“How Do I Talk To My Brother About Taoism?”

Greetings Mr. Gleghorn.

I recently read your article “Philosophical Taoism: A Christian Appraisal.”

Recently my older brother confessed to me, “I am not the most religious person in the world, but I do believe in God, a universal consciousness from which all things were created. And I do consider myself to be a spiritual person, though more in alignment with nature and the universe that falls outside the confines of organized religion. I have studied the eastern traditions of Taoism and Buddhism, and while they are separate and distinct from Christianity, the precepts found in the commandments and in western religion, including the concept of forgiveness, are all found there.”

I want to help him very much but I don’t want to preach to him. But I believe that God has placed this burden on my heart to help bring my brother into a right relationship with him or at least to use me for some part of this purpose. I would like to know if you could help me with any thoughts or resources that might help me to witness to him or to help him to see that he is on the wrong path for salvation. I do not believe that he is saved at this point in time.

Thanks for your letter. I think you are wise to avoid *preaching* to your brother. As I’m sure you know, however, it is extremely important that you be *praying* for him. Also, it would probably be good for you to familiarize yourself with a few important religious texts which your brother might be reading. Here I’m thinking of, for example, the Tao Te Ching (the classic text of Taoism). Finally, I would highly recommend reading the chapter on Taoism (and whatever other

chapters may be relevant) in Dean Halverson's book, The Compact Guide to World Religions. You can find it here: www.amazon.com/Compact-Guide-World-Religions-Halverson/dp/1556617046/.

Finally, be patient. It may take time (e.g. many years) for your brother to come to Christ. Keep praying for him, keep engaging him in conversation, and keep pointing him back to Jesus. Although Taoism does speak of the greatness of forgiveness, it really doesn't have any genuine means of providing it. The Tao is generally understood to be impersonal—not personal—and hence, incapable of extending forgiveness (which, after all, only a personal being can do). Furthermore, Taoism has no atonement for sin. Only Christianity offers a personal God, who loves us, and who sent His Son to be an atonement for our sins. This is often overlooked. But it is the only hope for man—and the only real "good news" there is (at least in an ultimate sense).

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

© 2010 Probe Ministries