

Could An Atheist or Satanist Baptize One Into Christ?
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Some assert that '*an atheist, an unbeliever (e.g. Muslim), a devil worshipper (Satanist) or the Devil himself could baptize one into Christ.*' I strongly disagree with that assertion and aver that the scriptures authorize only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God to teach/baptize others. I have discussed this topic via the Internet twice with some professed gospel ministers based in USA. On each occasion, I was cut-short in my delivery and was banned from the Facebook Groups '*What Does The Bible Say*' & '*Questions And Answer From the Bible.*' I have challenged some Admins [managers] of both sites to a public DEBATE on an OPEN and NEUTRAL forum but they have never accepted my offer. You can search for these discussions on Threads related to baptism on their pages but I doubt if such are preserved. It is for this reason that I am putting together this summary article to address their arguments and position, to scripturally/logically answer ALL their questions and re-state my own questions which they did not answer. Please note that one of them actually deleted some of my posts even DURING the discussions and, by blocking me prevented me from clarifying any latter issues they raised or felt was unaddressed. A Thread was closed with the Admins forbidding more comments from anyone. One even said that he would remove the Thread entirely. They always deflect issues to the validity of the salvation of the person who is baptized whereas this is primarily a question of authority. Nevertheless both angles will be looked into. The reasons which they advance for the position that an atheist/unbeliever etc. could immerse one into Christ are numerous; the common arguments will be examined in light of the scriptures.

First, we note that the basic that God expects someone to be taught, to know today and to believe for salvation are the core of the gospel:

1. Jesus the Son of God and a descendant of David by earthly lineage was given that we might not perish, he died for our sins, was buried and he arose on the third day for our justification -Jn 3:16, Rm 1:1-4; 5:1-11; 10:9-10, 1 Cor 15:1-4
2. The resurrected Jesus is now Lord and Christ, the one with all authority and king in the kingdom of God (church) –Act 2:22-36, Eph 1:20-23

These require that one repent, confess his name, be baptized for forgiveness of sins and become his subject -Mt 28:18-19, Acts 2:38; 8:12,37; 17:30-31. The facts in 1 & 2 can simply be summarized as "*believing that Jesus is the Son of God or Christ*" and is the purpose for which the book of John in particular and the New Testament in general, was written. If that is believed then one could be called a **believer**. When a believer thereafter obeys the gospel (via confession, repentance and baptism), he becomes a disciple. Philip first ensured that the Eunuch believed before he baptized him. It is the new born babe or Christian who now feeds on the word of God for growth and in fellowship with others get taught to obey whatsoever things Christ has commanded –Mt 28:20, 1 Pet 2:2, Heb 5:12-6:3.

ARGUMENT: You are saying that one cannot simply read the Bible and then become a Christian. He has to rely on a direct operation of God and have a pseudo-believer sent to him. The seed is the word of God (Lk 8:11). Do you believe that a man must have the help of another man to understand scripture? Yes or no? Do you believe that God has communicated in scripture in such a way that a man can read it and understand it without the aid of another man and obey it? Yes or no? You are adding a step to salvation. Hear, believe, repent, confess, FIND A FELLOW BELIEVER, and be baptized.

REPLY: The word of God is the seed quite alright (Lk 8:11) BUT man is the SOWER (Lk 8:5). The seed does not sow itself but preachers plant it and water, it is God that gives increase -1 Cor 3:6-7. It is the PREACHING of the gospel that is God's power unto salvation (Rm 1:16) for faith comes by HEARING (Rm 10:17). It is not committed to atheists to preach/baptize because the gospel is FOOLISHNESS to

such -1 Cor 1:21-25. The seed, the gospel is ENTRUSTED and committed unto man (earthen vessels -2 Cor 5:4-7). The word of truth is a thing angels desire to look into but it was not committed unto them (1 Pet 1:12, Heb 2:3-5, 1 Tim 3:15). **See the following passage for how God designed evangelism for the salvation of the world:** Romans 10:13-15 *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”*

The Bible is the number one best-selling book in the world and is freely available on the Internet so YOU want to do away with preachers and teachers of the gospel?? Sinners will not miraculously understand the gospel. Even when someone reads the scripture today (or access a religious material), such is still being taught by the writer who intended that his message be understood (Eph 3:4). The Ethiopian Eunuch did not understand by himself though one possibly may with diligent study now that the scripture is completely revealed. That the Scriptures have been inspired and are available does not obviate the need for the church to uphold and proclaim the truth via Teachers and Preachers. My point is that she cannot evade this task or delegate it to alien sinners. To claim otherwise is to ask the church to ‘close shop’ with the assumption that each sinner may teach, baptize and edify himself. YES, it is possible for one to understand the scripture without the help of another but it is not always possible to obey it all alone by oneself as an individual without the presence of others... E.g. observing the Lord's Supper when disciples come together, excommunicating an erring & unrepentant brother when the whole church is come together into one place, teaching and admonishing one another, etc. After asking repeatedly if a sinner could baptize himself, one of you conceded that ***"One can NOT baptize themselves as one must confess before another or others and there must be witnesses so at least one other person must be present."*** Thus he inadvertently admitted that one ACTUALLY NEEDS THE HELP (presence) OF ANOTHER PERSON before he can be baptized and saved! So... even if a prospect does not need help to understand unlike the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:31) such would still have to confess before another and then be immersed. Now, why is a witness needed? Would a baby suffice or an atheist or a believer? Who constitutes a credible witness for the good confession? See Mt 10:32, Rm 10:9-10, Acts 8:37-38, 1 Tim 6:12 and think deeply about that! I am not adding to the steps for salvation. You got it twisted because according to the Bible, it is the believer that finds you, preaches to you directly or by letter etc. for you to hear, that urges you to repent and before whom you confess your belief, and it is such that baptizes you or send another to do it!"

ARGUMENT: When Christians are available they may baptize but are not the only ones authorized to do it. A man could read the Bible and come to a knowledge that he needed saved and put on Christ in Baptism in a country where he was the only person who believed in Jesus. No one should jeopardize his salvation by waiting for a believer.

REPLY: You are simply rationalizing for an unbiblical concept and is short of bible references to support your claims! How does the Bible authorize? Can you provide any statement, command, example or passage that inferentially shows that atheists/unbelievers could and did baptize anyone into Christ? From the gospels to the book of Acts, we have believers mandated to teach/baptize and only such are recorded to have done so. Cornelius and Saul were somewhat familiar with the way (Acts 10:37; 22:9-12) but did not get unbelievers to baptize them. They did not endanger their salvation by waiting for some days for God's purpose to be fulfilled when the Lord sent each Peter and Ananias respectively. Interestingly, the preachers were hesitant to go but the Lord got them to the desired destinations. Those ministers did not

argue with God that unbelievers around the prospects could do the job! Jonah despite his initial resistance ended up where God wanted him to be. The God who sent Paul into Macedonia and allowed him to be shipwrecked on Malta can and will send gospel teachers to teach and baptize people everywhere he is sought after. Providence work things out for the good of those that love God. They that hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled according to the scriptural pattern. You claim to be an Evangelist but is unwilling to leave your comfort zone in order to go work in a far or unfamiliar/unfriendly region. Could this be a motive for your doctrine? A reason why the baptizer is probably considered an issue today is because of the plausibility of preaching unto distant persons by radio, web, satellite tv, phone, etc. Thus the rationalization that Christians may teach the truth while unbelievers do the baptizing of the prospects! In 2014, one of you preached via SKYPE to a Baptist congregation in Pakistan. No brother was reached and physically sent to assist them despite the fact that there were Christians in that country. They were converted and their confession of faith taken by phone. Their baptism was equally remotely supervised and watched online. Their own minister coordinated the immersions. While it would have been better if someone actually went down to assist, no known atheist/unbeliever immersed anyone on that occasion.

ARGUMENT: The baptizer is totally immaterial, anyone may do it. Explain then Paul saying “*For Christ sent me not to baptize.*”

REPLY: Was Paul in absolute terms saying he was not sent to baptize? Paul himself was baptized (Acts 22:12-16) and after his conversion, preached to and baptized people including many Corinthians (Acts 18:1-8) and those men whose knowledge needed to be made current or more perfect in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7). However, while he did a lot of preaching, it is evident from I Corinthians 1 that he did not do most of the baptisms with his own hands, implying that his companions must have done that. [This is not surprising for they often assisted with the writing of his letters, to which he would just append his signature greetings.] He always ensured the baptism of those he preached unto. Recall that Jesus did not baptize with his own hands but his disciples did while he taught (Jn 4:1-3). [Possibly because he wanted to focus more on the word and for none to feel superior that he was personally immersed by the savior.] The Corinthians were segregating themselves after their favourite preachers. Paul's statement in 1 Cor 1:17 when read within the context of that chapter truly means; “*For Christ sent me not to baptize {people into my own name} but to preach the gospel {and make men His followers}.*” He was not downplaying baptism but showing that another not necessarily the direct soul-winner can baptize a convert; for people must be baptized into Christ before they can claim to be Christians and should therefore not wear sectarian names. Paul's purpose was not to cultivate personal followers but to bring others into fellowship with Christ by preaching, irrespective of whether another believer (Apollos/Peter/Timothy/etc.) baptized or nurtured them; so long as they were baptized into and follow none but the crucified and risen saviour. Paul could never have fulfilled his ministry (received in Acts 26:18) if he later opposed Mt 28:18-20 & Mk 16:15-16. No wonder when his preaching was believed, he **immediately got** the Corinthians, Jailor/Lydia households, disciples at Ephesus, etc. baptized. 1 Cor 1:17 could be a strong delusion sent to ‘*faith-only groups*’ and ‘*Atheist-may-baptize-folks.*’

ARGUMENT: Does scripture require the faith of both the immersed and the one assisting for acceptability? Does it matter what the one assisting in the immersion thinks or believes? An atheist or unbeliever could baptize someone. Such a baptism is valid since God has placed no requirement on the baptizer. There is no scripture regulation concerning the baptizer. The point here is there are no qualifications for a baptizer the onus is on the one being baptized. As long as the one being baptized has

the proper heart and understanding. The baptizer is of no consequence. IF you want you want to prove anything, fill in these blanks:

In _____ (Bible reference) the Scriptures state that the administrator of the baptism must be _____ (instructions regulating baptizer) in order that the baptism of the penitent believer to be valid.

Here is another:

In _____ (Bible reference) the Scriptures state that _____ (exact words) MUST BE ORALLY SPOKEN BY THE BAPTIZER in order for the penitent believer's baptism to be valid.

REPLY: You are presuming too much, God does place requirement on those who are to teach and baptize, this is evident when we analyze the great commission and Paul's inspired charge to others.

Mark 16:14-17a *"Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that BELIEVE..."*

From Mark, it is evident that it is those that **believe** on the sonship and resurrection of Jesus that are mandated and expected to preach. They are to baptize those who believe the gospel.

Matthew 28: 18-20 *"And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye **therefore**, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them **into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."*

From Matthew we gather many facts:

- a) It is on the basis of the recognition of Christ's authority that one therefore go on to make disciples.
- b) The imperative shows that disciples are to be made **by** teaching and baptizing. Those who believe on Christ are to do the teaching and it is the same group that are mandated to do the baptizing.
- c) The action was to be done UPON the target/recipients. Those commissioned are the ones instructed 'baptizing them.' This shows that the nations/sinners are not to baptize themselves rather they were to be immersed by their teachers; 'be baptized' as seen in Acts 2:37-41.
- d) The one immersing the subject HAS TO do it with the understanding that the convert is being baptized "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Clearly, an unrepentant atheist (by definition) who denies the existence/authority of God/Godhead CAN NOT do that. The baptizer and convert both need to accept that baptism is in submission to the authority of Christ and the recipient is thereby being put into a union/relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- e) The concluding instruction after GO YE... *"teaching them to observe al things whatsoever I have commanded you..."* is also clear as to the role of training or feeding the babes in Christ; effort on the part of mature brethren is required -verbally, in writing, in conduct, etc. It is inconsistent (**and indeed a lie**) for you to posit that of the commands *"teaching and baptizing them ...and teaching them to observe"*, ONLY 'baptizing' is addressed to no-one in particular while the rest are meant for believers! Those baptized on Pentecost continued in the apostles' doctrine –Acts 2:42.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 *"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found FAITHFUL.*

1 Timothy 1:12; 4:16 *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me FAITHFUL, putting me into the ministry... Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; **continue in them**: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."*

2 Timothy 2:2-4 “*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to FAITHFUL men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*”

The above passages show that brethren especially ministers of the gospel should be faithful. Those who believe or are of faith are the ones to be trained to teach/baptize others and amidst such men will church officers be appointed (Acts 6, 1 Tim 3). Each Christian maintains an army position in God’s kingdom wherein Jesus is the ruler/commander-in-chief. Unbelievers/atheists, etc. are enemy troops.

Going by your reasoning, you may as well claim there is no Bible directive on who is to ordain elders in a congregation! May an atheistic woman or any unbeliever appoint elders/deacons for a church of Christ? **If NO, how do we know??** It is simply by abiding with what the Bible says (2 John 9). We know from the New Testament that ministers are the ones mandated to do it. All examples recorded in scripture so indicate (Acts 6, 14, 20, 1 Tim 3-5, Tit 1). If a congregation has no preacher then they must first get or send for one. To do otherwise is lawlessness and missing the mark. Similarly a penitent should await/send for a believer to obtain his confession and to baptize him into Christ. God answers prayers (Acts 10:1-4, 31-35) and evangelists must be up and doing. Your repeated fill-in-the-blank question is side-stepping. Here is the answer if you will receive it:

In Mt 28:18-20 (Bible reference) the Scriptures state that **the administrator of the baptism must be ABLE TO UNDERSTAND (or acknowledge) THAT BY THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST, HE IS IMMERSING THE SUBJECT [who has been taught the gospel and who believes it (Mk 16:16) as evidenced by repentance (Acts 16:31-33) and/or confession (Acts 8:37)] INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GODHEAD** (instructions regulating baptizer) in order that the baptism of the penitent believer to be valid.

If the baptizer disavows the above as an atheist or unbeliever or church of Satan will, it is an exercise in futility irrespective of what the subject believes. Those requirements are necessary otherwise a baptism into Christ occurs every time someone is taught to swim or that a parent bathes a child in a full tub! Surely, an atheist/unbeliever neither recognize the authority of Christ nor believe in the Godhead. He does NOT accept that baptism saves rather he sees the gospel as foolishness and the immersion exercise as a bath to remove filth from the body (1 Pet 3:21b). He despises the Lord; is not making a disciple of the one who confess Christ but is blasphemously humoring a joker.

In Acts 9 & 10 we see from the case of Paul & Cornelius that it is NECESSARY to wait for a believer to exhort and immerse a prospect rather than for one to baptize himself or call upon an unbeliever to do so. Naaman immersed himself in Jordan for healing... because he was instructed to do so (2 Kg 5). Those who believe Jesus is the Son of God are commanded to preach to and baptize sinners. ALL scriptural examples confirm this. Perhaps those who think it is burdensome/unwise to send for a believer to do it or think God cannot always provide one advocate for calling on an unbeliever to do it. Why is it appropriate for an atheist to baptize someone who believes than for the penitent sinner to baptize himself? If a sinner could teach/baptize himself then an individual will constitute the church (contrary to 1 Cor 12:14) and there will be neither need for fellowship nor Teachers/Preachers. It is a true logical implication that if the baptizer is totally immaterial or irrelevant then a sinner could baptize himself!

As per your second fill-in-the-blanks question, the Bible has not spelt out the EXACT WORDS THAT MUST BE ORALLY SPOKEN at a baptism. What is being done has already been mutually understood and agreed upon by the parties involved. If the baptizer says anything while dipping the penitent believer,

it has to be edifying and conform to acknowledging the authority of Christ. If what is SAID at the event is immaterial then ANYTHING may be said and if one insists that nothing should be said then that would be curious. Acts 19:1-7 shows that it does matter '*unto what one is baptized.*' Those men were previously taught and immersed into an outdated relationship! They should have been immersed into the Messiah who had come but they were not. If someone says he is just dunking you under water for fun or is putting you into Satan or is baptizing you into a denomination because you are already saved then you are **not** being baptized into Christ and his body (church).

ARGUMENT: I can trace my spiritual ancestry back to the Campbell/Stone movement which restored Christianity in the United States to people who were not baptized by believers. If the administrator of the baptism is important, then all Christians in the United States of America are hell bound. Those men found anyone they could to baptize them. Campbell was baptized by an unbeliever. You don't know what a believer is. A believer is one who is saved. If a man read the Bible and then wanted to obey the gospel but he was the first in generations to do so....he would have to be baptized by a nonbeliever. If all Christians were to die out and then someone dug up a Bible, that person read the Bible, could that person become a Christian? According to your doctrine, an atheist could not baptize me but a devil could ...(Jas. 2:19). According to you, this man is a believer and is eligible to baptize someone:

"And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, ...But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not (Mark 5:2, 5-6)."

REPLY: You construct fanciful scenarios like the fellow who claims baptism is not essential because a sinner may die on the way to get it done. So what... if God isolate the unrepentant wicked or allow a mocker to die? The great commission was given unto believers: I was baptized by one not an atheist and that suffices. Jesus had promised that his church would not die (Mt 16:18) and that it will glorify him throughout all ages. Ever read Eph 3:20-21 that states "*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in **the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.***" God says that the gospel will be preached in all nations (Isa 2, Mt 24, 28, etc.) It is FALSE doctrine to claim that the church will die out, may die out or once died out! One can restore some apostasy laden group to the faith but no one restored Christianity to the world as it was never lost since the day of Pentecost. There were Christians in USA before the Campbell/Stone group gained prominence, even a former President ministered in the Lord's church before the so-called restoration movement. Campbell got someone who believed in Jesus as Christ to baptize him, not an atheist. Imagining that his baptism was invalid (which I never said or implied) is troubling some.

From sources online, e.g. <http://www.therestorationmovement.com/.../highers01.htm> : "*on June 12, 1812, Alexander Campbell, along with his wife, father, mother, and others, was immersed by Matthias Luce, a Baptist minister, not according to Baptist usage, but upon a simple confession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah. This immersion took place in a deep pond in Buffalo Creek near the home of David Bryant.*"

The man who baptized the Campbells was a BELIEVER NOT an atheist or unbeliever. Do you know the difference? Even if you think he was not a Christian because he did not share your doctrinal views, you cannot deny that he believed that Jesus is the Christ.

The great commission was unto who? To believers. There were no Christians until after the day of Pentecost, Acts 11:26 is basic! I am amazed that you do not know that in the New Testament, a believer is a human being who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (Jn 3:16, 20:31), one who is such as should be

saved and thus added unto the Lord (Acts 2:47; 5:14). It is only those believers who continue in His word that are disciples indeed. While on earth, many of the Jewish rulers believed on Jesus but they were NOT SAVED BECAUSE they did not confess him, *see Jn 12:42-43 and Mt 10:32-33*. Saved people are believers but not everyone who believes is saved. Mk 16:16 should make that clear. Your assertion that the Devil is a believer who could baptize one is disingenuous because I earlier wrote that "*the notion expressed that an atheist or the Devil could baptize one is wrong!*" The gospel is committed unto men not demons or angels and if one is not taught/baptized by another human, he cannot be saved. How many times do I have to cite Rom 10, Mt 28 and Eph 3 for that? If any sinner should read the Bible today and understand it perfectly, he is still taught by the writing of men who were God's messengers: he will also need another human being to baptize him not a devil or an angel! Otherwise, God would have allowed the angel to teach and baptize Cornelius. The demoniac out of the tombs was not speaking by himself or of his own mind. Verses 8-10 shows Jesus was conversing with the evil spirit which possessed the man and had commanded it to come out. You have no point. Campbell's baptism was preceded by confession of Christ and his baptizer understood/accepted that as we find in Acts 8:36-38. The Baptist minister was not an atheist no matter how much you wanted him to be.

ARGUMENT: If a NON Christian can baptize someone, then an atheist can baptize someone. There is no Scripture which you can use to prove that a Non Christian can baptize someone. It is YOU that has to deal with the arguments people present which show that a "believer" is not needed.

REPLY: I do not really know what you have been studying but it obviously isn't the Bible alone. You must have had help, to come to these fallacious conclusions which you advocate. I urge you to believe the Bible and stick to only what it authorizes. [Now read this carefully...](#) neither John the Baptist nor Christ's disciples were Christians when they started baptizing people. They were believers though not atheists or unbelievers. Even Judas would have baptized people and you cannot label him an atheist or unbeliever by any stretch of the imagination. Judas did not just have an intellectual faith in Jesus as you suppose, he was an apostle who possibly also earlier wrought miracles based on Mt 10. The BURDEN of proof is on you to show that an atheist/unbeliever could teach/baptize anyone for salvation. You presented faulty arguments not scripture. Show us the command or an example from scripture, I have given several BCV [book-chapter-verse] that only those who believe upon Jesus as Christ preach/baptize and have divine authorization to.

ARGUMENT: Were you baptized by a believer in an unbroken succession all the way back to the apostles? Those who claim this view have never produced their lineage (ancestry) going back to the apostles. Thus, they should NEVER baptize anyone because there is absolutely NO assurance that they are a Christian. Maybe someone baptized someone in that lineage 1200 years ago that was not a Christian. That means they are not a Christian and no one they baptize are Christians. You are not assured of your salvation, nor can you be sure of your salvation. If you can't show that unbroken line, then those who can not fellowship with you because you are not a Christian.

REPLY: All the genealogies-rationalization about so-called 'spiritual ancestry' is not sound reasoning. Each man's sin or salvation is personal and not hereditary or passed in any lineage (Eze 18:20). Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling! Let us assume someone (Mr. A) approaches '*the church of Satan*' or an Atheist to baptize him **based on your teaching**. The baptizer said Mr. A was talking rubbish and hinted that he would be immersed into Satan or into nothing as he baptized him after being urged to. Later, Mr. A who believes that Jesus is Christ goes about as a professed Christian. He preached the gospel

(1 Cor 15:1-4) to and baptized Mr. B (who heard the gospel, believed, repented and confessed Christ). Mr. B similarly preached the truth to Mr. C and immersed him. Whose baptism out of A, B and C, is out of conformity to God's word? You taught Mr. A wrong and he was not baptized right. Though he believes on the Lord he was not baptized into Christ. Mr. B and Mr. C were however taught right and immersed into a relationship with the Godhead by the authority of Christ. The various baptisms were independent and separate events; each is to be examined on its own merit or demerit. Just as the men in Acts 19:1-7. Whoever they taught/baptized before their encounter with Paul would not be a Christian whereas those after would be. A supposed '*ancestral chain of transmitting salvation*' exists only in your imagination! According to you, the baptism of Mr. A was valid irrespective whatever was done, believed and said by any baptizer. Is that really so? [God had given instructions concerning those who were to carry the Ark of Testimony and how -Num 4:5-16, Exo 37:5. Just because the Philistines put the Ark on a cart (after suffering for taking it away in battle) to return it did not mean Israel should do same (Lk 12:47). Was it acceptable to the LORD when Israel contravened his word on **who/how** to carry the Ark of God (2 Sam 6)? Just as Uzzah was punished, so shall an unauthorized baptizer be. You and your Atheist/Satanist baptizer are probably emboldened because judgment isn't instantaneous (Eccl 8:11)]

ARGUMENT: Let me make a very simple observation. After Jesus died on the cross and the Holy Spirit fell on the Apostles at Pentecost, there was a time when NO ONE on Earth had been baptized in the name of Jesus, correct? SOMEONE at some point in time HAD to be baptized by an unbaptized person to start things off. You must understand that Paul encountered people in many areas that had not even heard of Jesus and had to preach about Jesus to them. It is not a stretch to suggest that he could not have baptized all of these people, so at some point in time they had to be baptized by others and to think that ALL of those others were believers is unreasonable to me.

REPLY: As I mentioned earlier, the apostles were believers (not yet called Christians -Acts 11:26) when they started the chain of teaching/baptizing on the day of Pentecost. Peter wrote '*baptism saves us.*' Us is an inclusive term so it is plausible they were also baptized into Christ for remission of sins just as Paul was (Acts 22:16) [Paul wasn't inferior -2 Cor 11:5; 12:11] Even if they were not, they had been declared clean and empowered to remit sins (Jn 20:21-23) by the one who had authority on earth to forgive sins. They were a special case and the most important thing is they were not atheists. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost (or Paul on his journeys), he and his companions would baptize people and it is not unreasonable that those newly baptized could help baptize more of the waiting multitude, so the baptizing grows in geometric proportion. They would not have told the people an atheist or the Devil could baptize you! Neither did the apostles stand idly by telling sinners to baptize themselves on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:41 states '*about [approximately] three thousand souls were added unto them [the apostles].*' If each of the twelve apostles alone, without assistance, baptized people in Acts 2, each would have had to baptize around 250 persons. If however, they were being assisted by those already immersed, then the number of disciples double at each stage. Thus no apostle would have baptized more than 8 persons altogether since the integer solution of the equation $12(2)^n \approx 3000 + 12$, is $n = 8$. The whole exercise would have been completed within forty minutes supposing each baptism lasted five minutes. Recall also that Paul had at least four male companions [Luke, Aquila, Silas & Timothy] when he first preached at Corinth and Acts 18:1-8 testifies that '*many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.*' Yet Paul informs us in 1 Cor 1 that he could only recall baptizing three households or families. We can reasonably infer that Paul was assisted by his companions and possibly by newly baptized converts to immerse others.

ARGUMENT: I can teach via Facebook the gospel of Jesus Christ, and if two atheists/unbelievers on the other side of the globe should read, believe, repent and confess to one another the Lord Jesus Christ, and then each baptize the other, are they not then Christians? A man may be lying to you and actually be an atheist. He baptizes you while you believe the lie....is your baptism valid? Answer the question. Can a person who is no longer faithful (in all that means) immerse a person and it be valid? Also something for those that advocate for the baptizer having to be a believer, what if they fall away, wouldn't that make your baptism of no effect?

REPLY: It would be nice if you could go down or arrange for a Christian near your prospects to actually visit and exhort them face to face. That will not only serve as encouragement but also as veracity for whatever claims are made behind the computer. For all you know you may be dealing with pranksters, stolen/masked identities or whatever! Assuming that the scenario is real does not constitute an issue. When your two atheist friends believe the gospel that God exists and Jesus is His Son they are NO LONGER unbelievers but believers! **Now they both** acknowledge the authority of Christ and the Godhead and understand/appreciate unto what each is being baptized.

An atheist or some other person may lie to you. Just as a prospect that has neither repented nor believed may lie and deceive a sincere believer to immerse him, so may a lying teacher convert and baptize an unwary person. If anyone comes to you preaching Christ (*just as Philip preached Jesus and his kingdom; not atheism or Satanism or denominationalism*) and you repent, confess Christ and is immersed into a relationship with the Godhead, I will rejoice alongside the angels in heaven (Lk 15:10). Why? ...Only the Lord sees the heart while men look at the outward appearance –1 Sam 16:7, Jn 2:24-25. If however a false teacher misleads you with a *perverted gospel* then both of you are in danger. Consider also:

Philippians 1:15-18 “*Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*”

It is a different matter altogether for you to KNOWINGLY go to an atheist for instruction in righteousness or baptism into Christ. It is definitely false teaching on your part when you encourage prospects to seek the assistance of Atheists on baptism. When a known unrepentant atheist/unbeliever visits (or is a neighbor to) your congregational assembly hall, do you invite/request such to minister on the pulpit or to help immerse a penitent? If not, why not??

Peter had prejudices and hypocrisy at times (Acts 10, Gal 2) yet was a minister of whom He confessed as the Son of God. Thankfully, God always got him back on the right track. Believers are not sinless, perfect individuals (1 Jn 2:1-2). So long as they acknowledge and keep the faith that Jesus is Lord you cannot tag them as unbelievers. The question that 'what if the Christian baptizer later fall away from the faith, does it invalidate a baptism?' is unwarranted. [So long as the baptizer had not been known to be disfellowshipped for sin, one can hardly adjudge such as unfaithful. Same goes for any Preacher who gives a sermon or brother who leads a prayer or a disciple who serves at the Lord's table. Fact is we get Christians to do these tasks NOT alien sinners because we are the ones AUTHORIZED to do them (2 Tim 2:2, 1 Tim 2:8; Acts 20:7).] If a believing baptizer later falls away, it has no bearing on the soul that was baptized and saved. That Demas fell away later (2 Tim 4:10) had nothing to do with the salvation of those he might have assisted to bring to Christ earlier (Col 4:14), he was the one in danger -1 Cor 9:27. The lingering question is ***where is the scriptural authority for an atheist/unbeliever to teach/baptize one into Christ and can he really do that from the heart or simply mock the subject and blaspheme during the act??***

CONCLUSION

If a sinner loves the knowledge of the truth, with Christians being alive to their responsibilities and the church doing its work of declaring the manifold wisdom of God as the pillar and ground of the truth, people will get saved the Bible way. If a contrite sinner would SEEK the Lord, God will surely send such a teacher/baptizer in fulfillment of his promise and word (Heb 11:6). Jonah, Ananias and Peter initially tried to resist but bowed to the Lord's will on evangelism eventually. Now God will not verbally speak to send us out today for his word instruct both the preacher & other believers to go preach and baptize (Mk 16:15-16, 2 Tim 4:2,5 & Acts 8:4, 1 Thess 1:7-8). Circumstances beyond our control, received messages, intuition and church directive, etc. could inform where one goes today for evangelism. Jesus never told Peter and the rest "let the word preach itself, let sinners teach and baptize themselves, let my sheep feed themselves" rather he said: "Go ye into the world and preach the gospel., teaching and baptizing them., feed my sheep." Christ commissioned his followers to a work and the situation has not changed.

One has to confess Christ before a valid witness and be immersed into [the name of] the Godhead by another... even Saul & Cornelius had to wait FOR DAYS for a believer to come concretize the message and baptize them respectively. These were not baptized by alien sinners neither did each baptize himself, despite their prior knowledge (Acts 9:17; 10:37) of Jesus. Likewise, we should make necessary effort to locate and send a Christian to assist anyone willing to obey the gospel. They did that **in the first century with rudimentary transportation, under intense persecution**. All, especially Preachers should learn from that and from Paul's zeal to save as many souls as possible even at constant risk to his own life. To claim that a situation demands that none witness the good confession or that getting a believer involved in baptism is impossible seems a demonstration of lack of faith in God's ability to work things out. If God could somehow get Philip to Samaria, Paul into Macedonia/Malta and Jonah into Nineveh, surely He can providentially make a disciple go to or be cast anywhere needed today. He can still open doors which no man can shut, give strength to the weary, properly fill those who hunger for righteousness and make a way where there seems to be no way.

It is important to state and pursue the scriptural pattern of Christ's disciples preaching/baptizing. Let us be wary of the fear of leaving our comfort zones, the impatience to quickly report increasing outreach numbers, the doubt of efficacy of prayers to achieve good works, the risk of abandoning a work half-way with excuses and the unwillingness to give generously in support of itinerant Evangelists. Also, God cannot be mocked so no-one should reject the gospel call at the opportuned time with intent to later baptize himself or call upon an unbeliever to do so when there is little or no chance for fellowship with the saints. My parting question is: *'If you submit yourself to the Devil, is the deceiver not going to baptize you into his own kingdom rather than into Christ?'* The messengers of Satan baptize people INTO their own cultic houses and not into the church of Christ which is the house of God.

This is not personal; I just have to refute your doctrine of *"anyone including an atheist, unbeliever and the devil could validly baptize you but don't baptize yourself."* Only lazy 'Facebook Evangelists' and lazy churches that are not zealous of the Lord's work advocate such!

Dear Brother

Having read your paper and the response to the questions that I asked it is obvious that you and I agree on a number of issues though some of the passages to which you have referenced, I believe, have been misapplied. I do agree that generally the person who teaches another person would be the one to baptise the penitent sinner and that it is undeniable that the Great Commission is addressed to believers. Therefore I believe that the *first option* should be that a Christian man baptise the penitent believer into Christ. However, the point on which we differ is whether *it is permissible* for an atheist or a Muslim to baptise one into Christ and I offer the following points for your consideration.

1. You affirm that *a believer is simply put 'someone who believes that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God'* and that *a member of a denomination who believes/affirms that Jesus is the Christ/Son of God Lord that died and was raised for our sins is a believer*. It follows then that members of a denomination could baptise someone into Christ but the atheist and Muslim cannot. This argument raises a number of issues. It implies that Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses are believers and may baptise one into Christ since both groups believe in Jesus Christ as the resurrected Lord and Saviour. Yet Jehovah's Witnesses deny the nature of Christ teaching that he is not a divine being but a perfect man just as the Muslim does. By what line of reasoning could a Jehovah's Witness be authorised to immerse one into Christ while denying the nature of Christ but a Muslim could not while equally denying the nature of Christ?

Pentecostals do believe in Jesus as Lord and Saviour but given the fact that they repudiate the doctrine of both Father and Son the Bible describes them as antichrists. *Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.* 1 John 2:22. By what twist of logic or hermeneutical principle would an antichrist be permitted to baptise one into Christ but an atheist cannot?

2. You contend that *the baptizer and convert both need to accept that baptism is in submission to the authority of Christ and the recipient is thereby **being put into union/relationship with the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit***. A Baptist though he is a believer from your point of view does accept the authority of Christ but does not believe that baptism puts us *into*

union/relationship with the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. Your argument on page 4 (d) is self contradictory because here is a believer who does not believe that baptism brings us into union with Christ but who in your view is permitted to baptise one into Christ. The major flaw in your argument as I see it is your limited understanding of the term believer as used in scripture. You need to clarify what hermeneutical principle or logic you use to exclude one group but include the other when both are in the same category.

3. I take the position that the New Testament emphasises that baptism should be complete immersion in water, in the proper name or authority, for the proper reason; that the person performing the rite of baptism is incidental and does not negate the validity of a person's baptism. I take this view based on the following

- (i) Paul in 1 Cor.1: 14-17 is not, as you so correctly show, denying the importance of baptism but on the contrary is showing that the one who teaches does not necessarily have to be the one that performs the act and equally that the baptizer is incidental to the purpose for which one is being baptised. Paul clearly shows that the baptiser is secondary to the name or authority into which the alien sinner is immersed and that the right to baptise an individual does not rest on the characteristics of the baptizer but on whether the individual is taught, believes and accepts God's overall plan of salvation. This is the essence of the series of questions he asked in verse 13.
- (ii) When Paul suspected that the disciples in Ephesus were not scripturally baptised the question was not directed at the **baptizer** but on the purpose of the baptism. His question '*Unto **what** then were you baptised?*' suggests that the baptizer was incidental to the validity of their baptism. Over and over again this principle is taught in the New Testament. Though Christ was preached from wrong motive and the character of those who preached was dubious it did not negate the efficacy of what was preached. *Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and*

in that I rejoice. Phil.15-18. The same truth is taught in 1 Cor.9:27 where it was possible for Paul to lose his eternal salvation and those to whom he preached be saved again showing that the person did not affect the effectiveness of the message.

- (iii) More importantly, consider Col.2:12 *having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.* There are three individuals here: the verse implies that there must be a baptizer since baptism is a passive action, the person being baptised and the Almighty God. The person doing the baptism is distinct from and does not affect what God accomplishes in baptism because it is upon **the faith of the person** being baptised and not that of the baptiser that God acts. Therefore the faith of the baptizer is inconsequential to what God does for the prospective convert suggesting that the character, faith or lack thereof of the baptiser is incidental to what happens at baptism.
4. You assert that *It is on the basis of the recognition of Christ's authority that one therefore go on to make disciples. The imperative shows that disciples are made by teaching and baptizing. Those who believe are to do the teaching and it is the same group that are mandated to do the baptizing.* It is undeniable that in the text the command to go into the world was given to believers. The question is this since this mandate was given to male believers and all the examples we have are of men carrying out this command to make disciples by teaching and baptizing would that mean that a woman cannot take the gospel to an individual? The point is that this command given to the apostles is incidental because he was addressing the twelve. Hence we must concern ourselves with how does an example authorise.
5. The Lord's Supper was instituted as closed communion, in an upper room and with one cup. Does that mean that this is a universally and perpetually binding example on Christians today? This was incidental and whenever an example is incidental to the execution of a command that example is not universally and perpetually binding. The same is true of the one carrying out the rite of baptism; it is mere incidental to the command itself.

Let me state again I do agree that generally the person who teaches another person would be the one to baptise the penitent sinner and that it is undeniable that the

Great Commission was addressed to believers. Therefore I believe that the first option should be that be a Christian man baptise the penitent believer into Christ. However, since the emphasis is on the mode, name and purpose for which baptism is done the mere immersing of the individual in water is incidental provided that the penitent believer accepts God's plan of salvation. To posit the view, as you have done, that the baptizer is crucial and by that means it would affect the potency of the baptism itself is binding where God has not bound.

Eddie Fisher

godfreyfisher@gmail.com

Could An Atheist or Satanist Baptize One Into Christ? Part 2
O. S. Asaolu (asaolu@yahoo.com), Lagos, Nigeria. {June 27, 2016}

Dear Brother Fisher,

Thanks for your rejoinder to my article which I received by email yesterday. You had promised to do a rebuttal to my material. [The APPENDIX cites the link to our initial exchange on Stevie R Butler's Facebook page, his 'Shout it Out' of June 6, 2016]. You still contend that anyone, even an unbeliever may conduct the water baptism and that the baptizer is immaterial. Since you had ample time to study my material and I answered your preliminary questions on who is a believer, one would expect you to:

- (a) thoroughly refute my numerous points or state your agreement with those which you concede to.
- (b) answer all the questions that I posed in the article since you maintain your initial stand.
- (c) use scripture to support your own position by citing Biblical directives, statements and examples.

These have largely been lacking in your response and rejoinder article. You have only agreed with my exposition of 1 Cor 1 and introduced Col 2:12 on what God does in contrast to the baptizer. However, we need to consider the totality of scripture upon the topic as well as your claims about this verse. Please note that I responded to all issues raised by those with whom I had the discussion related in my original article so it is cogent that a rebuttal of my article should endeavor to do likewise.

Below are some of the questions in my original article still begging for your response, kindly address them as they are relevant to the issue.

- i. The Bible is the number one best-selling book in the world and is freely available on the Internet so YOU want to do away with preachers and teachers of the gospel??
- ii. A prospect ... have to confess before another and then be immersed. Now, why is a witness needed? Would a baby suffice or an atheist or a believer? Who constitutes a credible witness for the good confession?
- iii. How does the Bible authorize? Can you provide any statement, command, example or passage that inferentially shows that atheists/unbelievers could and did baptize anyone into Christ?
- iv. May an atheistic woman or any unbeliever appoint elders/deacons for a church of Christ? **If NO, how do we know??**
- v. Why is it appropriate for an atheist to baptize someone who believes than for the penitent sinner to baptize himself?
- vi. The man who baptized the Campbells was a BELIEVER NOT an atheist or unbeliever. Do you know the difference?
- vii. According to you, the baptism of Mr. A was valid irrespective whatever was done, believed and said by any baptizer. Is that really so?
- viii. Was it acceptable to the LORD when Israel contravened his word on **who/how** to carry the Ark of God (2 Sam 6)?
- ix. When a known unrepentant atheist/unbeliever visits (or is a neighbor to) your congregational assembly hall, do you invite/request such to minister on the pulpit or to help immerse a penitent? If not, why not??
- x. ***Where is the scriptural authority for an atheist/unbeliever to teach/baptize one into Christ and can he really do that from the heart or simply mock the subject and blaspheme during the act??***

Everyone, especially those who hold on to your position should not ignore the questions, the least you should do is respond to them with reasoning and scripture. I equally entreat you to respond to the new questions I will raise in this article. Let me now address your writing for it is obvious you did not consider my article in its whole ramifications. I will quote relevant portions of my original article where necessary.

Fisher: "I do agree that generally the person who teaches another person would be the one to baptise the penitent sinner and that it is undeniable that the Great Commission is addressed to believers. Therefore I believe that the *first option* should be that a Christian man baptise the penitent believer into Christ."

Reply: If a fact is undeniable from scripture and you claim to agree with it in one breath, why subtly try to repudiate that in the next breath? Where does scripture give another option that an Atheist or unbeliever is to carry out ANY ASPECT of the great commission? Which Bible passage request unbelievers to preach, to baptize sinners or to teach converts to observe all that Christ has commanded?? *Do you also agree that generally Jesus is the one Mediator between God and man; the Saviour today (Acts 4:12, Tim 2:5) but sees that as the 'first option,' that there are other ways unto the Father in heaven?*

Fisher: "You affirm that *a believer is simply put 'someone who believes that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God'* and that *a member of a denomination who believes/affirms that Jesus is the Christ/Son of God/lord... is a believer.* By what line of reasoning could a Jehovah's Witness be authorised to immerse one into Christ while denying the nature of Christ but a Muslim could not while equally denying the nature of Christ?... By what twist of logic or hermeneutical principle would an antichrist be permitted to baptise one into Christ but an atheist cannot?"

Reply: My article already had information on who a believer is. For the question you posed in your email, I quoted from my Page 1 that a believer is simply put 'someone who believe that Jesus is the Christ'... **as summary of the entire Paragraph 2.** I had emphasized that a believer is known by what he believes and confesses. Do you have a problem with Jehovah Witnesses/Pentecostals baptizing anyone? I ask because you are one of those who claim that the baptizer is immaterial as it does not matter what the baptizer thinks and believes! I wrote that saved people are believers but the converse isn't necessarily true since a believer becomes a Christian after obeying the gospel (Mk 16:16, Acts 2:47; 5:14; 8:36-38, Rm 6:17). I showed on Page 6 that it matters "*unto what one is baptized.*" I wrote that the baptizer must understand/acknowledge that the prospect is being put into a relationship with the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. I repeated over and over that an unbeliever could not validly baptize one since such deny the Godhead. So Jehovah Witnesses or Pentecostals, etc. that deny the Godhead may purport to immerse but my logic permits NO antichrist by whatever appellation/description to baptize one into Christ.

Fisher: "A Baptist though he is a believer from your point of view does accept the authority of Christ but does not believe that baptism puts us **into union/relationship with the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit.** Your argument on page 4 (d) is self contradictory because here is a believer who does not believe that baptism brings us into union with Christ but who in your view is permitted to baptise one into Christ."

Reply: There are various kinds of Baptists now having diverse views on baptism as evident in these site links [1](#), [2](#), etc. I referenced what the baptizer did in the baptism of the Campbells on Page 6 [From sources online, e.g. <http://www.therestorationmovement.com/.../highers01.htm> : "*on June 12, 1812, Alexander Campbell, along with his wife, father, mother, and others, was immersed by Matthias Luce, a Baptist minister, **not according to Baptist usage**, but upon a simple confession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah. This immersion took place in a deep pond in Buffalo Creek near the home of David Bryant.*"] I equally wrote on Page 7 [If someone says he is just dunking you under water for fun or is putting you into Satan or is baptizing you into a denomination because you are already saved then you are **not** being baptized into Christ and his body (church).] Thus I have shown by implication that many baptisms conducted by denominational believers are invalid once they negate scripture as to the purpose or mode. My focus and

the issue under debate is more importantly on ‘who’ (baptizer) -whether such acknowledges and confesses belief in Jesus ab initio. That is why the emphasis is on **unrepentant** Atheists, Unbelievers (e.g. Muslims) and Satanists. If a believer confesses Christ’s authority as Lord and king in God’s kingdom (as per Paragraph 2 of initial Page 1), preaches the Lord’s death/resurrection and acknowledges with the prospect that the baptism is for remission and to get one into Christ not a denomination, isn’t that acceptable? Recall I also wrote on Page 9 [If anyone comes to you preaching Christ (*just as Philip preached Jesus and his kingdom; not atheism or Satanism or denominationalism*) and you repent, confess Christ and is immersed into a relationship with the Godhead, I will rejoice alongside the angels in heaven]

Fisher: “I take the position that the New Testament emphasises that baptism should be complete immersion in water, in the proper name or authority, for the proper reason; that the person performing the rite of baptism is incidental and does not negate the validity of a person’s baptism... and that the right to baptise an individual does not rest on the characteristics of the baptizer.”

Reply: Your claim that ‘the baptizer is incidental and his characteristics irrelevant’ is reading into the text! I earlier showed on Page 4-5 **that Christ placed requirements on who should baptize**. Only those of faith, disciples or believers have the mandate/authorization and one cannot give what he does not have. Check the green coloured text on those pages and disprove them with scripture or sound logic if you can.

Fisher: “His question ‘*Unto what then were you baptised?*’ suggests that the baptizer was incidental to the validity of their baptism.”

Reply: The ‘unto what then were you baptized’ is predicated on what one has been taught, what he believes/confesses, what he is immersed into as well as by whose authority. These are definitely impacted by who does the teaching/baptizing (Acts 19:1-5). Encourage believers to propagate the gospel in teaching and baptizing just as we see it done in the Bible. Unless you assume that baptism is dipping someone in water for any purpose by anyone saying anything... please answer from the heart in sincerity: *unto what will an Atheist/Muslim/Satanist baptize a penitent? If you do not subscribe to baptizing someone who openly denies Jesus why do you promote that such an antichrist should baptize others??*

Fisher: “The person doing the baptism is distinct from and does not affect ... the faith of the baptizer is inconsequential to what God does for the prospective convert suggesting that the character, faith or lack thereof of the baptiser is incidental to what happens at baptism.”

Reply: Your statement is NOT totally true. Jesus instructs believers to teach and to baptize sinners who believe into the name of the Godhead. **For you to assert that someone who openly declares he has no faith in God/Christ should baptize others is error.** Christians should reflect more on Mt 28:18-20 and note:

- *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. -2 Timothy 2:19*
- *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. - James 4:17*
- *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. - Romans 16:17-18*
- *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. - Jude 3-4*

Fisher: “It is undeniable that in the text the command to go into the world was given to believers. The question is this since this mandate was given to male believers and all the examples we have are of men carrying out this command to make disciples by teaching and baptizing would that mean that a woman cannot take the gospel to an individual?”

Reply: The text is not just theoretical, be a doer –James 1:22-25. The inspired word of God furnishes us completely for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness -2 Tim 3:16-17. There are instances in scripture where a woman shared the good news with individuals such as the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:19-30, 39-40), Mary Magdalene after the resurrection (Jn 20:1-18), Priscilla who with her husband expounded the word more accurately to Apollos at Corinth (Acts 18:24-26). Some apostles led about a wife (1 Cor 9:5) and we know Timothy’s mother and grandmother shared the faith with him (2 Tim 1:5, 1 Pet 3:1-2, Tit 2:3-4). Those women were... believers not unbelievers, okay? I just cited several scriptural passages on women relating the gospel. Can you provide a scripture implying or illustrating an avowed and unbelieving baptizer? There is **none**. You may allude to those who preach in pretense and insincerity while professing Christ. I addressed that earlier on Page 9 and stated that we are not mind-readers, only God sees the heart. We relate to others based on their expressed belief, **will you stop asserting that antichrists (1 Jn 2:22-23, 2 Jn 1:7-10) could baptize prospects into Christ for salvation?**

Fisher: “The Lord’s Supper was instituted as closed communion, in an upper room and with one cup. Does that mean that this is a universally and perpetually binding example on Christians today? ... the one carrying out the rite of baptism; it is mere incidental to the command itself.”

Reply: I find it curious that you also cite the example of the Lord’s Supper but go ahead to misrepresent the analogy. Recall I cited Communion on Page 9. The upper room, lights... are incidental but that the communion was closed -by believers who used unleavened bread and fruit of the vine are not incidental. **By your logic, an unbeliever could give thanks, break the bread and partake during the Communion?** My understanding of Mt 26, Acts 20, 1 Cor 11, etc. is: this is a memorial feast instituted for disciples to observe and believers were the ones who always did it in scripture. The baptizer is no incidental but a necessity for scriptural immersion to take place ...**else** one may baptize self or still claim baptism when the one immersing the prospect neither obtains/agrees with the subject’s expression of faith in Christ nor acknowledge that such is being baptized by Christ’s authority into a relationship with the Godhead.

Fisher: “To posit the view, as you have done, that the baptizer is crucial and by that means it would affect the potency of the baptism itself is binding where God has not bound.”

Reply: I have not stated that only a Christian or a sinless believer could baptize a penitent. I cited Peter and 1 Jn 2:1-2 on page 9. The thrust of my position is that an unbeliever who still repudiates Christ/God has no business baptizing a repentant sinner. Such intrinsically disparages the penitent’s faith in Christ, is not authorized to baptize and could never scripturally do it right, anyway. I have not bound where God has not; after all you agree with me **“that it is undeniable that the Great Commission was addressed to believers.”** **Unfortunately, you have loosed what God has not loosed!** You have permitted and do teach that avowed antichrists e.g. Atheists/Muslims/Satanists could validly baptize someone despite having no clear scripture to justify your assertion. Your position that such unbelievers may immerse believers into the Godhead also violates reasoning. I hope that you are sincerely mistaken in this matter and with time, **if you meditate more on scripture, accept what you profess to be undeniable about the great commission and really consider the questions which I have posed; you might come to a better understanding.** I have that expectation based on the fact that you attempted to some extent to consider the Bible unlike others who emotively construct fanciful scenarios why unbelievers should administer water baptism.

APPENDIX

The background to my interaction with Eddie Fisher is available here (as at the date of authoring this piece)

https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10153486082915880&set=a.10150202009640880.313151.639485879&type=3&comment_id=10153487736060880&ref=notif¬if_t=like¬if_id=1465313783322645

The following Email Exchanges then took place

From: godfrey fisher <godfreyfisher@gmail.com>
To: asaolu@yahoo.com; godfrey fisher <godfreyfisher@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 17, 2016 3:37 PM
Subject: Article on who can baptise

Dear Brother

In reading your paper it is clear to me that you and I are using similar terms but with different meanings and so in an effort to respond to your article and to do justice to it i need some clarification.

1. Who do you consider to be a believer?
 2. Is a believer a member of the church?
 3. Is a member of a denomination a believer?
 4. Can it be both?
 5. Can a person outside of the body of Christ be considered a believer?
- I need these questions answer before I give a response to the paper.

Yours in Christ

Eddie Fisher godfreyfisher@gmail.com

Jun 17 at 4:50 PM

Dear Bro Fisher,

thanks for your email.

I did define who I understand a believer is in Paragraph 2 Page 1 and on Page 6 of my article.

1. A believer is simply put "someone who believes that Jesus is the Christ; the Son of God."
2. I showed that believers are not necessarily Christians until such obey the gospel (in first paragraph of Page 7, I cited Jn 12:42-43, Mk 16:16 etc. to support this and also showed that some not all believers are added to the Lord -Acts 5:14; 8:36-38.) See also Jn 8:31-32, Acts 26:27-28
3. A member of a denomination who believes/affirms that Jesus is the Christ/Son of God/Lord that died and was raised for our sins as per 1 Cor 15:1-4 is a believer.
4. I wrote on third line of Page 7 that "Saved people are believers but not everyone who believes is saved."
5. Yes, it is possible for someone outside the body of Christ to be a believer. The Ethiopian Eunuch was -before Philip baptized him. In fact is is only believers who are added INTO the body of Christ by the Lord via baptism after their repentance and confession of faith.

Though I have answered you above, I think the questions you asked are not really necessary for you to attempt to defend the position that ANYONE (including a Muslim, Atheist or Satanist) may baptize the pertinent since you hold that the baptizer is immaterial or totally irrelevant.

Thank you.
Olumuyiwa ASAOLU (PhD)

Dear Brother

You seem to think that it was a deliberate attempt on my part to side step the issues you raised but this is certainly not the case. In my first response I thought it more prudent to deal specifically with the point at hand rather than dealing with some of the issues that you had raised since some of them were irrelevant to the question under consideration and some of the passages you used were misapplied. Therefore in this response I shall address your questions specifically and respond to both of your papers.

Questions

- *The Bible is the number one best-selling book in the world and is freely available on the Internet so YOU want to do away with preachers and teachers of the gospel?*

I find it remarkable that in this statement purporting to be a question you could come to the conclusion that my position that the administrator is incidental to what God does for the alien sinner at baptism would in any way suggest that I would want to *do away with preachers and teachers of the gospel*. That is not my point and I do not so contend. How you arrived at that conclusion escapes me.

- *A prospect ... have to confess before another and then be immersed. Now, why is a witness needed? Would a baby suffice or an atheist or a believer? Who constitutes a credible witness for the good confession?*

In your first paper you state:

- *one ACTUALLY NEEDS THE HELP (presence) OF ANOTHER PERSON before he can be baptized and saved! So...even if a prospect does not need help to understand unlike the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:31) such would still have to confess before another and then be immersed. Now, why is a witness needed? Would a baby suffice or an atheist or a believer? Who constitutes a credible witness for the good confession? See Mt 10:32, Rm 10:9-10, Acts 8:37-38, 1 Tim 6:12*

All that these passages teach is that confession is necessary in becoming a Christian and says nothing about who is authorised to baptise an individual. Matt 10:32 teaches that we must confess Christ before men and is not limited to *believing* men but is inclusive of all men including the atheist, Satanist and the Muslim. In the

same way our light must *shine before men* so too we must confess his name before men. Significantly, Jesus in the statement *confess me before men* uses the word *anthropos*. Why is this significant? It is significant because by His use of *anthropos* in both Matt.10:32 and 5:16 Jesus is suggesting that the good confession ought to be made before the atheist as well as the believer and that our light must shine before the atheist, Satanist and Muslim as well as the believer. Are we to conclude then that our light must shine and our confession should be limited only to believers? If not, why not? Were the many witnesses in 1 Tim 6:12 to whom Timothy confessed inclusive of only believers? Did he ever make that good confession to unbelievers? You referenced Rms 10:13-15 to prove *how God designed evangelism for the salvation of the world* but this passage does not have within its purview the question of who is authorized to baptise one into Christ but is merely teaching that the task of sharing the gospel is to be undertaken by terrestrial not celestial beings. It has nothing to do with who is authorized to baptize an individual into Christ.

These passages do not address the issue as to who is authorised to administer the act of baptism upon the alien sinner but that the penitent believer must confess Christ before his fellow men. To use the issue of confessing our faith before men to make the case that only believers are authorised to immerse a person into Christ is a gross non sequitor.

- *How does the Bible authorize? Can you provide any statement, command, example or passage that inferentially shows that atheists/unbelievers could and did baptize anyone into Christ?*
- *Where is the scriptural authority for an atheist/unbeliever to teach/baptize one into Christ and can he really do that from the heart or simply mock the subject and blaspheme during the act?*

In my statement that the issue hinges on the question of how examples authorise and that whenever an example is incidental to the execution of a command that example is not universally and perpetually applicable, I showed that the Lord's Supper was instituted as closed communion, in an upper room and with one cup. I argued that one would not expect to bind these because they were merely incidental to the meaning and purpose for which the Lord's Supper is observed. In response to this in your second paper you state:

I find it curious that you also cite the example of the Lord's Supper but go ahead to misrepresent the analogy. The upper room, lights... are incidental but that the communion was closed -by believers who used unleavened bread and fruit of the vine are not incidental. By your logic, an unbeliever could give thanks, break the bread and partake during the Communion? My understanding of Mt 26, Acts 20, 1 Cor 11, etc. is: this is a memorial feast instituted for disciples to observe and believers were the ones who always did it in scripture.

Your response not only shows that it is **you** that have *misrepresent(ed) the analogy* but that you have not fully understood the way in which examples authorise. The point is that the Supper was being instituted among believers, the elements to be used would be the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine which was the focus and *not* whether they met in closed communion in an upper room using only one cup. The question to you brother is this: Was it the place and vessel that were being accented or was it the purpose for their gathering? Since Jesus met them in an upper room, in closed communion and used only one cup was He by that example making that a universal and perpetually binding practice? You yourself have admitted that *the upper room, lights... are incidental*. If I were to use a multiplicity of cups would it invalidate the purpose for which the communion is observed? Does the presence of unbelievers during the observance of the Lord's Supper negatively affect the Christians who have met to observe it?

Your insistence that a passage of scripture be given to show that unbelievers are authorised to baptise shows that the truth that scripture places the emphasis on the penitent believer is lost on you. Paul in 1 Cor.1: 14-17 clearly shows that the baptiser is secondary to the name or authority into which the alien sinner is immersed and that the point of emphasis is not on the baptiser but on what the individual is taught, believes and accepts regarding God's overall plan of salvation. This is the essence of the series of questions he asked in verse 13.

Paul's question '*Unto **what** then were you baptised?*' (Acts 19: 3) was not directed at the *baptizer* but on the *purpose* of the baptism suggesting that the baptizer was incidental to the validity of their baptism. Over and over again this principle is taught in the New Testament. Phil.1:15-18 shows that though Christ was preached from wrong motive and the character of those who preached was dubious it did not negate the efficacy of what was preached.

Your response to this point is to contend that *'it is a different matter altogether for you to KNOWINGLY go to an atheist for instruction in righteousness or baptism into Christ and that we are not mind readers, only God sees the heart. We relate to others based on their expressed belief.* But this brother does not answer the point and raises the following question to which I invite your response. Brother no one is asking you to read minds but Paul is in fact teaching that the motive of the person does not impact on the potency of the message and makes a distinction between the two and the same is true of the person being baptised and the administrator of the baptism. If a person can preach the gospel from impure motives and not affect its efficacy then here is the question I invite you to address. Given the fact a person can preach from a wrong motive and not affect the validity of the message can an atheist preach the gospel from wrong motive say money or mockery and an individual believes that message and is baptised by the atheist would it negatively affect the baptism of the penitent believer who believed and accepted that message? Suppose a penitent believer is baptized by one s/he assumes is a believer, but two years later it is discovered he was not a believer, should that individual be baptized again? Suppose the individual died in the meantime, would he have died in an unbaptized state? Since you take the position that both the penitent believer and the administrator must accept the purpose of baptism, would the person need to be rebaptized? Since you claim that *only God sees the heart*, the question is whose heart does God look at in the saving process? I call your attention to Rms. 6: 17-18 *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.* The passage clearly teaches that it is obedient heart of the penitent believer and not that of the administrator's that determines whether he is made free from sin. Lest you claim that this is predicated on whether the Satanist, Muslim or Satanist can teach a person enough for him to be obedient let me say that if the believer understands and accepts God's plan of salvation it is *his heart* that God accents and not that of the baptizer. Once the person obeys from the heart scriptures show that his emancipation from sin does not depend on the administrator's but on his heart.

The same truth is taught in 1 Cor.9:27 where it was possible for Paul to lose his eternal salvation and those to whom he preached be saved again showing that the person did not affect the effectiveness of the message. Similarly, the question is not

on the authority of the administrator to administer baptism but on what the believer accepts at the time of his immersion that is accented in scripture.

Col.2:12 shows that God acts upon the faith of the penitent believer and not on the faith or lack of faith of the administrator. The administrator is distinct from and does not affect what God accomplishes in baptism because it is upon *the faith of the person* being baptised and not that of the baptiser's that God acts. Consider too Gal.3:26-27 which teaches that we are children of God *by faith in Christ Jesus* and that it is on the basis of that faith that one is immersed into Christ. The question that you need to answer is: Whose faith: the penitent believer's or the baptiser's? It *cannot* be that of the baptizer since he is not the one *being immersed into* Christ. Therefore the faith of the baptizer is inconsequential to what God does for the prospective convert at the point of his baptism. Your response cannot be merely to say *we need to consider the totality of scripture upon the topic as well as your claims about this verse*; you *must* take these passages and show how I have misapplied, misunderstood or misinterpreted them.

- *May an atheistic woman or any unbeliever appoint elders/deacons for a Church of Christ? If NO, how do we know?*

In your first response you state: *We know from the New Testament that ministers are the ones mandated to do it. All examples recorded in scripture so indicate (Acts 6, 14, 20, 1 Tim 3-5, Tit 1). If a congregation has no preacher then they must first get or send for one.*

The command to appoint elders was specifically given to the evangelist. Tit.1:5 and not to elders and there is no scripture to support the practice of elders appointing elders. Do elders have the right to ordain a fellow elder since **ministers** *are the ones mandated to do it* and *all examples recorded in scripture so indicate* If yes *how do we know?* Is it permissible for elders to appoint fellow elders when there is no scripture supporting this practice? You yourself deposit that *we know from the New Testament that **ministers** are the ones mandated to do it and all examples recorded in scripture so indicate.* What authority does an elder have to ordain a fellow elder and would it mean that those elders who were appointed by other elders are not truly elders having no right to serve since *we know from the New Testament that **ministers** are the ones mandated to do it and all examples recorded in scripture so indicate?*

- *Why is it appropriate for an atheist to baptize someone who believes than for the penitent sinner to baptize himself?*

Again, the point of your question is flawed. No one can baptise himself because baptism is a passive and not an active action. It is always '*they were baptised*' or '*be baptised*'.

- *The man who baptized the Campbells was a BELIEVER NOT an atheist or unbeliever. Do you know the difference?*

Yes I do. Your failure to adequately deal with this argument is very pronounced. In your first treatise you argue *that Campbell got someone who believed in Jesus as Christ to baptize him, not an atheist. The man who baptized the Campbells was a BELIEVER NOT an atheist or unbeliever. Do you know the difference? Even if you think he was not a Christian because he did not share your doctrinal views, you cannot deny that he believed that Jesus is the Christ.*

Yet you take the position that *the one immersing the subject HAS TO do it with the understanding that the convert is being baptized "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."* Clearly, an unrepentant atheist (by definition) who denies the existence/authority of God/Godhead CAN NOT do that. The baptizer and convert **both** need to accept that baptism is in submission to the authority of Christ and the recipient is thereby being put into a union/relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Since you claim that the administrator and the prospective convert *both need to accept that baptism is in submission to the authority of Christ and the recipient is thereby being put into a union/relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit* then Campbell's baptism was invalid because Luce was a Baptist preacher and *did not* accept what Campbell believed about baptism. History records that on the night of June 11, Campbell had to persuade Luce, who was afraid of upsetting his fellow Baptism brethren, to take his confession and baptise him contrary to prevailing Baptist doctrine to which he himself had adhered.

Your argument as stated in your second paper that *there are various kinds of Baptists now having diverse views on baptism* does not make the point because you contend that **both** need to accept that baptism is in submission to the authority of Christ and the recipient is thereby being put into a union/relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Since Luce *did not* accept the purpose for baptism then

Campbell was never saved and everyone else's salvation would then be null and void.

Since as you claim that *the one immersing the subject HAS TO do it with the understanding that the convert is being baptized "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, that of the Holy Ghost"* and since it is your position that **both** need to accept that baptism is in submission to the authority of Christ and the recipient is thereby being put into a union/relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and since this was *not* the case with the Campbell family then neither he, his family and everyone subsequent to him, including you, is saved. Brother the onus is on you to show an unbroken line or chain of faithful believers through the centuries that baptised an individual down to your own in order to validate your own baptism if you are to sustain your case.

If every baptism is valid *only* if a believer is the administrator and *only if* both believe the same about baptism, then you must show that everyone in the chain leading back to the apostles was a believer with shared beliefs about baptism otherwise your own baptism would be suspect.

I note that you made an effort to deal with this issue in your first treatise when you argued that *all the genealogies-rationalization about so-called 'spiritual ancestry' is not sound reasoning. Each man's sin or salvation is personal and not hereditary or passed in any lineage (Eze 18:20). Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling!* But brother I dare say that it is sound reasoning and this is the dilemma of your case. If the person who did the first baptism was an unbeliever then whomever he immersed would not be saved since you insist that **both** need to accept that *baptism is in submission to the authority of Christ and the recipient is thereby being put into a union/relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.* It would therefore follow that no subsequent to that would be saved because their baptism would be invalidated because the first administrator had no right to baptise because he was an unbeliever.

Your illustration of Mr. A B and C is permeated with flaws. You ask: *According to you, the baptism of Mr. A was valid irrespective whatever was done, believed and said by any baptizer. Is that really so?* If Mr. A believes that he is being baptized into the church of Satan, regardless of whether the baptizer believes this or not is immaterial because it is *what Mr. A believes* that is the issue *not* his baptizer and therefore he would not be saved. If Mr. A later changes his mind and professes

Christ he would still be lost because it is what *he believed at the point of baptism* that determines whether he is saved and not the baptizer even if that baptizer was a believer. This illustration is not sufficient to your case.

In response to my argument in Acts 19 you affirm that *the 'unto what then were you baptized' is predicated on what one has been taught, what he believes/confesses, what he is immersed into as well as by whose authority. These are definitely impacted by who does the teaching/baptizing (Acts 19:1-5).* My point still holds and the question is in fact *predicated on what one has been taught, what he believes/confesses, what he is immersed into as well as by whose authority.* If the believer accepts that at the point of his baptism does the administrator's lack faith negate what the believer accepts at that point? The fact that an atheist immerses him does that mean that all that the believer accepts at that point has been lost and that he is not immersed into Christ even though the believer believes, repents confesses Christ and accepts that he is being immersed for the remission of his sins. You insinuate that I am saying *that baptism is dipping someone in water for any purpose by anyone saying anything.* You are sadly mistaken because that is not my point. My contention is that what makes baptism not *dipping someone in water for any purpose by anyone saying anything* is based *not* on whether the administrator is an atheist, unbeliever, Muslim or believer but what the believer believes going into the water.

In citing Acts 19:1-7 you contend: *Whoever they taught/baptized before their encounter with Paul would not be a Christian whereas those after would be. A supposed 'ancestral chain of transmitting salvation' exists only in your imagination!*

Not so! This case proves that it was what they believed at the point of their baptism despite the fact that the person who baptised them, in this case Apollos, was a believer. That he was a believer did not validate their baptism and this is why they were re-taught in verse 4-5 showing that it was what they were taught and believed at the point of their baptism and not the faith of Apollos the baptizer that invalidated their baptism.

Again I ask if a person is baptized by one who claims to be a believer, but that person was lying and was never a believer, what does that mean for the one who was baptized if he or she never finds out? Is he saved? If yes, on what basis and if not why not?

Again I ask you to deal with this question: If the original person who was baptised by one who claimed to be a believer but was not and the person he baptised found out later that his baptizer was a staunch atheist, would that negate the baptism of all those who were subsequently baptised? If not, why not? You need to address yourself to these questions brother.

- *Was it acceptable to the LORD when Israel contravened his word on who/how to carry the Ark of God (2 Sam 6)?*

No it was not. What does this prove?

- *When a known unrepentant atheist/unbeliever visits (or is a neighbor to) your congregational assembly hall, do you invite/request such to minister on the pulpit or to help immerse a penitent? If not, why not?*

This question is similar to the one regarding the appointment of elders and is a no point. Why would a known unrepentant atheist, Satanist or Muslim visit a worship assembly enough to be invited or requested *to minister on the pulpit or to help immerse a penitent*? Let me ask you If a Pentecostal, Jehovah Witness or Catholic priest, since they are believers, comes into your worship or lives next door your place of worship would you invite him to lead a prayer or preach from your pulpit? If not, why not? The Bible commands the child of God to sing as an act of worship and that when he does s/he teaches and admonishes the brethren. When an unbeliever therefore sings in the public worship is he teaching and admonishing the Christian? Do you put a stop order and say to him no you can't sing because singing is an act of worship for the Christian and there is no authority for you to teach and admonish Christians? If not why not? When he gives do you return his/her offering because giving is an act of worship which only the believer is authorised to do? If not why not? When the unbeliever sings and gives does that negate the worship being offered by the believer who sits beside him?

Having addressed your questions I now want to turn to the rest of your arguments as presented in both papers. Your argument, as I see it, hinges on two issues (i) that the command to baptise is issued to believers as per the Great Commission and (ii) your understanding of who constitutes a believer. Let me deal first with question (ii)

You contend that *a believer is someone who believes that Jesus is the Christ; the Son of God* and make a distinction between a Christian and a believer claiming *that saved people are believers but not everyone who believes is saved*. Additionally,

you assert that *believers are not necessarily Christians until such obey the gospel* hence your distinction between the Christian and the believer is clear because you posit that *there were no Christians until after the Day of Pentecost, Acts 11:26*. Thus believers were not Christians until they were called such in Acts 11:26. The implication is that the right to administer baptism is *not* dependent on whether one is a Christian but whether one *believes that Jesus is the Christ; the Son of God* since one can be a believer but not a Christian.

This is where your argument runs into difficulty. The Greek word for faith *pistis* and its derivatives signals the following ideas (i) acknowledgement of information as being reliable 1 Cor.1:18 (ii) trust or reliance upon Jhn 2:24; Gal. 2:7 (iii) obedience Jhn 3:36. In the biblical scheme of things a believer must acknowledge what scripture reveals and trust it to be true enough to obey. The word *apeitheo*, as used in John 3:36, connotes the idea of disobedience and so one is not deemed and cannot be a believer while repudiating the faith of Christ. I contend therefore that members of denominations are in fact unbelievers since there can be no genuine faith in Christ without accepting the faith of Christ.

Given your argument that *believers are not necessarily Christians until such obey the gospel* a Pentecostal though not a Christian is a believer and is authorized to baptise one into Christ. Yet according to biblical teaching he is an antichrist because he repudiates the biblical doctrine regarding the Godhead and is in fact an antichrist. Your argument would then allow an antichrist to baptise one into Christ. Again I ask by what twist of logic or hermeneutical principle would a Pentecostal as an antichrist be able to baptise one into Christ and the atheist cannot? By your definition a Jehovah's Witness would meet the standard for a believer yet he denies the nature of Christ teaching that he is not a divine being but a perfect man just as the Muslim does. By what line of reasoning could a Jehovah's Witness be authorised to immerse one into Christ while denying the nature of Christ but a Muslim could not while equally denying the nature of Christ?

It is your position that *the baptizer and convert both need to accept that baptism is in submission to the authority of Christ and the recipient is thereby **being put into union/relationship with the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit***. A Baptist though he is a believer from your point of view does accept the authority of Christ but does not believe that baptism puts us ***into union/relationship with the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit***. Can he baptise one into Christ while not believing that baptism brings

us into union with Christ but who in your view is permitted to baptise one into Christ since he a believer? You need to clarify what hermeneutical principle or logic you use to exclude one group but include the other when both are in the same category. Again I take the position that members of denominations are in fact unbelievers.

In your attempt to answer this point you throw the question back at me by asking *Do you have a problem with Jehovah Witnesses/Pentecostals baptizing anyone? I ask because you are one of those who claim that the baptizer is immaterial as it does not matter what the baptizer thinks and believes!* In fact you pleadingly beseech *will you stop asserting that antichrist could baptise prospects into Christ for salvation?* But brother the problem is not mine but yours. Such is the dilemma of your position and so I ask again given your scheme of things Jehovah Witnesses are believers but deny the very nature of Christ, Pentecostals are believers but are antichrists; though Baptists are believers they do not *understand/acknowledge that the prospect is being put into a relationship with the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit*, why can they immerse one into Christ but the atheist and Muslim cannot when both are in the same category? Can they immerse one into Christ even though they are believers?

But brother this is not my quagmire but yours. Why? Because my position is that once the prospective convert believes and accepts biblical teaching on how to be saved and accepts the purpose for baptism the baptiser is inconsequential to what God does for the penitent believer at the point of his conversion. You must address yourself to the truths taught in Rms 6:17-18; Gal.3:26-27; Col.2:12.

In response to my argument that though Baptists are believers they do not *understand/acknowledge that the prospect is being put into a relationship with the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit* which according to you they must *understand and acknowledge* you claim that *there are various kinds of Baptist now having diverse on baptism*. But this do not address the issue because even though they are believers they would have no authority to baptise given your argument that they would have to acknowledge that one is being baptised into union with the Godhead. My question remains why can they according to your definition of a believer baptise one into Christ but the atheist, Muslim or unbeliever cannot even though they do not acknowledge that baptism puts one into Christ?

Listen to your argument *it matters "unto what one is baptized."* I wrote that the *baptizer must understand/acknowledge that the prospect is being put into*

relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I repeated over and over that an unbeliever could not validly baptize one since such deny the Godhead. So Jehovah Witnesses or Pentecostals, etc. that deny the Godhead may purport to immerse but my logic permits NO antichrist by whatever appellation/description to baptize one into Christ. Your argument is self-contradictory and is therefore false.

You claim that you *have shown by implication that many baptisms conducted by denominational believers are invalid once they negate scripture as to the purpose or mode.* Since you claim that **many** baptisms conducted by denominational believers are invalid once they negate scripture as to the purpose or mode it implies that some do. I ask can you name one denomination which do believe and practice that baptism is *for the remission of sins* since you contend that there are many who do not.

Again, I bring your attention to your own argument. *The issue under debate is more importantly on 'who' (baptizer) -whether such acknowledges and confesses belief in Jesus ab initio. That is why the emphasis is on unrepentant Atheists, Unbelievers (e.g. Muslims) and Satanists. If a believer confesses Christ's authority as Lord and king in God's kingdom preaches the Lord's death/resurrection and acknowledges with the prospect that the baptism is for remission and to get one into Christ not a denomination, isn't that acceptable?*

Surely it would and the reason is simply this it is what the penitent believer believes at the point of his baptism determines the potency of baptism to save and not the administrator. I ask suppose the administrator does not believe this but the penitent believer does would the penitent be saved? Would the administrator's lack of faith negate what the penitent believer accepts at the point of his baptism?

Again listen to the point that you seek to affirm. *If anyone comes to you preaching Christ (just as Philip preached Jesus and his kingdom; not atheism or Satanism or denominationalism) and you repent, confess Christ and is immersed into a relationship with the Godhead, I will rejoice alongside the angels in heaven.* And brother, I would join with you and the angels in heaven and rejoice as well because it is what the believer accepts at baptism and not the administrator's lack of faith that gives credence to and determines whether he is immersed into Christ or not. But let me put this to you. Suppose the believer comes to you believing *Christ (just as Philip preached Jesus and his kingdom; not atheism or Satanism or denominationalism) and you repent, confess Christ and is immersed into a relationship with the*

Godhead, but is baptised by an unbeliever would he have been immersed into Christ? If not why not?

I call your attention to the fact that that you implicitly make my point because all of the scenarios which you cite make the case that it is the believer that is being accented and not the baptiser. Your argument refers to what the penitent believer believes and accepts and not the administrator's faith that is at issue here.

In answer to my argument that since the mandate of the Great Commission was given to male believers and all the examples we have are of men carrying out this command to make disciples by teaching and baptizing would that mean that a woman cannot take the gospel to an individual you replied:

There are instances in scripture where a woman shared the good news with individuals such as the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:19-30, 39-40), Mary Magdalene after the resurrection (Jn 20:1-18), Priscilla who with her husband expounded the word more accurately to Apollos at Corinth (Acts 18:24-26). Some apostles led about a wife (1 Cor 9:5) and we know Timothy's mother and grandmother shared the faith with him (2 Tim 1:5, 1 Pet 3:1-2, Tit 2:3-4). Those women were... believers not unbelievers, okay? I just cited several scriptural passages on women relating the gospel.

Indeed in your analysis of the Great Commission as recorded by Matthew you stoutly affirm: *The imperative shows that disciples are to be made by teaching and baptizing.... the action was to be done UPON the target/recipients. Those commissioned are the ones instructed 'baptizing them.'*

Your reference to women then runs into numerous difficulties first of which is that neither Samaritan Woman nor Mary Magdalene were involved in sharing the Great Commission. How could they when it was not yet given? Secondly, Paul in 1Cor. 9:5 is not talking about the woman carrying out the demands of the Great Commission but that he had the right to marry just like the other apostles. In the other cases Priscilla, the believing wife in a marital situation and Louis and Eunice we do not see them baptizing any one. This is crucial for if they were making disciples, then by your argument, since *disciples are to be made by teaching and baptizing* how do you know that they were actually involved in baptizing either the husband or Timothy into Christ? You chastised those who would seek to separate teaching from baptizing as per the Great Commission. How do you know that these women baptized any one? Did they? Who baptized Timothy into Christ, was it his mother or grandmother? The

woman with the unbelieving man was it the believing wife that baptised him into Christ? Do you know that for a fact? So the question remains, since the command was given to *male* believers and all the examples we have are of men carrying out this command to make disciples by teaching and baptizing as you affirm would that mean that a woman cannot baptise one into Christ? May a woman baptise one into Christ, if yes how do you know and if not why not?

Let me now address your first point regarding the issue of the Great Commission. I hold that the New Testament emphasises that baptism should be complete immersion in water, in the proper name or authority, for the proper reason; that the person performing the rite of baptism is incidental and does not negate the validity of a person's baptism... and that the right to baptise an individual does not rest on the characteristics of the baptizer. Baptism must entail the right mode, element, purpose and subject and the penitent believer must accept these truths otherwise s/he is not baptised into Christ and it is this that determines whether s/he is immersed into Christ or not. It does not depend on who baptises but on the state of who is being baptized.

Finally, on this point let me state the Muslim, Satanist and or atheist would not be teaching God's plan of redemption and therefore would not be baptising them into Christ but if the believer accepts God's plan of salvation accepts the right mode, element and purpose for his baptism whoever immerses him does not negate what he believes nor nullify what God does because God acts on the believers faith not the baptiser's. Col.2:12, Rms 6:17; Gal.3:27. The validity of one's baptism does not depend upon who *administers* the immersion; rather it depends upon the *knowledge and conviction* of the one being baptised. He must believe and repent (Mk.16:16; Acts 2:38) and he must obey *from the heart*. I know of no passage that discusses the condition of the one doing the baptism since this is not the emphasis in scripture.

In my reply to your first article I stated that *I do agree that generally the person who teaches another person would be the one to baptise the penitent sinner and that it is undeniable that the Great Commission is addressed to believers. Therefore I believe that the first option should be that a Christian man baptise the penitent believer into Christ.*

I maintain that position and this is where you and I share common ground. I do teach that only the Christian should baptise one into Christ and would not teach that any denominationalist, Muslim, Satanist, atheist or unbeliever baptise any one as an

acceptable practice. If anything it would be an exception, and exceptions certainly do not establish any principles. But I do affirm that in circumstances where there is no Christian readily available whoever baptises the penitent is incidental depending on what the believer accepts at the point of his baptism.

The entire tenor of your argument is that the Great Commission was given to believers and that neither the atheist, Satanist, Muslim nor the unbeliever can teach one the gospel. I concur but this is actually a no point because they cannot teach what they do not know, understand or believe. That is not my position though. I affirm that when the penitent believer accepts the gospel, believes it, repents of past sins, confesses the name of Christ then once that is in place if he believes that he is being baptised for the remission of past sins then it matters not who baptises him or what they believe and that mere immersing them does not negate the efficacy of their baptism and therefore the issue of who has the authority to baptise is a non issue.

Finally, brother I would like you to address yourself to these questions as I have presented them in this response and invite you to address them.

1. Are we to conclude in light of Jesus' use of anthropos in Matt.5:16 and 10:32 that our light must shine and our confession should be limited *only to believers*? Were the many witnesses in 1 Tim 6:12 to whom Timothy confessed inclusive of only believers? Did he ever make that good confession to unbelievers?
2. At the inauguration of Lord's Supper was it the place and vessel that were being accented or was it the purpose for their gathering? Since Jesus met them in an upper room, in closed communion and used only one cup was He by that example making that a universal and perpetually binding practice? If I were to use a multiplicity of cups would it invalidate the purpose for which the communion is observed? Does the presence of unbelievers during the observance of the Lord's Supper negatively affect the Christians who have met to observe it?
3. Suppose a penitent believer is baptized by one s/he assumes is a believer, but two years later it is discovered he was not a believer, should that individual be baptized again? Suppose the individual died in the meantime, would he have died in an unbaptized state?

4. Based on Col. 2:12 does God act upon the baptiser's or believer's faith? Given Rms.6:17-18 is it the obedient heart of the baptiser that determines whether one is freed from sin or is it that of the penitent believer? In Gal. 3:26-27 is it the faith of the baptiser or the penitent believer that determines whether one is immersed into Christ?
5. As per Tit.1:5 since we know that ministers are the ones mandated to appoint elders and all examples recorded in the scripture so indicate, are elders authorized to appoint fellow elders? How do we know?
6. If the believer accepts the gospel at the point of his baptism does the administrator's lack of faith negate what the believer accepts at that point? If a person is baptized by one who claims to be a believer but that person is lying and was never a believer what does that mean for the one who was baptized if he or she never finds out? Is he saved? If the original person who was baptized by one who claimed to be a believer but was not and the person was an unrepentant atheist, would that negate the baptism of all those who were subsequently baptised?
7. If a Pentecostal, Baptist or Catholic priest, being believers, were to visit your assembly would you invite them to pray, comment at the Lord's Table or preach that Sunday morning?
8. When an unbeliever sings and gives during the worship service does that negate the worship being offered by the believer who is sitting next to him?
9. By what logic or hermeneutical principle would a Pentecostal being an antichrist, a Jehovah Witness while denying the nature of Christ, a Baptist not believing that baptism puts one into Christ immerse one into Christ but the atheist, Satanist, Muslim, unbeliever cannot ?
10. May a woman baptise one into Christ when there is no scripture or example that so indicate?

I invite you to address these questions and the issues I have raised and await your reply

Eddie Fisher godfreyfisher@gmail.com

Could An Atheist or Satanist Baptize One Into Christ? Part 3
O. S. Asaolu (asaolu@yahoo.com), Lagos, Nigeria. {July 23, 2016}

Dear Brother Fisher,

Thanks for your **second** rejoinder to my articles which I received by email on the 7th of July 2016. To the matter at hand, I will be brief at the risk of repeating myself.

Fisher: "...I thought it more prudent to deal specifically with the point at hand rather than dealing with some of the issues that you had raised since some of them were irrelevant to the question under consideration and some of the passages you used were misapplied.

Reply: Both are necessary –responding to refute and addressing the issue at hand from your perspective. It behoves you to **SHOW** that some of my points are irrelevant and you ought to demonstrate that I misapplied some passages. Simply assuming on your part that your thinking so is evident and agreeable to everyone is inadequate.

Fisher: "I find it remarkable that in this statement purporting to be a question you could come to the conclusion that my position that the administrator is incidental to what God does for the alien sinner at baptism would in any way suggest that I would want to *do away with preachers and teachers of the gospel*"

Reply: While the question was primarily for those with whom I had the initial discussion, it also extends to you because of your position which neglects the preacher/teacher but promotes the unbelieving baptizer. Some contend that a sinner could receive the word of God, understand and obey it to be saved **without the help** of another human being. That is a fallacy as demonstrated in my Article 1 Page 1 - 2.

Fisher: "All that these passages teach is that confession is necessary in becoming a Christian and says nothing about who is authorised to baptise an individual. Matt 10:32 teaches that we must confess Christ before men and is not limited to *believing* men but is inclusive of all men including the atheist, Satanist and the Muslim."

Reply: Excellent point you have made! *Mt 10:32, Rm 10:9-10, Acts 8:37-38, 1 Tim 6:12* stresses the importance of confession before all men just as our light must shine before all, agreed. However, I equally cited *Mt 28:18-19, Mk 16:16 and Acts 8:36-38* amongst others. The latter passages show that the baptizer verifies the prospect's belief via confession and that **only those mandated to make disciple of others for Christ are authorized to teach/baptize**; that both the immerser and prospect are required to believe and agree on the purpose of the immersion.

Fisher: "You referenced Rms 10:13-15 to prove *how God designed evangelism for the salvation of the world* but this passage does not have within its purview the question of who is authorized to baptise one into Christ but is merely teaching that the task of sharing the gospel is to be undertaken by terrestrial not celestial beings. It has nothing to do with who is authorized to baptize an individual into Christ."

Reply: *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! - Romans 10:13-15*

Sir, the task of sharing the gospel is to be undertaken by which kind of terrestrial beings? **Oh, you answered that before...** "... the person who teaches another person would be the one to baptise the penitent sinner and that **it is undeniable that the Great Commission was addressed to believers.**" You may wish to deny the self evident truth that Romans 10:13-15 showcases evangelism as pertinent to the salvation of the world, it

remains irrefutable just as well as the Roman 1:15-16, Eph 3, Mt 28, Mk 16 and 1 Cor 2 previously cited. If all these passages 'have nothing to do with who is authorized to baptize,' **is no one authorized to baptize??** Or are those "authorized to share the gospel" not the ones authorized to baptize? Please answer!

Fisher: Were the many witnesses in 1 Tim 6:12 to whom Timothy confessed inclusive of only believers? Did he ever make that good confession to unbelievers?

Reply: Timothy confessed the good confession to both believers and unbelievers, at least in his preaching and teaching as an Evangelist. Surely, you will not argue that this man whom Paul called his son in the faith, confessed to and was baptized by an unbeliever.

Fisher: "To use the issue of confessing our faith before men to make the case that only believers are authorised to immerse a person into Christ is a gross non sequitor."

Reply: See how I filled in the blanks regarding **the requirement on the baptizer** as requested by someone who shares your stand in Article 1 Page 4-5. **Refute my answer therein if you can.** You have admitted that the great commission is for believers and you have no example or passage directing/showing unbelieving baptizers. What I showed with Confession is that a believer is to take it before administering baptism, because he understands it and acknowledges the authority of Christ as well as what baptism portends, unlike the Atheist/unbeliever. Neither unbelievers nor babies could truly discharge the great commission. Would it be valid if someone says he made a confession and was baptized if all he did was lay in his bathtub, spoke to a baby and got the baby to push in him fully into the water?

Fisher: "Brother no one is asking you to read minds but Paul is in fact teaching that the motive of the person does not impact on the potency of the message and makes a distinction between the two and the same is true of the person being baptised and the administrator of the baptism."

Reply: We cannot and need not read minds. There is no need to and you ought not to contend that penitents should approach unbelievers for baptism or tacitly encourage Christians to share the gospel without baptizing. We are not discussing motives but expressed beliefs via words and actions. When someone claims to be an unrepentant Atheist or avowed Muslim who denies Christ how could you teach penitents to approach such for religious aid? Do not read minds, just follow and preach the inspired word which says: *"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son... Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed"* -1 John 2:22, 2 John 1:9-10
Those who refuse the above precept are partakers of the evil deeds of the antichrist, the apostle states: *"We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."* -1 John 4:6

Fisher: "In my statement that the issue hinges on the question of how examples authorise and that whenever an example is incidental to the execution of a command..."

Reply: All you need to do is cite the relevant passages authorizing unbelieving baptizers, if such exist. Also tell us clearly whether unbelievers may administer the Communion by giving thanks and breaking the bread the same way you assert that such 'terrestrial beings' could baptize the penitent. You deflected a lot about examples and the Lord's Supper. Nevertheless, you did NOT answer the questions:

- *Can you provide any statement, command, example or passage that inferentially shows that atheists/unbelievers could and did baptize anyone into Christ?*
- *Where is the scriptural authority for an atheist/unbeliever to teach/baptize one into Christ and can he really do that from the heart or simply mock the subject and blaspheme during the act?*
- *By your logic, an unbeliever could give thanks, break the bread and partake during the Communion?*

The focus is not on lights or cup or upper room, you are side-stepping. The issue is WHO is authorised to 'do this in remembrance of me' –believers or unbelievers; just as the main issue is WHO is authorized to teach/baptize or carry out the Great Commission –believers or unbelievers! We are not arguing over the presence of unbelievers when Christians gather to observe the Lord's Supper or to evangelize. Your type of reasoning which justifies unbelieving baptizers requires you to **also aver that unbelievers** could observe the Lord's Supper and **be the ones to administer it!** This is the dilemma of your position and it is obvious to even an open-minded child.

Fisher: "Given the fact a person can preach from a wrong motive and not affect the validity of the message can an atheist preach the gospel from wrong motive say money or mockery and an individual believes that message and is baptised by the atheist would it negatively affect the baptism of the penitent believer who believed and accepted that message? Suppose a penitent believer is baptized by one s/he assumes is a believer, but two years later it is discovered he was not a believer, should that individual be baptized again?"

Reply: I already answered these questions in Article 1 where I cited Phil 1, Demas, etc. You keep missing the point. When anyone preaches Christ to you without you knowing his true status, heart or motives, so long he preaches scriptural truth and baptizes you for the right purpose/mode, I and Paul will rejoice alongside the angels in heaven. You act based on what the man professed/ confessed (in pretence or in truth) and had no reason to doubt that he spoke from his heart. The problem is when you claim that penitents may submit to an **avowed, self-confessed and unrepentant** Atheist/unbeliever for baptism or any religious act when the word clearly says we should neither receive such nor bid them God-speed.

Fisher: "Your response cannot be merely to say *we need to consider the totality of scripture upon the topic as well as your claims about this verse; you must take these passages and show how I have misapplied, misunderstood or misinterpreted them.*"

Reply: You are stretching isolated passages to make unnecessary inferences that neither relate to the context nor harmonize with other scripture. For instance Col 2:12 state the work or operation of God in baptism yet you proceed to use the verse to assert that the baptizer is incidental and inconsequential. You fail to realize that if there is no human baptizer there could be no water baptism! I showed he is no incidental based on Mt 28, Mk 16, Acts 8, etc. Acts 19 shows that 'the what' unto which the baptizer immerses one is important.

Fisher: "The command to appoint elders was specifically given to the evangelist. Tit.1:5 and not to elders and there is no scripture to support the practice of elders appointing elders. Do elders have the right to ordain a fellow elder since **ministers are the ones mandated to do it and all examples recorded in scripture so indicate** If yes *how do we know?* Is it permissible for elders to appoint fellow elders when there is no scripture supporting this practice? You yourself deposit that *we know from the New Testament that ministers are the ones mandated to do it and all examples recorded in scripture so indicate.* What authority does an elder have to ordain a fellow elder and would it mean that those elders who were appointed by other elders are not truly elders having no right to serve since *we know from the New Testament that ministers are the ones mandated to do it and all examples recorded in scripture so indicate?*"

Reply: Again you deflected a lot about elders appointing fellow elders despite your statement above conceding that only Evangelists have the scriptural authority to do so. You did NOT really address my specific question "*May an atheistic woman or any unbeliever appoint elders/deacons for a Church of Christ? If NO, how do we know?*"

You have a way of dodging questions that highlight whether the unbeliever/Atheist is scripturally authorized to perform a spiritual/religious function -other than to be converted!

[By the way, where an Elder labour in word and doctrine (1 Tim 5:17) or is also a Preacher like Peter (1 Pet 5:1) then such may ordain more Elders/Deacons. Other Elders, like the rest of the congregation (Acts 6, 1 Tim 3) have a part to play in appointing more or new leaders. Let Elders not go beyond what the scripture

authorizes else they SIN and should repent! It is presumptuous to assert that so-called Elders appointed not by the Evangelist, are truly God-recognized Overseers. It is an erroneous and unscriptural practice when existing Elders, without an Evangelist leading and moderating the process, unilaterally go ahead to appoint new Shepherds. It is equally bad to seek to use such practice as excuse justifying why unbelievers may also ordain Elders or baptize believers. Despite a clear-cut, unambiguous instruction on who is authorized to ordain Elders, those who have little or no respect for the word of God will rationalize it away and argue otherwise, how sad!]

Fisher: "...the point of your question is flawed. No one can baptise himself because baptism is a passive and not an active action."

Reply: It isn't really flawed considering the assertions made that the baptizer is incidental and one could obey the gospel without the help of another human. Both assertions imply that a baptizer is not necessary and could be done without! I was the one who first showed that baptism is passive action in analyzing Mt 28 and Acts 2.

Fisher: "History records that on the night of June 11, Campbell had to persuade Luce, who was afraid of upsetting his fellow Baptism brethren, to take his confession and baptise him contrary to prevailing Baptist doctrine to which he himself had adhered. Your argument as stated in your second paper that *there are various kinds of Baptists now having diverse views on baptism* does not make the point because you contend that **both need to accept that baptism is in submission to the authority of Christ and the recipient is thereby being put into a union/relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.** Since Luce *did not* accept the purpose for baptism then Campbell was never saved and everyone else's salvation would then be null and void. "

Reply: Just listen to yourself... Do you read what you write even if you do not read what I wrote? You have not shown that the man who baptized the Campbells did NOT believe in Jesus as Christ or that he was an Atheist. You admitted that minister of the Baptist church was persuaded to baptize them based on their own beliefs about baptism. The history which I referenced states they were baptized "**not according to Baptist usage**" of a church vote for the one assumed already saved BUT rather upon a simple confession of Christ and unto remission of sins. Another great error on your part is linking Campbell's salvation or lack thereof to that of "*everyone else.*" I initially showed in Article 1 that [A supposed '*ancestral chain of transmitting salvation*' exists only in your imagination!] Even if you were right (and you are NOT), all what you would have proved is that the Campbells were not truly baptized. That in itself does not invalidate that they were believers nor would it invalidate any baptism carried out by them as believers. All your grammar and Greek about 'pistis' can not explain away Jn 8/12 and Acts 26! People become Christians after obeying the gospel but they first believe to be added to the Lord - Mk 16:16, Acts 5:14. The latter verse shows that believers are '*such as should be saved*' of Acts 2:47. Do you deny that the Ethiopian Eunuch was a believer upon his confession before his baptism?

Fisher: "Brother the onus is on you to show an unbroken line or chain of faithful believers through the centuries that baptised an individual down to your own in order to validate your own baptism if you are to sustain your case."

Reply: That you can repeat this argument at this stage shows that you have been flipping through my articles without really studying what I wrote. The answer is still in Article 1, Page 7 - 8.

Fisher: "But brother I dare say that it is sound reasoning and this is the dilemma of your case. If the person who did the first baptism was an unbeliever then whomever he immersed would not be saved since you insist that **both need to accept that baptism is in submission to the authority of Christ...** "

Reply: Fortunately, we know from Acts 2 that those who did the first baptisms on Pentecost were believers in Christ. All other baptisms into Christ in the New Testament were by believers also. For those of John's baptism encountered by Paul in Acts 19, he had to baptize them right. Since I was baptized by someone who confessed Christ and agreed that my baptism was to put me under Christ's authority as himself, neither of us traces baptismal genealogy... because none of us went to an unrepentant Atheist/Muslim, etc, we are assured. It is those that canvass for or go to unbelievers for teaching/baptism that have to fear for their salvation. You are conflating validity with authorisation, these are two different issues though related as addressed using the example of Israel/Philistines and who/how to carry the Ark of Testimony. Which of the duo received many stripes for using a new cart rather than following divine precepts for the Ark's transportation?

Fisher: "...it is *what Mr. A believes* that is the issue *not* his baptizer..."

Reply: You have conveniently chosen to neglect now that it is usually the ones who teach that baptize or are mandated to. You are inadvertently implying that people may flock to the church of Satan to engage in rites of baptism even if they are told it is an initiation into the occult –so long as they believe otherwise in their own heart. You may deny this but it is a logical consequence of your position.

Fisher: "... Apollos, was a believer. That he was a believer did not validate their baptism and this is why they were re-taught in verse 4-5 showing that it was what they were taught and believed at the point of their baptism and not the faith of Apollos the baptizer that invalidated their baptism."

Reply: *You need to read Paragraph 2 of my Article 1 again to see my full description of a believer!* The folks in Acts 19 knew only the teaching of John the Baptist but did not know that Jesus had accomplished his work and commanded baptism as per Mt 28 and Rm 6. That incomplete teaching affected their faith and thus impacted their baptism. Ditto Apollos who was shown the way of the Lord more accurately. I already answered your associated question in Article 1.

Fisher: "*Was it acceptable to the LORD when Israel contravened his word on who/how to carry the Ark of God (2 Sam 6)? -No it was not. What does this prove?*"

NB: Fisher later sent a short email expounding on his answer above that the Ark issue is unrelated to who baptizes since it has specific instructions and that God only looks at the heart of the penitent.

Reply: It proves that it is NOT acceptable to the Lord when

- a) someone contravene who should teach/baptize or carry out the great commission
- b) you argue that unbelievers such as unrepentant and self declared Atheist, Muslim or Satanist could share the gospel or immerse the penitent

Recall, you did profess "it is undeniable that the Great Commission is addressed to believers." Jesus was specifically instructing his disciples when he gave that Commission. That God looks at the heart of the penitent offering a sacrifice etc. would not justify someone from a tribe other than Levi to serve as ministering priest under the Law of Moses, neither does the New Covenant designate unbelievers as a *royal priesthood* to lead or immerse penitents into Christ.

Fisher: "Why would a known unrepentant atheist, Satanist or Muslim visit a worship assembly enough to be invited or requested *to minister on the pulpit or to help immerse a penitent?* Let me ask you If a Pentecostal, Jehovah Witness or Catholic priest, since they are believers, comes into your worship or lives next door your place of worship would you invite him to lead a prayer or preach from your pulpit?..."

Reply: They would be made to learn the principles of the doctrine of Christ rather than to minister. We would preach to them the whole counsel of God so as to get them to obey the gospel, renounce their denominational appellation and become Christians. If you have the time, check out my various write ups on

the various groups mentioned. I have authored "To What Extent May Non-Christians Participate In Worship, A Reply To A Pentecostal, Some Lies and Prophecies of Jehovah Witnesses, Baptism Is it Required, etc." These are available at www.lainosint.com/download/faith and relate discussions with Pentecostals, Baptists, Jehovah Witnesses, etc. If you think that I agree to their teaching or baptism then you are very wrong. That they seemingly meet the **summary** description of a believer is for the purpose of argument since my focus is refuting the notion that someone who openly rejects/deny Christ may baptize. When these groups go out to preach, they simply teach that Jesus is the Son of God and that people should accept him as Lord and Saviour. That supposedly grants them some leeway to baptize when they cite the relevant Bible passages on baptism -contrasted to the Atheist/Muslim. When their system, their purpose and mode of baptism is scrutinized it would be evident that it is faulty and that the penitent should be properly put into Christ and not into a denominational setup.

Fisher: "...I ask can you name one denomination which do believe and practice that baptism is *for the remission of sins* since you contend that there are many who do not..."

Reply: I am aware that the following groups aside church of Christ teach that baptism is for remission of sins, for one to get into Christ; Christian Church / Disciples of Christ, Church of Christ International. A search on the Internet also reveals [1](#), [2](#) [*"Many churches teach that baptism is necessary for salvation. This position is commonly called "baptismal regeneration" because it holds that one is "regenerated" or saved only when a person is baptized. A person who is not baptized, according to this teaching, is not saved and will not go to heaven even if he has believed and professed Jesus Christ as his Savior... Groups that teach this include the Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, many Pentecostal groups including the United Pentecostal Church, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Church of Christ..."*]

Their recognition of the necessity of baptism for remission explains why some of them erroneously baptize babies, or even immerse by proxy.

Fisher: "But let me put this to you. Suppose the believer comes to you believing *Christ (just as Philip preached Jesus and his kingdom; not atheism or Satanism or denominationalism) and you repent, confess Christ and is immersed into a relationship with the Godhead*, but is baptised by an unbeliever would he have been immersed into Christ? If not why not?"

Reply: You surely do NOT understand the ramification of preaching Christ 'the way Philip preached Jesus and his kingdom!' Philip was a believer who not only professes Jesus to be the Christ but also as king of God's kingdom or church. He taught and baptized others unto that belief after confirming their faith in what he preached via their confession -Acts 8. From that scripture and scenario, how does an **unbeliever** enter into the picture as a baptizer as you purport given that the preacher is a believer?? Even when Paul taught many in Corinth but personally baptized few it was demonstrated that they all must have been baptized by believers.

Fisher: "Your reference to women then runs into numerous difficulties first of which is that neither Samaritan Woman nor Mary Magdalene were involved in sharing the Great Commission. How could they when it was not yet given? ... How do you know that these women baptized any one? Did they? Who baptized Timothy into Christ, was it his mother or grandmother?"

Reply: I have not said that the believing women I listed baptized anyone or didn't, I merely highlighted what the scripture has to say about them and do not speculate! That differs from you who presumptuously assert that unbelievers could baptize penitents into Christ without any scriptural directive or example. No matter what you say, you cannot refute the scriptures provided: inspiration shows that women were among the Lord's followers (Lk 8:1-3, Acts 1:14-15), the Samaritan woman was implicitly commended for her role in pointing the villages to the Teacher - Jn 4:39-42, Mary Madgalene was expressly commanded to go tell the good news to some in Jn 20:17, Mt 28:5-8. Timothy was brought up by a believing mother and grandmother yet Paul called him his son in the faith, he was a youth or young disciple in the church when he started accompanying Paul (Acts 16:1-3) so the fact that his mum obeyed Deut [for us Tit 2, Eph 6] about

raising children in the Lord does not imply she was the one who baptized him. 1 Peter 3 instructs believing wives to try to win their unbelieving husbands by their chaste conduct if such men obey not the word while Priscilla accompanied her husband to privately teach Apollos in Acts 18. A believing woman cannot be an Elder or Evangelist based on 1 Tim 2-3 though she is a member of the church (Acts 8:12, 1 Thes 1:8). Godly women stay within their God-ordained role **as helpers to man who is the head** and do not usurp authority – Gen 2:18, 1 Cor 11:1-3, **Phil. 4:3**. I would not be surprised if you advocate for women to go ahead and teach/baptize sinners, start and oversee a church since you seem to suggest even unbelievers could do so. I do not go beyond the scriptures but rather teach and encourage men everywhere to take on their God-given leadership role and not to shirk their responsibility.

Fisher: “I hold that the... let me state the Muslim, Satanist and or atheist would not be teaching God’s plan of redemption and therefore would not be baptising them into Christ...”

Reply: It is not what you hold that matters but what the scripture actually states. If the unbelievers could not scripturally do it then they cannot intrinsically do it because they lack authority to so do both from Bible and from reasoning.

Fisher: “I know of no passage that discusses the condition of the one doing the baptism since this is not the emphasis in scripture.”

Reply: I recommend that you re-check Pages 4-5 of my Article 1 where this issue is addressed, citing Jesus saying ‘...THEM THAT BELIEVE, IN MY NAME...’ It was stated in scripture even if you claim it was not emphasized... obviously it was to be expected that such as unto whom the great commission was given would be the ones to fulfil it.

Fisher: “I do teach that only the Christian should baptise one into Christ and would not teach that any denominationalist, Muslim, Satanist, atheist or unbeliever baptise any one *as an acceptable practice*.”

Reply: Do you really teach that **ONLY** the Christian should baptize one into Christ? **If you did we would not be having this exchange!** You gave the impression that it is acceptable when an Atheist or church of Satan or any denomination baptize someone and inadvertently contended all along that unbelievers, not only Christians may baptize. If you justify the action then you have embraced the practice.

Fisher: “But I do affirm that in circumstances where there is no Christian readily available whoever baptises the penitent is incidental depending on what the believer accepts at the point of his baptism”

Reply: Your *situation ethics* dims the hope I expressed in the concluding part of Article 2. I addressed your new line of reasoning on Page 5 of Article 1 and cited the examples of Saul/Ananias and Cornelius/Peter. Is your faith strong enough to believe that “*with God all things are possible*” including making available a Christian to baptize the penitent? I employ you to also re-read my conclusion therein on Page 10. I have not advocated that a baptizer must know everything or be a perfect, sinless Christian. I have reiterated that a believer could be sought and found according to the scriptures. The pillar and ground of the truth [church] and her individual believing members should do the work committed unto them; prospects should seek their instruction/assistance on baptism.

Fisher: “I invite you to address these questions and the issues I have raised and await you reply.”

Reply: Your numbered questions have been addressed over, if I skipped any (as you did) re-check my write up. **I keep referring you to the scriptures and answers stated in my Article 1.** This discourse is becoming circuitous but we only need pause for a moment. **This statement of yours will forever reverberate until you really accept it: “it is undeniable that the Great Commission was addressed to believers.”**