

“Your Article on Edgar Cayce Can Hurt Christian Believers!”

I had previously ignored the anti-Cayce article on your web site, assuming that you had a right to your opinion and that you probably would not want to hear mine. It has come to my attention, however, that this propaganda has the potential to create harm and confusion for believers who might otherwise be helped by the Edgar Cayce readings.

While some of the things in your article are relatively true, some of your facts are patently false. It is shameful for a ministry that claims to do research to post an article that relies almost exclusively on secondary sources while completely ignoring what was actually said in the Cayce readings-a body of information that is readily available to anyone.

Probably the most egregious statement is: Cayce came to believe that Jesus was not the unique Son of God. Here is a quote (similar to thousands of other quotes) from a typical reading:

As to how to meet each problem: Take it to Jesus! He is thy answer. He is Life, Light and Immortality. He is Truth, and is thy elder brother. Will ye open and let Him in? For in Him is strength, not in the law, not in the man, not in the multitudes of men, nor of conditions or circumstance. For He ruleth, He maketh them-every one. For hath it not been given or told thee, hath it not been known in thine experience that “He is the Word, He maketh all that was made, and without Him there was nothing made that was made”? And He liveth in the hearts and the souls of those who seek to do His biddings. This, then, is not idealistic-but an ideal! What would Jesus

have me do regarding every question in thy relationships with thy fellow man, in thy home, in thy problems day by day. This rather should be the question, rather than What shall I do?
Cayce reading #1326-1

I believe that thousands of people have come to a closer walk with Jesus through the encouragement given in these readings. I would agree that these things should be approached with a gift of discernment and tested for their fruits. But how can you shamelessly attempt to associate this work (as many others have done) with occultic, Spiritualistic, channeling, doctrines of demons, etc.? Surely you don't need to be warned not to speak against gifts of the Spirit. If Cayce's gift was actually a gift of the Holy Spirit, then to call it demonic or Satanic would put a person in danger of being like those who accused Jesus of being demon possessed. You might at least invoke the wisdom of old Gamaliel (See Acts 5:22-42) and be careful that you are not fighting against God.

You have a wonderful opportunity to speak to many people. If you do keep Lou Whitworth's article on your web site I would urge you to at least post this message along with those of others who have responded to it. I will be looking forward to hearing from you.

Wishing you many blessings in Christ,

Thank you for your letter. And thank you for the respect with which it is written. Lou Whitworth is no longer with Probe Ministries. However, I am sending your letter to someone who can decide whether or not to keep Lou's article on our website. This is not a decision that I can make.

I have also written an article entitled, ["The Worldview of Edgar Cayce"](#). Although I also had to rely on some secondary source material, this material was almost entirely from a "pro-Cayce" perspective. And all of it (I think) would be endorsed by the A.R.E.

I'm sure you've done a great deal of research in this area. However, my own study convinced me that the only way I could affirm that the worldview revealed in the Edgar Cayce readings was Christian would be to redefine "Christianity" to mean something other than what all the orthodox creeds and confessions of the Christian church have understood it to mean. I'm afraid that I honestly do not believe that the worldview of the readings is consistent with biblical Christianity.

If you happen to embrace an "unorthodox" understanding of Christianity (defined relative to the historic orthodoxy represented in the creeds and confessions shared by virtually all conservative Christian denominations – e.g. Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and the various Protestant groups), then of course our disagreement will really be about Christianity – not Edgar Cayce. If this is the case, I'm afraid there won't be much point in dialogue. I'm already convinced that the "orthodox" understanding of Christianity is true (e.g. The Nicene Creed, etc.) – and am already quite familiar with the unorthodox forms and expressions of "Christianity."

Thanks again for writing. I sincerely wish you well.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

Probe Ministries

"Are There Biblical Solutions

to the Issues Self-Help Gurus Address?”

People like Wayne Dyer offer some interesting answers to everyday problems, like moving on with your life, overcoming excuses, etc. Are there Biblical answers like these self-help gurus offer?

Drs. John Townsend and Henry Cloud, writing and speaking partners who wrote the *Boundaries* books, are exceptionally wise men whose perspective is drenched in scripture and biblical thinking. In fact, Dr. Townsend earned a Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, which means he REALLY knows his theology. Between the two of them, who have written a number of books together and separately, there is a wide range of “self-help” resources, but which are really about plugging God’s principles into our needs. (And then, the reader discovers, it’s actually about plugging *ourselves* into God and His principles—first things first!) I would especially recommend *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life* (Townsend and Cloud) and *Changes That Heal* (Cloud). Here’s a link to their website: www.cloudtownsend.com

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

Addendum: My colleague at Probe, Heather Zeiger, sent this follow-up email:

Just for reference to the Biblical Self-help question. One can be encouraged that many of the Puritans have written on these self-help issues, so Christian authors have actually been publishing in this area for a while. I wouldn’t necessarily direct someone to the Puritans right off the bat, but I think it is encouraging that back in the 1600s, Jonathan Edwards

wrote about procrastination (one of his selected sermons in book form is entitled “Procrastination or The Sin and Folly of Depending on Future Time”) and about those things (affections) that we love more than we should. I’m reading John Owens’ *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers*. Basically he applies it with addictions. He wrote in the 1700’s.

Two recent books written by psychologists/counselors also with theology degrees are *How People Change* by Timothy S. Lane and Paul D. Tripp, which is the modern-day version of Jonathan Edwards’ *Religious Affections* – learning how to get over the gospel of works and accept grace. And deals with how people handle when tough things happen in life and what they turn to in order to cope. The other book that is really good is *When People are Big and God is Small* by Edward T. Welch, which is all about people-pleasing and co-dependency.

The theme in all these books is exactly what you said in your email – not some program or steps to make yourself better in the world’s eyes, but understanding what God thinks of these things and how through Him we can be free.

© 2009 Probe Ministries

“Does God Love Us All Differently?”

Does God love us all differently? I always thought He loves us all equally, but what about Scriptures like “Jacob I have loved, Esau I hated” and how John was the beloved disciple? Does God love some of us more or less than others?

Great question! It would seem that certain verses would indeed

support the idea that while God does love everyone (John 3:16—"God so loved the world. . ."), there are also degrees of love and favor. In Deuteronomy 7:6 Moses tells the children of Israel, "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, His treasured possession." Drawing on several Old Testament passages, Peter makes a similar proclamation to the Church in 1 Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession."

And then there are individuals, as you have pointed out. In Malachi 1:2-3, God does say, "Jacob I have loved, Esau I hated." It's important to understand what God means here, because God talks about hating individuals in the Old Testament, and the Lord Jesus calls us to hate our families in the New (Luke 14:26). These biblical uses of hate means "to love less." [For a compelling argument and explanation, see this article on Bible.org, "How To Hate Your Wife" at <https://bible.org/seriespage/49-how-hate-your-wife-luke-1425-35>.]

John does describe himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," but do note that Jesus never calls him that. Jesus loved *all* His disciples. John reveled in being loved by Jesus, and gave himself that anointed description, a description we can all ascribe to ourselves. It is a stunning light bulb moment when a believer realizes, "Wow! I too am a disciple whom Jesus loves!"

In Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, He tells the Father that He has "loved them [the disciples], even as You have loved Me" (23). The idea that the Father loves the Church as much as, and in the same way as He loves the Son is amazing. I can find no such statement about unbelievers. I think that God's love for all people is outrageously powerful and huge, but there seems to be a special component to the relationship between God and His people. Maybe that's because there IS an

actual relationship. . .?!

One more thing. Acts 10:34 says that “God is no respecter of persons,” but this does not mean he loves everyone equally. It means (and this is made clearer by checking the origin of the Greek word for “respecter”) that God is not impressed by anyone’s position, wealth, power or beauty. These things do not affect the way He judges with fairness and justice, the way a human judge can be “a respecter of persons.

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

© 2009 Probe Ministries

“Christianity Is Getting Creamed by Islam Apologetics!”

Lately I’ve been looking up things on Islam and Christianity, and it seems like Christianity is getting creamed by Islam apologetics. I mean, there are websites which show amazing scientific accuracies in the Qur’an, like the origin of the universe. They even attack the accuracy of the Bible and talk about the “contradictions.” I beg you to please help me. I mean, they do make a lot of good cases for Islam. Why shouldn’t I believe Islam is the true faith?

Scientific accuracy does not necessarily prove a book is divinely inspired. It simply shows it has some accurate facts. There are numerous books that are scientifically accurate but we would not view them as inspired. The Bible also has

numerous scientific accuracies. I have read many of the alleged contradictions in the Bible. Most passages cited are out of context, misinterpreted, or the science of textual criticism is misunderstood. The Bible is inspired in its original documents, not the copies. We have accurate copies but the few discrepancies we have do not affect any major doctrines. This is different from the Qur'an which claims to be perfect, the copy we have now, they claim, is a perfect reflection of what is in heaven.

What is interesting is that there are several errors in the Qur'an. Here are a few scientific errors: Sura 86:5-7 states that sperm comes from a man's chest. Sura 23:14 says man was created from a blood clot.

There are also several historical errors. Sura 20:85-95 states the Samaritans tricked Moses and the Israelites during the Exodus. The Samaritans did not exist till about 1000 years later. One big error is that Islam denies the death and resurrection of Jesus which is one of the best documented events in ancient history. On what basis do they deny this? We have too much evidence for this event. These errors put the inspiration of the Qur'an in question.

For more information please read my articles: [Jesus in the Qur'an](#), [The Historical Reliability of the Gospels](#), and [The Resurrection: Fact or Fiction?](#).

Patrick Zukeran

© 2009 Probe Ministries

“You Anti-Abortion Doctor Killers Are Hypocrites!”

So since obviously you say the religion is against abortion and abortion is evil and wrong. . . What is god going to do about the guy that murdered a man in church since he was an abortion doctor?

So murdering a baby is wrong. . . . and getting your anti, “you don’t have a choice” word across no matter what happens is OK?

It’s OK to bomb clinics and murder doctors and harass people. . . I must have missed that passage in the bible. That must be in the book of “I’m a Hypocrite” verse 12.

So let’s say your beautiful wholesome daughter was raped by a psychotic crazed madman and he got her pregnant. You would welcome that half-crazed child into your life? Or going off of anti-abortion tactics, obviously you would just kill her and say it was in the book of Hypocrite, or wait. . . you would put the baby up for adoption and not tell the parents that this is a child of a rape.

You see the problem here don’t you? But of course it’s not a problem in your eyes until it hits home isn’t it.

Oh I guess you anti-abortion activists will continue to bomb buildings, murder people and harass people in the name of god. Wow. . . you know what. . . that is rather hypocritical isn’t it.

Murder is OK, it must say so in some part of the bible that I missed too. . . and bombing. . . does it say anywhere there “And the lord, place a bomb in the building to blow it up”? Man, I musta skipped over that section.

Dear friend,

I'm glad you wrote so we can provide a different perspective. Before responding to the points of your email, let me state unequivocally that *we condemn the use of all violence in the struggle to end the violence of abortion*. As a ministry, and all of us individually.

So since obviously you say the religion is against abortion and abortion is evil and wrong. . . What is god going to do about the guy that murdered a man in church since he was an abortion doctor?

My guess is that He will respond the same way as to any other murderer.

So murdering a baby is wrong. . . . and getting your anti, "you don't have a choice" word across no matter what happens is OK?

We would say no, it's not okay. God tells us to show respect and honor to everyone, even those we disagree with.

And we disagree with those who believe it is acceptable to use violence to stop abortion. "The end justifies the means" is not a biblical philosophy; it is actually the fruit of Darwinist thinking that says the fit will survive by whatever means they can get away with. Those justifying their unbiblical actions because they believe that abortion must be stopped regardless of the methods used are dishonoring God.

It's OK to bomb clinics and murder doctors and harass people. . . I must have missed that passage in the bible. That must be in the book of "I'm a Hypocrite" verse 12.

:::wince::: Your point is well taken. However, please consider the possibility that people who bomb clinics and murder abortionists and harrass people are acting on their own choice

instead of taking their orders from what God has said in His word. The Old Testament property laws show that God wants us to respect other people's property, and bombing clinics is a violation of that. Murdering doctors is a direct violation of the commandment "Thou shalt not murder." Harrassing people is a violation of God's command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

So let's say your beautiful wholesome daughter was raped by a psychotic crazed madman and he got her pregnant. You would welcome that half-crazed child into your life? Or going off of anti-abortion tactics, obviously you would just kill her and say it was in the book of Hypocrite, or wait. . . you would put the baby up for adoption and not tell the parents that this is a child of a rape.

Let's go one step further. I'm a woman; during my childbearing years I lived with the possibility that it could have been me getting impregnated through a rape. I did think about what we would do. Because there's a big difference between pre-deciding a response to a hypothetical situation and actually living it, we had two choices: welcome the baby into our family as a continual reminder of what grace (undeserved blessing and favor) looks like, or giving the baby up for adoption. There is a growing number of infertile couples who would give anything to bring such a life into their home, regardless of how he came to be. The baby would be an innocent party who had nothing to do with his or her conception. (And even if the father were a "psychotic crazed madman," that doesn't make his offspring crazy.)

You see the problem here don't you? But of course it's not a problem in your eyes until it hits home isn't it.

It would be a very big problem. Our response is that we have an even bigger God.

Oh I guess you anti-abortion activists will continue to bomb

buildings, murder people and harass people in the name of god. Wow. . . you know what. . . that is rather hypocritical isn't it.

Yes, it is hypocritical to do things in the name of God who forbids us to do those things. I'm curious, though, why you wrote to Probe Ministries, since none of us are anti-abortion "activists." Not a one of us has ever bombed a building or murdered doctors or harassed people. I'm also curious. . . are you able to consider the possibility that people who cross God's lines, no matter how well-intentioned they are, are a tiny minority of those who are passionate about this issue?

We think it's interesting that in today's culture, it's not okay to blame all Muslims for the actions of extremist Muslim terrorists (and of course it's not). . . but it's acceptable to blame all Christians for the actions of a handful of extremists? Isn't that what you're doing here?

Murder is OK, it must say so in some part of the bible that I missed too. . . and bombing. . . does it say anywhere there "And the lord, place a bomb in the building to blow it up"? Man, I musta skipped over that section.

You're right. Murder and bombing other people's buildings are not instructed in the Bible. In fact, the Bible tells us to do the opposite of those things. The people choosing to resort to their own methods in hopes of achieving their goals are not basing their choices on biblical values or principles. They do what they do *in spite of* what the Bible says, not because of it.

Thanks for writing.

Sue Bohlin

© 2009 Probe Ministries

“What About Hindus’ Claim that Hinduism is the Oldest Religion?”

Indian Hindus claim that Hinduism is the oldest religion, but Bible teaches us that God created all this in Jewish form. If so, why do those Vedas and upanishads say they are older than the Bible?

Your question seems to be a complex question with multiple implications and I think we need to be careful to define some of our terms. First of all, even though God did create Adam and did place a special calling, promise and blessing on Abraham and his descendents, the Bible doesn't say that "God created all this in Jewish form." When God created Adam, Judaism was not in complete form yet, even though Judaism would descend from Adam and Abraham's blood. Judaism carefully traces its roots all the way back to the creation of the universe, and the creation of man, connecting Adam to Abraham. This started out as oral tradition which was written down much, much later. So that needs to be taken into account.

Second, even among scholars of the writings of the Vedas, there is some dispute about when the actual writings of the Vedas were written. Some of them might date back to 1500 BC, but some Biblical scholars date the Exodus of the Hebrews around this time. Conservative Biblical scholars (and I) hold that Moses was the primary author of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible.) This would date the Pentateuch as being as old as some of the Vedas. But it is true that Christianity was started with Christ or, technically, after his resurrection. The New Testament was written in the first

century. So, in one sense, one might claim that Hinduism is older than “CHRISTianity” because it dates back before Christ. [However, Christianity’s roots are in Judaism, which, again, traces *its* roots all the way back to the first man and woman.]

But if a Hindu apologist uses the phrase “Hinduism is older than Christianity” kind of as a “gotcha” statement, trying to make something more credible because of its age, their implications include a couple fallacies. First, Hinduism has changed and added books with their Vedas over the years, and it’s difficult to say all the Vedas are older than the Torah. Second, just because something is older doesn’t make something more true. This is the logical fallacy “*Argumentum ab Annis*” (argument because of age). Just because a religion, a thousand years ago from a primitive group, taught that child sacrifice to the gods was good, this didn’t make their belief or their practice true or good. And not just because of the argument that one religion being older makes it better. However, God’s existence, his creation, the existence of Adam, and calling of Abraham existed in reality years before Moses documented them in the Torah.

Hope you find this helpful.

Dave Sterrett

© 2009 Probe Ministries

**“How Do I Talk to My Friend
About Her Son’s**

Homosexuality?"

My very dear Jewish friend and mother has a gay son. She insists that she knew from age 5 forward, that he was different and going to be homosexual. She loathes Christians who say that being homosexual is not genetic, but learned behavior, and is sinful. How can I best respond to her biblically, about homosexuality? Or to anyone I meet with this perspective?

I'm so glad you asked! I see several issues in your email.

She insists that she knew from age 5 forward, that he was different and going to be homosexual.

If she was sensitive to her children, it is not surprising that she noted he was different from very early in his childhood. There's nothing wrong with being different. But it's sad that she "knew" he was going to be homosexual because it didn't have to turn out that way.

I believe there is a [spectrum of masculinity](#) in boys, and they are born at whatever place on that spectrum that is God's choice, and gift, to them. On one end is the rough-and-tumble physical, athletic, emotionally insensitive boy. Our culture would deem him "classically masculine." He loves to play ball or engage in various sports, to get dirty, and to play with other boys. On the other end of the spectrum from the athletic boy is the aesthetic boy: gifted in music, art, poetry, performing, enjoying reading and other quiet activities, and emotionally sensitive. Songwriter and musician Dennis Jernigan, himself a former homosexual, calls these boys the "Davids" of the church.

Unfortunately, our culture has too narrowly defined masculinity, labeling the sensitive, artistic boy different and gay. One man I know, provided with this perspective,

exclaimed, "If someone had explained to me when I was 17 that I wasn't gay, I was gifted, that would have changed everything!"

When a boy's father, especially, gives him warm attention, affection and affirmation, supporting whatever kind of boy he is, he usually grows up accepting and comfortable with his particular kind of masculinity. When a boy knows that his daddy believes in him and is his #1 cheerleader, he can connect with the world of males and continue to develop without incident. But when a boy doesn't receive the masculinity imprint from his father that makes him feel like he belongs in the world of boys and men, he can remain stuck at that place. (If he DOES have a great relationship with his dad but doesn't make the connection with other boys, the arrested development can happen a few years later.)

How do I know this? From being in ministry to hundreds of men whose stories are heartbreakingly similar. There are a few wild cards, such as sexual abuse, that can produce same-sex attractions even when a boy has a great relationship with his dad and his peers, but most of the time it's a very similar story.

[Incidentally, I see a similar spectrum of femininity for girls, ranging from the foo-foo girly-girl on one end, to the tomboy jockette, allergic to dresses, on the other. Our culture also too narrowly defines femininity, just as it does masculinity.]

She loathes Christians who say that being homosexual is not genetic, but learned behavior, and is sinful.

Well, being homosexual is NOT genetic. There is not only no evidence for a genetic cause for same-sex attractions, there is strong evidence for certain pre-conditions that characterize the histories of those who eventually take on a gay identity: the sensitive temperament, a lack of warm,

affirming connection with dad, a lack of affirming connection with other boys, and a resulting lack of self-confidence in being male.

And yet it can feel like people were born that way.

Maybe this analogy will help. My friend grew up in the south where everyone in his family was prejudiced. It was just the culture of his family and pretty much all the people his family ran with. As long as he can remember, he always hated and feared black people. Everyone he knew hated and feared black people. He didn't know there was any other way. But he wasn't born prejudiced. He was shaped that way because of countless interactions and modeling. He told me, "You grow up being taught and thinking that black people are bad and evil and you believe that until the Lord reveals something else. Then you change and you were not what you once were—what felt 'normal' to you."

No one chooses the feelings of a lack of confidence in one's masculinity, of not belonging to the world of boys and men. Then, once the sex hormones start flooding his body in adolescence, no one chooses the resulting sexual/romantic attraction to a guy who possesses what a boy wishes he had or were. The feelings are not learned, but the resulting choices and behaviors are. The Bible, including the Old Testament passages, does not condemn the feelings, only the chosen behavior. (And sexual sin is always a choice.) So I would make a distinction between the feelings and the actions.

So homosexual feelings are not chosen, but acting on them is, and it's sinful. It's not a sin to be tempted (what same-sex feelings constitute), but it is a sin to step over the line and give in. You might mention to your friend something like the fact that it's not a sin to be tempted to shoplift, but it is a sin to give in and steal. I would imagine she could get that.

How can I best respond to her biblically, about homosexuality? Or to anyone I meet with this perspective?

The first issue is to determine if they're even open to hearing another viewpoint. It's not a good idea to try and "correct" someone's values and beliefs when they are content in them, but Jesus told us to be salt and light. So we need to be careful with our words and offer another viewpoint with respect and gentleness, as Peter tells us (1 Pet. 3:7). You might say something like, "You know, there are lots of former homosexuals who see things very differently than what we usually hear in the media."

I would suggest simply stating what God has said in His word: that His plan for sexuality is within the bounds of marriage between one man and one woman. Anything outside of His intention is not only sinful, it's harmful, and that's why he tells us to avoid it. God's rules for sexuality are rooted in His love for us, and He knows that when we insist on doing things our own way, trying to meet legitimate needs in ungodly and illegitimate ways, we will suffer from negative consequences. We can point out that the biology of sex shows that God designed it for male-female coupling. (This argument holds true for an evolutionary perspective as well.) And when people who have been immersed in a culture of anything-goes sexuality insist that homosexuality is a viable option, gently ask what would happen if a group of gay-identifying people populated an uninhabited island. What would happen over time?

All you can do is respectfully offer God's truth as revealed in His word, and trust God with the results. We live in a culture that has been shaped by a definite agenda designed to normalize and legitimize homosexuality, and suggesting people think differently than the culture demands can be like asking a fish what it's like to be wet. A fish doesn't know the meaning of "wet" because it doesn't understand the concept of "dry." And people don't realize there's a legitimate, though

politically incorrect alternative view.

And it's probably worthwhile to mention that someone whose child is gay can easily react very defensively to the offensive idea that homosexuality is preventable and changeable, because that would indicate they played a role in it. And that just hurts too much to consider. Parents usually beat ourselves up with guilt anyway; this issue can push the guilt factor to an unbearable weight. So I think it's wise to be aware of that dynamic.

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

© 2009 Probe Ministries

“How Do I Know the Bible is True?”

How do I know that the Bible was true, since I base my faith on it? Why weren't some books canonized?

Great question! We have several articles that will help you with answers.

Are the Biblical Documents Reliable?

www.probe.org/are-the-biblical-documents-reliable/

Authority of the Bible:

probe.org/authority-of-the-bible-a-strong-argument-for-christianity/

The Inspiration of the Bible:

www.probe.org/the-inspiration-of-the-bible/

The New Testament: Can I Trust It?

www.probe.org/the-new-testament-can-i-trust-it/

The Christian Canon:

www.probe.org/the-christian-canon/

You will be especially interested in this answer to email:
"How Did the Church Recognize Which Books Were Inspired By God?"

www.probe.org/how-did-the-church-recognize-which-books-were-inspired-by-god/

So glad you wrote!

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries Webmistress

© 2009 Probe Ministries

"How Can I Teach Pluralism Wisely?"

I am teaching *Life of Pi*, by Yann Martel, in my Advanced Placement English class.

As an evangelical Christian working in a public school, I want to evoke discussion about pluralism as we read. The book does discuss Christianity (through the Catholic tradition), Hinduism, and Islam. The main character in the book explores all three and converts to Islam and Christianity while still a Hindu.

I think this is the "ultimate pluralist" created by Martel. □

Keep in mind that my students are freshmen, and my definition

of religious pluralism would need to be somewhat simple.

Whatever I teach focuses on whomever I teach. How can I, as a Christian teacher, probe their minds and hearts to think about deeper issues?

Thanks for writing. It's great that you want to help your students think about pluralism. It's probably safe to say that many teachers are quite happy with pluralism and wouldn't think to challenge the notion.

Since you can't promote Christianity, I can think of two ways to approach the subject: making clear the differences between the major religions, and talking about the nature of truth.

First, a lot of people say all religions are the same without knowing what they teach. It would be instructive to put up a chart or make a list of the beliefs of the different religions. For example, regarding God or ultimate reality:

- *Hindus are pantheists or polytheists.*
- *Buddhists are atheists or pantheists.*
- *Muslims are theists and unitarian.*
- *Christians are theists but trinitarian.*

There's a pamphlet called ["The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error"](#) which you might find at a Christian bookstore that lists a lot of differences.

The point is that they teach contradictory ideas. How can they all be true?

If the students respond with the "it's true for them" line, ask why they think so? The only ways that could be so would be if 1) there really is no god; religion is just something people make up, or 2) there is a god, but no one can really know anything about him. Whichever of these they might believe, you can ask why they think so.

You may even want to back up a little and talk about truth itself. Talk about its exclusive nature. If it's true that I'm typing on a keyboard, for example, it has to be false that I'm typing on a tree or an elephant. Logic reflects the way the world is. A thing (like a keyboard) can't be another thing (at the same time and in the same sense). And, a thing can't both exist in reality and not exist. You can extend this to moral issues as well. Ask if it's okay for one set of parents to beat their child blue with rods when they don't get their homework done (or use another example they'll find horrendous). If they say it's wrong, say something like, "But it's true for them, then it's good."

You can also talk about whether it's important to make distinctions between true and false. This and the above are more preparatory kinds of things that make it possible for people to believe one religion can be true and others false. You have to relate these questions to real life. Talk about other things in their lives that have to be either true or false (including moral issues, if not religious ones). The main point is to get the students thinking about the nature of truth, using things in their world where they know true and false in the classical sense apply. That can raise in their minds a conflict. They're used to the "true for me" thinking, but in their lives they don't and can't live that way. You can then relate this to the matter of religion.

Finally, they may talk more about social matters, about the need to respect all people. To this you can pose this problem. Ask what, say, a Muslim might think if you tell him you respect his religious beliefs even though no one can really know what God (or Allah) is like, or if you say that there really is no God, but that religion is something that people make up to meet their needs. Would a Muslim feel gratified and respected by this "inclusive" attitude? I know as a Christian it doesn't make me feel more respected when someone claims that Jesus really isn't the only way to God, because that is

central to my beliefs. Students need to know that people can disagree about ideas without hating each other. Unfortunately, that idea (that disagreement equals hatred) is so often fostered today. To think someone is wrong means you hate them and will do harm to them. That's all part of the tolerance nonsense being taught today.

If all this is clear as mud, write back and we'll talk some more.

Rick Wade

© 2009 Probe Ministries

“Christianity Teaches Four Gods, Right?”

The Bible clearly states that there is only one God. Deuteronomy 6:4 states, “Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.” The Father is obviously called God as seen throughout the Bible. No one will argue that point. So there is one member of the Trinity, the Father.

Jesus the Son, is a separate person but He is also called God. John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Holy Spirit is also a separate person, and He is also called God.

Let me see if I got this right. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

God is a trinity, composed of three divine persons, namely,

the Father, Son, and holy spirit. God is also the Father, the first person of the first God who is a trinity. God is also the Son, the second person of the first God who is a trinity. God is also the holy spirit, the third person of the first God who is a trinity.

All of this means that there are four Gods. One three-person God and three single-person Gods. But to avoid the stigma of polytheism, all four Gods are really one God.

Did I get that right?

I don't know if you really wanted a response or not, since it seems like you may have just been trying to have some fun. But obviously no orthodox trinitarian Christian would subscribe to the doctrine as you have characterized it.

Actually, you basically got it right when you wrote: "God is a trinity, composed of three divine persons, namely, the Father, Son, and holy spirit." In other words, God just "is" the unity of the three divine persons. Traditionally, this has been expressed by saying that God is one in essence, three in subsistence. Trinitarian Christians do not propose the absurd (and logically contradictory) notion that there is only one God, and yet (somehow) there are three Gods. That would clearly be incoherent. Rather, we maintain that there is only one God (monotheism) who mysteriously subsists as three distinct persons (Trinitarianism).

Consider an analogy (which I take from the Christian philosopher William Lane Craig). Cerberus was a three-headed dog that guarded the entrance to Hades in Greek mythology. Cerberus, therefore, was one dog with three heads. Now we could imagine that each head constituted a distinct center of consciousness. We could even give them names, say, Spike, Bowser, and Rover. Spike would be conscious of being Spike, but also of being Cerberus. He would also be conscious of not being either Bowser or Rover. The same could be said, in an

appropriate way, regarding the conscious experience of both Bowser and Rover. Now consider Cerberus as a spiritual, disembodied entity. You have one being, Cereberus, who has three distinct centers of consciousness (i.e. Spike, Bowser, and Rover). This is something akin, I think, to what the Trinitarian maintains about the nature of God, recognizing, of course, that God is an infinitely higher being than any merely finite being. I could write more, but you get the idea. Hopefully this analogy will help you better understand what Christians maintain about the nature of God. Of course, it's only an analogy—and to ridicule it for that reason would really be rather petty. I offer it solely as a way of making this doctrine a bit more comprehensible, while nonetheless acknowledging that there is genuine mystery here as well.

Best wishes as you continue to explore and examine Christian doctrine!

Michael Gleghorn

© 2009 Probe Ministries