Worried about cross-contamination?

When I was growing up (back when the Dead Sea was just starting to get sick), it seemed like everyone could eat everything. That's probably not true, but closer to the truth than today.

I'm more interested in free gluten than I am in gluten-free, but I get it. It's not my focus for this article, but I believe the way we process much of our food today has much more to do with making it as cheap as possible (and, in turn, maximizing profits for the manufacturer) than making it as healthy as possible. Our bodies don't do well trying to digest things they were never meant to. When you are young, you are going to live forever, and you can eat whatever you want, whenever you want. Then you get a bit older and start to realize that if you eat whatever you want, whenever you want, not only are you certain you are going to die, but it might even happen that day! 😊

We have to work very hard to make sure we are not endangering the health of others. Even restaurants go to great lengths to ensure every patron's health. Airlines are also very careful not to allow passengers to eat certain foods if there are others on the flight who are extremely sensitive to specific allergens.

Sometimes, I think we've gone a bit too far. For example, I bought a can of peanuts, and guess what the warning label stated? You probably already figured it out. "WARNING" May contain peanuts!" To be honest, I was kind of hoping it did contain peanuts because that's why I spent my hard-earned money on that particular product!

There's another kind of cross-contamination. One that affected me greatly as a child. Picture this. I'm sitting at the dinner table with a plate of food directly in front of me. It includes chicken, mashed potatoes, carrots, and green beans. Now, if you can possibly do it, imagine the carrots actually touching the mashed potatoes! I know, horrifying! Just imagine how I felt, having to eat it! Yes, I was one of those strange children who was not only a very picky eater, but I also didn't want anything touching anything else. I've matured a bit since then, and my wife has helped me significantly widen my pallet as well.

This all leads me to the third type of cross-contamination, which is much more significant. It does not deal with the cross-contamination of food, but contamination of the cross! You may have a good idea of where I am headed with this.

We (in the US) are living in a Christian nation, right? Well, not so much anymore, and it was never purely Christian, but there certainly was a much greater influence of Christian principles among the citizenry and institutions than today. However, even those who would call themselves "Christian" did not truly hold biblically based views. They held to portions of Christianity but were often missing the

most key element, faith alone in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the receiving of eternal life.

It's human nature to use our own reasoning to arrive at a belief system that we not only believe is true but that we are also (and most importantly) comfortable with. Think about it. Who sets a standard for themselves that is so uncomfortable and virtually impossible to achieve? Basically, no one. We tend to create or accept a set of standards with which we can fairly confidently conclude that "we're actually doing fairly well." After all, I'm not really a bad person. I mean, even though I'm not perfect, no one is, and I do a lot of good things, and God knows my heart. Who can argue with that? Um, how about God? And, yes, God does know your heart, but that's not necessarily a good thing if you're trying to defend your character (Jeremiah 17:9).

You may recall my Question of the Month (June 2023) entitled, *Are you barking mad?* It included a very powerful quote from Richard Dawkins, arguably the world's leading atheist. He was addressing Christians who attempt to blend Darwinian evolution with the Bible. He was not impressed and pointed out some interesting issues. Here is a portion of that quote:

> *"It seems to me an odd proposition that we should adhere to some parts of the Bible story but not to others. After all, when it comes to important moral questions, by what standards do we cherry-pick the Bible? Why bother with the Bible at all if we have the ability to pick and choose from it, what is right and what is wrong?"*

It is without question that many groups have "contaminated" the cross, and we call some of them "cults." One example would be Mormonism, or the Church of Latter-Day Saints (LDS). They believe God used to be more like a human being, much like us, but earned his way to deity and then proceeded to father spirit babies with his wife (or multiple wives). Two of those spirit babies were Jesus and, yes, Satan! Apparently, Jesus made good choices, but Satan didn't. Jesus earned the right to attain deity and to come to Earth as God's representative. Not only was God originally more like us, but we can become like God is today! We can eventually be gods ourselves! Sound like a bit of contamination going on here? Just a tad.

As aberrant as Mormonism is when it comes to the truth of the Gospel message, I don't think it's as potentially dangerous as another level of contamination. What type is that? The type that claims to accept the biblical message, but twists it just enough (subtly), to disqualify it from being true saving faith. (When I say more dangerous, I mean in the sense that more people are apt to buy into it. All aberrant views are equally as bad regarding the ultimate consequence of adhering to them.)

I've often thought of it this way. If you were the Prince of Darkness, which do you think would be the more effective strategy?

A. *Try to get as many people as you can to dress in occultic garb, go into the woods, and directly worship you (Satan) by chanting while sacrificing animals on some type of altar.*
B. *Take the truth of Christianity and taint it just enough so that it no longer represents saving faith.*

I think the answer is obvious. Very few people are drawn to things that are overtly satanic. However, many people are very comfortable claiming to be a Christian while morphing their beliefs, attempting to feel better about themselves and their daily choices and appealing to the vast majority of those around them by not offending them in any way. In other words, being very accepting of other people's views. After all, that is the truly caring response, right? I mean, we shouldn't be pushing our views on others. Everyone has to find their own way.

I think that's where we are as a society. Everyone has their own belief, and we are to respect and accept that. No one should be pushing their views on anyone else. Do you notice a slight conundrum here? The belief that we shouldn't push our views on anyone else is being pushed on Christians (and others, as well). Why is it alright to push that view and not other views, Christianity in particular? And is simply stating your views to someone who may have a different opinion "pushing your views on them?"

I feel like I'm just getting warmed up, but I'm already at the end of the article, so I will quit abruptly and uncomfortably! 😊

Let's make sure we truly understand the biblical Gospel message and be careful not to contaminate it ourselves or pretend that those who hold different views are truly saved. Eternity is at stake!

If you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don't hesitate to contact us!