

Busman's Bible



A Christian bus driver in Southampton has refused to drive a bus sporting the slogan, "There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life". It is a message that the British Humanist Association originally sponsored for London buses but the campaign has now spread elsewhere. Perhaps it is not the best message to greet you on a winter morning, but it has given Christians free publicity for their God as the Adverts have become a talking point in pubs and workplaces across the country. In many ways the campaign has backfired on humanists. It has actually raised the profile of God in the public arena and given Christians an open opportunity to witness.

Looking through the message boards on the internet I have become intrigued by one thing. The God the humanists don't believe in – and are fighting to strongly against – is one I don't believe in either. The comment they keep making is "I'm sick and tired of adverts that tell me to convert or I'll go to hell". One Facebook Discussion board writer sums up a common view: ""non-believers burn in eternal hellfire and it's part of your duty to seek out the blasphemers and punish them". For many an agnostic or atheist, the reason for non-belief is the distorted picture of God given in their past. That is why I have enjoyed reading through Genesis and Exodus this last month. It takes me back to origins. These books share with me insights into God's care for his creation. I love the first two chapters of Genesis as they show me that I am more than a descendent of an amoeba or chimpanzee. The story gives me self-esteem. I am His special creation. I am made in his likeness. I equally appreciate chapter 3. A sad story of loss yet transformed into one of promise as God seeks out Adam in the garden and starts the plan of redemption. As I struggled with Noah and his 120 year mission, travelled with Abraham and his roller-coaster faith journey, despaired with Esau and Jacob, then followed with wonder God's workings with Moses and the Israelites, I came to realise that this is a God who is more than the "Intelligent Designer" of those scientists who recognise some plan in the cosmos but do not want to put a name to it. This is a God who works for relationship with his creation. Working with the 'stiff-necked' Israelites in the wilderness – and recognising all their weaknesses, he still says to them, "The people that you live among well see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you" [Ex 34:10 NIV] As our "Follow the Bible" reading plan takes us into the Leviticus and Numbers with their rules and regulations we may find the message harder to see, yet even there the very rules themselves point to a God who cares for their physical, social and spiritual wellbeing. He gives them a set of guidelines far superior to those of the surrounding nations.

There is some hard going in parts of the Old Testament. Some may struggle with parts of the reading plan, but I would suggest that you always ask the question, "What is God trying to say to me in this passage?" I may not get all the answers but I'm sure it will prayerfully make me think. It may also give me something to talk about on the bus because I can now "stop worrying and enjoy my life" because I know I have a God who cares.

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