

WHY DON'T WE JUST LOVE EVERYBODY?

Dear Bro. Waddey: I love the Lord. I am fifth generation church of Christ. I have attended church of Christ schools from first grade all the way through university. I have given my life to sharing the Good news of Jesus with those who need him most. As I write this message I am sitting in Africa where I have been serving since 1995.

I have watched so many brothers in Christ fight argue and divide. If we looked at our church planting in the US we would see that many of our local congregations were birthed through splits and division. Much of our church growth has come from baptizing our kids. How many of those kids are we keeping? If we took a close look at the statistics we would see that we are not even doing a good job keeping our kids.

I think it is high time that we start loving each other. We need to share that love with everyone Muslim, Hindu, or any member of a "denomination".

Are we in the church of Christ known because "we love one another?" May more believers in Christ take seriously the new commandment Jesus gave us.

One of the early restoration slogans should not be forgotten, "Christian only not the only Christians!"

May we be accused of loving people too much! Jamie

Dear Bro. Jamie: Thanks for sharing your thoughts. I too have spent some time in Africa, four different nations. It was a joy to share the gospel with those in that great field white unto harvest.

I could not agree with you more about loving our brethren. Also I agree with you that our work here at home leaves much to be desired. I too preach that evangelism is our great need (Matt. 28:19). Yet I do believe that just as Ephesus had left her first love and needed to be called back and just as Paul observed that some would depart from the faith and in his letter warned against that (I Tim. 4:1-2), we too have to deal with such problems. It is not be choice or from pleasure that I do so but because I, like you, love the church and want to see her prosper. While we must love each other from the heart fervently, we must remember that it is truth that makes us and our converts free (John 8:32). As you teach your African brothers and sisters to love each other you must also teach them to love Christ and that means to keep his commandments (John 14:15).

Do a good job for the Master. You are in my prayers. May the good seed you sow bear fruit unto eternity.

Your brother in Christ and his kingdom, JHW