular thing I have found,” replied Sadhu Sundar Singh, “is Christ.”

-John R. W. Stott



DETACH Christianity from Christ, and it vanishes before your eyes into intellectual vapor . . . Christianity is not existent apart from Christ; it centers in Christ; it radiates now, as at the first from Christ . . . it perishes outright when men attempt to abstract it from the Living Person of its founder.

-H. P. Liddon



Everything "Christian"

is derived from the
Being and activity of Jesus.

All of **Christianity** is
contingent and dependent
on Him, and
expressive of Him.

**Christianity is
Christ!**

-James A. Fowler



The prerogative of our
Christian faith, **the
secret of its
strength** is this,
that all it has, and all
which it offers, **is laid
up in a person...**
that it has a Christ as its
middle point...

-Author Unknown



The supreme revelation is given in **the life and person of Jesus.**

The revelation is not His teaching or His acts but Himself . . . **Christianity is not** a dedication to a system of rules or of thought, but **a dedication to a Person.** This is **unique** among the religions of the world.

-William Temple



We have instructed the church in nearly everything but **becoming disciples of Jesus Christ.** We have filled people **with doctrines instead of Deity;** we have given them manuals instead of **Emmanuel.**

-Francis Frangipagne



If I am to know God, I will
know Him through **Jesus**.

If I am to gain knowledge,
it is deposited in **Jesus**.

If I am to have wisdom,
I will find it in **Jesus**.

If God dwells in me, it is
because **Jesus** dwells in me.

If I wish to study God,
I must study **Jesus**.

If the Holy Spirit is active
in my life, I will hear Him
speak of **Jesus**.

-Gayle D. Erwin



To be Christians

is to live our lives
through, on, in,
under, unto, for and
like Jesus Christ,
and **Christ** then
becomes the
center of
our lives.

-John R. W. Stott

2

Your Christ
is too
doctrinal

*You search the Scriptures,
for in them you think you have
eternal life; and these are they
which testify of ME.*

JOHN 5:39



It is Christ Himself,
not the Bible, who is the
true word of God. The
Bible, read in the
right spirit and
with the guidance of good
teachers, will bring us
to Him. We must not
use the Bible as a sort of
encyclopedia out of which
texts can be taken for
use as weapons.

-C. S. Lewis



The Scriptures should
be read with the
aim of finding
Christ in them.

Whoever turns aside from
this object, even though
he wears himself out all
his life in learning, he will
never reach the
knowledge of
the truth.

-John Calvin



Hundreds of people
today are devoting
themselves to phases
of truth, to causes.
Jesus Christ never asks us
to devote ourselves to
a cause or a creed;
He asks us to
devote ourselves
to Him absolutely, and
take up that cross daily.

-Oswald Chambers



THERE was one mistake into which the early Church was never in any danger of falling. In those early days men never thought of Jesus Christ as a figure in a book... They did not think of Him as someone who had been but as someone who is. They did not think of Jesus Christ as someone whose teaching must be discussed and debated and argued about; they thought of Him as someone whose presence could be enjoyed and whose constant fellowship could be experienced. Their faith was not founded on a book; their faith was founded on a person.-

-William Barclay



God did not just
reveal factual data,
informational propositions
of a **belief-system**
of doctrine or theology,
but **He "revealed**
His Son..." (Gal. 1:12).

-James A. Fowler



One of the **primary schemes** of the devil is to turn the Bible into the Tree of Knowledge for us, instead of the **Tree of Life**. He is seeking to make it law to us rather than a **revelation of Christ**, in whom alone life is found.

-Rick Joyner



“And the Word became flesh.” Without this verse the Christian faith is the Word become word — an idea, a philosophy, a moralism; with it the Christian faith is the Word become flesh, a fact—a Redemptive Fact, the Supreme Fact.

-E. Stanley Jones



They (the early Christians) **did not say,**
"This is the truth:
we will learn it, and
it will instruct us."

They said, "This is the
**Lord: we have
waited for Him,
and He will save us."**

-E. Stanley Jones



The historical
JESUS
is himself the
embodiment
of truth...


-John R. W. Stott



THIS tendency to transform the work of the Living God into a philosophical doctrine is the constant temptation of theology, and their greatest disloyalty when they transform the action of the Spirit which brings forth fruit in themselves into an ethic, a new law, into principles which only have to be ‘applied.’

-Jacques Ellul



CHRISTIANITY has followed Plato in his doctrine of ideas and in following him emphasis has been thrown upon belief in religion. When this emphasis on ideas was combined with the Roman tendency toward legal and exact phraseology, the stage was set for fierce clashes over doctrine and creed.

-E. Stanley Jones



THE so-called "church fathers" of the first few centuries of Christianity . . . reduced Christianity into moralistic and ethical religious rules and into creedalistic concepts of correct content of thought. They so quickly let go of the dynamic life of Jesus Christ as the essence of Christianity, and allowed it to become merely a belief system.

-James A. Fowler



The One who is
the way, the truth and
the life (John 14:6)
will not be
reduced to our
logical categories
and intellectual
formulas.

-Tony Campolo



THE break of Christianity with Christ, turning Him into the Word become word, was the most disastrous break possible. For it gave up the one thing in Christianity that makes it unique—the Word become flesh. All the other faiths have the Word become word, but only the Christian faith has the Word become flesh.

-E. Stanley Jones



THE essence of Christianity is not a standardized belief-system. The essence of Christianity is not a consensus of doctrine. The essence of Christianity is not commonality of creeds. Jesus Christ is the essence of Christianity.


-James A. Fowler



FEW WERE AS
CARELESS
OF ORTHODOX
FORMULAS
AS JESUS.

-C. K. Barrett



 AM not such a fool as to run amuck against theology, as some people in this day do. But what I wish to insist upon is that the first form of Christianity is not a theory, but a history, and that the revelation of God is the biography of a man.

-Alexander MacLaren



The doctrinal
statement of
Christianity,
which is the verbal
expression of
the Living Truth,
may have been
mistaken for
the Truth itself.

-Wesley W. Nelson



Those who
have succeeded in
defining doctrine
most closely
have lost Christ
most completely.

-James A. Stewart



PHYSICIANS are in constant danger of becoming calloused to suffering, lawyers are in danger of cynicism about justice, and those of us who think and talk and read and write about God are in danger of having the very words we use about God separate us from God, the most damning deformation of all.

-Eugene Peterson



THE trouble with "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" interpreters is that they contend for their interpretation as "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." They confound the Incarnation with their interpretation of it. They have the Incarnation neatly tied up in a package of statements about it and they contend for that package . . . But Jesus may have stepped out beyond the web of their own words long ago. The Word is always bigger than our words. Paul calls Jesus the "unspeakable gift"—you can't speak Him completely. In the end you have to kneel in adoration at the Wonder of the Word.

-E. Stanley Jones



THE OBJECT
OF FAITH
IS NOT
THE TEACHING
BUT THE
TEACHER.

-Soren Kierkegaard



TODAY the need is not primarily for the recovery of doctrine and truth. There may be a need in a large area for the restoration of fundamental truth and doctrine to its right place, but when you have it, when you have exact doctrine, you have no assurance of having life. It is possible to be exact and correct in your doctrine and to be perfectly dead. Whatever may be the need of the recovery of lost truth, the need over all, greater than all, is the recovery of spiritual revelation as to the Lord Jesus, to see Him anew.

-T. Austin-Sparks



*Beyond the sacred page
I seek thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for thee,
O Living Word!*

-Mary Lathbury

3

Your Christ
is too
institutional

*The Church is Christ's body,
in which he speaks and acts,
by which he fills everything
with his presence.*

EPHESIANS 1:23 (The Message)



In conversion you are not attached primarily to an **order**, nor to an institution, nor a **movement**, nor a set of beliefs, nor a **code** of action — you are attached **primarily to a Person**, and secondarily to these other things.


-E. Stanley Jones



SCHOLARS of Church History have indicated that the concept of orthodoxy was introduced into Christendom, not in the 1st Century, but early in the 4th Century, under the leadership of the Roman emperor Constantine. He desired a unified Christianity as a state religion, in order to consolidate his own power.

-Daniel Andersen



 ALL the wretched mess that exists in the organization of Christianity today would never have come about. It is because something specific in itself, either a movement, a mission, a teaching, a testimony, a fellowship, has taken the place of Christ.

-T. Austin Sparks



Christianity
appeals to all
nations, races and
creeds, but you
have made it **SO**
ecclesiastical
that it appeals to
nobody.

-Rabindranath Tagore



THE fundamentalist "Christian religion" in general has allowed doctrine, their belief system, to become the supreme issue. "Doctrine" becomes their basis of fellowship, acceptance, security, bonding, etc. It is a tragic misrepresentation of the Church when the basis of our commonality is calculated by doctrinal agreement, rather than the indwelling Lord Jesus.


-James A. Fowler



The substance and form of **Christianity** for very many is **not** the original, deep, heart-relatedness but is a tradition, a **creation** by men, a **product** of history, a crystallized **system**.

-T. Austin-Sparks



 YOU can sketch a fairly accurate picture of the history of the Church like this: God gave a wonderful fresh breath of Holy Spirit life (on the day of Pentecost, and repeatedly, during renewal down the centuries) and man comes along and says, “Wonderful! Now, let’s set up a Church preservation Society to keep things going.” And he begins to organize a new denomination, a new fellowship, a different structure, fresh rules and regulations and activities, during which the Holy Spirit quietly (and often unnoticed) makes his departure. Does this new forward looking framework collapse overnight? Not a bit of it! It goes on, year after year, even century after century—the world’s counterfeit of the real thing.

-David Watson



GREAT truths were restored to the church through every previous revival. Many of these truths were carried to extremes and error because the church allowed them to become the focal point in place of the only One upon Whom we must keep our attention. This has led to almost every disorientation, and it will every time we allow it to happen.

-Rick Joyner



PRACTICES and perspectives of Christianity separate from the Person of Christ eventually turn malignant. When principles about Him are isolated from Him... we eventually find ourselves with nothing to offer the world. You cannot have a kingdom without a King.


-Fawn Parish



MOST denominations originated with a genuine move of the Spirit which imparted truth to the church. These truths were meant to lead the church closer to Jesus, and unquestionably this was accomplished for many. However, with each of these movements there have always been people who never saw beyond the truth itself. They began to build their towers around the truths, rather than seeing them as mere stepping stones to The Truth. These towers have now become many of the denominations scattered across the spiritual landscape of Christianity.

-Rick Joyner



N the beginning the Church was a **fellowship** of men and women who centered their lives on the living Christ. They had a personal and vital **relationship** to the Lord. It transformed them and the world around them. Then the Church moved to Greece, and it became a **philosophy**. Later it moved to Rome, and it became an **institution**. Next it moved to Europe and it became a **culture**. Finally it moved to America, and it became an **enterprise**. We've got far too many churches and so few **fellowships**.

-Richard Halverson



Nearly every
denomination
or movement seems to
develop a **particular
slant** or system of tra-
ditions, some of which
ultimately **obscure** the
simplicity and purity
of **devotion** to
Christ.

-Francis Frangipagne



Many who should
be **disciples of
Jesus** today are still
only disciples of . . . a
reformer, a religious
group or even an **idea**
[that] has displaced
their **loyalty**
to **Jesus Christ**.


-Geoffrey T. Bull



MANY are the ...isms that have formed in the context of Christian religion over the centuries, and which serve as a denial of the divine reality of Christianity. Every such ...ism serves only as a pathetic diminishment of the divine display of Christ's life in Christians. They also serve as bunkers behind which religionists can hide in order to participate in their divisive positioning and posturing, instead of focusing together and being unified in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

-James A. Fowler



 WHAT am I going to work for? Am I going to work to try to establish some society, some denomination, or some 'undenomination,' to win a place for a teaching, or an interpretation, or a system of truth? Is it to some THING that I am devoted, or is it to secure for the Lord Jesus His absolute centrality and supremacy?


-T. Austin-Sparks



Beware of
anything that
competes
with loyalty
to Jesus
Christ.

-Oswald Chambers



S long as religion was denominational-centric God could not trust us with power. Had he done so, it would have run into a denominational megalomania . . . But if religion is Christ-centric, if to be a Christian is to be Christlike, to catch his mind and Spirit, then I think God can back that with power to the utmost . . . God can trust us with power here.

-E. Stanley Jones



What is true of all organizations, buildings, individual people, and the whole of creation is true of churches: They exhibit life when they are defined by and live out of a center rather than when they are defined by and live on the perimeter.

-Gregory A. Boyd



Judaism was a fold,
a circumference
without a center,
but Christianity is a flock,
where we have a
center without a
circumference. We
have no wall about us, but
we are gathered
around Him, our
Good Shepherd.

-H. A. Ironside



THE church is the church when it's all about the Initiator, the Originator, the Instigator, the Sacrificial Lamb of the Church. There is no other focal point, no other reason, no other point, no other motivation, no other structure... just the Person of Jesus living His life through His people... and His people inviting Him to do so.

-Sojourner magazine



The church has only
this task: **to em-
body Christ,**
manifest His nature,
demonstrate
God's love to the
world and proclaim
His Lordship **over**
all things.

-Manfred Haller



*If we are the Body
Why aren't His arms reaching
Why aren't His hands healing
Why aren't His words teaching*

*And if we are the Body
Why aren't His feet going
Why is His love not showing
there is a way.*

-Casting Crowns



The Church is **not**
a religious
community of
worshippers of Christ
but is **Christ Him-**
self who has taken
form among men.

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer



No assembly,
no church,
no movement,
no testimony,
no fellowship
is justified in its
existence from God's
standpoint except
insofar as Christ
is expressed
by it.

-T. Austin-Sparks



Christianity is
always and only
the dynamic
expression of the
life of Jesus
Christ in the
Christian,
individually and
collectively.

-James A. Fowler

4

Your Christ
is too
religious

*For in Christ, neither our most
conscientious religion nor disregard of
religion amounts to anything. What
matters is something far more interior:
faith expressed in love.*

GALATIANS 5:6 (The Message)



YOU DID NOT
RECEIVE A RELIGION
ABOUT JESUS,
BUT THE ACTUAL
PERSON
OF JESUS.

-Francis Frangipagne



His aim was
never to give us a
new religion in order
that we might live
a bit more de-
cently—in that case
Moses and his law
would have
sufficed.

-Christopher Blumhardt



God
is not
interested in
religion.

-William Temple



Take one look
at church history and
you will see that
Christianity needs
to hear the **message**
of Jesus as much
as or more than
most religions.

-Bruxy Cavey



Jesus
calls men,
not to a
new religion,
but to life.

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Religion
is a satanic
counterfeit
of a relationship
with God.

-Robert Heidler



Religious sin
is the only sin
Jesus publicly
confronted.

-Gregory A. Boyd



There are a
thousand ways
of being **religious**
without submitting
to **Christ's lord-**
ship, and people
are practiced in
most of them.

-Eugene Peterson



Satan is not,
as men suppose,
the instigator
of their crimes.
Religion is the
special sphere
of his influence.


-Sir Robert Anderson



Men never
do evil so
completely
and cheerfully as
when they do it
from religious
conviction.

-Blaise Pascal



HRISTIANITY as a religion is no better than Islam or Buddhism or Hinduism or any other man made religion. It is not Christendom that changes lives or changes history. It is the movement that Jesus began through his death and resurrection.

-Erwin Raphael McManus



The essence of
the religious spirit
is getting life from
being truer and more
righteous than others,
rather than getting life
from God alone
It is living from the
perimeter rather
than the center.

-Gregory A. Boyd



Rule 1: Don't have anything wrong with you.

Rule 2: If you do, get over it quickly.

Rule 3: If you can't get over it quickly, then fake it.

Rule 4: If you can't get over it quickly or fake it, then stay way from me. I don't want anyone to think I have it too.

Is it any wonder that people do not grow and cannot find healing in that kind of environment? Jesus offers us so much more.

-Brian Dodd



God's goal is
not to create people
who are religious.
His goal is to bring
men and women into
a **relationship**
with **Himself!**

-Robert Heidler



Our life is not to
be found in our correct
doctrine or in our
piety, as important
as these are.

To get life from
these **is religion.**

Our life is rather to
be found in **Jesus
Christ**, and in Jesus
Christ **alone.**

-Gregory A. Boyd



Religion... is
the attempted
replacement
of the divine
work by a
human
manufacture.


-Karl Barth



TO summarize church history in a crass, but not altogether inaccurate, way... Jesus came with the message "Religion is redundant. God has gone out of the religion business and he wants you to experience everything you turned to religion for—forgiveness, salvation, instruction—through me." And his followers said, "Wow. What a cool idea. We should build a religion out of that!" And they did.

-Bruxy Cavey



F all of our worth is found in Christ, and if we trust that this worth is unsurpassable, there is simply no extra worth to be gotten by such things as looking good, acting religious, or being successful.

-Gregory A. Boyd



Religion shifts
our focus off
Jesus Christ
and places it on our
selves and how
well we are or aren't
performing.

-Steve McVey



GOD is not interested in religion, but He is tremendously interested in life. You cannot read the NT without realizing that the Lord Jesus did not care a whit for the Sabbath regulations of his day when they were set against the need of a broken man for healing. God is not interested in stainglass windows, organ solos, congregation hymns or even pastoral prayers half so much as he is in producing love filled homes, generous hearts and brave men and women who can live right in midst of the world and keep their heads and hearts undefiled.

-Ray Stedman




We need to **ask**
forgiveness from
God, from the world,
for **being**
religious.

We have striven to be
religious when **we**
were called to
be loving.

-Gregory A. Boyd



 BELIEVE in a secular Christ. I do not believe in a religious Christ. I believe one of the whole difficulties of Christianity is we've put Christ in a special building for a special occasion, with special forms of worship, special music, special everything. Cut the special out; put your hands in your pocket and go in your old blue jeans. Christ is a secular person.

-Norman Grubb



Many a soul begins
to come to God
when he flings off
being religious,
because there is only
one Master of the
human heart, and that
is not religion but
Jesus Christ.

-Oswald Chambers



RELIGION . . . is a loser, a strictly fallen activity. It has a failed past and a bankrupt future. There was no religion in Eden and there won't be any in heaven; and in the meantime Jesus has died and risen to persuade us to knock it all off right now.

-Robert Capon



RELIGION is managed spirituality—an attempt to make people feel better about themselves without helping them discover the reality of their own friendship with the Living God. It is man's attempt to do God's work.

-Wayne Jacobsen



THE very credentials these people are waving around as something special, I'm tearing up and throwing out with the trash—along with everything else I used to take credit for. And why? Because of Christ. Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant—dog dung. I've dumped in all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced him . . . I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally.

-Paul the Apostle (The Message)

5

Your Christ
is too
sectarian

*Is Christ
divided?*

1 CORINTHIANS 1:13



Disunity in the
Body of Christ is
the scandal of
the ages. The
greatest sin of the
Church is not lying,
stealing, drunken-
ness, adultery—not
even murder—but the
sin of disunity.

-Paul E. Billheimer



The basis of
our fellowship
is not around this
doctrine, that
doctrine, the other
doctrine; or around this
group, that group,
or the other group. It is
around Christ and
only around
Christ.

-E. Stanley Jones



Christ is our unity,
not dogmas, not polities,
not rituals: our oneness is
a oneness of life.

We need for our centre no
tower with a top reaching
to heaven, we have a
living Lord who is
with us, and in Him, we
being many,
are one.

-Alexander MacLaren



WE DO NOT
MAKE A CREED,
BUT CHRIST
THE GROUND
AND TERM OF
UNION.

-John Nelson Darby



Christian Unity can
only be "in Christ".
It is based on the New
Birth and New Life
in Christ, and upon
the oneness of all
the members in
the Christ
who is the Head.


-G. T. Manley



Unity does not
come from
believing the
the same thing
but from
trusting the
same person.

-Mike Wells



 ONE might think that, with the Bible as the center of Christianity, the unity of Christians could be easily realized. But unfortunately this has not proved true, though we can consider it fortunate indeed that, as this inability to unify proves, the letter of the Bible cannot really replace the living Christ as the center of our faith.


-Kokichi Kurosaki



Give me men
that love me when
I differ from them
and contradict
them: those will be the
men to build up a
true church.

-Anthony Norris Groves



 ONE obstacle we must overcome is the illusion that we, because of our ability to "rightly divide the word," are more spiritual than those in other churches. This deception infects churches across the board. Consequently, we remain divided, kept in isolation by our own spiritual pride, never discerning that the enemy has the church down the street similarly thinking they are more spiritual than us.

-Francis Frangipagne



SO LONG AS
WE JUDGE CHRIST
TO BE DWELLING
WITH A MAN,
THAT IS OUR
WARRANT
FOR RECEIVING
HIM.

-Anthony Norris Groves



UNTIL I can learn to see my brother's faults as a mere mote compared with the reality of the Lord living in Him and on the other hand see my own critical and negative reaction to him as a great wooden beam of sin in myself, I shall never find the key to unity . . .

-Norman Grubb



That is the
bond of union
—that we
belong to Christ.
One with
Christ—that is
the great bond
to keep
before us.

-George Mueller



The problem
of unity will be
well on the way to
solution if the . . .
church makes
Christ central
and all else
marginal.

-E. Stanley Jones



SOME theological scholars have been insisting that the critical issue in the church is what we believe about Jesus Christ. In a very basic sense, he has always been the critical issue in the church and, for that matter, in history. Invariably and inevitably, when anything else is made the issue, it tends to divide those for whom Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord.

-Richard Halverson



THE gospel' is the announcement of the kingship of Jesus; 'justification by faith' reminds those who, abandoning their varied idolatries, have given their allegiance to Jesus that this very allegiance is the only distinguishing mark by which the renewed and united family of Abraham is to be known. All other possible distinguishing marks undermine the gospel itself, implying that the crucified and risen Jesus is not after all the one true king.

-N. T. Wright



Whenever the
periphery is in
danger of displac-
ing the center,
we are not far
removed from
idolatry.

-D. A. Carson



WHEN other issues are allowed to polarize those for whom Christ is Lord, that issue, whatever it is, elevated to a position of greater importance than Christ Himself. One eminent scholar for whom I have profound admiration and respect put it this way: *“Whatever you make the issue, you make the idol.”*

-Richard Halverson



The plagues of
controversy and
division and
weakness will be
largely lifted when
we get back to
the center—
Christ.


-E. Stanley Jones



I am persuaded
the more the love
of God is shed abroad
in our hearts, the more
all narrowness of
spirit will subside
and give way.

-George Whitefield



 HAVE come to a fixed conclusion: the issue is simply Jesus Christ . . . He is the hub, but too many of us are out on our favorite spokes like owls on different limbs. When we stand at the hub all the spokes are ours. And the closer we are to the hub the closer we are to all the spokes!

-Vance Havner



The Father has decreed that Christ's Church shall be united. His Son has purchased it, and the Holy Spirit is here to establish it. The battle you are facing is a distraction; the real issue is to maintain the oneness of Christ.

-Francis Frangipagne



Sectarianism
is essentially a
failure... to
embrace in our
affections all who
belong to
Christ.

-Author unknown




One church. **One**
faith. **One** Lord. Not
Baptist, not Methodist,
not Adventist.

Just Christians.
No denominations.
No hierarchies.
No traditions.

Just Christ.

-Max Lucado



 BRITISH nobleman preaching the gospel in Sweden some years ago was asked by a lady what church he belonged to. "To the Church of Christ" was his reply. "Yes, but to what branch?" she insisted. "Madam, I do not belong to any branch. I belong to the Trunk."

6

Your Christ
is too
trivial

*For some men, straying from these
things, have turned aside to
fruitless discussion...*


1 TIMOTHY 1:6 NASB



How many
leaders have
saddled their pet
peeves, drawn their
swords of bitterness
and launched into
battle against breth-
ren over issues that
are not worth
discussing?

-Max Lucado



 IN the present decade, preoccupation with styles of worship—traditional or renewed, organ or guitar, hymns or choruses, incense or balloons, recited or spontaneous prayers, old or new translations of the Bible—have upstaged the central drama of Calvary and Easter morning. Styles overshadow substance, form transcends content, the Church supplants Jesus.

-Brennan Manning



All these petty
little things that
divide the heart of the
saints is merely giving
ammunition to
the hosts of evil and
weakening the
spiritual power
of the saints.

-Harold St. John



If we do not keep
our attention
upon the ultimate
purpose of God,
we will continually
be distracted
by the lesser
purposes of God.

-Mike Bickle



WE are often distracted from the River of Life by the little tributaries that feed it. Only when we are able to see the sum of all truth are we able to accurately understand any single part of it. Jesus is the Sum of all spiritual truth. All things will be summed up in Jesus.

-Rick Joyner



THE Jerusalem leaders came near to smothering the gospel in the beginning. It was Paul who loosed it from its Jewish fetters. He dared follow the living Christ into the heart of paganism. He came back and told what God had wrought. The Jerusalem leaders... drew up some of the things considered essential for the Christians among Gentiles... "to abstain from things strangled and from blood." Binding up the gospel of Christ with that! Of course it dropped away, for the gospel was at grips with bigger issues. It may be that to future Christians some of the things that we consider essential in our systems will seem just as absurd as this does to us.

-E. Stanley Jones



The **problem** with
the church today is
not corruption. It is not
institutionalism. No, the
problem is **far more**
serious than some
thing like the minister
running away with the
organist. The problem is
pettiness. **Blatant**
pettiness.

-Mike Yaconelli



The sensitivity
of men to small
matters, and their
indifference to
great ones,
indicates a strange
inversion.

-Blaise Pascal



THE apostolic letters . . . seek to redirect the saints back onto Christ and away from a myriad of things seeking to rob them of their time, energy, attention, focus, and spiritual devotion... These distractions were abundant in the early Church. They became entangled in many things. The whole controversy of Jews and Gentiles; to be circumcised, or not to be circumcised; to marry, or to remain single; to keep the Sabbath, or not to keep the Sabbath; which foods to eat, and which foods not to eat; whether one should follow Peter, or Paul, or Apollos; to speak in tongues, or not to speak in tongues; how men should behave, and how women should behave; what about this, and what about that. On and on it went, and on and on it still goes today... We do not need more of the Lord, since we are already complete in Christ — we just need less of everything else.

-Chip Brogden



THE MAIN THING
IS TO KEEP
THE MAIN THING
THE MAIN
THING.


-Stephen R. Covey



TRUE discernment means not only distinguishing the right from the wrong; it means distinguishing the primary from the secondary, the essential from the indifferent, the permanent from the transient, the good and the better from the best.

-Sinclair Ferguson



 It is time the church quit pretending that pettiness doesn't matter. Pettiness has become a serious disease in the Church of Jesus Christ, a disease which continues to result in terminal cases of discord, disruption, and destruction.

-Mike Yaconelli



PERHAPS you've heard about the farmer who was out working in his field. He saw a mouse and that angered him. So he took his hoe and began to go after that mouse. He spent the next thirty minutes chasing and beating at that mouse and finally he killed it. Then he looked back and realized he had wrecked an acre of his crops.

-Warren Wiersbe



As long as we
in a small-minded way
put what is individual and
isolated in the fore-
ground, we are
torn by untruthfulness
and confusion. We are in
conflict. We lose ourselves
in superficialities.
We persist in folly.
We remain in death.

-Eberhard Arnold



Nothing is
more unworthy
of a wise man
or ought to trouble
him more than to
have allowed
more time for
trifling useless
things than they
deserve.

-Plato



Look at things
largely and
don't spend
your life playing
with pieces of
scaffolding.

-Harold St. John



How many
pulpit hours
have been
wasted on
preaching the
trivial?

-Max Lucado



WE patter into arguments about predestination; we wool-gather in the third heaven; we digress into conjectures about the atonement; we divert ourselves by counting miracles or collecting grammatical oddities. And then St. John's vision interrupts us. We are startled out of our woolgathering digressions, our tangential arguments, our inattentive diversions. Our imaginations are kindled with a vision—of Christ. We are roused, attentive, alert. Everything suddenly is in proportion. Christ is the last word... This is the goal towards which everything is aimed... The Revelation gives us the last word on Christ, and the word is that Christ is the center and at the center.

-Eugene Peterson



Things which
matter **most**
must never
be at the **mercy**
of things which
matter **least.**

-Johann W. Goethe



MAY the Lord keep you from entering into the curious questions at home. I believe these subjects which cause such contention are really like small dust on a scale, in comparison with the preservation of love and harmony in Christ's body.

*-From a letter by Anthony Norris
Groves to his wife, 1849*



WHEN we are concentrated upon the primary purposes of God the secondary purposes will then serve the one. If our eye is single, on Him, then the whole body will be full of light. If our eye is not single but divided into the many secondary purposes, it will become darkness instead of light. Even though they may be truths they will still deceive us; they will become distorted and extreme if our focus is not on the Lord Himself.

-Rick Joyner



There are an
infinity of
angles at which
one falls, only
one at which
one stands.

-G. K. Chesterton



THERE is only one safe and sure center of Christian experience, doctrine and testimony and that is Jesus Christ. Stand at any other point, no matter how good, and you will become lopsided. Stand with Him and you keep your balance, for by Him all things consist.

-Vance Havner



From a proud
doctor of theology,
from a contentious
pastor, and
from useless
questions,
may God deliver
his Church.

-Martin Luther



Gentlemen,
for the love of
God, let us buy
big maps.

-Lord Salisbury

7

Your Christ
is too
finite

*Christ . . . gives us
the best picture of God
we'll ever get.*

2 CORINTHIANS 1:6 (The Message)



Jesus Christ
Himself is the
final exegesis
of all truth. He is
all that we need to
know about
God.

-Major W. Ian Thomas



The Revelation
of God is not
a book or a
doctrine, but a
living Person.

-Emil Brunner



Wisdom,
God's blueprint
for humans, at last
herself becomes
human.

The Shekinah
turns out to have a
human face.

-N. T. Wright



Jesus Christ
is the singular
essence and
expression of the
gospel, of the
revelation of God,
of Christianity,
of the Church...

-James A. Fowler



JESUS
IS GOD
LIVED BY
MAN.

-Frederick Godet



HE [JESUS] IS
THE LIVING,
CONCRETE,
EMBODIED
PICTURE OF
GOD.

-Gregory A. Boyd



HERE'S the statement that I recommend you chew on a little bit: GOD IS JESUS. When you see Jesus, you are seeing God, not just because Jesus is God, but also because God is Jesus. Jesus is the One who shows us who God is and what God is like.

-Trevin Wax



JESUS
WAS GOD'S
EXACT
REPLICA.


-Philip Yancey



WHEN people think of God they often think of him more like an exalted, detached spiritual being, a great angel, in fact, without much to do with our world of space, time and matter. I'm glad they don't believe in that God; because nor do I. I believe in the God whose exact imprint is on display gurgling in the manger, arguing in the Temple, bleeding on the cross. I believe in the God made known in Jesus...

-N. T. Wright



 WE see the Father in the face of his Son. God is like Jesus in character. Transfer every characteristic of character from Jesus to God, and you do not lower your estimate of God—you heighten it. For there is nothing higher for God or humans than to be Christlike. Jesus is God simplified, God approachable, God understandable, God lovable. When I say “God” I think Jesus. And nothing higher can be thought or said! Jesus is the last word that can be said about God.

-E. Stanley Jones



In Jesus, God lay
down on the dissec-
tion table, as it were,
stretched out in
cruciform posture for
the scrutiny of
all skeptics who
have ever lived.

-Philip Yancey



Jesus is the Word
of God. He is not
the best Word. He
is not the ultimate
Word. He is not
the seal of series of
improving words.
He is the Word.

-Author unknown



An old Chinese scholar, after listening for the first time to the story of the loving, sacrificing God, exclaimed to his neighbor, “Didn’t I tell you there ought to be a God like that?”

-E. Stanley Jones



There are many things we can't explain. However now we have an explanation of God's nature—Jesus Christ. There need never be confusion about Him again.

-Eugenia Price



LET JESUS
DEFINE
WHO GOD IS.
NOT
YOUR DAD,
NOT
YOUR PEERS.

-Gregory A. Boyd



I know of
no God other
than the one
called Jesus
Christ.

-Martin Luther



God's total
explanation
of Himself to
man is Jesus
Christ.

-Eugenia Price



Anything that
one imagines of
God apart from
Christ is only use-
less thinking and
vain idolatry.

-Martin Luther



If I were to sit
down to try to think out
the kind of God
I would like to see in the
universe, for the life of me,
I couldn't think of
anything higher than
that He should be
like Christ.

-E. Stanley Jones



DO you want to know what is on the mind of God? Then look at Jesus! Do you want to know the will of God? Then look at Jesus! Do you want to know what is in the heart of God? Then look at Jesus! Jesus is the exact representation of what is on the mind and heart and in the will of God!

-Anne Graham Lotz



Your image of
God is the single-
most important
element of your
spiritual journey.

-Graham Cooke



My brothers and
sisters, Jesus is
our God. He and
the Father are one.
He is the image of
the invisible
God. Our Jesus im-
age makes all the
difference.

-Brennan Manning



The greatest
news that has ever
been broken to
the human race
is the news that
God is like
Christ.


-E. Stanley Jones



WHAT MAKES
CHRISTIANITY
CHRISTIAN
IS CENTERING
IN GOD
AS KNOWN
IN JESUS.

-Marcus J. Borg



 ONLY to the extent that we resolve in our minds and hearts that God looks like Jesus—dying a God-forsaken death on the cross in order to open up the fellowship of the perfect, loving, triune community—can we make any progress in expressing God's love in our lives.

-Gregory A. Boyd



GEORGE Buttrick, former chaplain at Harvard, recalls that students would come into his office, plop down on a chair and declare: “I don’t believe in God.”

Buttrick would give this disarming reply: “Sit down and tell me what kind of God you don’t believe in. I probably don’t believe in that God either.” And then he would talk about Jesus, the corrective to all our assumptions about God.

-Philip Yancey

8

Your Christ
is too
cluttered

*There is only Christ . . .
He is everything.*

COLOSSIANS 3:11 (Jerusalem Bible)



Our greatest
need, and God's
greatest gift to
US, is to awaken us
to the sufficiency,
supremacy, and
destiny, of the Lord
Jesus Christ.

-Fawn Parish



The one who
has **Christ** has
everything.
The one who has
everything except
for **Christ** really
has **nothing**.

-Augustine of Hippo



Re-state to yourself
what you believe,
then do away with
as much of it
as possible, and get
back to the bedrock
of the Cross
of Christ.

-Oswald Chambers



The risen victorious
Jesus . . . was all
the early Christian
community had . . .
That's not rhetoric;
that's history. They
had only Jesus and we
keep thinking that
we need some-
thing else.

-Brennan Manning



THERE is only one relationship that matters, and that is your personal relationship to a personal redeemer and Lord. Let everything else go, but maintain that at all costs, and God will fulfill His purpose through your life.

-Oswald Chambers



He must mean
everything to us
and to be united
to Him must
become the
greatest passion
of our lives.

-James M. Houston



GOD is calling us to an undistracted passion for His Son. There are many dazzling things to distract us. The distractions are not necessarily evil, they're more like Moses and Elijah appearing with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration; interesting, even significant, but not where God desires our eyes to rest.

-Fawn Parish



I fear, lest somehow as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

-Paul the Apostle



We must **strive to**
proclaim a mes-
sage that "re-converts"
Christians **back to**
Christ for ALL that He
is—transforming
many, once again,
into **Person-**
driven disciples.

-David Bryant



IF CHRISTIANITY were merely...

- BIBLE KNOWLEDGE, the best Christians would be those who most diligently accumulated it.
- DOCTRINE, the best Christians would be those who most accurately defined it.
- THEOLOGY, the best Christians would be those who most thoroughly studied it.
- ETHICS, the best Christians would be those who most carefully practiced it.
- RELIGION, the best Christians would be those who most dutifully observed it.



IF CHRISTIANITY were merely...

-EVANGELISM, the best Christians would be those who most zealously promoted it.

SERVICE, the best Christians would be those who most tirelessly performed it.

HOLINESS, the best Christians would be those who most rigorously perfected it.

BUT CHRISTIANITY IS CHRIST,
and therefore the best Christians are those know Him intimately and reflect His character.



*Be Thou my vision,
O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me,
Save that Thou art;
Thou my best thought
By day or by night
Waking or sleeping,
Thy presence my light.*

-8th Century Irish hymn



He is a path, if any be misled,
He is a robe, if any naked be,
If any chance to hunger,
He is bread,
If any be a bondman,
He is free,
If any be but weak,
How strong is He,
To dead men life He is,
To sick men health,
To blind men sight,
And to the needy wealth,
A pleasure without loss,
A treasure without stealth.

-Giles Fletcher



God cannot
give us happiness
and peace **apart**
from Himself
because it is not
there. There is **no**
such thing.

-C. S. Lewis



BACK TO JESUS ALONE

When you can't figure out whether to sit at His feet, walk in a manner worthy of His call, stand in battle, or run the race with diligence, ***It is time to get back to Jesus alone . . .***

When you can't even remember: The twenty-two characteristics of a good wife or husband, the seven steps of appeal to authority, the eight things to do when you are worried, or the nine ways of love, ***It is time to get back to Jesus alone . . .***



When you hear: it is pre, mid, post, a, or pan, don't take the "mark," it is "time, time and half a time," and you can't get through the next hour, ***It is time to get back to Jesus alone . . .***


When you hear testimonies of others: raising the dead, praying all night, fasting forty days, leading thousands to the Lord, and memorizing the entire Bible, and you hear it through someone who hasn't done any of it, ***It is time to get back to Jesus alone . . .***



When you hear: have faith, work hard, repent, conquer, give, suffer, sacrifice, evangelize, make disciples, wait on Him, walk in Him, pick up your cross, claim your possessions, and pray, and you feel pulled then different directions on a rack, ***It is time to get back to Jesus alone . . .***


-Jim May



 ARE you tired? Worn out?
Burned out on religion?
Come to me. Get away with
me and you'll recover your life.
I'll show you how to take a real
rest. Walk with me and work
with me — watch how I do it.
learn the unforced rhythms of
grace. I won't lay anything
heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep
company with me and you'll
learn to live freely and lightly.”


*-Jesus Christ - Matthew 11:28-30
(The Message)*



 HAVE a dream that the centrality and supremacy of Jesus Christ will be the focus, the mainstay, and the pursuit of every Christian and every church. And that God's dear people will no longer be obsessed with spiritual and religious things to the point of division. But that their obsession and pursuit would be a person—the Lord Jesus Christ.

-Frank Viola



 WHAT I am praying for is for a great surge of emphasis upon spiritual formation that will enable us to move beyond defending doctrinal positions, or debating formulations, beyond a mainly intellectual approach to the Christian faith, all the way to that place where persons experience a dynamic, personal relationship with a living God.

-Dwight Grubbs



JESUS IS ALL
WE HAVE;
HE IS ALL
WE NEED
AND ALL WE
WANT.

-Vance Havner



YES, all things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, I've dumped it all in the trash so that I can embrace Jesus and be embraced by Him.

-Paul the Apostle



All we need
are hearts that
will not be
satisfied
with something
or someone less
than Him.

-Francis Frangipagne



We must **never**
again allow
ourselves to
be **distracted**
from the
simplicity
of devotion to
Christ Himself.

-Rick Joyner



The End

*(Although we will
never get to the end of
exalting His greatness.)*



The Author

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