

If All Roads Lead To Rome, What About Heaven?

Fall 2010 Newsletter

Will he or won't he. Now he says he won't. But who knows! Who am I talking about? The pastor in Gainesville, FL who was threatening to burn a Koran. Had Islam been around in the first century, can you imagine Jesus or Paul burning the Koran? Koran burning is probably not a very effective ploy for evangelizing Muslims.

I was listening to an afternoon radio talk show the other day which was discussing the possible burning of the Koran. A caller, a 14 year old girl, made the following comment, "Don't the Muslims and the Christians know that they worship the same God?" The girl identified herself as a Catholic.

So, was the young girl right? In 2007, President George Bush made the following comment, "Well, first of all, I believe in an Almighty God, and I believe that all the world, whether they be Muslim, Christian, or any other religion, prays to the same God. That's what I believe." Was President Bush correct? "In a book co-authored by Muhammad Ali, . . . entitled *Healing: A Journal of Tolerance and Understanding* . . . Muhammad Ali writes, 'If you're a good Muslim, if you're a good Christian, if you're a good Jew: it doesn't matter what religion you are, if you're a good person, you'll receive God's blessing.' (p. 3) 'The great monotheistic religions of the world all worship the same God. They just call him by different names.' (p. 9) 'All people serve the same God. We just serve Him in different ways.' (p. 32)" (NewsWithViews.com, 10-23-07). Is Muhammad Ali correct? Do all, or at least, most roads lead to heaven?

According to LifeWay Research, of 1,000 protestant pastors surveyed, 69% said that Christians and Muslims do not pray to the same God. My question is, what about the other 31%? A Pew Forum U.S. Religious Landscape Survey of 35,000 adults in 2007 found that 70% of those who belong to a religious tradition believe there are many ways to heaven (you may remember that 57% of evangelicals agreed).

Are there many ways to heaven or only one way to heaven? It seems our society leans toward the many ways. The only problem is, all the major religions each claim to be the only true faith. Of course, we know that is not possible because each of the world's religions contradict each other. Islam rejects the triunity of God and denies that Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected. Buddhism rejects the existence of a personal God. Hinduism believes everything is divine. Each of these could not possibly be true, unless God is very confused and contradictory. So why do so many Americans and 57% of evangelicals hold to universalism in a predominately Christian country?

I was talking with a former parishioner last week about why so many Christian youth were leaving the church in their late teens and twenties. Part of the problem, we both agreed, was the church's failure to teach apologetics to the children and youth and yes, even to the adults. In this apologetic vacuum, Christian youth and even adults are succumbing to the indoctrination of tolerance and multiculturalism.

What if, instead, our youth (and their parents) were taught a few of the key arguments for the existence of God like the cosmological, the argument from design (both the fine tuning of the universe and the irreducible complexity of biological life), and the moral argument. What if, in our churches, we equipped believers to know the evidences for the resurrection of Christ, the very linchpin of our faith? What if we taught older elementary children and youth how to counter NeoDarwinistic dogma with much stronger arguments for Intelligent Design? And, what if we taught them why Jesus is the only way, and therefore, why there cannot be many ways to heaven?

Due to cultural context within which we exist in today, and the lack of the church's preparedness to confront the lies of our culture with truth; I believe apologetics must be an indispensable part of every church's teaching and equipping ministry from the children's ministries all the way up to adult ministries. Reasons Ministries exists to equip believers to know what and why they believe so they can stand firm in the Christian faith, be effective tools in God's hand for reaching those that do not yet know Christ and to be able to apply practical apologetics to everyday life.

In Christ,

David

Info you can use:

—Accuracy of the Bible – 54% of Protestant church attendees agree strongly that “The Bible is the written Word of God and is totally accurate in all that it teaches”.

—Only 16 percent of Protestant churchgoers read their Bible daily and another 20 percent read it “a few times a week.”

—Salvation by Grace – 58% of Protestant church attendees agree strongly that “Eternal salvation is possible through God’s grace alone; nothing we do can earn salvation.”

—Born a Sinner – 56% of Protestant church attendees agree strongly that “Every person is born a sinner due to the sin of Adam being passed on to all persons.”

—Jesus’ Death and Resurrection – 72% of Protestant church attendees agree strongly that “Jesus died on the cross and was physically resurrected from the dead.

—Bible – 14% of American teenagers ages 12-19 read the Bible regularly in the last 30 days

(The above survey results from: LifeWay Research)

Reasons Ministries' Mission

The mission of Reasons Ministries is *to equip believers to know what and why they believe so they can stand firm in the Christian faith, be effective tools in God’s hand for reaching those that do not yet know Christ and to be able to apply practical apologetics to everyday life.*

About David

18 Years of Pastoral Ministry in The C&MA. Ordained and Licensed through the Ohio Valley District of the C&MA

Adjunct Professor @ Indiana Wesleyan University at the Louisville, KY Campus since 2001

Have taught 11 different courses including several Bible/Apologetics courses, Cultural Anthropology, Marriage and Family, two business courses and two introductory courses for new students.

Have taught around 700 students.

Graduate of Toccoa Falls College with a B.A. in Missiology and Alliance Theological Seminary with a Masters in cross-cultural and theological studies. Additional Masters level work at TFC and Columbia International University

Started Reasons Ministries in November 2008

Serving on Ohio Valley District LO&CC and as a District Presbyter

Married 30 years to Beth with three adult children

Recent and Future Ministry Activities

June 28, 2010

Spoke at the Sunday a.m. service at the Bridge Community Church in Elizabethtown, KY.

July 18, 2010

Speaking at the Sunday a.m. service at the Bridge Community Church in Elizabethtown, KY.

July 25 and August 1, 2010

Speaking at Grace Crossing Church in Louisville, KY and giving a seminar on August 1.

October 29-31, 2010

Weekend of ministry at Coshocton Alliance Church, Coshocton, OH

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Reasons Ministries is a developing ministry under the auspices of the Ohio Valley District of the Christian & Missionary Alliance. All contributions are deeply appreciated and tax deductible.