

## Christianity, it's a Family Affair

I'm swerving in and out of lanes, racing down the interstate; a typical morning really. My mind is cluttered with a thousand thoughts. Life in general is weighing heavily upon my shoulders; people to see, places to be, goals to meet, deadlines, everything depending on me. The last thing I need is another snide comment from the boss about clocking in late.

"Come on people," I grumble, "Can we pick it up here?" I stomp the gas and whip sharply into the fast lane; striving to get ahead of the crowd you know, always looking to slice out another few feet of open road.

This time there's a raking of steel, and I'm spinning. My coffee is in my lap. I realize my tires and I are both screaming.

I've clipped the front of a small truck riding in my blind spot. Off into the median I go, out of control, whirling into oncoming traffic. The last thing I remember is a chrome grill, and the word 'MACK'.

Suddenly I'm standing in line. Up ahead, atop the hill stands the gates of an immensely beautiful city. Merry sounds of singing and laughing spill over its jewel encrusted walls. I can hardly wait to get in and join the party. I considered skipping to the front, but think better of it, remembering my last attempt.

Some folks seem so excited they can hardly stand it, while others bite their nails and desperately rehearse the little excuses they've hastily thrown together. Behind me a fellow keeps glaring angrily at me. He looks a lot like the guy driving the little truck I'd clipped.

As we draw closer I catch a glimpse of the gate keeper. Something seems vaguely familiar about him as well. Maybe it's his swagger, or the way he carouses around with his hands on his hips like some gunslinger from the old West. "Hey," I realize, "That's George Bush!"

Suddenly I'm standing before him. "Mr. President," I campaign, "You don't know how glad I am to see someone up here I recognize."

"W" just stuck out his top lip like he does when he's stumped. "Partner," he replied, "eh eh eh... I don't believe I recognize you. What'd you say your name was?"

"It's Guy Sheffield," I replied, then turning to the angel thumbing through a little book, "Two F's, like the baseball player." After a long moment, the angel shook his head solemnly. I felt the color leave my cheeks.

On cue, two little secret service imps in dark shades appeared from a steamy hole in the ground. My flesh began to crawl. "Did I mention I voted for you?"

The imps latched on to my elbows and began to escort me down. "Wait, wait..." I blubbered, "I believed in you! I believe in you George!"

The President just shook his head and leaned across the podium, "Even the devil believes in me son. But he won't be sipping tea at the White House any time soon either. Eh, eh, eh..."

From the back someone shouted, "Stop holding up the line!" George's ears perked up. "Hey! Is that you Karl? What are you doing in line? Get on up here. You know you've got executive privileges in my administration. Eh, eh, eh..."

I woke up about then, and boy was I glad! The whole dream was starting to freak me out. It sure brought one point home though. Knowing *about* somebody is a far cry from actually knowing them!

Jesus said as much. (*On Judgment day many will say to me, "Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name." But I will reply, "I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws."* **Matthew 7:22-23** NLT)

We don't gain access into God's Kingdom simply because we know about Jesus, or even because we believe in Him and go to Church. Even good works aren't the key.

Those pearly gates only swing open for those who *know* Jesus as Lord; for those who have chosen to unwrap the best gift ever, a sincere personal relationship with God Himself. I reckon that sets Christianity apart from all of the false religions. You see, Christianity is not a belief system, it's a family.

This ride could be over before the coffee cup hits the floorboard. We'd do well to stop focusing so much about getting ahead of the crowd and more about slicing out time for pursuing the things that really matter, particularly our relationship with the Lord.

But anyway- Who cares if I never get to hob nob with the President, stroll through the rose garden, or prop my feet up in the oval office? Especially when I've been invited to be best friends, blood kin, and a favored child of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

-Guy Sheffield 9-11-07