

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." - Psalm 119:105

June 29, 2008

Are There Many Paths to Heaven?

Troy Nicholson

A survey by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life revealed some sad statistics about the beliefs of Americans ("Believers see many paths to heaven," *The Tennessean*, 6-24-08). 70 percent of those surveyed believe that "many religions can lead to eternal life." How can anyone believe such a thing when considering the contradictions that exist between many religions? That would be like saying many contradicting sets of directions can lead to the same result.

But what if the directions/religions are ignored and people simply do what they want to do? This seems to be more the scenario painted by the survey. While 79 percent believe there are absolute standards of right and wrong (Do 21 percent not believe in any absolute standards???), 52 percent turn to "practical experience and common sense" to determine those standards. How can 27 percent believe there are absolute standards of right and wrong while also believing they can be determined by practical experience and common sense? Who determines what is practical, what is common sense, when different people reason in different ways? The wisest man warned against such a way of determining standards when he wrote, "*There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*" (**Proverbs 14:12; 16:25**).

The survey found that "most U.S. adults range far from knowing or caring about the distinctive teaching of their professed faith." So why even have a professed faith if you care nothing about it? Maybe this finding explains why 45 percent admitted that they "seldom or never read their religion's holy texts." Why bother reading a standard you have no intention of making your own? Paul tells us why to make Scripture our standard: "*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work*" (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). It is what gives us "*the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*" (:15). We had better know and care about it, or we will not be led to salvation.

Speaking of "*salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*," the survey went on to say that "most evangelicals, whose denominations teach that Jesus is the sole route to salvation, instead say people who have 'led good lives' go to heaven." So who determines what is "good"? In other words, one does not even have to believe in Jesus to go to heaven if he/she leads a "good" life. Those who believe this have either never read or refuse to believe what the Bible says about Jesus, even though it says that "*there is salvation in no one else*" (**Acts 4:12**). Jesus Himself said, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me*" (**John 14:6**). Was/is He wrong?

The majority surveyed said their religion should "adjust to new circumstances" or "adopt modern beliefs and practices." This may be part of the reason the director of the survey said that it portrays a nation of "free-flowing spirituality." The Bible warns against having a spirituality that goes with the flow, that can and will be "*tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming*" (**Ephesians 4:14**).

The survey also revealed that 74 percent believe there is a heaven - a place of eternal reward - and 59 percent believe there is a hell - a place of eternal punishment. Someday these numbers will rise to 100 percent, but it will be too late to do anything about it then.

What Kind of Values Do You Have?

Troy Nicholson

The survey mentioned above also revealed that only 42 percent of those surveyed “often feel that my values are threatened by Hollywood and the entertainment industry.” What about the other 58 percent - do their values agree with those of Hollywood and the entertainment industry? When we consider all the humanism and immorality portrayed by today’s entertainment, we must pray this is not the case. When we consider the way many around us live, it seems obvious it is the case.

We all ought to feel threatened by Hollywood’s values. Peter described “*righteous Lot* (as being) *oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds)*” (**2 Peter 2:7-8**). In consideration of the evil around us today, we should feel the same way - that is if we are righteous and have the kind of values we should. What kind of values do you have?

“I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the peoples, and I will sing praises to You among the nations. For Your lovingkindness is great above the heavens, and Your truth reaches to the skies.” – Psalm 108:3-4

News and Notes

The **meal list for the upcoming meeting** is posted in the back. Both lunch and supper times need to be taken, so please do your part and sign up soon. Both J.R. and his wife Sue will be here and need meals.

There will be a **singing tonight at John Moore's home** following the evening worship. See him or another member if you need directions.

Mary Burnett remains at home on Hospice care.

Metty Fain remains in Highland Manor Nursing Home; Room B2; 215 Highland Circle Dr; Portland, TN 37148.

Estelle Hayes is still having problems with her left leg after falling a few weeks ago.

Corrine Mayo, who once worshipped here, died last week.

Joyce Werner had an increase in her medicine that caused a bad reaction. She has an appointment about her hypertension Tuesday.

Ame White is suffering with high blood pressure.

Absent: Jerry Jenkins (work), Johnson and Smith families (Gulf Shores), Pat Richards (FL).

New Reports from men we support: Allen Malone (Vietnam).

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).