

Community Bible Fellowship Church

Cedar Fields - A Bible Fellowship Church

Loving People into the Kingdom

Part 6: Answering More Questions

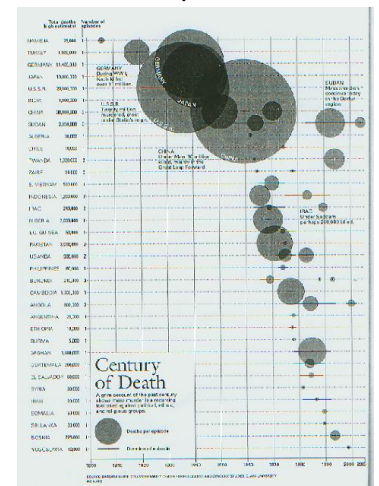
Philadelphia Inquirer, June 29, 2008 Mark Bowden: None of us can examine everything; we exercise judgment. Very little of what we accept as true, we know to be true. . . . Once I reach outside my small, familiar universe, though, most of the things I "know" turn out just to be things I **believe**.

- ❖ People go to hell – really?
 - All their lives people make multiple choices many times over whether they want God in their lives or not. Well, after they die, God will let people have their lifelong choice: life forever WITHOUT Him. That is what the Bible calls hell.
 - Our opinion or thoughts about eternal life are informed by what Jesus taught. Jesus was the main teacher of "hell."
 - TK, *RfG*, p.81: **Imagine two people arguing over the nature of a cookie. Jack thinks the cookie is poison, and Jill thinks it is not. Jack thinks Jill's mistaken view of the cookie will send her to the hospital or worse. Jill think Jack's mistaken view of the cookie will keep him from having a fine dessert. Is Jack more narrow-minded than Jill just because he thinks the consequences of her mistake are more dire? I don't believe anyone would think so. Christians, therefore, aren't more narrow because they think wrong thinking and behavior have eternal effects.**
- ❖ What about my relative that I loved and was good – what about them?
 - The righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart; devout men are taken away, while no one understands. For the righteous man is taken away from calamity; he enters into peace; they rest in their beds who walk in their uprightness. Isaiah 57:1-2
 - Genesis 18 – "Will the Judge of the Earth do wrong?" Is He unjust? He is not. God will do what is right. But...God will also do what is merciful. However, His mercy is riveted on the historical reality of Jesus – His Son, the Savior of Men.
 - By the way, Jesus says no one is good – only God! Everyone needs a Savior. This is why Jesus died.
- ❖ Infants and handicapped people
 - Duet. 18 – none who were under age will be punished.
 - He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me." 2 Samuel 12:22-23
 - For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. 1 Corinthians 7:14
- ❖ Homosexuality, sex in general
 - At our church, we promote and encourage great sex lives. We know God gave sex as a tremendous gift.
 - At our church, we are against all kinds of sexual sin whether hetero or homosexual.

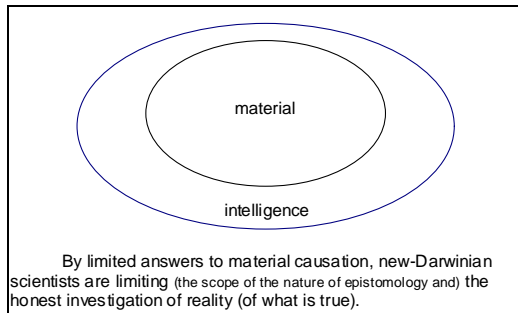
- God's way is the best and healthiest and the only moral way – sex in a marriage of a man and woman only.
- We love homosexuals, murders, cheaters and such at our church. We don't agree with what they do. This is true tolerance.
- ❖ What about women pastors or leaders in the church?
 - Our church believes women have the same gifts as men.
 - But the Bible teaches men and women have different roles.
 - Women lead projects, teach Sunday School, can be deacons.
 - But only men can be elders or pastors.
 - Many passages of Scripture teach appropriate cultural expressions, but does not command an exact pattern of cultural expressions.
- ❖ I believe Christians and Muslims pray to the same God.
 - Muslims would be very offended at that. They don't believe it at all. And no true Christian should too. Allah and Jesus are different.
- ❖ I don't have to go to church
 - Yes, but the fact that you don't **want** to is indication of a problem. God's children want to be with the rest of His family.
- ❖ I worship and meet with God in nature
 - Well, that's nice but He told how He wants to be worshiped and "met with." You cannot make up your own rules about how to meet with God. He doesn't allow that.

Good Illustrations or Responses

- When someone complains about Christians in their life or bad church experiences
 - I find that many people argue against believing mostly because of moral, relational or personal reasons not really rational reasons.
 - One, they either have been hurt in the past, now find reasons to stay away.
 - Or, two, they just really want to do whatever they want and find all kinds of reasons not to believe. This way, they are their own god.
 - Like rich man with Abraham, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not even be convinced if someone rises from the dead." Luke 16.
 - **"The church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints."**
- Religion (Christianity) have done more harm than good in history.
 - Also – see Century of Death chart from Nat.Geo. Jan.2006:
 - Teachers should not be judged by the worst student in the class who fails to study or do homework or follow the class schedule and gets an F!
 - Not true - Alister McGrath: **"The 20th century gave rise to one of the greatest and most distressing paradoxes of human history: that the greatest intolerance and violence of that century were practiced by those who believed religion caused intolerance and violence."**
 - Also – **"When people have done injustice in the name of Christ they are not being true to the spirit of the one who himself died as a victim of injustice and who called for the forgiveness of his enemies."** TK, *RfG*, p. 67



- All religions answer these basic first-order questions:
 - 1. Where did we come from?
 - 2. What went wrong?
 - 3. How do we fix it?
- Christianity has the best answers which match the reality of our existence - the best religion to explain our common human experience.
 - Nature (where people say they meet with God) – pristine beauty versus
 - City – lots of people – sin, breaking away from God.
 - God created world – “very good.” Man fell away (called “the Fall”) and we see biblical reality played out before us.
 - **"I believe in Christianity as I believe the sun has risen, not only because I can see it, but because by it I can see everything else." C.S. Lewis**
- Basic human experiences that are universal in all cultures:
 - everyone wants to be loved
 - everyone wants their life to count
 - many carry a load of guilt
 - many are consumed with bitterness over past hurt
 - there is a universal fear of death across all cultures
 - **C.S. Lewis: “If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”**
 - I have placed eternity in their hearts – Eccl.
- The Uniqueness of the Historic Christian Faith
 - Unique Christ – claimed He was God, killed because of that claim, proved He was God – can’t be liar, lunatic or Lord all at the same time – pick one.
 - **Illustration** of swimmers saying “Jesus didn’t yell” !!
 - Unique – the concept of grace. All other religions – How do you get to heaven? – you earn it. Christianity – Jesus Christ earned it for you. Grace, the un-earned infinite and majestic goodness of God, is peculiar, special, unique to Christianity.
 - See our church brochure for grace quotes.
- Science vs. Bible – false dichotomy.
 - Like stereo – channel A – nature; channel B – Bible – both in tune to same song written by God. Psalm 19 and 1 Tim 3:16.
 - Fact and Faith are complementary to one another not contradictory. Science is interpretation of nature. Theology is interpretation of Bible.
 - Most of greatest scientific discoveries and exploration done in the name of Christian faith wondering how and what God created.
 - Science should be asking what is true reality? Not limiting it to materialistic answers.
 - Alvin Plantinga: **“...the very practice of science requires that one reject the idea of God raising someone from the dead... [This] argument... is like the drunk who insisted on looking for his lost car keys only under the streetlight on the grounds that the light was better there. In fact, it would go the drunk one better: it would insist that because the keys would be hard to find in the dark, they MUST be under the light.” TK, RfG p.86.**



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- Jesus rose from the dead. Greatest and most potent fact of history.
 - All history dated B.C. or A.D. Before Christ or the year of our Lord – “anno Domini”
 - Have plenty of proof of Bible’s accuracy:
 - Historical investigation
 - Archeology
 - Fulfilled Prophecy
 - Cosmology
 - Anthropology
 - Biology
- “Every person has to define right and wrong for him- or herself.”
 - TK, *RfG*, p. 46-49: **“I always responded to the speakers by asking, ‘Is there anyone in the world right now doing things you believe they should stop doing no matter what they personally believe about the correctness of their behavior?’ They would invariably say, ‘Yes, of course.’ Then I would ask, ‘Doesn’t that mean that you *do* believe there is some kind of moral reality that is “there” that is not defined by us, that must be abided by regardless of what a person feels or thinks?’ Almost always, the response to that question was a silence, either a thoughtful or a grumpy one.”**
 - Fish illustration – free in fish tank with water; dies being liberated from tank on land.
 - TK: **“Freedom..is not the absence of limitations and constraints but it is finding the right ones, those that fit our nature and liberate us.”**
- What about separation of church and state?
 - This is the classic and rampant misunderstanding of The First Amendment. Separation of church & state as promoted in our present American dialogue is NOT a good understanding of the anti-establishment clause.
 - Here it is: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” The government needs to pass laws that promote the public welfare and also happen to be consistent with and even sustain certain moral understandings in good religion (Christianity for sure).
- Ask Questions!!!! (Columbo technique from www.str.org)
 - What do you mean by that? Or... In what way?
 - How did you come to that conclusion? Or... What is your authority to say that?
 - Can you clear this up for me?
 - Can I think about this and get back to you?

Altogether, all the proofs and reasons and rational for our Christian faith separately may be able to be picked apart and argued but the cumulative argument is potent.

ADDENDUM

This is what the Bible says about Jesus:

John 14:6 - way, truth, life; no one comes to the Father but by Jesus

Acts 4:12 - salvation found in no one else

Matt 5:11 - blessed when persecuted because of Jesus

Mark 2:5-6 - who can forgive sins but God? Jesus does.

Luke 10:22 - no one knows the Father except the Son

John 6:53-54 - unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man you have no life in you

Rom 9:3-5 – Paul's prayer and doxology

Php 2:5-11 - our attitude should be like Christ's

Col 1:15-20 - the supremacy of Christ

Heb 1:1-4 - Christ superior to the Old Testament mediators

Rev 1:10-18 - the glorified Christ has the keys to death and Hades

- ❖ **Paul Copan:** The claims of relativists are like saying, "I can't speak a word of English" or "All generalizations are false." Our most basic reply to the relativist is that his statements are self-contradictory. They self-destruct. They are self-undermining. The relativist actually falsifies his own system by his self-referential statements like "Everyone's beliefs are true or false only relative to himself." If claims are only true to the speaker, then his claims are only true to himself. It is difficult to see why his claims should matter to us. But if you are being consistent—if your statement is only true for you, then I see no reason to think it applies to me.