

Dear friends,

Last week I wrote the following letter to a friend who commented on a sentiment expressed by another friend that the only problem with Truths of God is the "God" part. She readily agreed with that, and the following exchange followed. I would add briefly that it may be a mistake for me to make so much commentary on policy and politics when the purpose of it is to encourage people to read and understand Truths of God. While I stand behind every letter in terms of faith and purpose in the grander sense, some of my letters may not cover a full comprehension of things on particular issues. A person could have a better understanding of specifics and disagree with ancillary letters, and that's OK and can even be a good thing, but if that person disputes the notion of loving your neighbor as yourself, or clearly establishes an argument that simply ignores this sentiment, or they even intend evil for others, then they are missing the main point. As far as the following letter is concerned, the few I've shared it with believe that it should have been the introduction to Truths of God, so hopefully that encourages a few who might otherwise choose not to read it to do so. Anyway, the whole exchange of letters is less than five pages, so feel free to give it a read.

Bob.

From S-

*Excellent comment by Mr. NJ . I would have to agree as there are so many preconceived feelings and ideas that are deeply rooted in a person when they see the word God that a description of the meaning would be difficult since there are no clean slates before they begin reading.*

*Enjoy the day!*

Dear S,

I know this is not what you meant, but your comment only reinforces what I was getting at initially. There is no hope without God. As I make clear in Truths of God, a person doesn't need to believe in God to serve God or live a good life. A person like you, for instance, you wrote "as I will mine doing good positive things for everyone." That's lovely, and you will do that. And you can call it your journey, or whatever metaphors you choose, and you will be a good and loyal child. But other people will not. Monks can cloister themselves in abbeys and rightly worship to save their own souls and help those around them, but they will not prevent the world from burning.

We will keep tearing up the world until there is not nearly enough food, and then we will murder one another en masse. It could easily be prevented now, be prepared for now. It can be prepared for with weapons to make those murders easy to commit, or it can be prepared for with shared sacrifices, common goals for all. It can be prepared for by conditioning people to live as slaves, with a weak many passively submitting to a few strong, the weak higher on the food chain than livestock but lower than free, free-thinking individuals, or it can be with brotherhood and understanding, acknowledging that all are God's children, to be treated with the love with which we ourselves would want to be treated were our circumstances reversed.

We could prevent it because God has given us free will to choose, as individuals and as a collective, but we won't, because too many people of good conscience want nothing to do with God while those who do evil and serve darkness use the power of his name. And you can sit back and watch everyone on their journey, the journey that ends at a precipice with billions of souls walking behind them and blindly surging forward as the journeys of those ahead come to a quick end, and you can blindly have faith that everything will work out somehow, every bit as blind as those who claim their faith will save them from the evil choices they knowingly continue to make. This isn't prophecy but simply looking at what is and seeing how it concludes if we don't choose a different path.

And I have been shown a light to a different path, a path to salvation for us, for a prolonged future where we can make the world just a little more like heaven, and you would think that would bring me joy, but it doesn't. Knowing that the choice is there and that we will fail to take it is a kind of recurring nightmare, like knowing that someone you love has cancer that could be cured, albeit painfully, and the person will be made whole, but the person with cancer refuses to see it. And my attempts to warn them make them love me less, and yet I love them still so I have no choice but to keep trying, knowing that the cure will become more painful, and the prognosis more dim, as time goes by and knowing that the small part of them that acknowledges the possibility of the cancer simply intends to disfigure themselves by cutting off the infected limb, or limbs, if it gets too bad. And I'm not a doctor and don't quite have the words to diagnose the symptoms other than to simply point out the obvious (just look at that big painful lump that you can see just as well as I can, please!). So I'm stuck between that place where I say nothing, make money and live the good life God has blessed me with knowing what will be in a future that I don't think I will have to live to see anyway, or I can keep trying to be more convincing knowing that people will want to hear from me less and talk to me less.

I am happy for you. I am happy that you will find salvation doing good, positive things for everyone. But you very well may live long enough to see where this is going, and if you could give up all of that time for a chance to come back to this day to try to fix the future for others would you do it? That's what Truths of God is about.

Bob,

*You prove your own point. Saying one if believes in God doesn't make the man necessarily good and saying a non believer may be more in touch with God. My belief system is much more deep and complex than can be told over email but one thing I can say is that all world religions not just the big three monotheistic ones have some glimpse of the truth; we all feed into the same fountain of truth and their must be room for all beliefs. Once you gather all truths of all people you may be the closest to the truth. Now on a more urgent side is we need to be Stewards for the Earth it would be a better use of time to convince some people to save the earth than to believe in God. Through saving the Earth people will see their God. God to me can't be linear, things aren't linear. We live in a world of circular energy. Ones actions and energy must be mindful and caring and the world will be a mindful and caring place. There are pockets of this and it is growing. God to me if I can call it that isn't a God or a Goddess it is a neutral glue that interconnects everything! I have always had an affinity to trees as a young child I would name everyone of them and it was a spiritual connection. That's where I find God but I also see God in people. Goddess /God to me is this beautiful pure energy of love and compassion that we are all capable of. Yes, we are capable of anger but love conquers all. If we care and nurture kids will grow without anger in their hearts. It is the teaching and balance. The closer we are to each other and to nature the more close we are to God. And if we take out the word God I am not afraid that all will go to this awful end. The destruction we see now is due to us and I am sure many of those people responsible say they believe in God. Like you said though it is funny because if they really did their actions would be to love the land and not decimate it. We must act to defend what you may call God's land I may call our home.*

*Our UU fellowship is a wonderful example we do a great deal of social justice, environmental, and peace works. When one witnesses all the good a community can do one knows it is possible. Also, if you want the food chain equalized used your power and passion and to work in political office to work on making this country more about love and less about greed. Also, I am fixing the future for others by working on the issues on hand I won't have to go back because I already cared deeply enough to help. Last point, if you convinced people that a God existed what would be the end goal? Do you think they would start caring more about one another? If that is the goal there is more than one way to that goal. God is just one of the ways but it doesn't speak to everyone. I have too many relations around the world who have complex belief systems and to say one is right over the other is dangerous.*

*I see that you care so very much it is painful for you to feel you have the elixir that will heal a social ills which is very powerful and I could see how it can be so frustrating but try to step back and meditate on why you feel that way. What you are actually asking people to do believe how you do.*

*For now,*

S

Dear S,

I will keep this brief. Every question you ask is answered in Truths of God, either specifically or by logical inference. My apology for the way this will probably sound, but I understand your perspective and you don't understand mine. You seem to have understood some of Truths of God but not the message, not the main point. If you had, you'd not have posed some of these questions and would have worded others differently. While I would choose that you better understand, Truths of God would tell you that doesn't make you any less good or caring. I should simply be, and am, happy that you're willing to read these letters and should be satisfied that they might make an impression on you.

As you say, you work on the issues at hand in an effort to make the world more about love and less about greed because you care deeply enough to help. No one should dissuade you from doing that, and if you feel that things I've written do dissuade you, then that would be the best reason for not reading these letters. You did write a couple of things worth noting that prompt observation:

*"Yes, we are capable of anger but love conquers all"*

You mention being stewards of the Earth. While I certainly don't worship nature, not getting into the details I think it could be argued that I revere nature as much as you do. Not using the "stewards of the Earth language" you have used, Truths of God makes it clear multiple times that we must protect the Earth God has given us. But assume, by some chance (albeit your view seems to make that exceedingly unlikely) that we don't find a way to work together to fix the damage we've caused and the physical environment of the planet becomes inhospitable, and millions more, perhaps billions more, suffer and die when it could have been prevented, how would that case be an example of love conquering all? When Christian Europe invaded the Near East so many hundreds of years ago, and many, many tens of thousands (at least) died needlessly and horribly, leaving that land and people in much worse shape than they were in (the effects of it are still being felt) while ultimately conquering nothing, is it your argument that love ultimately conquered all in some way? When many millions of Jews were put to death over perhaps 2000 years of history for their beliefs, was that love conquering all? When the early Hebrews eradicated some of the native populations of the Canaan in the name of God, was love conquering all then? How about the millions murdered in Russia and much of Asia during the Communist purges, in so many different countries? Did love conquer all then? Love can, even should, conquer all. We share that belief, but the difference between us is that you seem to believe that if a good person simply lives a good life and leads by example, it will happen. It doesn't happen that way. If you want love to conquer all, you have to teach it to people in such a way that they believe it must be so, and for many, more than enough to tip the balance you speak of, they have to understand, as Jesus attempted to teach us, that loving our neighbor as ourselves is a must, a commandment of God. If you want love to conquer all, you will have to communicate a better understanding than we have had thus far.

*"all world religions not just the big three monotheistic ones have some glimpse of the truth; we all feed into the same fountain of truth and their must be room for all beliefs"*

Partly for the sake of argument, but also to clarify the way you think about these things and the way you talk about them, the Aztecs sacrificed the lives of no less than thousands in rituals to appease God according to the understanding they were taught. Christians murdered who knows how many, for centuries, for not converting to Christianity, because their belief was that a person who converted to Christianity was saved, and the ones they murdered were damned to an eternity of hell anyway. Muslim terrorists murder people indiscriminately, mostly fellow Muslims, on a somewhat regular basis, and some Muslim clerics prod them on as though it is a command of God. (My reading of the Qur'an doesn't suggest that Islam justifies this any more than the Bible justifies murder, but this is the argument made by some Muslims. Try publishing a picture of Muhammad.) Hitler taught, to an eager following, that it was necessary for a superior race to kill or enslave entire other races of people in order for the superior race to thrive. These are strongly held beliefs, so is your argument that these are beliefs that we must make room for? Whatever someone believes should be tolerated and the rights of people to hold them should be respected? I know this is not what you believe, but it is what you're saying, what you're espousing. And as above, Truths of God teaches that people must be free to believe in God, or not believe, as they choose, so long as they aren't hurting others, but your response, at least a plain reading of it, strongly suggests you either missed it or didn't understand it as it fits into the whole.

Anyway, doing good to others, loving your neighbor as yourself as you seem to be doing, is always a good thing, and there's nothing wrong with leading by example. Please keep doing that. But remember that good people, some God acknowledging and some not, have done this during all of the examples made in my two paragraphs above, and yet love did not conquer all. Your sentiment seems reflective of the notion that we are living in an enlightened time where good sense, fairness, decency and reason will prevail. All the more reason it will be such a tragedy if we do fail, and keep in mind that people at many key points in history considered themselves more enlightened, having a better understanding, than people they knew to have come before them. Our failure now will be absolutely catastrophic on a worldwide scale.

But I was aware before I wrote Truths of God that while we have the power to prevent many of the worst horrors that our future holds and to move into a real golden age of our existence, where we make this world more like heaven for all, it comes down to the choices we make. When it comes to influencing the beliefs of others, tipping the balance for good, in a permanent and lasting way, was unlikely from the start. Many have argued that free will is ultimately an illusion, and they believe themselves to be men of good will, but they ultimately deceive us and keep us from a better destiny. Convincing someone that they have no free will serves no better purpose than to justify the easy path, the self-serving, self-promoting path. This is all in Truths of God. People will read it or they won't, they will share it or they won't. The answer hasn't kept me from enjoying a good life, though it is a regular source of frustration. My dilemma is captured fairly well in the serenity prayer: Lord grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the strength to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. (There's so much wisdom in this I have to wonder how an atheist interprets it.) I try to convince myself that I've done what could best be done at whatever point given the understanding given to me. But the serenity part doesn't come easy for me, so here I am writing this letter. And will be next month and at whatever other point in the future until it becomes certain that there is nothing else that can be done in my life.

So it is. Thank you, as always, felt deeply, for reading and writing back.  
Bob.

*Bob,*

*It has been about a year I think since I read it and I remember understanding it through my lens as we all have ours. So one day until I can go point for point, page by page with questions to understand exactly where you are coming from however I know it is the God part I have trouble with for all the reasons you listed below people have used God to wage horrible atrocities and I believe Jesus was an figure of major importance and however I don't believe in the trinity. I also have issues with the meeting they had in 325 ad. in Nicea. I also remember reading in your TOG (does it bother you if I use the abbreviation ? You always write it out .... I am going to get it and quote you..... okay I am back and holy cow I have a lot of comments here and there. ) Basically, a lot of yeses and right ons. It is just that this notion of some singular energy and with a will just doesn't work for me. Page 71 " if we declare our own will to be God's will and instead do evil, we will also fail." I don't agree that we will fail. We are working on it as a society and if some need God to work on it please it's freedom of choice I support their right to believe, It is just that I derive energy and passion elsewhere.*

*Also, above this quote I see what I was saying to you in the previous email which you concur here "But there comes a time when we have to stop thinking about how to say things better and how to do things better and actually do them" pg. 71*

*Your email below. I re-read it. I suppose what stands out is " If you want love to conquer all, you will have to communicate a better understanding than we have had thus far." and that for me is 6 principles and 7 sources of UU. I believe in humanity to continue to learn and grow and make huge differences that make the world a better place. Look I agree with most of your letter . We would really have to go page by page and discuss but at the end of the day do we need to be on the figurative same page? Can we agree we both really want what is best for the world and through our Actions and petitions ( just signed one from Bristol Bay) we will get there. How would an atheist interpret the serenity prayer?. I think in much the same way you do except they don't use the word Lord. I'm not trying to be sarcastic*

S

I think we're on the same page, agreeing on hope but not means or conclusion. I'm going to share this discussion with others, although I take out other people's personal references unless they choose to publicize them. Thanks again.