“Why Should We Trust the Bible?”

Dear Mr. Zukeran,

I recently caught your article on “The Authority of the Bible” and I was wondering if you could answer a few questions for a long time follower of Christ who is now having trouble with the Bible. I’m not having trouble with the Bible as a whole, but what I’m having a problem with is the claim that it is inerrant. With your impressive list of merits, degrees, etc, I was wondering if you could tell me what you think about this. The name of God has been used to influence people to do some pretty awful things. How do we know that the Bible was immune from political influence during its translation?

Is there a line that you drew in the sand and just said, “Even though I don’t understand it, I will claim this as truth”? In all your experience and learning, what is the one thing you hold to when everything else seems to falter?

I did not grow up in a Christian home and throughout high school I attended a private Episcopal School. The priests were atheists or very liberal. Therefore, I grew up not believing in the Bible. Eventually I embraced Atheism. After hearing the gospel message at a small Baptist church, I began to investigate the claims of Christ. From the evidence of creation, I could not deny the evidence for God’s existence.

Then I studied the historical accuracy of the gospels and found them to be very accurate historical works written by first century eyewitnesses. (For more see the article “Historical Reliability of the Gospels.”) In the gospels, Jesus claimed to be the divine Son of God and confirmed his claims through his miraculous, sinless life, death, and resurrection. We have good historical evidence that Christ did

live a miraculous life not only in the gospels, but in several works of non-Christian literature as well. (For more information read the article "The Uniqueness of Christ" and "The Resurrection: Fact or Fiction?")

Since Christ confirmed his claims to be the divine Son of God, what He taught was true. He taught the Bible was the inerrant word of God. [Note: theologian Dr. Wayne Grudem defines inerrancy as the belief that all the words in Scripture are completely true and without error. "The inerrancy of Scripture means that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything which is contrary to fact." *Bible Doctrine*, Zondervan 1999, p. 40, 42.] Inerrancy applies to the original documents, not the copies. However, we have thousands of ancient manuscripts to confirm that our Bible today is very accurate to the original texts.

Finally, I agree, there have been atrocities committed in history in the name of Christ. However, we should not discount the Bible because of the misinterpretation and misapplication of men in history. To those who have misapplied the text, we can point to the Bible and show where they have deviated from the biblical teaching and the example of Christ. The reason we know they were in error is that we can point out the error in the biblical text. The truth of the Bible should not be judged on the misapplication of certain people or organizations. We do not discount the value of the medical practice because we have had bad doctors who have used their practice for evil ends. The example we should look at is Christ, the founder of our faith.

Thanks for your question; it's great to interact with someone who is really thinking through the issues.

Patrick Zukeran

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“I Would Become A Christian Except that It’s Based on Lies and Deception”

Mr. Zukeran:

I read your comparative essay on Buddhism and Christianity. It was very interesting. However, it is quite obvious to me that you are bias toward Christianity. You raised an interesting point that the Buddha’s writings were written hundreds of years after his death, therefore, are not accurate and somewhat vague. You go on to say that Christianity has a more solid foundation being that there is a recorded history of Jesus during his ministry. There is one important fallacy in your logic that you failed to mention and/or consider that the Jesus you speak of actually existed. And many historians would agree with me that the Gospels were not written until hundreds of years after the so called death of Jesus. I do not write this criticism to offend, but to develop dialogue. My family and my community have deep roots in Christianity and I myself want to be a Christian, but I cannot lie to myself and deny the knowledge that I have. Unfortunately, I have yet to meet someone who can present Christianity to me in a way that will allow me to embrace it. The reason being it is based on lies and deception.

Thanks for reading my article and your response. I appreciate your honesty regarding the writings of Buddha. I was raised in the Japanese Buddhist tradition and many members of my family are still active members of the Buddhist community. In my studies of Buddhism, that was a question I often wrestled with and would ask the priests at the temple. I came to believe in

Christ because of the compelling evidence for Christ. I came to learn He was unique and indeed the divine Son of God.

The four Gospels present an accurate historical record of Christ. Your assertion that the Gospels were written hundreds of years after the death of Christ is incorrect. I believed that claim for many years until I studied the evidence. Presently, due to the evidence we have found, I do not think you will find many historians today agreeing with your assertion. There is strong internal and external evidence that the gospels were written by eye-witnesses in the lifetime of the eye-witnesses.

Here are just a few evidences. We have numerous ancient manuscripts that uphold a first century date. The Chester Beatty Papyri is a group of manuscripts that contains most of the New Testament and is dated 250 A.D. Since it is a copy of almost the entire New Testament, we can safely conclude the original books of the New Testament were written well before, probably in the late first or early second century A.D. The Bodmer Papyri date to 200 A.D. and contain most of the book of John, the last gospel written. Since this is a copy, the original was probably written earlier and since Matthew, Mark and Luke precede John, they are written even earlier. Finally, we have the Rylands Papyri which is a fragment of the book of John which dates 120 A.D. and this fragment was found in Egypt. We can conclude that John was written within the first century since he wrote from Asia Minor and this copy had made its way from there down to Egypt where it was found. Since Matthew, Mark, and Luke precede John, we can conclude these books were written within the first century A.D. The manuscript evidence alone silences the assertion that the gospels were written centuries after Christ’s death.

Then we have quotes from the early Church Fathers. Clement of Rome wrote a letter to the church in Corinth in 90 AD and quotes from all four Gospels. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch writes a letter from Rome in 115 A.D. and quotes all four

Gospels. Polycarp writes to the Philippians in 120 A.D. and quotes from all the Gospels. I could go on but I will stop here. The fact is, the Church Fathers from the first three centuries were already familiar with the writings of the Apostles and were already quoting them as inspired scripture.

So the assertion that the gospels are written hundreds of years after the death of Christ is a false assertion. For more information, please read my article titled "The Historical Reliability of the Gospels."

Sincerely,

Patrick Zukeran

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"My Husband Wants to Engage in a Threesome"

My husband is a Christian and has a good understanding of the Bible. However he has a desire/fantasy to engage in a threesome. I asked him if he believes that is OK with God and he replied yes. He says that the Bible speaks of men being with other men as sinful, however in the days that the Bible was written the men had more than one wife and it is acceptable with God as long as it is acceptable to each person involved. I disagree, but I have no biblical reference to back up my belief. Is the Bible clear about this issue?

Yes, the Bible is clear in teaching against this practice. Your husband is mistaken in stating that the Bible either

condones or at least does not prohibit a threesome of one man and two women because some of the leaders of Israel practiced polygamy.

Although the Bible does not have a specific verse that says do not engage in a threesome, there is a long list of Biblical principles that make it clear that such behavior is outside of God's will for us as His children. The Bible clearly forbids a married man from having sex with a woman who is not his wife; i.e. adultery (Exodus 20:14, Matthew 5:27), and also forbids sex between two unmarried individuals, i.e. fornication (Acts 15:20, 1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Thessalonians 4:3). Jesus' teaching in the New Testament clearly shows that a man who is not rightfully divorced from his first wife and takes on another wife is also committing adultery (Matthew 19:3ff).

In the light of the Biblical prohibition against fornication and adultery, a threesome of one man and two women could consist of the following situations:

- None of them are married to each other—fornication (and adultery if one or more of them is married to someone not involved in the threesome);

- The man is married to one of the women and not to the other—he is committing fornication with the other woman and adultery against his wife at the same time; or

- The man is married to both women—according to Jesus' teaching in the NT, he is committing adultery against his first wife.

In all of these cases, the two women are acting in a depraved, unnatural manner toward one another (Romans 1:26)

A sampling of the Biblical principles which apply to this subject are summarized below:

God's Intention for Marriage: When God created marriage, He

stated the man shall cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh (Genesis 2:24). Note that He does not say the three or more shall become one flesh. God's purpose for marriage has always been a covenant relationship between one man and one woman. This is reaffirmed in Ephesians 5:31-33 where the marriage relationship is shown to be a picture of Christ's relationship with His one bride, the Church, and the passage from Genesis is quoted, "the two shall become one flesh." It goes on to say that each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself. Note that each individual has his own *wife* not his own *wives*.

God's Standard for Adultery: In interpreting the Bible, Jesus' instruction and interpretation of the Old Testament and any other topic should be our authoritative source. In Matthew 19:3-9, Jesus repeats this principle of becoming one flesh and adds, "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." He then goes on to say that the Law of Moses only allowed for divorce because of the hardness of their heart and that God's full standard is "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." Jesus' teaching on this matter overrides any attempts to use Jacob, David, Solomon, etc. as examples that God supports polygamy. God allowed it in those cases and in every reported case polygamy only led to trouble and heartache.

NT Standard for Maturity: The standard for spiritual leadership and maturity in the NT is the husband of one wife. (1 Timothy 3:2,12, Titus 1:6) We don't know if the first century church forced a polygamist who came to Christ to divorce all of his wives, but he could not be a leader in the church, and the objective for believers was clearly marriages of one man and one woman. For additional insight, consider the passage where Paul is discussing marriage in 1 Corinthians 7. In that passage, he notes that a couple is not to withhold sex

from one another except for a mutually agreed period for prayer and fasting. Note that he makes no mention of how this should be handled in a polygamous situation, because polygamy was not part of God's plan for marriage.

Our Body Belongs to the Lord. In 1 Corinthians 6, the Scripture is very clear about what God thinks of a man engaging in sex with someone other than his wife even when that sexual act was encouraged by the society in which he lived.

> 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Is this threesome going to glorify God? Is this something that Jesus wants to honor with His presence?

Depravity between Women. Clearly the threesome suggested by your husband includes sexual interaction between two women. Romans 1:26-27 clearly states that this degrading activity is the result of man's depravity and is not God's desire for his beloved children.

Victory over Sensuality. The purpose of sex in marriage is not to promote sensuality. The only purpose of a threesome is sensuality. The Bible is clear that sensuality is a deed of the flesh and not a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:19-23). In particular, Ephesians 4:17-24 says that we are no longer to

walk in the futility of our mind, giving ourselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness, but we are to put on our new self that has been created in righteousness.

I could go on and on with other passages that clearly teach against such practices. The only way to argue that the Bible supports such activity is to deceive oneself as to the nature of the activity and the clear teaching of Scripture.

I would like to end by encouraging your husband to consider his fantasy in the light of the following verses:

1 Peter 3:7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. How does introducing another woman into the special intimacy you share with your wife show her honor? How does it show that you are living with her in an understanding way? The suggestion that her intimacy is not enough dishonors and degrades her dignity as a fellow heir of God's grace as it would any other woman involved in such a relationship.

Romans 13:13-14 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. Seeking to go beyond the marriage relationship is making provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. Our lusts are great at tricking us into rationalizing foolish behavior that is going to damage ourselves and others. When we start making provision for them, we are moving ourselves outside of Christ's protection. We can be sure that Jesus Christ is intensely interested in your relationship with your wife and has NO interest in participating in a sexual threesome.

Even if the Bible was silent on the topic (which it clearly is not), 1 Corinthians 8 & 9 and Romans 14 would prevent you from pursuing it further in the light of your wife's feelings about the subject.

Understand that the reason God puts limits on our sensuality and promiscuity is not to deprive us of greater satisfaction in life. Just as we do with our own children, He puts those limits in place to protect us from harming ourselves and others. Please recognize this fantasy for what it is—a deceitful lust which needs to be taken captive in obedience to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Don't feel ashamed for being under attack by lust (it is a common position to find ourselves in), and be sure and ask God for His way to escape from this deceit (1 Corinthians 10:13). Turning his back on this fantasy will lead to joy and satisfaction, whereas continuing to pursue it will lead to continual craving and heartache.

_____, if your husband is unwilling to consider the evidence presented above, you should seek competent, Christian counseling as a couple. In addition, I can recommend some good resource materials to better understand God's purpose for marriage and how you can grow as a couple. Here is a sampling of resources:

• ***The Marriage Masterpiece*** by Al Jansenn—a comprehensive look at God's purposes for marriage

• ***Marriage Without Regrets***—a comprehensive inductive Bible study from Precept Ministries

• ***Sex According to God*** by Kay Arthur—what does the Bible teach about sex?

• ***A Lasting Promise: A Christian Guide to Fighting for Your Marriage*** by S. Stanley, et.al.—identifying and removing destructive behavior patterns

• ***When Bad Things Happen to Good Marriages***, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott

I am praying that God will speak to you and your husband leading you into the joy of being one in Him.

Yours in Christ,

Steve Cable

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"What Do You Say to Someone Who's Had Sex-Change Surgery?"

I have heard of a man who has undergone a surgery to change his sexuality to female. After two years, "she" is married to another man.

What are the biblical references on sex-change surgery? How do we counsel if we meet someone like this? Furthermore, in an interview with this man, he said that inside him is a woman who is trapped in a man's body. Please help me understand this issue.

This is a difficult situation since the developments of technology have made it possible to carry through on self-deception in ways the world has never seen before.

There is nothing in the Bible about sex reassignment surgery, but everything the Bible says about male and female pertains to those who are confused about their gender. The most

important principle is that God chooses whether a child is boy or girl, and our bodies tell us what gender God intends for us. If someone feels that their gender is mismatched to their genitals, then the solution is not to mutilate one's body, but to cooperate with God to change one's confused thinking.

"I am a woman trapped in a man's body" is a familiar statement made by a gender-confused person, but it's not accurate. The feelings are real, but the interpretation of the feelings are faulty. Several years ago, here in the U.S., Johns Hopkins University stopped doing sex-change surgeries because they learned that several years after the surgery, people weren't happy. That's because having a doctor change the outside, did nothing to change the heart, and the wrong thinking continued. Here is a link to a powerful essay written by the doctor who made the decision to shut down the program: www.firstthings.com/article/2004/11/surgical-sex

Also, here is a website that I think you will find helpful in understanding the regret many people experience post-surgery: www.sexchangeregret.com

How do you counsel someone? Well, it depends on what they think. A person who is happy with their sex-change probably isn't going to be interested in talking to someone who thinks differently about it. If they're not happy, and suspect they made a colossal mistake, then I would suggest pointing them to the grace and mercy of God. Sometimes we make decisions we can't fix, and the only solution for a regret-filled person is to invite God into the mess they've made and ask Him to bring glory to Himself through it. God can make all things work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). He honors our choices, though, and a person who has chosen to mutilate their body will have to live with a mutilated body. But one can do it to the glory of God. The good news for the person who has trusted in Christ is that when they receive their new, glorified body in heaven (1 Corinthians 15), their original gender will be

restored.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

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"What Advice Would You Give Someone Leaving an Abusive Church?"

We now realize that our church is abusive. What advice can you give us?

I would advise you read a few books that will help during the difficult transition. *Recovering from Churches that Abuse* by Ron Enroth, *Healing Spiritual Abuse* by Ken Blue, and *The Grace Awakening* by Charles Swindoll. Often, there is a lot of hurt and bitterness. These books can help you overcome the pain and keep from becoming a bitter individual.

Second, I would advise you join a support group from a good church. There are very few support groups for spiritually abused victims but if you can find one, great. If not, a group to share your experience and pray with is a great help.

Third, many abused victims want to inform members who remain at the abusive church. This can be very frustrating and time consuming. I do not recomend spending a lot of your energy doing this. It is best to leave it all behind and begin a new chapter in your life.

Finally, enjoy your new freedom. Visit churches and fellowships. You will realize that the body of Christ is a lot bigger than you can imagine and this is refreshing to see. In the process, you will meet a lot of neat Christians who may become your new family in Christ.

Patrick Zukeran

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"You Misguided Piece of ****!"

What the h*ll are you, you misguided piece of sh!!! What did your so called 'God' snap his fingers and wham! earth is 'created' hehe you are an idiot. Where is your God anyway? Floating up in the atmosphere somewhere? Religion is something misguided humans look for when their life is in the dumps (eg. crops fail, someone dies etc etc), they want to believe in something…….. which does not exist. Homo sapiens increased brain size has allowed it to think of things like this. That is all Christianity is, you can believe in it but don't expect other people to believe a falicy.**[sic]

Thanks for taking the time to visit at least one of my articles; whether you actually read anything I can't tell from your message. Unfortunately your comments follow a rather common pattern of showing a lot of bluster with no substance. If you think I have made an error of fact or judgment, I would be glad to discuss something specific with you. I am sorry you have such a low opinion of people of faith (who, by the way, in reference to your comment about other people not believing it, are in the vast majority). It sounds to me like you are

more mad at God than convinced of His nonexistence.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, Ph.D.
Probe Ministries

"Mohammed and David Both Had Multiple Wives"

Hi Pat,

I bought your "Evidence and Answers" CD series on Islam and listened to the first one today. I must say that it was very informative and enjoyable. In that particular broadcast, you contrasted Islam with Christianity by pointing out that Mohammed had eleven wives. However, the Bible records that King David, described as a man after God's own heart, also had numerous wives and concubines. Doesn't that nullify your argument with Mohammed somewhat?

Great question. First, God's intent was for men to have one wife so David was out of God's will there, and the Bible shows He did not have a good home life. David was a man after God's heart but he was not sinless, he only was deeply committed to God. In Islam a qualification for a prophet is that he is sinless after his call. Muhammad is believed to be sinless; that is why this is a key point. David is not believed to be sinless but sincere; Muhammad is supposed to be sinless. The Koran limits men to four wives but Muhammad took several more. Also, Muhammad's youngest and most favorite wife Aisha was nine years old when they consummated their marriage. David did not marry a child but married women. Finally, Muhammad took

his son-in-law's wife as one of his wives as well. So the character of Muhammad does not point to a sinless prophet.

Pat Zukeran

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"What's Dominionism?"

Mr. Anderson:

I heard you say on Point of View that your guest, Craig Parshall, can speak on many issues. You were talking about that PBS person, Bill Moyers.

What's this "dominionism" thing? I went to Wikipedia and it doesn't sound like anything a true follower of Christ Jesus would want to be involved with.

I noticed that the May 2005 issue of *Harpers* magazine that Craig Parshall was talking about on the program actually used the term dominionism. I really think the authors in that magazine article and in the Wikipedia entry are misusing the term.

Dominion theology defines a small group of postmillennial Christians who are part of the Christian Reconstruction movement. They are trying to bring about God's kingdom on earth through government, societies, and cultures. That would not describe the theology or agenda of the members of the National Religious Broadcasters or the National Association of Evangelicals.

In fact, I can't think of a single prominent leader in either of these organizations that would hold to that theological

position. Perhaps there is one that I don't know about, but it certainly does not describe the theology of NRB or NAE.

To put it simply, I don't think the term "dominionist" in the magazine or even in the Wikipedia entry is a fair description of the evangelical leadership in America.

Thanks for writing.

Kerby Anderson

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"Why Was God Sorry He Made Man?"

"Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He created man on the earth and He was grieved in His heart."**(Gen. 6:5&6 NKJV)**

When I read this passage three things stood out to me and seemed contradictory to everything that I have been told about God and have read in other parts of the Bible.

1) God is perfect and infallible. Why then was He "sorry that He created man"? In my mind "sorry" indicates some admission of error.

2) God is pure good. The Word says that all things were created through Him (*logos* the Word) and there is nothing that exists on the earth which He did not create (my summation of John 1). Therefore evil exists, but who created evil: Satan or

Lucifer? In my understanding he is the author of rebellion and all kinds of "evil." OK, so who created Lucifer who is later called "adversary"? Well, God did. The universe and in fact all reality was conceived by God and given life by the Word (please correct if I am wrong, I truly want to believe). So evil had to have been conceived first by God in order for Lucifer to have the ability to rebel. Follow? Nothing exists that God did not create.

3) God is omniscient. If God created time and knows all then why did he create man when He knew man would turn their hearts to evil? Taking that thinking further, why did he make Lucifer knowing he would rebel? Therefore, why did God create rebellion?

The term "sorry" doesn't necessarily carry the connotation of admitting to an error. For instance, I can be "sorry" that a good friend has been stricken with a terminal illness. But this doesn't mean I'm taking responsibility for the illness, or that I've committed an error of some kind. Similarly, God was "sorry" and "grieved" by man's wickedness (to continue our analogy, the "illness" of sin). But God was not directly responsible for this wickedness rather, man was responsible. God created man in His image and endowed him with genuine libertarian freedom. Thus, man not only had the freedom to do good, he also had the freedom to do evil. Unfortunately, man exercised his will to do what was evil in God's sight. Hence, God was "sorry" that he made man. But the evil was not done by God, but by man whom God had created with genuine freedom (part of "the image of God").

It's true that no "thing" exists which God did not create. But most philosophers and theologians do not consider evil to be a "thing" (i.e. something which exists in its own right). Rather, moral evil is a corruption, perversion, or defect in some good thing created by God. Everything created by God was good. Moral evil entered the picture when the angel now known as Satan freely chose to exercise his will in defiance of God.

This angel was created good, not evil. But he chose to do evil, and he did this freely. God did not force him to sin, or tempt him, or anything of the sort. Satan freely chose to rebel against God and was thus corrupted by sin. I personally think the fall of Satan is described in Ezekiel 28:11-19 (for reasons that I don't have time to get into here).

I think it's a mistake to say that God created rebellion. God did not create rebellion. Rather, God made rational moral agents (like humans and angels) and endowed them with genuine moral freedom (which necessitates the genuine freedom to do good and/or evil). God's creatures some of them, at any rate chose evil. God did not. Of course, God knew the creatures would choose evil. So why did He create them? Apparently, He considered it worthwhile to create such free creatures even knowing ahead of time that they would sin. He provided a means, at His own expense, for man to be redeemed and saved from his sins. Satan and the demons will simply be destroyed.

At any rate, it's important to assign blame to whom it is due. God created free creatures and thus the possibility of moral evil. But it was the creatures themselves, not God, who actualized this possibility by freely choosing moral evil. God did not tempt them to sin, nor did He force them to sin. They freely chose to sin.

Hope this helps. By the way, an excellent website which you may want to visit is bible.org. They have thousands of helpful resources for studying the Bible.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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“I Have Some Questions on the Separation of Church and State”

Mr. Anderson,

I read your article on the Separation of Church and State and have a few questions for you. At the end of your article you wrote of an “‘open public square’ (where government neither censors nor sponsors religion but accommodates religion).” First of all, I’m curious as to whether you feel that the architects of the First Amendment intended for the protection of religion in general (as in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, etc.), or for the protection of strictly Christianity, as many of them were Christians, or at least claimed to be Christians? In addition to the latter part of that question, do you feel it was added more to prevent the rights, morals, etc. of Christians from being infringed on by a future non-Christian president, or do you feel it was added in order that a Christian president did not infringe on the beliefs of those of other faiths? Secondly, I am wondering as to the purpose of an “open public square” in the context of religions other than Christianity. Ideally, how would you see something like that functioning?

Thank you for your questions about the separation of church and state. Let me try to answer them in order.

1. Did the architects of the First Amendment intend to protect religion in general?

Although the primary religious faith in the 18th century was Christianity, it certainly appears that the framers intended the First Amendment to be inclusive of all religious faiths. For example, in James Madison’s *Memorial and Remonstrance*, he says:

> *Because we hold it for a fundamental and undeniable truth, that religion or the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence.*

He seems to be defining religion as the duty we owe to our Creator. I would take that to apply to nearly any religion, not just the Christian religion.

2. Was it added to prevent the rights and moral of Christians from being infringed?

Some who ratified the Constitution did not even want a Bill of Rights, but others would not ratify the Constitution unless there were specific protections to prevent the encroachment of the newly formed federal government. The framers clearly stated that Congress shall make no law meaning that the federal government can't tell citizens what to pray, what to read, what to think, or even where to assemble. These protections apply to all citizens, not just to Christians.

3. What is the purpose of an open public square?

As I mentioned in my article, I believe that this would be a world in which all religious perspectives would be given an opportunity to express themselves in the public square. Although we supposedly live in a society dedicated to tolerance and civility (see my article on this topic), religious values are often stripped from the public square. This naked public square only seems to permits secular ideas and values rather than all ideas and values.

A good example of an open public square would be the Equal Access Act passed by Congress in 1984. Religious students should have the same equal access to school facilities as non-religious students. If a school allows the debate club or the Spanish club to utilize the school facilities after school, they should also allow students who want to start a Bible club

to have the same privileges.

Kerby Anderson

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