

DO WE WORSHIP THE SAME GOD?: BY George Dardess

During our first (of 3) discussions on the book, the group covered various aspects of the first four chapters.

Our discussions were necessarily brief, compared to the subject, but will hopefully spark more conversations and inquiry at other times and places. It was noted in one group that even reading the book during lunch and breaks at work started conversations with co-workers, some of whom were Muslim.

We were encouraged by Sr. Kathy Warren, in the previous presentation, to make everyday contacts with people of other faiths, in particular Muslim people, by starting simple conversations at the grocery, or day care or exercise place. We might eventually invite others to our places of worship or events. We can certainly work together on community events and initiatives toward our common good as a community.

There are a few key points that the author brought out in the introduction that are of interest: --- No simple, single answer has emerged (about our worship of the same God)...But, the “interplay of responses (that is) thoughtful and generous” and “...the discussion itself are more important than the answers...”

--- It is important to “know clearly and accurately what the Qur’an/Bible say about God and God’s deeds among us as an indispensable first step in...engaging in discussion about God with Muslims/Christians...”

--- Why? If it is the same God of Peace, then we have the “strongest possible warrant for working together against terrorism, and for peace and justice.”

-- An important goal – “having established human relationships between our two communities of faith.” Here in Rochester, MN.

Some of the points that came with the conversations included:

- Many of our feelings about Muslims are based in fear which is the opposite of Love.
- Extremists are separate from Muslims;
- Infidel relates to giving in to –isms, particularly, materialism/consumerism, which move away from truth, and show a basic lack of respect for other people;
- Each person must be looked at as a human being first. We all have something in common: we love, we have lost a love, we fear something.
- We admire the faithfulness of the Muslims in prayer and fasting;
- We may have the same God who reveals in different ways to different cultures;

In wrapping up there were also several points to share;

- God’s relation to Adam was about call and response;
- Semantics, culture, tradition keep us from knowing God completely;
- Maybe the Sabbath that we relate to “resting on the 7th day” is like God taking a deep breath...;
- Inequality of men and women is more likely because of humanism and culture than true religion.

Join us for our next discussion of “Do We Worship the Same God?” on Monday, March 28, 6:30-8pm in the St. John Fellowship Area. We will look at chapters 5 – 8. Please read over the questions at the end of each chapter and choose one from each chapter you might like to discuss.