

http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/willis_e_elliott/2007/08/godcommanded_light.html

"God...commanded light...."

ON FAITH - WASHINGTON POST - WILLIS ELLIOTT

What's wrong with me? "Not a problem," some "On Faith" commenters would say and without hesitation have told me. More thoughtful, a cognitive therapist would muck about in my ideas to find the one labeled "Mail System Error: This message was undeliverable...." The therapy indicated? Get me unblocked, so communication can continue.

I can imagine a cognitive therapist asking me, "What passage or verse in scripture or literature best defines your own faith or beliefs? Why?" That's fishing not for where I'm blocked but where my spirit is flowing free, confident, joyful, hopeful for myself and for everybody. "Own" is the spear point of the this-week's questions coming down from "On Faith" above upon the pates of us panelists. My "own" is more than what I profess and possess. It is what "owns," possesses, me. And without hesitation I can say what that is. Rather, *who* that is. And I shall answer, as directed, with a quotation:

"GOD, who commanded light to shine forth out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God on the face of Jesus Christ." (New Testament: 2 Corinthians 4:6)

Most religious conversions occur in the late teens, when all one's human powers have emerged and none are yet fully developed. Consciousness, the last and greatest mystery to science, peaks in an awesome gradual-or-sudden increase of appreciative awareness. "Seeing the light" is the most common metaphor for it. I had that experience one evening during my seventeenth year and have never since doubted God's loving and purposeful presence in my life.

In Boston a few week ago, I met a university professor from China, on a project at Harvard. When I politely inquired as to his religion, with quiet joy he said, "Jesus Christ in my heart." That does it for me, too. He and I are *converts to Christ*—he, from a non-Christian start in life; I, from a superficially Christian.

Christian conversion is a "turning around" from arrogant and anxious self-centeredness to humble and joyful Christ-centeredness. In some cases, conversion seems sudden, but always it's the heart-and-mind conclusion of personal accumulated evidence. I was lord. Now, in the words central to Christian creeds, "*Jesus is Lord*." The heart of the Christian Story is the paradox that Jesus became Lord not by lording it over anybody but by humbly serving all. The drama is on a two-level stage. On the upper level, the Son of God enacts the *humility* he is to live as Jesus and to model for us:

"Your attitude should be the same as Christ Jesus. Although he was God in his very nature, he did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in human appearance, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father." (New Testament: Philippians 2:5-11)

That's the play you see when you walk into the Christian theater. As you walk out, you may conclude that you have heard a heavenly voice calling you to be of some earthly good. Or, if you didn't get it, you will conclude that what you have heard is nonsense, white noise.

BY WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | AUGUST 21, 2007; 8:11 AM ETSAVE & SHARE:

PREVIOUS: [MEETING GOD WITH A SOUND HEART](#) | NEXT: [WHY I TRY TO SERVE GOD AND OTHERS](#)

Comments

Please report offensive comments below.

Lep,
I'm glad you believe in relativism in this situation because I think George Carlin sux. Not funny to me. I'm more of a Chris Rock, Carlos Mencia type of guy. But hey to each is own.

POSTED BY: DAVID | AUGUST 22, 2007 8:25 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

ANON:

So if your god is responsible for the fact that your brother is now a wealthy man, why didn't he simply not allow him and his family to become homeless in the first place? Surely an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure?

David:

George Carlin is a comic. He takes a lot of his material from his Ctholic childhood. Lighten up - he's freaking hilarious.

POSTED BY: LEPIDOPTERYX | AUGUST 22, 2007 1:40 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

YOYO,

George Carlin has no idea what he's talking about. I'll tell you right now, I've broken every commandment many times over and I'm still going to be in the presence of my Lord. It's not about what you can do, it's about what has been done for you. It's too bad that people like George Carling don't understand this. They think it's a set of rules that if you break your in hell. Nope we all break them. We all deserve hell. It is only by the acceptance of Jesus Christ in which we are justified

POSTED BY: DAVID | AUGUST 22, 2007 12:49 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

"Why take you thought for raiment? Consider the lillies of the field; how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say to you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, how shall we be clothed?

(For after all these things the gentiles (unbelievers), seek; for your heavenly father knoweth that you have need of these things.

But SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS; AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU.

TAKE THEREFORE NO THOUGHT FOR TOMORROW: FOR TOMORROW SHALL TAKE THOUGHT FOR THE THINGS OF ITSELF.

SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY IS THE EVIL THEREOF."

Jesus the Christ.

POSTED BY: PEACETROLL | AUGUST 22, 2007 10:10 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

One of my favorite passages from scripture is Psalm 13:5.

Psalm 13:5 But I trust in your unfailing love;

my heart rejoices in your salvation.

So many people miss the point of salvation!!! I thought that salvation was only speaking of liberation from damnation but it's much more. I was so lonely, depressed and broken until the one day I prayed to Jesus to ease my sufferings. I had no other place to turn too. I turned my faith towards the heavens and the Lord answered. One week later, I met my beautiful wife. Now I have two beautiful children with the third on the way. My family and I are so happy. I love my children and my wife with all of my heart. They bring so much love and purpose into my life. God is good because he cared for my little soul and created a paradise for me on Earth. I will never take love for granted as long as I live.

God saved my life and how can I ever repay such a blessing?

My brother James and his family were homeless a few years ago. None of us knew that his family was living on the street. My brother kept it secret because of his pride. He too had no place to turn too and offered his prayers to the heavens with full faith. There is nothing more frightening too a parent when they see their children living in those conditions. The good Lord answered and too this day my brother and his family are living in a beautiful home. James has successful career making money hand over fist. My brother to this day is appreciative, thankful and modest. His story is truly amazing. I'm so happy for him and his wonderful family...

I share the hope that is in me because I want to share the good news. I want others to be blessed like I was. It would be a shame to keep this secret and not tell others how rich God's love is. Thank you Lord Jesus. God is good.

Potens est autem Deus omnem gratiam abundare facere in vobis ut in omnibus semper omnem sufficientiam habentes abundetis in omne opus bonum

P.S. if you suffering in the world my friends, believe and be saved!

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | AUGUST 22, 2007 9:24 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Hey All !!!

The information is particularly important to men, who turn third dozen, it's the age when most men are early signs of prostate and prostate adenoma.

Disease prevention is better than cure later.

Visit Prostatitis.

And let's health will be many years with you!

POSTED BY: AIBOLIT | AUGUST 22, 2007 9:01 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

God is not love. God is ancient myth,
invented by our ignorant and fearful ancestors
to help them through the night.

Then they realized what a powerful weapon of mind control

religion could be. People WANT to believe

in a God because it feels GOOD to believe.

People believe all kinds of hocus pocus, always

have. But that don't make it true.

Here's how George Carlin sees it...

Religion has actually convinced people that there's an invisible man -- living in the sky -- who watches everything you do, every minute of every day. And the invisible man has a special list of ten things he does not want you to do. And if you do any of these ten things, he has a special place, full of fire and smoke and burning and torture and anguish, where he will send you to live and suffer and burn and choke and scream and cry forever and ever 'til the end of time! But He loves you.

-- George Carlin Politically Incorrect, May 29, 1997

POSTED BY: YOYO | AUGUST 22, 2007 12:27 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

God does nothing; which is completely understandable as he exists only in the mind of the beholder.

If he ever did anything I'm sure we would have heard about it a million times over. But he doesn't, because

he has no more reality than Batman.

The myth is kept alive mainly through childhood indoctrination and the fear of the death and nothingness which awaits us all when our lives end.

God is a teddy bear for fearful grownups who refuse to face the reality of their own mortality.

I say get over it. Grow up..

POSTED BY: YOYO | AUGUST 21, 2007 11:57 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

YoYo

You didn't mention Uganda . Do you know its history, what its people were put through, how their faith has enabled them to rebuild Uganda into the prospering land it now is? Its story is a vivid example of what God will do in a willing people.

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | AUGUST 21, 2007 11:26 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

As for 'hating God cause there's trouble in the world, that's cause of false promises. People who say, "Do as we say, obey us, and the One True God will be nice to you, have the whole world in his hands, etc," ...then go blithely building cities in places where tsunamis happen, while damning and laughing at traditional peoples who know better.... claiming, "God will control everyone in the world for you if you obey, and there'll be peace if you suffer or stay in the flock..."

Then when wars or disasters happen, say, "Who knows why God did this, but it must have been cause somebody disobeyed masturbated or did some other wickedness involving not obeying *us*.."

Well, you bet that'll cheese people off on some level.

But the answer 'Why people 'hate God' when this stuff happens,' is easy.

False promises.

As a Pagan, people often ask me, accusingly, "How can you worship a nature-Goddess when nature is so cruel?" But the question doesn't even make sense. Earth is *alive,* not decreed to be under control...

So often I hear a sort of doublethink from so many Christians: "If everyone doesn't believe as we do, terrible things will happen," ...but when terrible things *do* happen to (or are done by) people who *do* believe as they do, their God (or belief about 'God') is not responsible.

Doesn't stop em from insisting they have the One Right Way and that people believing differently from them is to blame for everything that goes wrong, and therefore they should have exclusive worldly power, though.

Simple fact is, the rest of the world obviously doesn't see things that way.

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | AUGUST 21, 2007 10:14 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Again, Anonymous, it's not a 'tough' or even a *sincere* question to 'ask,' "Why do you hate God?"

It's an *accusation* *masked* as a question.

It's saying, "My view of you as a God-hater because you disagree with me is true, cause I say it is: defend yourself accordingly, even if my assertion is a lie."

That's not a question or dialogue, it's defamation. Your *religion* may claim people who don't follow your religion 'hate God,' but that doesn't mean people are subject to your judgement of them.

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | AUGUST 21, 2007 9:43 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

YoYo,

Why don't YOU help the people in Darfur. Why don't YOU help those who are victimized by natural disasters. I personally believe God is love. Let's replace the word God in your phrase.

I hate LOVE for never doing anything.

Never does IT help in tsunamis,earthquakes,floods or hurricanes.

IT just lets it all happen.

Wars too.Just fight it out among you,LOVE don't care.

LOVE'S no help in Darfur,like IT was no help in Rwanda, or Ethiopia or in the Holocaust.

It's like someone once said,If LOVE does exist, its exactly like IT doesn't.

As I am unable to believe in a lazy,good for nothing LOVE then it comes to me in a blinding flash of truth:

There is no LOVE. We just pretend there is,because it feels better than facing the ice-cold reality of our impending deaths.

Amen.

Why don't YOU have the love to help them yourself? Why doesn't humanity. Is it because humanity has removed God? If humanity removes God, then love goes with it.

POSTED BY: DAVID | AUGUST 21, 2007 9:34 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I hate God for never doing anything.

Never does he help in tsunamis,earthquakes,floods or hurricanes.

He just lets it all happen.

Wars too.Just fight it out among you,God don't care.

God's no help in Darfur,like he was no help in Rwanda, or Ethiopia or in the Holocaust.

It's like someone once said,If God does exist, its exactly like he doesn't.

As I am unable to believe in a lazy,good for nothing God, then it comes to me in a blinding flash of truth:

There is no God. We just pretend there is, because it feels better than facing the ice-cold reality of our impending deaths.
Amen.

POSTED BY: YOYO | AUGUST 21, 2007 8:22 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

THE QUESTION

What passage or verse in scripture or literature best defines your own faith or beliefs?

My answer to this question can not help but change as the Holy Spirit reveals more of Gods truths to me.

I seem to possess an inherent bent against another's authority in my life but have come to understand, even welcome Jesus' absolute power in my life. His authority is not over me but for me,--always.

The seventh chapter of Luke speaks of a Roman centurions understanding and acceptance of Jesus' authority.

7:7 Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.

7:8 For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.

7:9 When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"

As I strive to go, to come, and to do as Jesus directs me His love for all people manifested in a servants simple obedience never ceases to amaze me.

POSTED BY: 4TH WATCH | AUGUST 21, 2007 8:17 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

PAGANPLACE: When people can't ask each other questions no matter how harsh they may presume to be there can't be open and honest discussion. You presume that the majority of Christians are bigots because of your bias conception of the christian faith and people.

I'm for tough questions and won't be offended if the person has a sincere objection!

Silence is not the solution! Or name calling...

It's to easy to label people but maybe that's your way of not addressing the question at hand.

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | AUGUST 21, 2007 7:28 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Anyway, time for promised hasty departure: but I'll note for you, Richmond, that I find it telling that when I asked you to predict *my* reaction to a 'moral' problem, what you came up with was how I would judge someone else's actions based on some 'absolute' you presumed I had.

It's kind of my point that life ...and goodness... just don't work that way.

Blessed be. :)

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | AUGUST 21, 2007 6:32 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Anonymous / Jon,

Thanks for your post.

You wrote:

'You say, "I'm an agnostic because I've never seen the slightest bit of evidence that a god-being exists." May I ask you another question? Where have you searched and how did you come to such conclusions?'

My answer to your question: From a lifetime of observing, thinking, and wondering.

As I said, I'm agnostic. I've seen no evidence that a god-being exists. I also haven't seen any evidence that a god-being doesn't exist.

Certainly it's possible that a being that could reasonably called "God" does exist. I'm not one who proclaims positively that "God does not exist!" I have no knowledge of the matter.

I'm glad you've had the positive experiences in your life that you describe. I've had positive experiences, too, but none that have led me to the conclusions you've reached.

I've even had one "mystical experience" in which everything I saw was as described by the poet William Blake (1757-1827):

"If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thru' narrow chinks of his cavern."

The vision lasted an hour or two and then faded, as these visions always do. It seemed to me that I had seen into the heart of things, but the beauty seemed to be part of the natural universe, not something inspired by a diety.

I appreciate your interest in my welfare and I accept your words in the spirit you intended.

POSTED BY: NORRIE HOYT | AUGUST 21, 2007 6:15 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Offhand, ...Of Mice and Men? :)

In that case, no, it's not 'immoral,' it's *not paying attention* (in this case through cognitive impairment.)

Would it be immoral for *me* to squeeze a bird to death? Why would I 'want' to? Being hungry and faced with a particularly ornery chicken?

No, that wouldn't be 'immoral.' For some reason doing it out of cruelty? I suppose it would be. If I were in any way motivated to.

Besides, I didn't say, 'Ask what I think is immoral,' I said, 'Predict my reaction,' if you know what's so 'harmful' about not having your 'objective standard.'

As for your thesis, I think it's more like you say, 'Not believing in my version of the Divine is arrogance and selfishness.'

But, try again.

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | AUGUST 21, 2007 6:03 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

thinking quickly... I want to ask if it's immoral to squeeze a bird to death. 2 bonus points if you get the reference.

Peace,
RT

PS I happen to vehemently agree that "systemic arrogance that gets in the way of communication"... that's kind of the whole of the Christian message.... arrogance and selfishness gets in the way of communion with the Divine... thinking so much of 'self' that the 'other' gets lost in the noise.

POSTED BY: RICHMOND T. STALLGISS | AUGUST 21, 2007 5:55 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

looking at clock. Oh, and as for my little challenge, let's keep it to personal ethics for the sake of simplicity, and also, expect delays in response if you aren't quick: I have something to go and do shortly. :)

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | AUGUST 21, 2007 5:47 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Anyway, keeping in mind that my original post was speaking to the common accusation that people who don't believe in certain religions in certain ways are therefore fair game to be called 'God-haters,' (however much a 'truth-proposition' you may believe that, by your own standards to be,)

...has nothing to do with truth or objectivity.

It has to do with you *claiming* your one belief among many *is* objective, which is a far cry from being 'truth.'

One may or may not believe that a philosophical objectivity exists. It's quite another to claim that you *possess* it just because your own belief claims that it does.

I, personally, accept that all our perceptions are subjective, and that there are no privileged claims to 'objectivity.' (Not even if a book or a religion circularly claims this status for itself.)

We can only try to account for our own biases and communicate.

No, I don't think Christians are monolithically-hateful, but there is a systemic arrogance that gets in the way of communication.

I was indoctrinated in it. And left it behind.

You 'ask' (accuse) the wrong 'simple questions.' (accusations.)

You decide, that within your own belief, 'All good among a fallen and corrupt humanity comes from this or that interpretation of this or that translation of this or that book'

I say your absolutes and claims to refer to a unique 'objectivity' as something upon which good conduct and morality... are illusory.

You believe that without these words, people are inherently awful.

Rather than finding out how I actually behave, you simply say that I live a detrimental life upon others because I don't accept your 'objective standards.'

That's 'bigotry.'

So pervasive and 'absolutely acceptable,' it goes unquestioned. But, bigotry. And illusion.

Predict my reaction to a 'moral problem' of your choosing.

Then we'll see who's listening.

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | AUGUST 21, 2007 5:41 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Jesus said this:

Mathew 18:4-5 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."

Paul speaks of the thing that a child does not have, knowledge; while Jesus speaks to the qualities that a child does have: trustfulness, humility, receptive mind, and teach-ability. Adults can be knowledgeable but hard headed and these will not accept the Lord for they have much pride and are all puffed up.

All in all, I would rather be like a child at the foot of my savior than to own all the knowledge of this world. Even more so to use my so called knowledge to cause a little one to sin. So I am like the child portrayed by Paul and also a child who belongs to Christ.

POSTED BY: TIM | AUGUST 21, 2007 5:25 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Erk. Pardon the bad editing above, technical difficulties.

What I mean, Anonymous, is that saying 'Why do you hate God?' isn't a 'simple question,' it's an *accusation.* From your own preconceptions, you think people who live outside your standards must be consciously 'evil' (hating a God they don't believe in) *within* your standards.

You say your opinion of them as haters-of-your-God somehow has more weight than their own experiences of their own life.

Like Richmond claims here:

"When you (PP) say, "deny people the human dignity of living by their own standards" you implicitly assert that there are *no* objective standards of comport besides those Willed by the individual."

Not quite. (unless maybe you're capitalizing Will in a Thelemite sense) Your binary good-evil context makes you think this in a bad way of me, as well as place weight on a theoretical idea of 'objective' that you implicitly claim is your God and your beliefs.

To clarify, I believe there are 'standards' of a sort, (well, many, in fact.) but I don't believe they are 'objective.' Or 'Absolute,' unless it comes to oaths. Certainly not legalistic.

Not as the absolutes you claim ...claim to be.

You in fact, *accuse* me of having no morality because in *your* context morality *must* come from 'objective' and universal 'absolutes' ...by extension, you believe therefore that your Bible *must be* those absolutes in some way.

I say, *nonsense.*

You may claim that you're 'simply speaking the absolute truth' when you compare someone else's religion to 'having a booger hanging out' or 'standing in the street like an idiot.'

For all you know I'm directing traffic with nose filters in cause of the fumes.

You say:

"It's not hateful or inflammatory to point out that "it's all good -- do what you want" is an unhealthy life ethic. "

It is, however, defamatory to say that's what someone else is saying because that's what *you* believe about them.

On this, I think *you're* the one not listening.

"You claim that any attempt to point out external standards is not only an "assault on human dignity"... but also "*intentionally* inflammatory." A truth proposition (ex: "you have a booger coming out of your nose"... "your fly is undone"... "you are standing in the street, where cars might hit you") may offend your sensibilities or embarrass you, but that is not the same as hate speech.

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | AUGUST 21, 2007 5:21 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

"PAGAN PLACE - YOU USE THE WORD BIGOT TO FREELY AND OUT OF COMPLETE CONTEXT! I ASKED A SIMPLE QUESTION THAT DESERVES AND HONEST ANSWER."

Actually, it speaks *precisely* to the original context of the word 'bigot,' ...it comes from people devaluing others and saying the justification was 'Bi Gott.' (By God.)

This is very much about context.

You may ask a 'simple question' in your own terms, terms which may just happen to mean to you that people who don't *live* in your context are 'damned chaff and goats,' ...this doesn't mean that your context is any more valid than yours, just because *you* believe that your beliefs are the 'godly' context by which to judge others.

If you start saying, 'People who don't believe as I do because this is what my belief says about them must be answerable to my context,' then *you're* the one who must meet a burden of proof when making derogatory claims about them, not they.

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | AUGUST 21, 2007 5:00 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Paganplace thinks Christians would say things like: "my words say humans are bad unless they believe in my words and rituals and authorities"

RT says: What an uncharitable misinterpretation of Christianity!!!!

It's not that "Christian words" say humans are bad, it's that Christians have come to understand that there is such a thing as error.... we believe that "harm" is not just subjectively felt but objectively impactful, like the notion of bad karma, as it is thought to extend throughout the universe. Human authorities and books don't, in themselves, damn people, but it *is* possible to screw up your relationship to the Divine via your actions... and to say as much is not hateful.

When you (PP) say, "deny people the human dignity of living by their own standards" you implicitly assert that there are *no* objective standards of comport besides those Willed by the individual. You claim that any attempt to point out external standards is not only an "assault on human dignity"... but also "*intentionally* inflammatory." A truth proposition (ex: "you have a booger coming out of your nose"... "your fly is undone"... "you are standing in the street, where cars might hit you") may offend your sensibilities or embarrass you, but that is not the same as hate speech.

It's not hateful or inflammatory to point out that "it's all good -- do what you want" is an unhealthy life ethic. That mentality is in contrast to the way the "really" world works, and to live by it will get you into personal trouble whether people tell you that to your face or whether they shut up and let you suffer the consequences of your attitudes. God Loves You just the way you are, but he doesn't want you to stay that way. If you don't want people's advice that's one thing, but to reject advice-giving always and forever seems somewhat hard-headed.

I think it is unfortunate for you that you continue to look on Christians as monolithically bigoted and hateful. Sometimes I feel that you are not even listening.

Peace,

RT

POSTED BY: RICHMOND T. STALLGISS | AUGUST 21, 2007 4:54 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

PAGAN PLACE - YOU USE THE WORD BIGOT TO FREELY AND OUT OF COMPLETE CONTEXT! I ASKED A SIMPLE QUESTION THAT DESERVES AND HONEST ANSWER. THANK YOU NORRIE FOR YOUR TIME.

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | AUGUST 21, 2007 4:28 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Hi Norrie, thanks for the post and your honesty. You say, "I'm an agnostic because I've never seen the slightest bit of evidence that a god-being exists." May I ask you another question? Where have you searched and how did you come to such conclusions?

Deuteronomy 4:29-30 29 seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. Romans 1: 20For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

If you're searching in the wrong places you might not find God and I can see your dilemma. If you do find the Lord and I believe someday you will that moment will change your life forever! Some people are afraid to find God because they are fearful of the change! I admit it's an overwhelming experience and amazing but I assure you that you will never lose your personality as a person! How have I been changed? I'm no longer materialistic, greedy and selfish. I have become more charitable, loving, merciful, caring, forgiving and honest! I have given up the life of dishonesty, boastfulness, disingenuous and self seeking! And I would give you the shirt off my back. That is what God has revealed to me through prayers, nature, mass and reading of the scriptures! Have a great day. And thank you for your time in responding to my questions...

- Jon

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | AUGUST 21, 2007 4:24 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Well, I think calling people 'God-haters' (along with the constant, chirping, 'Ha, ha, you'll go to Hell cause you're not 'loving' like me,' ... because they don't believe in your demonstrably-flawed religious authority is another 'childish thing.'

It's inflammatory speech meant to deny people the human dignity of living by their own standards. "If you don't believe my words, you must hate God and all we call good, because my words say humans are bad unless they believe in my words and rituals and authorities. You don't count as a person. My 'Godly' opinion of you as a 'God-hater' counts for more than your actual life.

Bi Gott.

It's a bigotry so pervasive that many who perpetrate it just don't see it. They think it's perfectly 'logical.'

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | AUGUST 21, 2007 2:57 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Ashley,
Thanks for your post. You've got it right about where I stand, and I agree with what you wrote.
Best wishes to you.

POSTED BY: NORRIE HOYT | AUGUST 21, 2007 2:43 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Richmond:

:) is *punctuation.* :)

It indicates a smile, a much-needed addition to the language as text, via the Internet, becomes more conversational. Interpreted by context, of course.

And, Tim. That's a pretty passage, even if it is often used in one translation or another in condescending ways... and, as so many Pauline writings, seems to directly contradict the Jesus that Paul claimed to represent, in that he said, not to 'put aside childish things,' but to embrace the mindset of children.

My observation is that sometimes, people believe it's *vital* to have (or just worship at the altar of) "The" perfect understanding, ...because they believe that being 'wrong' is the worst, most frightening, and irrevocable thing that could possibly happen to one. It causes them to defend wrong action because the possibility being 'wrong' is psychologically-unacceptable... too frightening to face.

The more strident and outwardly bombastic and hateful a Christian or other preacher may be, I see... Not the wonder and brilliance of a child, but... Fear. Fear that clouds the judgment and externalizes the *terror* that someone turned *doubt* into by promising salvation from the internal horrors of a promise that *belief* is an end of itself.

The promises of 'salvation' by belief and profession of something written have a dark side.

That's the idea that 'if you're wrong in your belief, you're screwed.'

Makes it kind of hard to admit error, don't it?

It also can make people turn what's supposed to be a grand faith into a *talisman.* "I call, If we pray this way, what we say is the good, and people who don't are wrong, regardless of the effects."

Maybe that's the childish thing to put aside.

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | AUGUST 21, 2007 2:41 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Anonymous,

"Norrie Hoyt: why do you hate God? Or hate the very thought that God might exist?"

I guess you haven't read very many of my posts over the past year.

As I've written numerous times here, I'm an agnostic, not an atheist. I'm an agnostic because I've never seen the slightest bit of evidence that a god-being exists.

I don't hate "God" or anything else that I've never had a reason to believe exists.

I've also written many times that I'm a "Buddhist sympathiser." Buddhists don't believe in a god.

So why did I write, "God [sorry, I don't usually refer to nonexistent things]..."? To have some fun and twit those who are always proclaiming that their "God" does exist and that I must pay attention to it.

Regards.

POSTED BY: NORRIE HOYT | AUGUST 21, 2007 2:30 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I don't think it's that Norrie or anyone else here hates God or the idea that God might exist; we just aren't buying what you're selling. I can't connect a supposedly loving God to anything tangible here on earth. I'm tired of being told that "faith" is what will give me all the answers to why God's children kill, hate and maim each other in his name. Forgive me my cynicism if you must, but I'm not going to blindly put my faith into a cycle of intolerance and illiberalism.

I'm not the one wrapped up in hate. Some of the verses in the Bible, Qu'ran and Torah are very beautiful indeed, and convey messages of peace and love and joy. But I can, and do, enjoy those works as those of people with brilliant ideas and no idea where to credit them

except some sort of higher power.

May you all find happiness in your own beliefs.

POSTED BY: ASHLEY | AUGUST 21, 2007 2:25 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

RICHMOND T. STALLGISS:

You say, "What I am saying is that WE are the ones speaking the language of violence and retribution, and GOD is the one who adopted our preferred language to convince us that there is a better way to live besides enmity and murder."

Richmond, I'm in perfect agreement with you. God perfects his power through love. 1 Corinthians 4:20-21 20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. 21What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit? When I think of the Passion and suffering of our Lord I'm constantly reminded of the violent nature of man! Our violent and barbaric nature is on display for all to see when they look up the cross. This is a lesson for all mankind to seek the alternative way to life which is love. You live by the sword and you shall die by the sword! Jesus Christ came to save us from ourselves! Are we listening? You be the judge of that...

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | AUGUST 21, 2007 2:12 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Paganplace said: "Well, great. If the Christians are all saying the sacred can't really be communicated in human words, why all the insistence on your words and yours alone? :)"

RT says: Is ":" a word? Don't you have to know what ":" means before you understand what it means when written down? ;)

RT

POSTED BY: RICHMOND T. STALLGISS | AUGUST 21, 2007 1:24 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Willis E. Elliott, The Lord Jesus made your life beautiful! How beautiful the Holy Spirit of Christ! How beautiful He will be in person! Can't wait to see you there with Him and all the other Saints.

Thank you for the university professor from China, story: "...with quiet joy he said, "Jesus Christ in my heart."

That does it for me, too.

POSTED BY: HEYYOU | AUGUST 21, 2007 1:02 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Please feel free to use any words you wish to communicate what you believe is sacred. This is not Iran or some other Muslim nation, thank God! Peace to all you Pagans out there.

A partial picture of the face of God can be communicated in human words. Our knowledge is imperfect and increased when confronted with the Truth in human flesh. All glory to God for revealing more of Himself even to the extent of his death on a cross for our sins. With this he left us a picture of the language of love that could not be communicated through words alone.

1 Corinthians 13:8

"Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

POSTED BY: TIM | AUGUST 21, 2007 1:01 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Well, great. If the Christians are all saying the sacred can't really be communicated in human words, why all the insistence on your words and yours alone? :)

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | AUGUST 21, 2007 12:14 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

RTS, language is limited as you have stated. We search for the vision of God for the "face of God" but words can not describe Him. We can not even effectively describe an animal with words much less the infinite.

God knew this "and the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as only the Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14.)

Also,... He who has seen me has seen the Father.. (John 14:9)

Words were a barrier until the word became flesh and lived among us. Now we not only have the words we have the history, his deeds, his life, his actions, his example, his sacrifice, and his holy spirit. This is enough for now as the glories to come can not be communicated in the flesh.

POSTED BY: TIM | AUGUST 21, 2007 11:54 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Norrie Hoyt: why do you hate God? Or hate the very thought that God might exist?

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | AUGUST 21, 2007 11:36 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

God [sorry, I don't usually refer to nonexistent things], Anonymous, I guess I've attained that state without realizing it!

Thanks for awakening me to the fact.

Best wishes.

POSTED BY: NORRIE HOYT | AUGUST 21, 2007 10:48 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

What happens when a Buddhist forsakes the 6 precepts and becomes totally absorbed in himself and the computer he is working with?
He enters NERDVANA.

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | AUGUST 20, 2007 11:30 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

The passage in scripture that is referred to as The Lord's Prayer and also the Our Father: Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven, give us this day our daily Bread, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. OUR FATHER, as in the Father of the entire human race considering that not only did He create everyone but also everything. WHO ART IN HEAVEN, not only is He in Heaven but He is also putting the finishing touches on the Heavenly Jerusalem not to be confused with the New Jerusalem which is going to go down the tubes just like the Old Jerusalem only more so. HALLOWED BE THY NAME, actually God is Pure Love but from so many of the posts that call themselves christians, you would never know. THY KINGDOM COME, God's Kingdom which will be a Kingdom of Pure Love and it is for all of His children which is ALL OF HUMANITY. THY WILL BE DONE, Like it says in many places in the bible, it is God's Will that ALL BE SAVED, also if all that someone calling themself a christian, cares about is going to the "good place", how christian is that, considering that on the cross Jesus said, "Father forgive them", there is not an asterick after them, them means ALL OF HUMANITY, we have all done wrong at least I have. ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN, as it says even the forces of evil, satan and his cohorts, are working toward the Will of God even if inadvertently, besides being a liar and a thief, the deceiver is also a loser. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD, this refers not only to that which sustains us physically but also the Eucharist which is the BREAD OF LIFE. FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US, this is a divine equation, pure and simple, Jesus told us as much. AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, satan is the tempter and like it says when we fall which we all seem to do at times at least I have we can ask for forgiveness, we can go directly to God for forgiveness, the curtain in front of the Holy of Holies has been torn in two, yes the one that so many people are trying to sew back together. BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE, yes satan and his cohorts are real and in God's Plan, All of Humanity will be delivered from all evil that is why we are to be willing and active participants in God's Plan whatever we may have been called or chosen to do. Sincerely, Thomas Paul Moses Baum.

POSTED BY: THOMAS BAUM | AUGUST 20, 2007 6:23 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

What I am saying is that WE are the ones speaking the language of violence and retribution, and GOD is the one who adopted our preferred language to convince us that there is a better way to live besides enmity and murder.

POSTED BY: RICHMOND T. STALLGISS | AUGUST 20, 2007 1:58 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

You have to ask yourself... what language was God speaking... and where did this or any other language come from....

And the answer is that language ... "the ability to speak to someone else about the way life is" ... has to come from shared common experience. I simply cannot talk to someone who does not understand where I am coming from.

How is it that I can communicate intelligibly with Norrie Hoyt on the internet without ever having met Norrie Hoyt? How is it that I can respond to "comments" by Willis Eliot if I have never met this man and if we did not have the opportunity to share any common experiences in the same room together. The answer is that we share a common language.

And this is the answer to the puzzle that Hoyt offers to the essay writer. Hoyt asks, "what is the purpose of God's plan unfolding as it did" .. and the answer is that God intruded into the selfish human world of ambition and sibling rivalry and warlike jockeying for position, and taught us of his alternative vision for humanity as being conflict resolvers, justicee doers, friend-makers, and reconciliation agents. He came to us in our linguistic incompetence... and showed (and lived) a narrative of death-to-self and life-in-God.

In short, he: "commanded light to shine forth out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God on the face of Jesus Christ"

You can't have logic if you don't first have syntax and vocabulary... i.e. language itself. The events that Hoyt describes offer the vocabulary and context for who Christ was supposed to be and by extension who God is.

Peace,

RT

POSTED BY: RICHMOND T. STALLGISS | AUGUST 20, 2007 1:50 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should have everlasting life.

God was at the University of Atlantis in 18,000 B.C., taking a course in logic and reasoning.

He said: "Professor, I know that I acted cruelly when I created this world where every being suffers. Suffering is indeed the central, inescapable motif of this world-realm I made."

However, I have thought carefully, deeply, and rationally and logically, and I have come up with a plan to set things to right.

I will create a people called the Jews. I will conceive a Son of Mine, who will be brought to birth among this people.

When he reaches maturity, I will arrange that he shall be horribly tortured and cruelly done to death by a cruel people I shall also create, called Romans.

After His death, I shall have it put about that his excruciating suffering means that humans thereafter shall be freed from suffering if they do exactly what I command they should do and believe.

My commands shall be communicated to all people through a new organization, to be known as "The Religion of the Tormented Jew", which shall be nicknamed "Christianity" after my dead Son.

My plan is reasoned, reasonable, and logical, is it not, Professor?

The Professor replied, "God, you've certainly done enough work in this class that I won't flunk you out. Just don't ask for a recommendation for graduate school."

Atlaneans were long-lived, so, to avoid futher comment from his Professor, God waited 16,000 years, until after the Professor had died, to put his plan into effect.

POSTED BY: NORRIE HOYT | AUGUST 20, 2007 9:03 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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