

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

The term pluralism, when applied to religion, lauds diversity. Wikipedia states: “religious pluralism holds that no single religion can claim absolute authority to teach absolute truth.” It insists that various religions (e.g., Hinduism, Judaism, Confucianism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, et al.), are all equally viable in their respective “truth claims.” Acceptance of the diverse (and contradictory) concepts of deity (e.g., dualism, polytheism, pantheism, Greek mythology, monotheism, et al.) logically follows for the pluralist.

Perhaps the ultimate pluralist was Bahá'u'lláh, founder of Bahá' Faith. He taught “God is one” and that Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, and (predictably) himself are all God’s messengers.

Christianity does not allow Christians to (1) force their religion on others, (2) prevent non-Christians from practicing their religion, or (3) seek to make converts by any means besides preaching the Gospel of Christ (Mark 16:15-16). However, one simply cannot believe the Bible and believe in pluralism.

The Bible unabashedly reveals and describes one God, the Creator of all things, Who alone is worthy of honor and obedience by His creation (monotheism). Hundreds of passages from both Old and New Testaments forbid the worship of anything or any being besides the “true and living” God. The great summary of them all is the first of the Ten Commandments, which solemnly begins: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exo. 20:3-5). One may disagree with and reject what the Bible teaches in this regard, but none can deny that it so teaches.

Likewise, one cannot accept pluralism and Bible teaching concerning the identity of God’s “messengers.” Although Abraham was not really a messenger of God, God spoke to him on many occasions (e.g., Gen. 12:1-3; 15:7; 17:1; 18:23-32; et al.). Moses was indeed God’s prophet and lawgiver. Upon his death, the Bible said of him: “And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face” (Deu. 34:10).

Jesus is not merely “one of God’s messengers.” He is the Messiah/Christ of the Old Testament prophets (Mat. 1:21-23; Luke 1:26-33; Acts 3:19-26; et al.). He alone is the Savior of mankind from sin and its eternal consequences (Luke 19:10; John 3:16; 8:24; Heb. 7:25; et al.). He alone—not Krishna, Buddha, Mohammed, Baha’i, nor any other—can bring men to God (John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5-6). Again, men may reject this teaching, but the Bible undeniably teaches it.

—Dub McClish
Denton, TX

BELVEDERE BEACON

“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)

Volume 8 Number 37 September 16, 2007
A PUBLICATION OF THE BELVEDERE CHURCH OF CHRIST

535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574

(Greater Augusta, GA area)

What Is Really Important in Life?

Not where you were born:

Winston Churchill was born in the ladies' cloakroom in the castle of Blenheim. His mother was attending a social function there when she gave premature birth to her son.

Not your education:

Did you know that nine of our presidents did not attend college? (They are Truman, Cleveland, Andrew Jackson, Lincoln, Filmore, Taylor, Van Buren, Jackson, and Washington).

Not size:

President William Howard Taft weighed 350 pounds. President John Adams was only five feet six inches tall.

Not your looks:

Did you know, for example, that President U.S. Grant's wife was "cross-eyed?" She wanted to have it corrected with an operation, but he said he "liked her that way."

What really counts? If you want to enjoy life, then check:

Your Attitude:

"The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?" (Pro.18:14). Your spirit or attitude can bless you *or* break you.

Use of your time:

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not *as* fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16).

Your belief:

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man" (Ecc. 12:13). Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mat. 6:33).

Center in on the things that really count. If these are right, then you can overcome any other obstacles that may be in your way.

Author Unknown

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.

Morning Worship 11.00 am.

Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

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God knew that Israel would want a king to be like the nations round about them. Thus we see that God, through Moses, gave instructions that the king must follow. Note what Moses said, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

“When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel”
(Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

Note that the king was to make a copy of the Law (v. 18). Why would God command that the king write out a copy of the Law for himself using the copy that was before the priests and Levites? The task of making copies of the Law was normally the work of the scribes, yet God wanted the king to make his own copy. Why could the king not have had a scribe to copy the Law? Why could God have not simply said that the king could read the Law? After all, such a task would have been very time consuming for the king particularly given his other responsibilities. Educators tell us that one learns more by writing than simply by reading. Clearly, God wanted the kings of Israel to know His law in order that they might rule in harmony with God's will. Given the failure of so many of the kings, could it be that they failed to carry out this responsibility – and that because of that failure they ruled contrary to God's will and thus led their subjects away from God? Maybe the history of Israel would have been different had they had the right kind of leadership that knew God's Law.

Is there not a lesson in this for leaders in the Lord's church? Indeed, is there not a lesson in this for all Christians? There is no law in the New Testament commanding the leaders of God's people today, or for God's people today to write out the law. However, could it be that the more of God's law for today (the New Testament) that we personally write out the more we would be obedient to God's will? It's worth considering.

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett and mother, Kathy Treadway's mother and Bronwen Gibson's mother (Lavonne McClish) – who has continued health – related issues and who is undergoing pain management therapy, Linda Chumbley is also undergoing pain management therapy; and Rachel Fitzpatrick's aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer.

Jack Peebles is to be moved to the NHC facility in North Augusta on Monday. This will be easier on the family for visiting. Continue to keep Jack and Jean and their family in your prayers.

Justine Hall's new-born great granddaughter, Mary Ann, is now home but still has to have oxygen.

Maomi Aaron asked for prayers for her sister who is still having health issues.

Several were not out Wednesday evening. Some were sick. Also, there were heavy, but badly needed showers that made it difficult for some to be out on the road.

Our next potluck will be on September 30 after morning worship. Plan to stay and eat with us.

Your Son for a Quarter

Several years ago, a new preacher moved to Houston, Texas. Some weeks after he arrived, he had occasion to ride the bus from his home to the downtown area. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change. As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, "You'd better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it." Then he thought, ‘

“Oh, forget it, it's only a quarter. Who would worry about this little amount. Anyway, the bus company gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a ‘gift from God' and keep quiet.”

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, then he handed the quarter to the driver and said, “Here, you gave me too much change.” The driver with a smile replied, “Aren't you the new preacher in town? I have been thinking lately about going to worship somewhere. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. I'll see you at church on Sunday.”

When the preacher stepped off the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, held on, and said, “Oh, God, I almost sold your Son for a quarter.” Our lives are the only Bible some people will ever read. This is a really, almost scary example of how much people watch us as Christians and will put us to the test! Always be on guard and remember (as I try to remember) that you carry the name of Christ on your shoulders when you are a “Christian.”

- Author Unknown