

Lessons from Islam: What To Do To Keep Christians Christian

In a series of events, some planned and some unexpected, I was essentially immersed in Islam for about a month. I began this experience with some opinions that, while not fully researched, still had valid foundations (which includes spending a year working with Afghans). I considered myself educated enough to not just take anyone's word about Islam, but not educated enough to express these opinions. I previously agreed with C.S. Lewis when he claimed that Islam was "the greatest of the Christian heresies" ("Christian Apologetics," collected in *God in the Dock*) and that, "Attempts at ... a minimal religion are not new -- from Akhenaten and Julian the Apostate down to Lord Hebert of Cherbury and the late H.G. Wells. ... The greatest of such attempts was that simplification of Jewish and Christian traditions which we call Islam." ("Religion Without Dogma," also collected in *God in the Dock*). But now that I have done some serious and systematic study, I feel that even this less than complimentary description grossly overstates the substance Islam actually has. But I do not write this to insult the Muslim people, as I can attest from personal experience that the integrity and honor most of them possess as individuals is no different than what you find in most people from Christian lands.

Perhaps the most interesting part of my experience was when I began a friendship with a Muslim with whom I work with. He loved to send me videos of former Christians who converted to Islam (or so they claimed; I have doubts of their sincerity for reasons I won't go into here). These videos were invariably Christians of authority. Presumably, I was supposed to be impressed that so many educated Christians found Islam to be preferable. Sadly for him, all they did was reinforce the opinions I already had concerning Islam. Nearly all the "conversions" were deceitful fabrications easily debunked (such as claiming Pope Benedict XVI had converted to Islam in 2013). Personal testimonies were grossly flawed in describing what Christianity was. I can't comment on what their life experiences were, but if Christianity was what they said it was, I wouldn't be a Christian either. Logical arguments, as few as there were, were likewise strawmanned to the point of being slanderous. But then I had a "God moment" and, rather than mope in silence about the situation, decided to check into the number of conversions myself. Thanks to the Pew Research Center, this was a relatively easy task.

I found out that, within the U.S., Islam will lose 23% of its members. This is, for all practical purposes, the same as the 22% attrition rate for Christianity. I could have decided that was all I needed, but I continued to look. The next set of numbers was alarming. While Christianity was only gaining one convert for every four members it lost, Islam was converting almost exactly as many new members as it was loosing. Islam may be stagnant in the United States, but Christianity is dying. But I didn't stop there. I also looked at why Muslims were leaving the faith, and what I saw was staggering! Fifty-five percent of Muslims, when they leave the faith, become skeptics (i.e., agnostic or atheist). I knew from previous research on another project that only 15% of former Christians become skeptics. This has ramifications I'll get into later, but there was one last bit of information I found before I stopped. I found out that Christian converts represent 80% of the converts to Islam, and that former Protestants have about a 50% *greater* chance to become Muslim than a former Catholic!

With these facts in mind, and with me already spending much of my last two years in life trying to answer the question of how to improve Christian retention, I formulated some new ideas. First of all, while Christianity does indeed have a real problem retaining its members, those that leave still retain some type of spiritual life. They may join another Christian denomination, become C&E (Christmas and Easter) Christians, consider themselves devout Christians but don't feel they need a church, actually have a vague idea of returning to the church one day (but never do), become a

pantheist (as I did once), turn to Hinduism (or other Eastern faith), embrace Islam, experience Paganism, become a Satan worshiper, or join a coven. But regardless of choice, the overwhelming number of lost Christians still look for spiritual fulfillment in some way. In contrast, Islam is a theological dead end (I'll explain my reasons for saying this in my last topic). The numbers suggest that while Christians are unhappy with Christianity (or at least their church), they are still happy with God and seek Him in some way, shape or form. And many of those who don't seek Jehovah still seek some other spiritual reality to replace Him. Muslims, however, are more attracted to Islam than to Allah, and are therefore left with nothing if they become disenchanted by Islam (I will discuss this in detail in a future paper, "How Do We Think of the Creator God -- Transcendence vs. Immanence").

Also important to me was the fact that Islam relies heavily on Christianity to keep its numbers up, and that they are at least successful enough to maintain the *status quo* despite the massive exodus of their own practitioners. All of a sudden, my co-worker's annoying evangelization efforts were giving me clues as to how Christians could do better in retaining their numbers. Whatever was attracting Christians to Islam could also be used to retain Christians. While I do not know how much more Islamic immersion (if any) I will do, I am now thinking I should look at other non-Christian sources that appeal to Christians. And the very first place I thought of was Dr. Jordan Peterson (before his conversion). A series of podcasts called "The Bible Says What?" has also shaped my opinions here.

1) The Unchanging Qu'ran: Perhaps of everything I was told, the most non-intuitive piece of advertising Muslims use is that the Qu'ran never changes. If you compare the oldest surviving text of it in its native language to any other copy you come across, every single dot and line will be exactly the same. Or so they claim. My research has shown this to be false, but I will not elaborate on this here (Dr. Jay Smith, who has a YouTube channel, is a very good source of information on this). But regardless of the facts, this alleged solidarity is compared to the scores (if not hundreds) of Bible translations in English alone.

Lesson: Teach the youth how modern day Bibles are translated using scientific methods and that, the King James Bible (KJB) excepting, all major Bibles (in English) are virtually identical in the messages they give. The differences that do exist are from the equivocalness of words, the inherent lack of precision that comes from translating complex ideas from one language to another, and the doctrinal influences each church has. In short, no Christian disagrees with what the Bible *says* in any meaningful manner, but rather how to *interpret* what is said. Unified Qu'ran or not, Muslims fail to agree on interpretations of it as well. Finally, within the Catholic Church, the magisterium has been tasked with the job of ensuring every official Catholic Bible throughout the world is faithful to the interpretations as understood by the apostles (what is called Apostolic Tradition).

2) The Holy Family: The Qu'ran and Islamic tradition rely heavily on the apocryphal Gospels. Which Gospel they use seems to be controversial, although Islam officially claims it is the Gospel of Jesus. Interestingly, Muslims claim that only Mohammad, who lived about 600 years after Jesus, is the only person to have heard the true Gospel of Jesus. But Timothy, James, Thomas and Barnabas are also mentioned as inspiring the Qu'ran, and it is possible that some mixture of all of them is what ultimately filtered into the Qu'ran today. But regardless of its sources, Muslims will talk extensively concerning the lives of Mary and the young Jesus. Indeed, the Qu'ran has an entire chapter dedicated to each of these two members of the Holy Family. So from here we actually have two insights: a desire to better understand the personal lives of the Holy Family, and the importance of inspired literature.

Lesson 1: Christians should talk more about the Holy Family on a personal level. Very little is done in the Catholic Church other than having a few holy days reserved for them, and I am not aware

of any Protestant church that does even this much. While it is common among all Christians to consider Mary and Joseph as the perfect human parents, very little is said on what being a perfect human parent is. The Gospels speak almost nothing of how Mary and Joseph raised Jesus, but we do know that they were devout Jews. Knowing this, we can still glean quite a bit from the Old Testament and Talmud as to how a proper Jewish family lived. This, of course, will require some courage, as talking about perfect parenting will mean setting standards that our current culture claims is "oppressive" to those who don't have parents, or might hurt the feelings of those whose parents are less than ideal. But our children are "voting with their feet." If our faith won't answer these questions, then we can't blame them for seeking answers elsewhere.

The Holy Family is also paralleled with the Heavenly Family. Jesus is the common member between the two. It is reasonable to claim that the scriptural motives and behaviors of God the Father are matched in Saint Joseph. We also have a Joseph from the Old Testament to whom God spoke in dreams, who saved his family by going to Egypt, and is known for his chastity. Likewise, we can expect many similarities between the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. There was also a famous object from the Old Testament that carried God; was never far from "a man like Jesus" (I'm inverting the meaning of Deuteronomy 18:15); carried the Word of God (Ten Commandments), the Bread of the Presence, and the Staff of the High Priest within it; had a sojourn in the hill country for three months; and was met with leaping upon its arrival. While this archetype does not tell us much about the personality of the Virgin Mary, it speaks volumes as to the nature of her purpose. And as the mother of the king, she is the Queen Mother, a position well documented in Old Testament and secular histories.

Lesson 2: Explain why some books are in the Bible and others are not. This may seem like an insurmountable task, as tens of thousands of "Christian" documents exist from the first three centuries AD. But *all* Christian denominations, and nearly all of the non-denominationalists, agree to the books of the New Testament, and there are only minor (and mostly unimportant) disagreements on the contents of the Old Testament. And since neither the typical Christian nor the typical Muslim seems to talk much about the Old Testament, I propose that disagreements on Old Testament scripture are not relevant to this paper.

The short answer to why certain books in the New Testament are included while others are not is because every major Christian denomination who looked at the contents of the New Testament has either explicitly agreed to the actual selection of books, or found no compelling reason to remove or add to the list. The long answer is not much more complicated. Only a few choice Old Testament books (Genesis, Exodus, Samuel, Isaiah, Daniel and Ezekiel) seem to get much attention from Christians. Likewise, most Christians seem to focus on Romans and I & II Corinthians, and pay little attention to the rest of the Epistles. But Christians *are* excited about the Gospels. Nearly every biblical disciple, including Mary Magdalene and Judas Iscariot, has been "credited" with a Gospel. But three of the accepted Gospels were actually written by personal disciples of Jesus (albeit through the use of scribes), and Luke's interviews of those who knew Jesus actually set the standard for what is called "investigative reporting" today. There is no evidence whatsoever that non-biblical Gospels were written by the person they are attributed to, nor to anyone who knew them personally. Indeed, the evidence suggests that the early Christians did not think much of these "Gospels" when they were first penned. Thousands of copies of the accepted Gospels are known to exist in good condition from the first and early second centuries (i.e., when there were still people around who knew the apostles personally), whereas the other Gospels only have a few or even one known copy in existence. Most of them are in such poor condition that only fragments remain.

Finally, as the first Christians were Jews who accepted the Messiah, the Jewish tradition of

midrashs needs to be addressed. A midrash was a story told using biblical characters, but was never intended to be considered inspired. They are the theological equivalent of "historical fiction" or "tall tales." The excluded Gospels have all the characteristics of being Christian midrashs, and their obvious lack of popularity among early Christians (otherwise there would have been more copies of them and they would have been maintained better) actually testifies to the integrity of Christian teachings that Islam claims is missing.

3) A Triune God Is an Absurdity: Despite the almost universal belief within Christianity of a triune God, it remains a stumbling block for those curious about it. This lack of understanding is a major boon for Muslim evangelists, as I have yet to see one who didn't focus on this at some point in their talks. In one of the videos I was shown, an (alleged) former Christian minister converted to Islam because he felt teaching this doctrine *was too hard*, and he preferred the simplicity of one god and one person in Allah.

Lesson: As Christians, we are not concerned with how hard our faith is to understand; we are concerned about the truthfulness. As C.S. Lewis said in "Christian Apologetics," (again, collected in *God in the Dock*, pg 102), "Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of *no* importance, and, if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important." And he is only echoing Saint Paul, who said, "If Christ has not been raised, then empty [too] is our preaching; empty too your faith. If for this life only we have hope in Christ, we are the most pitiful people of all." (1 Corinthians 15:14, 19) Greater efforts to explain this concept must be made. In truth, any attempt to understand an infinite God with our finite ability to comprehend is doomed to fail, and therefore is technically a heresy. But the Catholic Church does believe in the concept of the formula, which is not "the truth," but is nonetheless helpful in understanding "the truth" (Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) #170). And there are examples we can use that are far superior to some of the more common and noticeably heretical ones: the three states of water (ice, liquid, steam; which can only exist one at a time instead of simultaneously, a heresy known as "modulism"), the egg (shell, white, yoke; which can be separated from each other), or Saint Patrick's clover (three leaves on one flower, but like the egg, they can be separated from each other). While these are perhaps good for elementary and middle schoolers, more mature people need better explanations.

I suggest that we can build on "God is Love" from 1 John 4:8, 16 because love requires three distinct aspects to exist all at once and as a single unit -- love cannot exist if any one of the three is missing, and none of these three can exist without love. They are the lover, the beloved and the expression of love itself. This example also shows the primacy of God the Father, because while all three aspects need to exist simultaneously, love cannot exist unless the lover initiated it. This, by the way, is the way Saint Augustine explained the Holy Trinity.

We can also differentiate between "being" and "person," which seems to be the biggest hang-up for Muslims, Unitarians and skeptics alike. "Being" means "existing," and "personhood" means the state of having free will. The table I sit at while I type this has being, but it is not a person (1 being, 0 persons). I, however, am a being and I have free will (1 being, 1 person). Marriage is a state of being, freely entered into by two people (1 being, 2 persons), and a family is a state of being for at least three people (1 being, 2 parents and at least 1 child). The Christian God is one being of three persons. This last example is also biblically supported, as Jesus makes frequent use of family in His teachings (God is the perfect family, and we are called to be adopted into it, consider **Topic 2**).

4) The Bible Is Full of Problems: This is a very broad topic, as literally any part of the Bible can be

held up for scrutiny. Claims that God is a murderer of children (10th plague in Exodus and King Herod's slaughter of innocents after birth of Jesus) are perhaps the most disgusting. More reasonable concerns are the apparent denial of evolution, a lack of scientific evidence for the entire world being flooded, or that the Tower of Babel could have existed as presented in the Bible. But I have also been asked how it is possible for Michal, daughter of Saul, to be barren (2 Samuel 6:23) and yet have 5 kids (some translations of 2 Samuel 21:8).

Lesson: It is impossible for anyone to have a ready answer for every possible question that could come up, and it would not be prudent for any but a devout apologist to attempt to plan for even the more common questions. But I think an effort can be made to ensure the youth are not afraid to open up the Bible and see for themselves the alleged contradiction (the overwhelming number of "problems" come from not taking a passage in context), and I believe they should be encouraged to get a quality study bible (like the Ignatius brand) to help with the hermeneutics. At the very least, our youth should be made aware that the KJV is the *only* major Bible in English that does *not* use either the most current scientific methods of translation, or the most recent archaeological discoveries of ancient texts for its translations. As a result, relying on the KJV is not a good option when specific wording is important (as it turns out, the matter of Michal's barrenness was quoted from the KJV, the New American Bible identifies the children as being born to Michal's sister, Merab). And this is not just my "Catholic prejudice" against the KJV; most respected Protestant theologians rarely quote from the KJV themselves. Having confidence in their ability to read and understand the Bible will likely encourage our youth to challenge the incredible and unpredictable assertions from non-Christians rather than become disillusioned with Christianity.

5) Christians Are Anti-Science: This comes mainly from atheists who glorify Galileo as a martyr for science, and a very vocal minority of fideistic Christians push this agenda as well (most notably the Creationist movement). In our increasingly technological world, it is theological suicide to make someone feel they have to choose between the two. In contrast, Islam claims there are many prophetic statements in the Qu'ran and Hadiths that foretell scientific discoveries.

Lesson: Christians need to be aware that science is only possible because Christianity convinced the known world that order existed in the universe (Pagan gods are both moody and fickle, whereas Yahweh is a lawgiver), which gave the philosophers a chance to have their works accepted by the general population without fearing divine retribution. In other words, far from Christianity promoting myth and superstition among the commoners, it was Catholicism that removed myth and superstition from the commoners so that scientific discovery would be widely accepted. Catholic contributions to science are innumerable, but they include discovering how to refract light, discovering the composition of the biological cell, creating the study of genetics, and formulating the Big Bang Theory. Sir Isaac Newton, whose contribution to science cannot be overstated, was a devout Protestant (ironically, he was also an alchemist). Nearly all European cathedrals were made with observation platforms for early astronomers, and the one in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome is still in use today. I also feel it would be beneficial for the full story of Galileo to be better known.

6) Christians Are Not Moral: In another conversion video, the man told a story of how he started off feeling contempt towards a Muslim his dad was working with. However, he decided Islam was the right religion to be in when he saw how honest the Muslim was in dealing with customers, whereas he and his dad were not being so honest. The Spanish Inquisition, Crusades and pedophile scandals are used by almost any non-Christian who wants to put Christians (especially Catholics) "in their place."

Lesson: To act out one's faith is the obvious solution to this problem. But it is also quite

patronizing for non-Christians to harp on this all the time, as simply being a Muslim or a skeptic does not automatically make one "a good person" either. I think an effort should be made to explain there is a difference between morality (how to decide what is good and bad) and ethics (whether or not one lives in a manner consistent with one's moral code). Just because one *professes* to follow a particular set of morals does not mean one acts ethically. Assassins of all faiths know killing is wrong, yet they do it anyway. Religion should be judged on whether or not it is true, not upon the actions of its most unethical members. To do otherwise will either lead to disillusionment no matter what faith one joins, or one must live in denial as to how one actually lives. This is closely related to the next topic.

7) Christians Are Violent; Islam Is a Religion of Peace: The Crusades are often regarded by Muslims as proof that they are actually a persecuted people who only go to war to defend their homes. In a similar manner, they claim they allowed sanctuary to the Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition, which was a hostile attempt of self-called Catholics to steal Jewish wealth. Sadly, it is not just the Muslims making these accusations. Even National Geographic, which used to be a great source for understanding world culture, now encourages this and similar viewpoints. And of course, Protestants often voice similar crimes made against them from the Reformation era.

Lesson: The study of religious history should be encouraged, especially when the secular world is painting such a distorted view of it. One of the things Muslims conveniently forget is that Islam never claimed to be a "religion of peace" until the 20th Century (1,300 years *after* its founding), basically in response to the frightening number of terrorist attacks going on. Indeed, many of the same Muslims who claim Islam is a religion of peace also like to brag how the world's largest Empire was Muslim, and that it only took 250 years to achieve it. The fact that this expansion was through "holy war" is largely ignored. In contrast, it took 300 years before Christianity was willing to allow its members to even join a police force because of the inherent violence associated with the profession. It took another 700 years before Christianity declared a "holy war," and this holy war was specifically organized to stop Muslim military expansion. We cannot ignore the importance of teaching our young the ugly parts of our past, as the skeptics and Muslims have their own distorted idea of history that they are teaching to our young.

8) Facing Existential Truths: In an interview conducted by Dr. Peterson with two Catholic professors at the Word on Fire Institute (before Dr. Peterson converted to Christianity), he was asked by his guests what he thought Christians should do to promote their faith. Dr. Peterson claimed that all he is doing is providing advice on how to deal with life's problems, and noted that Christian teachings were already telling people to do these things. In another interview with Bishop Robert Barron and an Orthodox priest, [the still skeptical] Dr. Peterson was congratulated on bringing so many people back to Christianity and asked for his "secret." Dr. Peterson replied that all he did was read the Bible and explain the real world lessons it was teaching, and that he thought his guests would be better qualified to do that than himself. His guests were unable to respond.

Lesson: It is not enough to just tell the youth to be "good." They need to be told that Christianity is not just a ticket to Heaven, or a box that needs to be checked. Once in Heaven, we will have no need for Christianity. Christianity is a legitimate way of life for here on Earth because it has answers that work for life's problems, and it needs to be taught that way. Our youth need to be warned that horrible things will overwhelm the best of us, and that we will sometimes be left alone and wondering what we are to do next. Some things will be so bad that we may wonder why we were even born. Christianity can both help minimize the trauma of these events, and provide answers on what to do when they do come along. We can't just tell our youth what to do; we need to show them where to go for answers and how to understand them when we are no longer around to help them.

9) The World Is an Ugly Place: On YouTube, I saw yet another Christian turned Muslim being asked a question about John 10:30 -- "The Father and I are one." His response was "I know for a fact Jesus never said that because Jesus didn't speak English." (paraphrased for this paper) This was not a bad joke on his part; he was serious. He spent the next five minutes explaining how English did not exist in the time of Jesus. And the scary thing is that the audience gave every indication that they were buying into what this charlatan was saying.

Lesson: Our culture has a very much "hand's off" attitude when it comes to teaching. While this paper is not the place to discuss it in detail, the prevalent attitude from p5-20 (pre-Kindergarten to Doctorate Degree) is that the student ought to teach himself. We are only fooling ourselves if we think our youth are teaching themselves anything useful this way. *We* are still teaching them when we tell them (literally or figuratively) to find out for themselves (especially up through high school). What we are teaching them is that we don't have the answers they are looking for. We cannot blame our youth for seeking answers elsewhere when we refuse to give them answers. Those who would lead our youth away from Christianity are all too happy to take advantage of our laziness and give their own answers. We need to take Dr. Peterson's advice seriously, and show that Christianity not only *has* answers to life, but that it has the *best* answers to life.

10) The Role of Mysticism: More than half of Muslims who leave the faith become skeptics, whereas only a small percentage of Christians do so. Furthermore, Protestants are much more likely than Catholics to become Muslim when they leave their church. How is this possible, as all three have the Bible in common? One theory that ought to be considered is the role mysticism has. Mysticism is the belief in the presence of the supernatural in the real world, and I find it interesting that the mystical influence these three religious categories allow in their faith correlates with how likely those who leave will remain spiritual. Islam allows no mysticism at all; it is a heresy deserving of death. Their God is above humans, and He has not interacted with humans since Mohammad (and even then only indirectly). It seems to follow that if one becomes disillusioned with Islam's teachings, then one will either seek a religion with less mysticism, or one with more. And since Islam is the least mystical of all world religions, it makes sense that half of them would leave religion altogether. In keeping with this theory, Protestants, who have some mysticism (receiving the Holy Spirit at baptism, the answering of prayers, and a few churches place emphasis on charisms), but nowhere near what Catholics have, would seek Islam if they want less mysticism or Catholicism if they want more. Finally, if a Catholic becomes disillusioned and wants less mysticism, then there are many choices he has before he would come to Islam.

Lesson: This lesson will favor the Catholics the most, as Protestants lie somewhere halfway between Islam and Catholicism when balancing transcendentalism with mysticism. Still, while Catholics do indeed embrace the mysticism of Christianity, it appears to me that we focus too much on the outsides of mysticism. The Eucharist is not a representation of God; it *is* God on Earth. The prayer of King David to see the face of God and live (Psalm 27: 4, 8*) has been answered. And, as usual for God, not only is the prayer answered, but the answer greatly exceeds expectations: the only way to live is to consume it (John 6:53). Not only do we get to see the face of God, we become the face of God. While this is taught to Catholics, it is not explained. Seventy-five percent of Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence, which is amazingly close to the 80% of young adults who leave the Church. I'll let the gentle reader make up their own mind on whether this is coincidence or not.

Unfortunately, just as with explaining the triune God, a full understanding is not possible without heresy. But that should not keep us from trying. This topic is the subject of a major work of

mine (the aforementioned "How Do We Think of God the Creator -- Transcendental vs. Immanence) and I believe the short answer is to ask how God made the universe. If the answer is *ex nihilo*, then we have a God that is beyond us, and the next question becomes, "How can He help us if He is beyond our reach?" If, however, the answer is that God made us out of Himself (i.e., pantheism), then the question becomes, "How can He help us when He is just as wretched as we are?" (Remember, in this scenario, God is us and we are God.) The Catholic response is that God did indeed create us out of nothing, but by consuming Him in the Eucharist, He has let Himself become a part of us. In doing so, He does not become part of the wretched world, but rather elevates us above the world's wretchedness. Note that this solution not only shows how man can be saved, but the problems associated with the other solutions go away. Catholicism doesn't so much answer the other questions, as make the questions meaningless.

But while the Eucharist does indeed remove those questions, one needs to also know how the Eucharist can be possible. This itself is an absurd question, as we are told that "For God all things are possible," (Matthew 19:26), but I think we can still find a biblical explanation. The same God who spoke reality into existence can will this reality to end (indeed, most Christians agree that existence is only maintained by the divine will keeping it in existence). In the miracle that makes the Eucharist, the bread and wine simply cease to exist by God's will, and are replaced by Jesus in the appearance of bread and wine. The fact that God *can* insert Himself into this reality is testified by the entire New Testament, as Jesus is fully divine as well as fully human. The change of appearance should not be difficult to imagine either, as scripture tells us that Jesus changed His appearance at least three notable times: during the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8 and Luke 9:28-36), as a gardener to Mary Magdalene (John 20:15) and as a stranger on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). One may also wonder if this might not be how Jesus was able to simply pass through so many homicidal crowds during his ministry.

Conclusion: I have heard many excuses for why we are not teaching our faithful. The two most common is that it is the parents' responsibility (as per CCC #2221 and 2223). Fine, then let's teach the parents so they can teach the children. It is a special form of insanity to assume uneducated parents can properly educate their children. The Bible tells us the wisdom of this ("If a blind person leads a blind person, both will fall into a pit." Matthew 15:14). I have also heard that it is because our children are not smart enough to understand these topics. Then why are those who are succeeding in taking our children away spending so much time talking about these topics? Do our children suddenly gain 30 I.Q. points when talking to non-Christians? We need to stop deluding ourselves that we can't make a difference. By our own belief, someday, everyone who has had a chance to influence a child will be asked what he did about the 80% loss of the faithful between ages 18 and 22 (Protestants do slightly better at 67%). Do we really want to tell God, "It wasn't my job."? I don't know exactly how I will respond, but I *do* know that's one answer I will *not* give.

*Some Bibles use verse 1 to identify the author of a given Psalm, so verse numbers may vary accordingly between translations.

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