



First Thoughts



Welcome to our first edition of *CrossingCurrents*, the Crosswinds Foundation E-Letter, in this new format. We hope you will find it both useful and informative as you interact with an ever changing culture.

Each issue will include articles and information about current trends and movements in the culture that may be impacting your corner of the world. These are meant to be informative, but also to provide helpful tips and resources for you to use in engaging the culture where you are.

This new format will allow us to provide our subscribers with more information, such as the CultureTracks segment, which will be a regular feature. CultureTracks will give you just the facts about the cultural footprints that Americans are leaving behind.

Eventually, these E-letters will be linked to our website, so past issues can be viewed and utilized in your research. We will also include a segment with letters from our readers, so be sure and let us know your opinion - whether you agree, or not.

We look forward to your input and hope you enjoy your subscription.

With Best Regards,

Bob Waldrep
President, Crosswinds Foundation

PS. Feel free to forward and share this with your friends.



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"Coming Soon to a Bus Near You?" by Bob Waldrep



Signs like this are appearing on buses

Atheism, the belief there is no God, is still a view held by a few Americans. In

fact, according to a June 2008 survey by the Pew Forum, only 1.6 percent of Americans identify themselves as Atheists. However, though small in number, this is becoming an increasingly vocal group with an apparent interest in growing their number.

In October, British atheists announced a plan to

place advertising posters on London buses proclaiming, "There is probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life." A website was set up to take donations and within a short time over \$80,000 had been donated to the effort.

Richard Dawkins, an Oxford Professor and author of the bestselling *The*

YOUR DONATIONS HELP

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God Delusion, pledged to match all donations up to 5,500 pounds (approximately \$9,300). Dawkins, who is a member of the British Humanist Association (atheists also refer to themselves as humanists), said, "This campaign to put alternative slogans on London buses will make people think – and thinking is anathema to religion."

Hanne Stinson, chief executive of the British Humanist, describes the message as a positive one that is not intended to bring in new recruits but to communicate it is okay not to believe in God and to dispel the idea presented by the religious that atheists will burn in the "lake of fire". According to Stinson, "It's about reassurance."

Despite the protestations otherwise, it sounds more like it is about "recruitment". Could you imagine, for example, a Christian organization placing a billboard proclaiming, "God is real – Trust Jesus" and saying it is only for the purpose of reassuring believers? Of course not, any such claim would be viewed as ludicrous by humanists.

Whatever one believes about their real motivation, they plan to start the campaign in January, 2009. Not to be undone, their American brothers have also jumped on the bandwagon, or maybe we should say the band "bus".

On November 11, members of the American Humanist Association held a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. and announced they will be placing advertisements on Metrobuses in the D.C. area during the holiday season. Their message: "Why believe in God? Just be good for goodness' sake." (Image of interior bus signage on page 1.)

As with their British counterparts,

they claim the campaign is not intended to proselytize. Rather, the Communication Director for the American Humanist Association, Fred Edwards said, "Our message is that all of us can have moral values as a natural result of who we are as a species and who we have become as a civilization"; adding, "Each of us knows what it means, generally, to be ethical."

GOD PROBABLY DOESN'T EXIST SO ENJOY LIFE

(Message placed on Buses in England by the British Humanist Association)

Specifically, there is a problem when he throws in the word, "generally" to his statement of man's ethics. Do you want to do business with a person who is ethical, or one who has some "general" sense of ethics? Also, what is the standard this "general" sense of ethics is based upon?

Typical of the humanist view, Edwards states it comes from "who we are as a species and who we have become as a civilization". This, at minimum, implies that mankind has some innate sense of ethics, or morality that has grown and developed as civilizations have developed.

Does that mean less advanced civilizations have not developed the same degree of ethics? Do we have better ethics than less developed countries? Were older civilizations, such as the Roman civilization, less ethical since they were less advanced?

If the answer to these questions is yes, it means the standard of ethics is

evolving and varies depending upon where and when one lives? Without an established standard for ethics, each person and each civilization is left to establish their own standard. Therefore, one could not question the ethics of any society, even though it disagrees with one's own.

Thus, based upon such an assumption, how could anyone dare say someone else is unethical when they are only being true to their own established ethics? Were an atheist to be cheated by someone, how could he legitimately complain when that person was only being true to their own sense of morality? For an atheist to question another's ethics would be judgmental. Interestingly, an allegation they love to apply to Christians who promote a biblical standard of morality.

Atheists maintain morality is not established by a deity or found through religious belief but comes from within and its standard is established and changed by evolving civilizations. In stark contrast, the Bible teaches the standard for morality is not self-determined but is established by God and is constant no matter where and when one lives.

Furthermore, the Bible teaches that man is not inherently moral, but derives his morality from being made in the image of God and that morality has been corrupted by sin and can only be restored through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Apart from such a relationship one cannot be "good for goodness sake" no matter how hard he tries. As the Apostle Paul states, 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' (Rom 3:23)



The British campaign declares God probably doesn't exist, so enjoy life. The American campaign more assertively asks, why believe in God, just be good? A better question for each group to ask is, "What if God does exist?"

God does exist and He doesn't call us to be good for goodness sake, but to come to His son, who is "good". Our greatest need is not to be good, or to have fun, it is to know our Creator.

Jesus declared, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through

me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well." (John 14:6-7) Now that is good news – put it on the bus!



ENGAGING THE CULTURE

Visit Our Website!
crosswindsfoundation.org

For additional information on a topic in this newsletter, or another area of interest, contact us for a free information packet.

Culture Tracks

Statistical data reflecting some of the findings regarding the cultural footprints of Americans.



American's Views of Evangelical Voters

(Polling done in relation to the 2008 campaign)

- 59% said evangelicals will have a significant influence/effect on the election outcome
- 59% said evangelicals will cause the political conversation to be more conservative
- 59% said evangelicals will spend too much time complaining and not enough time solving problems
- 56% said they believe evangelicals will be misunderstood and unfairly described by the news media
- 52% felt evangelical voters would focus primarily on homosexuality and abortion
- 47% said evangelicals will minimize social justice issues
- 47% believed that evangelicals will vote overwhelmingly Republican
- 44% believed evangelicals will not approach the election with an open mind.

From Barna Research, Sept 2008 Report

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www.crosswindsfoundation.org

In the Mailbag
What Our Readers Are Saying



Thanks for the articles you've written for the Alabama Baptist. You are doing good work to build up the faith of believers. I especially appreciate you recommending Reasons to Believe. I've been the president of the Huntsville chapter of Reasons to Believe from 1997 - 2007, so I applaud you for that recommendation.

I had tears of joy in my eyes as I read your e-mail. Thank you so much for sharing it with us. It makes me feel so good to know we are using the money God has so richly blessed us with to help ministries like yours that grow the kingdom of God.

Thanks for article on Christian Science in The Alabama Baptist last week. Are you doing all of these? I have to admit I did not keep 1,2,or 3 but want to hold on to these. I have enjoyed your "Spiritual Buffet" articles and have found them to be very informative. I need a copy of the article on [Nation of] Islam. I have tried to retrieve from the Alabama Baptist on line site but was unable to get the older articles. If you can send per e-mail would be great if not please let me know how I may obtain this article.

(Editor's Note: See QuickLinks to view some of these articles. If you cannot find one you are looking for email us and we will see if we can't help you with a link, or email a copy to you.)

Missing Articles From Past Issues?

Just let us know and we will be glad to send copies of those you would like to have. Here are some of the topics we have covered:

- [Becoming a Post-Racial America](#)
- [Oprah and Spirituality](#)
- [President Bush, Faith, and Culture](#)
- [Atheists and Christmas](#)
- [Coming Soon to a Bus Near You?](#)