

“I Disagree with Your Judgment of Conversations With God”

Mrs. Bohlin,

My name is _____ and I am a devotee of the Conversations with God philosophy. I noticed [you are not a fan of the books or beliefs in the CwG series](#) . I respect the fact that you have an opinion on this and express it openly, however, your claims that the books are “false doctrine of devils” and “very unsafe in anyone’s hands” are not supported. Why do you feel they are “evil” and dangerous? Perhaps because people may change their minds about religion after reading them? If this is so, you say that your religion does not allow freedom of thought nor disagreement with your beliefs. You proclaim that the Bible is God’s ultimate truth and that any writings against the holy scripture (even the Qur’an, which includes both the New and Old Testament) are “wrong”. Correct me if I am mistaken, but isn’t your God’s wish that each person come to her of their own volition? If nothing but obedience to pre-set rules is required, what then is the purpose of life?

I wonder if you are aware that most sections of the Bible were written as many as 200 years after the ascension of Jesus. That leaves a lot of room for error, especially in light of the fact that the Bible was written by humans (whom are inherently imperfect according to your beliefs). Are you familiar at all with a Red Bible? It is a copy of the Bible where all direct quotes from Jesus are printed in red and all other words in black—more than 90% of a Red Bible is black print. This means that over 90% of the Bible is subject to the opinions and cultural influences of those who wrote it. It is said in *CwG Book Two* that even this most recent missal from

God is not entirely pure because any human will “filter” the message through his own perception (Neale Donald Walsch is no exception).

Thank you! Namaste!

Hello _____,

...however, your claims that the books are “false doctrine of devils” and “very unsafe in anyone’s hands” are not supported. Why do you feel they are “evil” and dangerous? Perhaps because people may change their minds about religion after reading them?

Let me put it this way. Let’s say someone has a recipe for brownies that her mother gave her, which she got from her mother, and which she got from HER mother. But this person starts tinkering with the recipe. Instead of baking soda, she puts in arsenic. They’re both powder, and you don’t use very much of either, so what’s the problem? The problem is that brownies made with arsenic kill people.

At Probe Ministries we come from a definite position on the Bible: it really is true, and it really is without error, and it really is the word of God. We don’t believe this because we’ve just been taught it; we believe it because there is such strong evidence for it. There are a number of articles on our Web site about [the reliability of the Bible](#). If someone writes something that claims to be spiritual truth, and it contradicts the Bible, then either this other writing is false, or the Bible is false, but they cannot both be true. As I’ve already said, we place our faith in the validity of the Bible, so our position is that books such as *Conversations with God* are evil because—even if they say a lot of nice and true things—they make false statements about God, about truth, about sin, and about the consequences of departing from what is true. In the exact same way that eating arsenic-laced brownies will cause physical death, “swallowing” books like

CwG can cause spiritual death, which is separation from God.

People changing their minds about religion is not a problem; that's how ALL of us here at Probe came to become believers in Jesus Christ. We all changed our minds. But when people discard what is true and embrace a lie as a result of reading books like Walsch's, THAT is a problem. Or, when people don't even know what is true but they embrace the lie, that is also a problem.

If this is so, you say that your religion does not allow freedom of thought nor disagreement with your beliefs.

Actually, biblical Christianity gives a lot of room for disagreement within the confines of what is true and important. And it is very clear that no one can force another person to believe or conform from the heart, even to what is truly true. If this were the case, God would never have given us as His creation the gift of choice, which includes the freedom to think whatever we want. I can tell you, as a biblical, orthodox Christian, that Christianity very much allows you as an unbeliever to believe whatever you want and to disagree with me as much as you want. You have that right.

What you—and I, and everybody else on the planet—don't have the right to, is to be free from the *consequences* of believing wrong things. Such as believing that gravity can be suspended at will. Or believing that arsenic and baking soda are interchangeable. Or believing that a person can violate what God has said in His word and there are no consequences.

You proclaim that the Bible is God's ultimate truth and that any writings against the holy scripture (even the Qur'an, which includes both the New and Old Testament) are "wrong".

Excuse me, but the Qur'an may contain points and *elements* from both the New and Old Testament, but that doesn't it make it holy scripture.

Correct me if I am mistaken, but isn't your God's wish that each person come to her of their own volition?

First, God has revealed Himself to us as masculine. It is just as disrespectful to call Him a "her" as it is to deliberately call you "George" when you have revealed yourself to be "Jane."

Second, you are absolutely right about His desire that we turn to Him in faith. However, Jesus also told us that no one can come to God unless He calls us to Him first. This is because we come into the world spiritually dead—it's like getting a radio with no antenna. It takes a miracle for anyone to hear Him calling to us.

If nothing but obedience to pre-set rules is required, what then is the purpose of life?

I would respectfully disagree that "nothing but obedience is required." The purpose of life is to enjoy God, to love Him, to bring glory to Him, and to walk out His plan for our lives. The kind of obedience that pleases God comes from a heart that is tuned to Him first. God's desire is that we be in a love relationship to Him. That's very different from a callous God who demands we jump through hoops to please Him. I would suggest that that kind of God is a caricature and not the true, living God.

I wonder if you are aware that most sections of the Bible were written as many as 200 years after the ascension of Jesus.

And I'm wondering if you know where this information came from. There are skeptics who dismiss the early dates of the New Testament because they don't want to believe in the validity of the New Testament documents. There are also plenty of biblical scholars who accept the evidence for first-century dates. People believe what serves their presuppositions. Did you know there are people who deny the Holocaust happened?

Does that make it go away? Those who insist on later dates for the New Testament, and who deny the authorship of all the gospels and epistles, do so because they have an agenda.

That leaves a lot of room for error, especially in light of the fact that the Bible was written by humans (whom are inherently imperfect according to your beliefs).

I would say that the Bible was PENNED by humans, but this book makes the amazing claim to be the very word of God, who “breathed” His words into the minds and spirits of the human writers. And its remarkable internal consistency, combined with the fact that there is so much fulfilled prophecy, not to mention the power to change lives as testified by millions of people, is strong evidence that it really is the word of God. God would be very interested in making sure that His communication stayed pure, don’t you think? And since we still have the original languages (still spoken today) with thousands of copies of the biblical documents that we can go back and check, there is good reason to trust the Bible. What evidence do you have for error?

Are you familiar at all with a Red Bible? It is a copy of the Bible where all direct quotes from Jesus are printed in red and all other words in black—more than 90% of a Red Bible is black print. This means that over 90% of the Bible is subject to the opinions and cultural influences of those who wrote it.

Yes, I have a Red Letter Edition. This is something an editor produced. It doesn’t mean that the rest of the Bible is any less the word of God than what Jesus said. And yes, the human personalities and cultures of the writers are identifiable, but that doesn’t prevent God from expressing His thoughts perfectly through those writers. He’s a very big God. <smile>

It is said in *CwG Book Two* that even this most recent missal from God is not entirely pure because any human will

“filter” the message through his own perception (Neale Donald Walsch is no exception).

We all filter EVERYTHING through our own perceptions. But that doesn't change the truth of what's in the Bible. There are several questions we must ask when we read the Bible: far more important than “What does this mean to me?” is “What does this mean? What did the author intend to communicate?” There are ways of answering those questions that allow us to be fairly certain, much of the time, that we're getting a pretty accurate handle on what was meant.

We all have our filters, but it's not that hard to remove them. What kind of filter do you use when you read the label on a medicine bottle? I would imagine that, like me, you don't try to figure out “what does this mean to me?” but “what did the doctor intend here?” and it's usually not very hard to figure out.

I find it very interesting that Neale Walsch appears to make the claim that this is a communication from God. If that were so, why does it contradict what God has already said in black and white? And if one takes the position that we can't trust what's in the Bible because of all the alleged errors and cultural filters, what CAN we trust? How do we know what is true? Why should we believe Neale Walsch's writings? Why should we believe anything at all?

Thank you! Namaste!

And I honor you as a creation of God, made in His image, and much beloved by the God and Father of us all.

Blessings,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

Posted April 2003

“Why Do Muslims and Christians Fight and Kill Each Other?”

Dear Mr. Closson,

Thank you for your information about Islam and Christianity. But I want to know, why have Muslims and Christians always fought and killed each other? What factors are involved?

The easy answer is sin. As Paul says in the book of Romans, “...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...” A more complex answer is that the two world religions have mutually exclusive truth claims about the nature of God and the person of Jesus Christ. For one to be true the other must be false. However, individual Christians who encounter opposing truth claims should heed the words of Peter and share the hope we have in Christ with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). The New Testament gives no justification for doing violence to any human being because of his or her beliefs. Our example is Christ, who humbled Himself even to the point of dying on the cross rather than to strike back at his enemies.

The example of Muhammad is quite different. He was a military leader and was actively engaged in having his enemies assassinated. The Koran teaches that those who leave the faith are to be killed, as are those of other faiths who reject the authority of Islamic rule. The aggressiveness with which Islam conquered previously Christian territory in the eighth century pretty much guaranteed a difficult relationship between the two people.

Please don't take this as an excuse for unjust violence done in the name of Christ. Nor does what is written here take into account the possible right of nations or governments to protect their people from outside invasion or violence. What I am mainly talking about is the response of individuals to the existence of opposing truth claims.

Thanks for the thoughtful question!

Sincerely,

Don Closson
Probe Ministries

“Why Do You Lie About Islam?”

Why do you say lies about Islam? You have to be fair when describing other religions to Christians otherwise you are a liar.

You said that in Islam no one can make relation with God and that's not true. Everyone can make relation with God, moreover the topheads of islamic organizations can't claim they are better than common people cuz it's a pure heart issue in the first place.

You said in Islam God is unknown and that's tricky cuz for sure we know him but we didn't see him,so we know him morally not physically.

You said the prize is after death, and that's the greatest lie, cuz the rule that every Muslim know is, bad relationship with Allah(God)=discomfort in life, good relationship=comfort, contentment, and help of Allah. You said that everyone need forgiveness even Mohammed and that's not true, the truth is

that we all need surplus from Allah cuz our good work can't reward blessing of Allah in life let aside the paradise.

You claim that Allah in Islam doesn't love anybody, however he loves the devouts. Is that enough, or you want me to say more?

If you are innocent and said that by mistake then correct it and contact me, if you want to misguide your people, it's up to you and Allah will judge you.

Thank you very much for taking time to read [the article on Islam](#), and especially for writing to us. We appreciate you. And we do honor your request that we be fair in what we say about religions beside Christianity. If there are errors in what we have said, we are certainly open to correction.

As I read your message, I noted the following objections to the article on Islam:

1. That there is no true relationship with God in Islam.
2. That God is unknown in Islam.
3. That salvation consists in the blessings that come after death, rather than during this life.
4. That everyone is in need of forgiveness, even Muhammed.
5. That God is not described as a loving God in the Koran.

I can understand why some of these statements would be offensive to you. Let me do my best in trying to respond to each of them.

First, that there is no true relationship with God in Islam. In reading over the article, I couldn't find this precise statement. But I did find the statement at the end of the article that "the New Testament . . . reveals the only source of acceptance before God in His love and grace, expressed through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ" This is the clear testimony of the New Testament, and of Jesus Christ himself, and of his apostles. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father (God) but by

me" (Gospel of John 14:6). The apostle Peter said, "Salvation is found in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The name he referred to is Jesus Christ. This is a difficult statement to accept, I know. But it is the clear teaching of the New Testament, which also tells us that God is "the rewarder of those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). In other words, if we earnestly seek the truth of God, He will reveal it to us. And we believe that truth includes the teaching of Jesus Christ concerning his being the way to a relationship with God.

Second, that God is unknown in Islam. I did find the statement in the article that in the Koran, God is ultimately unknowable. I can understand your reaction to this statement. But it was intended to reflect the orthodox Muslim doctrine of mukhalafa (difference) and tanzih (removal or making transcendent), which implies that God's essence is not really knowable to us . . . that the attributes or characteristics ascribed to God in the Koran are descriptions of his actions or deeds, but not of his nature or essence. This may not be widely comprehended by Muslim people, but it is a reflection of Islamic teaching. You can consult for reference the book entitled *The Call of the Minaret* by Kenneth Cragg (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 42-43.

Third, that the "prize" is after death, and not in this life. I couldn't really find a statement like this in the article. Actually, the New Testament teaches that there are many blessings that flow from our relationship with God through Jesus—both in this life and in the next. But obviously, knowing God does not shield us from ever experiencing pain and sorrow during this life. But it does assure us of the comforting grace and mercy of God, both now and after we die.

Fourth, that everyone needs forgiveness, even Muhammed. I know that among some Muslims, Muhammed is viewed as a nearly perfect man. And he obviously was a very great man. But the

Koran itself testifies to his imperfection, and his need to ask forgiveness from God. See the following Koranic texts: 40.55; 41.19; 48.2. According to the the New Testament, all of us stand in need of God's forgiving grace. At one point it says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and at another, "For the wages (penalty) of sin is death (eternal separation from God)" (Romans 6:23). This last text goes on to say, "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." In other words, eternal life (which includes forgiveness of our sin, as well as fellowship with God) comes to us as a free gift. At another place the New Testament says, "For by grace are you saved, through faith; and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8-9). As it says in the Gospel of John, "Yet to all who received him (Jesus Christ), to those who believed in his name, he (God) gave the right to become children of God" (Gospel of John 1:12).

Fifth, that the Koran does not speak of God as a God of love or as a Father to his people. I know that one of the names of God in the Koran is "Al Wadud" (the Loving, Compassionate one). I believe it is used of God only twice in the Koran (11.90 and 85.14). Yet I think it is clear that this title falls short of the Bible's description in I John 4:8 that "God is love," as well as the many examples of God actually extending his love to sinners. For example, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (I John 4:10). Actually, the great Islamic theologian al-Ghazzali taught that this title for God refers only to his objective acts of kindness or expressions of approval. In his work *Al-Maqsad Al-Asna* he says, "He (God) remains above the feeling of love" (p. 91) and "Love and mercy are desired in respect of their objects only for the sake of their fruit and benefit and not because of empathy or feeling" (p. 91). In light of this, I would have to

stand by the statement in the article that in the Koran God is not spoken of as a God of love or as a Father to his people (a title never attributed to God in the Koran), as He is in the Bible.

Mr. _____, I do appreciate very much your writing to us. My purpose is not at all to offend you personally, but to encourage you to evaluate the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament, and to compare them to the teachings of Muhammed in the Koran. My wish and prayer is for God's blessing and grace on your life.

Sincerely,

Richard Rood

“You Mismatch People About Jesus and Allah”

Hi—I'm a Muslim from UK. I visited your site and found you to be a misleading person who is blinded by faith most probably passed down the family. You say that Jesus is god then that means that you don't believe in one god but you believe in two gods, Jesus and his father (god forgive). And if Jesus was god why were the Romans able to overpower him, how can the god who created everything be overpowered by a few measley people?

I hope you do your research thoroughly in the future and look at and review religion with the same eye you look at yours, and if not look at your own religion with the same critical eye you look at others. Please don't forget your initial duty is the search for truth not the enforcement of your own religion. Please don't lie in order to achieve a genuine good

purpose or you are opposing your own fundamental beliefs.

Hope allah guides to the correct path. Please search for the truth the real truth.

Thank you for writing. I want to honor you for your deep respect and love for God, which is very evident in what you write. I understand why you want to defend your perspective on God.

However, God has revealed certain things about Himself to us that Islam does not accept, but that does not mean they are not true. I share your belief in one God, not two Gods. The idea that God could have three persons and still only be one God is so outrageous it HAS to be a divine idea—how could mere mortals think it up?!

Let me try to explain. Do you believe in water, and steam, and ice? I bet you do. They are all comprised of the H₂O molecule. Do you believe in three different H₂O's? I bet you don't. You probably believe in one H₂O molecule that takes three different forms. This isn't a perfect analogy to God, but it's closer than anything else I can imagine.

The Bible teaches that Jesus is God, the Father is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, but they are not each other and they are not three separate Gods. I have no idea how this can be true, but it's what the Bible teaches and it is what Jesus said. Jesus was 100% God, but left heaven to become 100% God AND 100% man at the same time. He wrapped Himself in human flesh and became one of us. The purpose for this was to die for our sins because we cannot possibly overcome the penalty for our sin and make ourselves perfect—and God requires that people be perfect to enter heaven.

The Romans did not overpower Him: He allowed them to take Him because that was the divine plan from before creation. There is a huge difference. Even when He was on the cross, He said

that if He wanted, He could call a legion of angels to come take Him off but that wasn't the plan, so He didn't.

I assure you I have done my research. I tell you, most respectfully, that it is Islam that has gotten off the path of truth. Muhammad listened to Christians and to Jews but chose to believe only what he wanted to believe about Jesus and about what the Bible says. The Bible says that Jesus is fully God and fully man, but Islam says that is a lie. Jesus said He would die for our sins and then come back to life in three days—and He did. He is alive today. Where is Muhammad? He is dead. Jesus is far more than just a prophet; He is actually God.

I pray that God will allow you to see that this is true. Why don't you ask Him? Ask the one true God if it's true that Jesus is God. If you have the courage, I challenge you to read the story of a faithful Muslim who discovered this truth about Jesus: www.answering-islam.org/Testimonies/athanasios.html

God bless you, and lead you into all truth.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“You're Mistaken About Islam”

Hi there Sue,

I was sent a copy of your article [A Short Look at Six World Religions](#). Having studied most of them in school years ago, and then in seminary, I had a pretty good knowledge of things, but as with many things, I haven't really thought about the Hindus or the Buddhists for some 30 years! While you read this note, keep in mind that I am a born-again Christian, who lives

in Spain, works in Spain and Morocco and is professionally dedicated to translating texts (English/Spanish and a long list of etc.) so I do know a bit about languages.

I found the Moslem part interesting, but I do disagree about a thing or two. One must consider two things before getting into Islam...its founder married a rich widow, so by the time he was 20, he was married, and had no need to work (unlike us and the rest of humanity at that time), so he dedicated his time to meditation and searching...for God I would imagine. He entered into contact with Judaism, and with the early years of Christianity. Therefore, when you start looking at the Koran and the Moslem faith, there are many, many things that are taken out of Judaism...no pork, no shellfish, and a long list of etc, etc. When you see them praying, they use a string of beads just like a rosary! And there are also many, many aspects that are from the early Christian faith. (Remember that the first Christians were much more Jewish in their thinking that most of us could ever be!)

As I said at the beginning, my work is 100% dedication to translation and there is a clear translation problem with Allah/God when it comes to Islam. The word God for us who speak English is fine, but if you speak Spanish, the word is Dios, and if you speak Arabic, it is Allah (when written in English format, and if it is in the Spanish format, it is Al). Saying that the Moslems do not believe in the same God as us Christians do is totally mistaken. The whole problem stems from a translation error. In Spain, most of the "modern" Moslems, when they say their prayers in Spanish, the use the word "Dios", and not the word "Al." Today, when it comes to translating, it is considered correct to not translate proper nouns in a text, therefore, when the Koran was translated into English, you translated everything, and the Arabic word Allah was made to sound English and therefore considered to be another god. (To give you another example...I live in Seville in southern Spain, but here in Seville, the name of the city

is Sevilla, and most people want the city to be called Sevilla, and not Seville. Does this mean that Seville is one city and Sevilla is another? No, of course not) This is the same problem with God and Allah. How many born again Christian use the word Jehovah to describe the God of Abraham? Does that mean they are two different Gods? Of course not. Is the God of the Old Testament different from the God of the New? One again, of course not!

If you consider for a moment that Allah is not Yav nor God, then you are pulling the rug out from under the feet of the many missionaries who have spend years trying to take Christianity to the Moslems.

After being raised in the US in an active, church-going Christian family, and having lived abroad for 30 years, I have discovered that the western version of Christianity has become altered over the centuries to adapt to cultural implications of various nations. Our beliefs have incorporated heathen beliefs and customs, which are accepted, but are about as far from the truth as can possible be! (sorry about so many examples) We exchange presents at Christmas, and have a tree and the like, including Santa Claus, who was a saint. Where did it all come from?? First of all, Christ was not born on December 25. Based on the Bible description, and knowing weather conditions in the Mediterranean, I am sure that it was more like March or April, and according to my studies, historically, the Wiseman visited Christ about July, so really, the best time of the year to have Christmas would be July, but change the business world on that point! Then, we have a tree...that all comes from the pre-Christian beliefs in northern Europe and England...the druids used to think that the (oak) trees died in winter because the gods left, so they decorated them to get the gods to come back...and they did, in Spring! Over the years, pine trees were decorated, and then people started bringing them into their houses, and the like. If you get down to the bottom line, then if you want to really

celebrate Christ's birthday, then we'll have to throw out the heathen tree! The celebration in December 25...it is only 4 days later than the celebration of the coming of winter, a heathen practice in Stonehenge (UK). Personally, I would rather celebrate Christmas and gift giving in July, with no strings attached, but then business is business!!

Thank you so much for taking the time to send such a thoughtful and educational letter! You have obviously gained a great deal of perspective in your time in Europe, and I appreciate all the things you've shared with me.

I would like to address your comment "Saying that the Moslems do not believe in the same God as us Christians do is totally mistaken." If you re-read my reasons for this statement, they have nothing to do with the word for God in English and Arabic, and everything to do with the character of Allah and of the God of the Bible. Because the article was written as a time-constrained radio transcript (aimed at a Christian audience), I was limited in what I could say. A strong case can certainly be made for the perspective that Muslims and Christians differ in our understanding of how God is revealed in the Bible and the Qur'an. I suppose it's something like the old story of the three blind men encountering different parts of an elephant: one felt its tail and said the animal was like a rope, the second felt its trunk and said it was like a tree, and the third felt its hide and said it was like a house. I do believe that because the Bible is inspired and the Qur'an is not, we can trust what the Bible says and must see the Qur'an as a man-made book that, as you point out, borrows from both Judaism and Christianity. Thus, one view of God is correct and the other, while containing some truth about God, is incomplete and incorrect.

You mention the work of Christians trying to evangelize Muslims (an amazing task!). I see a parallel between their calling and Paul's sermon at the Areopagus, where he invoked the unknown god the Greeks worshipped and suggested that he

could identify that unknown god for them, taking them from what they already knew to unfamiliar theological territory.

It's always hard, when we're trying to fit a large subject into a short amount of time, to strike the right balance between simplicity and accuracy. To be honest, my statement about Allah not being the same as the God of the Bible was directed at the well-meaning people who mistakenly believe "we all worship the same God with different names: God, Allah, Brahman, Buddha. . ." Certainly, Islam and Christianity have many points of similarity, particularly in terms of the fact they are both monotheistic, but there are too many Christians who don't understand the huge and significant differences.

I really appreciated your comments about the cultural aspects of Christianity. I think it's a challenge to Christians in every culture, in every time in history: to stick to Biblical Christianity and leave out what is cultural. As Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 4:6, "Do not go beyond what is written." A lot of people equate American (or Western) Christianity with Biblical Christianity, and they're not the same! You gave the excellent example of how we celebrate Christmas, by using imported pagan symbols and dates. I have also seen a difference in the way many American Christians view the use of alcohol compared to European Christians, and when one culture's taboos are imposed on another, misunderstandings occur and opportunities for bridge-building can be lost.

Thanks for sharing your thoughts with me.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“How Do I Witness About the New Age Movement?”

How do I witness about the New Age movement with firm intelligence but empathy?

There are a number of helpful books available which set forth a Christian response to the New Age Movement. I will recommend a few resources you might want to consider, but the bibliographies in most of these will direct you to many further resources as well.

1. *Embraced by the Darkness: Exposing New Age Theology from the Inside Out* by Brad Scott (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1996). Brad spent ten years involved in the New Age religion until converting to Christianity. He teaches at Golden Gate University.

2. *Confronting the New Age and Unmasking the New Age* by Douglas Groothuis (InterVarsity Press). Doug teaches at Denver Seminary.

3. *The New Age Movement and the Biblical Worldview* by John Newport (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998). This looks like a comprehensive resource by a distinguished professor of Philosophy of Religion at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

4. *Apologetics in the New Age: A Christian Critique of Pantheism* by David Clark and Norman Geisler (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990).

5. *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs* by John Ankerberg and John Weldon (Oregon: Harvest House, 1996).

6. I would also recommend checking out Marcia Montenegro's website at www.christiananswersforthenewage.org. Marcia was a

former astrologer who was deeply involved in the New Age Movement prior to her conversion to Christianity. She has many helpful articles on her site. CANA stands for Christian Answers for the New Age. Please be sure to check out her site.

Finally, there is a brief [article on the New Age Movement by Kerby Anderson](#) on the Probe website. In addition, there are many other related articles in our [“Cults and World Religions”](#) section on our Web site at www.probe.org.

A careful study of some of these resources, combined with prayer and compassion for those you seek to reach, will be of great benefit to you as you seek to share Christ with those you love.

Best wishes in witnessing for Him,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

“You Are Too Harsh on Women Who Are Gender-Sensitive”

Dear Sue Bohlin,

In your article [“Probe Answers Our E-Mail: What’s Your Position on Gender Neutral Bibles?”](#) you write,

“I am also bothered by the unspoken assumption that women are too self-centered and hyper-sensitive not to be able to figure out that when the Bible—the very words of God Himself—uses the word “man” or “mankind” to refer to all humans, we can’t figure that out without getting upset. Just about every language on the face of the planet uses the

generic male pronoun to represent all people, but apparently our sensibilities are too finely-tuned to allow for readers of these newer translations to make the mental jump. . .! “

I think it sounds a bit harsh. As a Christian woman, I have struggled for years to see that women have as much value to God as men because it seems to me that the Bible is mostly for men and about men. Women were created for men, must submit to men, and to be the help mate to men. I know that most people claim that women are not inferior to men but when I read the Scriptures, I see the inferiority very clearly. However – I find it helpful to read a Bible that uses pronouns and nouns that clearly show which verses refer to males only and which refer to all mankind. I don't appreciate the comment about not being able to make the mental jump to understand the idea that male pronouns are often inclusive. I don't think I am being self-centered, since I truly believe that women are inferior to men in God's eyes, but I am learning to accept that God has a right to make us for what ever purpose He chooses, even if this hurts very deeply and doesn't make sense to me. Was there really a need for you to be so hard on those of us who struggle with these issues?

Dear friend,

I regret that my article caused you pain. I'm not sure that it was me being harsh as much as your unfortunate (albeit understandable) tenderness and sensitivity at having been lied to about the inferiority of women. I think the high value of women starts in the very beginning of the Bible when God deliberately makes Adam incomplete without Eve, and says it is not good for man to be alone. . . and then Paul fine-tunes that truth in 1 Cor. 11:7 when he says that man is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. If woman is the glory of the image and glory of God, then we are the best and most beautiful aspect of His creation! I love what John Eldredge writes in *Wild at Heart*: “Eve is the crown of

creation, remember? She embodies the exquisite beauty and the exotic mystery of God in a way that nothing else in all creation even comes close to." Please also note the poignancy of his next sentence: "And so she is the special target of the Evil One; he turns his most vicious malice against her." I would respectfully suggest that your sensitivity may have been triggered by the arrows of the Evil One's "vicious malice" against you.

There is a strength and glory to men that is different from the strength and glory of women. When we look at the way the Lord Jesus treated women with such tenderness and respect and dignity, attributes totally unknown in the world at that time, we see what God REALLY thinks of women. He likes us; He loves us; He delights in us! He does not think we are, nor did He make us, inferior to men. We are different from men. He put the most beautiful and tender parts of Himself in US, to reflect His image in a way men cannot—just as there are wonderful parts of the Fatherhood of God that men reflect in ways we cannot. That is not a difference of value, but of function.

I truly ache that you struggle with the issue of women's value in the sight of God. My guess is that the way you've been treated by misogynistic men who do not protect and cherish women as God tells them to, has given you the wrong impression of what God thinks of us. I pray He shows you how very much He esteems you as a wonderful creation of His hand and heart.

I would like to invite you to listen to a powerful, encouraging and comforting recording of the Lord Jesus speaking to His Bride, based on what He has said in His word and produced by a good friend of ours, Bob Singleton, [here](#). This has been very touching to the people who have heard it, and I pray it will minister to your heart as well.

Warm blessings,

“I Heard a Radio Teacher Say Not to Go to Church Anymore”

I've been listening to a family radio talk show. The minister is saying on his show that you are not to go to church.

He said and I quote, “The Bible tells us that for 2000 years after the death of Jesus on the cross those who believe in Jesus were to go to church. But now we learn from the Bible that God is no longer saving people through the ministry of the churches. The church age has come to an end.

“Fact: God commands in his law book the Bible that the true believers are to leave their churches. This is because God is calling his righteous judgment upon all the local congregations as God prepares for Judgment Day, which is almost here.”

My questions for you are:

1. How does this guy know that God does not want you to go to church?
2. Why would he say that? Isn't one of the Ten Commandments “Keep holy the Sabbath day” and therefore means go to church?
3. How does he know that Judgment Day is almost here? Only God knows that, right?

Arrrgggghhhhhh!!! This would be a good person for you NOT to listen to anymore. He doesn't know what he's talking about. The “church age” has certainly NOT come to an end. The Bible is just as true today as it's ever been, and it says, “...and

let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

1. How does this guy know that God does not want you to go to church?

He doesn't. He got an idea in his head that's not from God, because it contradicts God's Word. God will never tell us anything that contradicts Himself.

2. Why would he say that? Isn't one of the Ten Commandments "Keep holy the Sabbath day" and therefore means go to church?

That is a very legitimate application of the commandment.

3. How does he know that Judgment Day is almost here? Only God knows that, right?

That's true; however, Jesus told us that we would be able to see the signs of the end of the ages, and a lot of people believe things are so bad in the world that we must be getting near the end. But we CANNOT tell the future.

The apostle John writes, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1) I think this radio preacher is one of them. I think it makes God wince to have one of His people directing others to do something that goes against His word and His heart.

I'm glad you asked!

Cheerily,

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

“Can’t Homosexuality Be Seen as Population Control?”

From an evolutionary perspective, wouldn't homosexuality be seen as a population control? This would then make it useful, contradicting to your assumptions made in the obviously biased partial commentary.

Many evolutionary biologists have wrestled with the widespread presence of homosexuality in human populations. Essentially, their quandry is not that homosexuality is present in large numbers (2-3% at most in any population), but that it is found in virtually all cultures and societies at least to some degree. Evolutionarily, this implies that there is some evolutionary benefit and some genetic component, which usually means it contributes to survival and reproductive success in some way. But how can that be when homosexuals reproduce at a far lesser rate than heterosexuals? The original sociobiologist, E. O. Wilson, stated the problem this way: “The homosexual state itself results in inferior genetic fitness, because of course homosexual men marry much less frequently and have far fewer children than their unambiguously heterosexual counterparts.” (*Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*, Belknap/Harvard, 1975, p. 555.) Evolutionary explanations require an immediate genetic benefit for the individual expressing the trait or behavior. Things such as “population control,” as you suggest, require a cooperative spirit (technically referred to as group selection) that is normally considered outside direct genetic influence and is therefore rejected by most evolutionary biologists.

Most evolutionary biologists have tried to deal with the problem by one of two suggestions. First, the genes involving

homosexuality (if there are indeed any at all, but so far there is no evidence for any) could be advantageous somehow in the heterozygous state (individuals who have one copy of a gene leading to homosexuality but not both and therefore not truly expressing the trait), and therefore the gene or genes are kept in the population that way even though when both copies are expressed in the same individual (homozygosity) reproduction is prevented. Second, some have suggested that homosexuals may gain a genetic fitness by being primarily helpers in raising offspring of their brothers and sisters, therefore preserving their own genes through aiding the survival of their nieces and nephews who carry about 1/8 of their own genes (technically referred to as kin selection). Aiding the survival of eight or more such nieces and nephews preserves a full complement of your genes into the next generation which is how natural selection supposedly works. Both of these options may at first sound reasonable but, neither of these options has a shred of evidence in support of it.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, Ph.D.
Probe Ministries

“How Do We Deal With Our Son’s Long Hair at Church?”

I have a teenage son who is wearing his hair long, just to the top of his shirt collar. He is an awesome son who loves God and witnesses along his daily walk in life. I have heard people at church say things to other kids like “If you don’t get your hair cut you’re going to look like _____.” And one

parent even told their son "I don't want you hanging around with the crazy long hair boy." He has even heard things himself. I know him better than most, because he is my son. How do we as parents handle this within our church? I feel like everyone is looking to us to make him cut his hair. Are we as a Christian family setting a wrong example? I know God looks at the heart.

Well, I write this to you as the mom of a former teenager who came to church one Sunday with his hair not only long but GREEN . . . when my husband was chairman of the board of elders!

There are certain areas where it's safe for our kids to display the fact that they are different and distinct from us, and hair is one of those areas. It's not a moral issue, it's not a character issue, it's a cultural issue. When you can see that his heart is good and that he loves the Lord, the hair thing just doesn't matter. . . because in a few years he will choose differently, I'll bet.

If I were in your shoes, I would not say anything to the other people in your church because it really isn't any of their business. And if they said something to me, I would smile and say, "You know, it's not the way I would choose for him to wear his hair, but we're so proud of his heart and his character that it just outshines the length of his hair. We'd rather have a son with long hair who walks with the Lord than a son with short hair who ignores Him."

And then tell yourself that it's unfortunate that the people in your church are being judgmental and shallow, because they are.

For what it's worth,

Sue Bohlin

P.S. The Lord took care of the hair thing with our son in

time. . . he developed severe male-pattern baldness while in college. He's now completely bald on top and, since he's in the Air Force, it's shaved WAY short. □

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