

SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH BUDDHISTS PART 3

Main Idea: Jesus Christ offers
something far greater than Nirvana;
He offers everlasting life

John 8:12

Apologetics 06.12.13

7) HOW TO WITNESS TO A BUDDHIST

1) Acknowledge shared convictions:

- This life is not all there is.
- Whatever can be lost is not of ultimate value (American materialism).
- Not everything that exists is physical
- Possession of great wealth and power is ultimately unfulfilling (Luke 9:23-26).
- Always placing oneself above others is wrong (Phil. 1:6 - Jesus' example is one of total sacrifice for others).
- It is bad to be a slave to one's passions.
- Meditation is good...so long as it is focused on God & His Word (Psalm 1)

Point: Both agree that things are not right but disagree on the cure and the "why."

Big question...

Q: Why do we serve and love God?

“The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever” - *Westminster Confession*

A: God is the source of all joy and we have been “hardwired” to desire Him and gain pleasure in serving Him. Therefore, we should never feel guilty about “enjoying” serving God. Just because something is fun doesn’t make it wrong.

(See, *Desiring God* by John Piper).

2) Ask how they know Buddhism to be true.

“The greatest opportunity for Christians to establish a communications bridge with Buddhists may lie in the ambivalence of Buddhism itself.” - Corduan, 354.

3) Point to the massive historical evidence for Christianity.

- **Buddhist tradition differs fundamentally from that of Christianity. In Christianity we can distinguish an ‘initial tradition’, embodied in the ‘New Testament’, from a ‘continuing tradition’, which consists of the Fathers and doctors of the Church, the decisions of councils and synods, and the pronouncements of various hierarchies. Buddhists possess nothing that corresponds to the ‘New Testament’. The ‘continuing tradition’ is all that is clearly attested. The bulk of the selections in this book was written down between A.D. 100 and 400, in other words about 600 to 900 years after the Buddha’s demise. For the first five hundred years the Scriptures were orally transmitted . . . different schools wrote down different things. Much of it was obviously composed centuries ago, and some of it must represent the direct and actual sayings of the Buddha himself. At present we have, however, no objective criterion which would allow us to isolate the original gospel. All attempts to find it are based on mere surmise, and the discussion of the subject generally leads to nothing but ill will and fruitless disputes.”**

• Edward Conze, trans. *Buddhist Scriptures* (New York: Penguin Books, 1959), 11-12.

7) HOW TO WITNESS TO A BUDDHIST

4) Expose the falsehood of atheism: “The Buddhist is an atheist and Buddhism in both its Theravada and Mahayana forms is atheism” - K.N. Jayatilleke

Buddhist argument against God from evil:

- (1) If God exists, then there is no evil
- (2) There is evil.
- (3) Therefore, God does not exist

Q: What is the problem with this argument?

A: It assumes God & evil are incompatible as well as God not having a reason for permitting evil.

- “The entire Buddhist worldview is based on a philosophical standpoint in which the central thought is the principle of interdependence, how all things and events come into being purely as a result of interactions between causes and conditions. Within that philosophical worldview it is almost impossible to have any room for an atemporal, eternal, absolute truth. Nor is it possible to accommodate the concept of a divine Creation” - *The Dalai Lama*

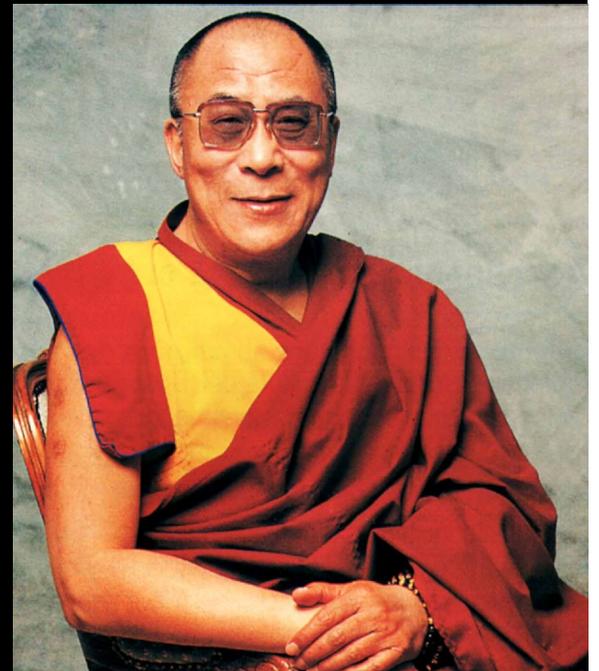
Point: You cannot be
a “Christian” Buddhist.

Christianity: Creator

Buddhism: No Creator

Q: What problems can you identify with
denying the existence of a Creator?

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *The Good Heart: A Buddhist Perspective on the Teachings of Jesus*, edited by Robert Kiely and translated by Geshe Thupten Jinpa (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1996), 82.



7) HOW TO WITNESS TO A BUDDHIST

5) Make the correct distinctions:

Buddhism focuses on ignorance & Enlightenment

Christianity: Sin & redemption

Buddhism: Bodhisattvas (Buddhist deities)

Christianity: personal God who revealed Himself in Christ

Buddhism: Uncertainty of Enlightenment

Christianity: Certainty heaven through faith in Christ (1 John 5:13 *'I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.'*)

Buddhism: Resignation to the world's problems (look within)

Christianity: Sacrifice one's life in sharing the solution to the world's problems

- Luke 9:23-26 *And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. 25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? 26 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*

Questions?