

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

August 21, 2016

"God Has No Religion"

by Frank Himmel

I was reading an online discussion a few days ago. The subject was laws governing churches' endorsement of political candidates, restrictions that are based on churches' tax-exempt status. Are such limitations fair? Should churches have tax-exempt status? Is the law being enforced consistently? Legalities aside, is it proper for churches to endorse candidates? These questions generated a lively debate. One man, doubtless trying to sound profound, boldly began his comments with our title statement: "God has no religion." Hmm.

What Does That Mean?

My immediate reaction was, what does that mean? It struck me as an example of the increasingly common practice of a person making some high-sounding assertion that is, upon closer inspection, nonsense. Let's see.

Dictionary.com says *religion* is "a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe,

especially when considered as the creation of a super-human agency or agencies, usually involving devotional



and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs."

Does God have beliefs about the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe? Yes, indeed. It was created by and for Christ (Colossians 1:15-17). "He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth... that they would seek God" (Acts 17:26-27).

Does God have beliefs involving devotional and ritual observances? He certainly does. Those who worship in ignorance must repent (Acts 17:23,30). Acceptable worship is in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). The New Testament reveals the specifics.

Does God have beliefs about a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs? Absolutely! His Word identifies many kinds of wrong conduct and warns, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6). Conversely, it commends things like love, peace, gentleness, and self-control, noting that "against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

By every aspect of the definition of the term, God has a religion!

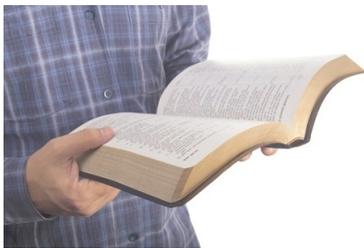
Dictionary.com adds other definitions of *religion*, such as a specific set of beliefs that people adhere to or the body of those who adhere to them. That might be Christianity vs. Islam, Catholic vs. Protestant, or Presbyterian vs. Methodist. Perhaps this was the sense in which the commenter affirmed that "God has no ▶

religion,” implying that one is as good as another, that God has no preference. That brings me to the more fundamental question...

How Does He Know?

How does the commenter know that “God has no religion”? How do any of us know what God thinks? Surely it is arrogant to presume that because we view a thing a certain way, God must view it that way, too. And the fact that men have such divergent personal views makes it self-evident that we have no intuitive sense of what God thinks.

“For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11). Just as you do not know my thoughts unless I reveal them to you, we do not know God’s thoughts unless He reveals them to us. God has spoken. He has spoken to us in His Son, Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-2), and through Jesus’ apostles



and the prophets (Ephesians 3:3-5). The Bible is their work. It is God’s Word to us (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

If we want to know God’s thoughts we

must read His Word. When we do, we will discover that God has very specific thoughts about religion, in whatever sense of the term – thoughts that are far different than man’s (Isaiah 55:8-9). ■

Inseparable Things

by Frank Himmel

The book of James is one of my favorites. It emphasizes application of Bible principles and is therefore among the most practical books in all Scripture. Notice these things that James couples together. It is foolish to try to disconnect them.

- Hardships and beneficial experiences (1:2-4)
- Faith and prayer (1:5-8)
- One’s sin and his willingness to sin (1:13-15)
- Hearing and doing God’s will (1:22-25)
- Religion and daily living (1:26-27)
- “Big sins” and “little sins” (2:9-11)
- Faith and works (2:14-26)
- Wisdom and good behavior (3:13-18)
- Quarreling and selfishness (4:1-3)
- Friendship with the world and enmity toward God (4:4)
- Present humility and future exaltation (4:6-10)
- Your plans and God’s will (4:13-16)
- Patience and strength (5:8)
- Prayer and righteousness (5:16)
- Apostasy and death (5:19-20)

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	David Gray	John Baucom	Greg Winget
SONG LEADER	Carlos Garcia	John Baucom	Brian Wilson
OPENING PRAYER	Mark Clifton	Chris Brooks	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Brian Wilson	Brian Wilson	
CUP	Albert Lee Harrison	Albert Lee Harrison	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Ron Cunningham		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Gary Hagler
CLOSING PRAYER	Don Rapp	Lee Davenport	Albert Harrison Sr