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Conversation about Beliefs

By Freddy Davis



A while back, a Facebook friend posted a meme that showed up in my Facebook feed. It was a political yard sign that said, "God bows down to President Donald J. Trump: Declares he is perfect." At first I just looked past it, but very quickly people started jumping in to put down Christians. I originally had no intention of getting into this conversation, but finally came to the conclusion that someone ought to say something positive to defend the Christian faith and perspective, so I put in one comment.

However, someone didn't like that I said something positive about Christians and started coming after me. At that point, I engaged this individual and we had the following conversation.

**[Notes:**

1. The conversation below is not everything that was written under this meme. I only included the string that I became involved with.
2. I have not included actual names except my own.
3. The conversation is not edited, so you will find some errors in grammar and spelling.

**FS**

Definitely Evangelicals fingerprints, RL what do you say

**RL**

FS definitely

**LM**

no Christians buy that crap

**RL**

LM you do know the Klan is founded upon Christian principles right?

**FS**

Very much so

**[Note:** A conversation about the Klan continued, but in a different string. I did not become involved with that and it is not included here.]

**Freddy Davis**

That is not an evangelical point of view. You don't seem to know much about evangelicals.

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**RL**

Freddy Davis what is there to know. The doctrine of Christianity is what it is.

**Freddy Davis**

RL Surely that is tongue-in-cheek, right? You can't be that uneducated about the variety of theological expressions that claim Christianity as their root.

**RL**

Freddy Davis which lends to much of the problem. So, because there are many "factions" of the Christian religion. The one "common" thing, which to say the least isn't really common because of the interpretations is the bible, correct?

**Freddy Davis**

The fact that there are people who do not know how to correctly interpret the Bible does not lead to the conclusion you have made. You have made a generalization concerning the "doctrine of Christianity," yet don't seem to have any idea what you are talking about. What, to you, is the "doctrine of Christianity?"

**RL**

Freddy Davis s\_\_\_ that's way to easy... the bible.

**RL**

Or... maybe it's not the easy. Which leads to an entire separate falsehood, concerning the religion.

**Freddy Davis**

You obviously don't understand as much as you think you do. You make some rather strident assertions concerning the beliefs of Christianity, yet you have not given any reasons why what you believe is true and why Christianity is false. Simply making a claim does not make it true.

There are very specific hermeneutical principles involved in interpret-

ing the Bible (or any literature, for that matter). The variation in what people say they believe come from two different sources.

One matter stems from the fact that there are two categories of beliefs associated with the faith. The core essential beliefs are those that actually define the Christian faith itself, and every genuine Christian church believes these. There are also non-essential doctrines that have more to do with how people express their faith (which accounts for the various denominations) It appears to me that your lack of understanding of this has led to your misstatements above.

The other matter is that there are denominations and churches that have abandoned biblical theology altogether, yet have still kept the moniker "Christian." These are Christian in name only.

Your assertion that "The doctrine of Christianity is what it is," simply does not reflect reality. There is no "doctrine" of Christianity. There is the Christian faith, and the faith is defined by various doctrines. So, once again, what specific issue do you have? And when you try to give a defense of your assertion, how about specifically defining what you mean. God is an objectively real person that can be known in an objectively real relationship. Perhaps you should consider exploring that.

**RL**

Freddy Davis so it actually is very simple. I don't have to read further than your first statement. Proving something false means there is an assertion that it is true in the first place. I don't have any evidence that the bible is a historical book based on historical facts. Therefore I don't have to disprove anything. It is up to you, asserting the idea that it is true, to make me "know" or even for the benefit of doubt, "believe" that the doctrines, teaching and ideas

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of the bible are true. You cant disprove something that is unbelievable in the first place.

**LM**

Freddy Davis You cant reason with these folks Not worth it

**RL**

LM "these folks" huh? Right. It's okay brother. Bowing out of an intellectual conversations is something that I as an adamant non Christian expects.

**Freddy Davis**

RL Something is only unbelievable based on the presuppositions you begin with. You have, so far, failed to specifically state your starting point. Based on the very incomplete assertions you have made, you seem to be operating from a naturalistic worldview perspective. Is that the case? Are you dissing my beliefs based on an assumption that the natural universe is all that exists?

In order to have a credible argument that my beliefs are false, you necessarily begin with an assumption that what you believe about the nature of reality is true. Yet you have not demonstrated that to be so.

You see, you do have to read further than my first statement. If you are going to challenge someone else's beliefs, you better be ready to defend your own.

(You do realize, don't you, that your assertion that there is no evidence that the Bible is a historical book based on historical facts is simply not true? The fact that you have not done enough research to know that says nothing about the historical reliability of the text.)

**RL**

Freddy Davis we are going in circles my brother. So here is my beginning just to give you the starting point that you ask for. The bible is a fictitious

piece of literature stolen from ancient Egyptian stories, remastered and re-taught, with a European, white male dominant twist, used only to control and attempt to govern the masses... so let's go from there.

**Freddy Davis**

That is simply not true. Where do you get that kind of nonsense? This is not helping your credibility.

And you didn't answer my question. Do you hold naturalistic worldview beliefs?

**RL**

First and foremost, I dont want nor do I need credibility, that in itself would be submitting to someone's else's truth instead of my own. To answer your second question, I dont have belief. Beliefs are only necessary for those who don't know.

**LM**

RL bye buddy

**RL**

LM (Bye Bye emoji)

**Freddy Davis**

RL You are not really serious, are you? Don't have any beliefs? What do you think you have been spouting? Just because you can't articulate them doesn't mean you don't have them. When you give answers like that, it does hurt your credibility. It shows you have no idea what you are talking about.

Your "truth" consists of the things you "believe." What do you believe about God? What do you believe about man? What do you believe about the ultimate a person can achieve in life? You do have "beliefs" about all of these things, and there is not a single one of these questions that you can answer based on empirical knowledge. (I won't ask you what you believe about the Bible because your previous answers show you don't know anything about it.)

God really does exist, though, as an objectively real person - and you can know him in an objectively real personal relationship if you are willing to. I am really looking forward to your answers.

**RL**

Freddy Davis no sir. Truths are not bathed in beliefs. I don't follow doctrines based on belief. Only Logic, facts and truths

**Freddy Davis**

That is simply not true. You have no idea what you are even saying. For instance, do you believe in God? Support your answer with logic, facts, and truths.

**RL**

I don't believe in God, but see him everyday I look in the mirror. Logically, factually and truthfully, I KNOW I exist, therefore believing is not necessary.

**Freddy Davis**

Since you don't believe in God, am I to assume that you believe that the natural universe is all that exists? (Please answer this question.) Also, simply making a claim that you are God does not make it so. You need to demonstrate logically, factually, and truthfully how you know that to be true.

**RL**

I think you are missing my point, and to continue to ask questions hoping that you will steer me into some kind of quagmire will not happen. If you have a point, simply state it. I am not going to continue to answer the same question just because you asked it a different way. So that question has been asked and answer (the one about believing in God). And it was absolutely done in a logical, factual and truthful manner.

**Freddy Davis**

You absolutely did not answer my question, and now I believe you are dodging. The fact is you have not demonstrated in any way that you are God - neither logically, factually, nor truthfully. But I am actually more interested in the other question you didn't answer. Do you believe that the natural universe is all that exists?

**RL**

Freddy Davis no I answered the question, just not to your liking. I don't dodge questions because I don't have to. If I don't want to answer I simply say that as well. But I indeed answered your question.

**Freddy Davis**

You are the one that put down another person for "bowing out of an intellectual conversation," and here you are avoiding the implications of your own words. Saying you don't have beliefs is silly. You do have beliefs - beliefs that cannot be answered based on your own requirements of logic, facts, and truth. Saying you "don't believe in God" is a totally meaningless statement. We know nothing about what you believe by knowing what you don't believe. But you do believe in something! My guess, based on the less than forthcoming answers you have given, is that you do believe that the natural universe is all that exists - that there is no such thing as a transcendent, non-natural reality. That is a positive statement of what you seem to be saying you believe (without being able to verbally express it). But that is a "belief." And using your own standards, you must have some empirical way of demonstrating your belief to be true. So, it is time to back up your words. Give me the "facts" you have to support what you believe.

It is really unfortunate that you insist on asserting your beliefs in ways that put down people you don't agree with. You don't seem to be able to have an actual civil, intelligent conversation. Here's hoping you can get past that - and perhaps even come to the place where you realize that your beliefs really are beliefs.

I will say again, that an objectively real God does exist, and he has revealed himself in an objectively real propositional revelation. He can be known personally by those who are willing to honestly explore the possibility.

**RL**

Freddy Davis every response you have given is completely subjective... based on your beliefs. You can't tell me that because I do not agree with what you are saying "makes" me have a belief..

**Freddy Davis**

It is not subjective to say that you have beliefs. It is impossible not to have them. It is curious that you don't understand that simple truth.

What you seem to be calling subjective is my "guess" concerning your beliefs based on the things you have said. I have had to guess because you continue to refuse to say anything of substance. All you do is say you have answered questions you have not answered and sidestep the issues we are talking about. We can resolve this, however, if you were willing to actually answer a question instead of continually dodging. Do you believe that the natural universe is all that exists?

**RL**

Freddy Davis yes. What I can see, touch and prove are all that exists for me.

**Freddy Davis**

So how do you know that what you can see, touch, and prove are all that exists? Do you have some kind of empirical basis for making a statement like that?

**RL**

Freddy Davis I never said it was all that exists. Don't try and twist my words please I know exactly what I said. So with all that you have asked, please answer what is it that you are trying to bring me to realize. There is no need to ask a thousand questions. Just express what you think.

**Freddy Davis**

Twist your words? I asked, "Do you believe that the natural universe is all that exists?" You were quite direct in your last reply. You said, "yes. What I can see, touch and prove are all that exists for me." Do you have some kind of other meaning that is hidden under the surface (One hidden in the last part of your sentence - ... exists "for me," perhaps )? If so, just quit playing games and say what you mean. If not, then my reply is dead on.

I think I have said my point over and over again. What you believe is not based on "facts," it is based on a belief system that asserts that your "facts" are true. However, you have been unwilling, or unable, to back your beliefs up by presenting the "facts" that prove that what you believe is true.

All I am saying is that everything you are saying you believe is actually the expression of a religious system (one based on faith in your beliefs). Now, everyone is certainly free to believe what they want, even if it is total fantasy. But no one gets to say that they don't believe anything and use that as a foundation to disallow other people's beliefs. If you are going to dis my beliefs, then you are going to have to justify the dis by proving that what you believe is true. You have not done that -- and you won't be able to as it doesn't reflect reality as it actually exists. There really is an objectively real God that has revealed himself in an objectively real propositional revelation that you can know if you open yourself to the possibility.

**RL**

I'm literally LOL. Because you have not attempted to understand any of my replies. You only tried to make them conform to your preconceived notion. But the fact remains is I don't have a belief or subscribe to a belief system. I know who I am. I know what I am... and that is based on facts. I don't believe because when you KNOW there is no need for a belief.

**Freddy Davis**

Do you really believe that? (Hope you get the implication of this question.)

Don't understand your replies? You have no idea what you are even saying. I have not tried to make you conform to anything. In fact, have you even read what I have written? I have done some speculating about your beliefs based on what you have actually written down, but in every case I noted that it was speculation. The reason that was necessary was because, in spite of your protestations to the contrary, you have desperately tried not to make any definitive statements. In spite of your attempts, though, you have done some of it anyway. Then when I point them out, you deny you said them. How weird is that?

In spite of your protests, you do subscribe to a belief system. Just because you don't seem to have made the effort to come to a conscious understanding of what you believe, it does not mean you do not have beliefs. Earlier I asked you three questions. Answering those would have helped you express your beliefs. You chose, however, to brush them off in the mistaken notion that if you simply didn't answer you could continue to pretend you don't believe anything. Well, keep on pretending. It doesn't change reality, it only allows you to continue to live in fantasy fog.

You say you KNOW. Well, what is it that you KNOW? I am really curious. So far, your posts have not backed up that assertion.

## **RL**

Freddy Davis once again, just because my answers don't conform to your standards does not invalidate them. If you think I "believe" something then hey, that's on you my friend. I am a spiritual being, there is no need in my consciousness for me to have a belief system, yet you continue to assert that I do. I mean I guess you know me better than me. I am not interested in what it is that you are searching for, maybe there is an "ah hah" moment, but hopefully you will get it from the fact I still don't have to "believe" anything because I KNOW me.

## **Freddy Davis**

It is not a matter of standards. It is a matter of understanding reality. You say you are a "spiritual being." I suppose you have some science to back that up, or is it something you believe by faith? Unless you have some empirical way to measure your spiritual beingness, the only way you KNOW is by your beliefs that it is true. If you do have some experiment that you have performed to show it, I would love to see it. The truth is, you either "believe" you are a spiritual being or you don't "believe" you are a spiritual being. (Either way, it is a belief and is an expression of your faith system.) How do you KNOW that is true?

## **Conclusion**

At this point, RL bailed out of the conversation. This is a typical response when people begin to realize that they can't support the line of thinking they are asserting.

I'll admit that it is rather frustrating for me to deal with people like this, and I hate it when they just drop out of a conversation. However, there is value in engaging these conversations.

First, even though there was not a lot of opportunity to share faith in Christ with this individual, there was some, and at the very least I was able to plant some seeds that hopefully will someday sprout.

Second, I also know that there were numerous people following this conversation. The witness I was able to share, and my showing the falsity of RL's arguments, was hopefully an encouragement to them – both for their own Christian walk, and to provide them confidence that their Christian faith can stand in the face of opposition.

Finally, there are different approaches that must be taken to witness depending on the situation. While it is not necessarily the most pleasant thing to get into these kinds of back and forth dialogs, sometimes it is necessary for a witness to take place. Jesus once shared a parable about the soils (Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, and Luke 8:4-15). He indicated that there were different kinds of soils that the gospel message might fall into. One of those was hard ground. When the seed of the gospel falls onto that kind of ground, it can't penetrate, and it won't bear fruit. It is not that this kind of soil is incapable of being good soil, but as long as it

is hard, it won't be. It is my hope and prayer that the above conversation will have the effect of beginning to break up the hard ground, and that one day the seed of the gospel will be able to penetrate RL's life. It is my prayer that he will, one day, come to know Christ and bear the fruit of the gospel in his life.

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