



WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL
Volume 18 Number 24
June 28, 2022

A Reasonable Discussion With An Ex-Mormon

By Tal Davis

Recently I received on my personal email a message from a man I will call Buzz (not his real name). The message is a fairly typical example of the kinds of correspondence we often get at MarketFaith Ministries on all kind of issues. In this case, Buzz wanted to discuss Mormonism, but I think he really wanted to get into deeper questions about the truth of Christianity. I thought you might enjoy reading our discussion.

Now let's get into it.

BUZZ

Hi Tal

I hope this finds you well.

I came across your article "The six big problems with Mormonism" today. As an ex Mormon I find these articles interesting and fascinating.

I was raised a Mormon and knew nothing of the "truth" until I left home and began my own knowledge search. It has been many years since I left Mormonism. I have looked high and low for the truth. I seem to find more questions than answers.

Nonetheless I am reaching out to start a conversation around Mormonism. I will keep this short in hopes that you will return this message.

TAL

Thanks for writing. I commend you for realizing the fallacies of Mormonism. Nonetheless, I get the feeling you are still unsure of which faith system

(if any) is really true. Unfortunately, many ex-Mormons sort of "throw out the baby with the bath water" when it comes to religious issues. They are afraid they will get burned again. Obviously, however, I believe that Christianity in its purest form is demonstrably true. There are good reasons to believe that Jesus was a real person, that He lived and ministered in 1st century Palestine, that He was crucified on a Roman cross and died, that He was buried in a borrowed tomb, and that (and this is the big one) He actually rose from the dead and was seen by hundreds of eyewitnesses. I will be glad to try and answer any questions you might have about Mormonism, Christianity, or anything else if I can.

BUZZ

Hi Tal

Thank you for the reply.

I want to shoot you straight here. I'm not interested in a sales pitch about Christianity. I personally do not believe it to be true for a myriad of reasons. But we don't need to debate its validity. Each of us are entitled to our own beliefs. I certainly respect yours and would ask that you do the same for me. One of the main issues I have with Christianity is peoples need to try and sell it to me. That in itself is doubt creeping out and desiring approval of others. But that is a topic for another day.

Let's focus on the real reason I reached out to you, Mormonism.

I am about as educated as they come on Mormonism. The main question I have about it is why do you think

Permission to Reprint

If you wish to reprint this article in your own print or electronic newsletter, please include the following text:

*Reprinted from **Worldview Made Practical**; a free e-zine produced by **MarketFaith Ministries** featuring practical teaching and life tools to help Christians become more effective in their faith life. Discover **MarketFaith Ministries** at www.marketfaith.org.*

Speaking Schedule

If you are interested in having Freddy Davis or Tal Davis present one of our **Worldview Seminars** or to share about worldview and its practical implications at your church or organization, please contact **MarketFaith Ministries** to schedule your event. All contact information is at the bottom of this e-zine.

Worldview Resources

It is one of the primary purposes of **MarketFaith Ministries** to provide resources to help Christians understand the practical implications of worldview. You can find many free resources that will help you in your quest at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

the ones in it cannot see it's glaring issues? Why can't they see that their founder was a fraud, a thief, and a ----- (censored)? They will die defending those fallacies. Why?

TAL

Thanks again for writing. I can assure you I am not trying to sell you anything. In fact, I couldn't even if I wanted to. Faith in Jesus costs us nothing (though it cost God everything). I thought you wanted to discuss "truth."

In any case, I get that you want to focus on Mormonism. You wonder why so many people are committed to Mormonism despite its lack of intellectual and historical credibility? I think the answer is simple, most people want to have something to believe in. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has mastered the art of presenting its propaganda in ways that are quite appealing to some naive folks looking for answers. Of course, the LDS church carefully disguises its peculiar doctrines and practices by couching it all in familiar Christian terminology. Thus, even most Mormons don't fully comprehend just how deviant their faith is from historic Christianity. In recent years, the LDS has gone to even greater lengths to obscure its unorthodox theological distinctives, even to no longer referring to itself or its members as Mormons or Latter-day Saints (and demanding the secular press do the same). They now use the title "The Church of Jesus Christ" and want to be known as "Christians."

Also, people who are raised in the Mormon faith and culture generally are indoctrinated into the church's theology and polity to such an extent that they take it for granted as true. This is, of course, true of most people who are raised in any reli-

gious system and culture, including Christianity. Often it takes some case of religious or personal crisis to shake them out of their presumptions. That is why I always challenge skeptical people, and those of other faiths, to examine carefully the bases of their own worldviews and beliefs (Yes, I encourage Christians to do so also). Then I challenge them to investigate the claims of Christ and of historic Christianity. I tell them not to just take my word for it, but to study the evidence, which I believe supports Him and its truths.

I hope my message is more on point to what you intended.

BUZZ

I do want to discuss truth. What I find interesting is that when Christianity cannot answer or explain something they fall back on faith. Faith isn't truth. Nor is it proof. Faith is hope. Hope that they are right.

What makes you so sure that you have the truth?

TAL

I do have one personal question. You know where I stand as an evangelical Christian, but I don't know what your beliefs are. Obviously, you are not a Christian or a Mormon. So are you an atheist, an agnostic, Jewish, Muslim, or identify with some other religion? Just asking. Now to my responses.

I don't agree with your definition of faith. Christian faith is not belief without evidence, it is full trust based on evidence. Christians believe in Christ because we have substantial evidence, as I mentioned in my first response. Jesus Christ lived in Palestine in the 1st century A.D. He carried out a ministry and did miracles. He died on a Roman cross. And, most importantly for the truth of Christianity, He rose from the dead! These events were

Subscription Information SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE:

A subscription to **Worldview Made Practical** is complementary for anyone interested in receiving it. If you received this email as a forward from a family member or a friend and wish to subscribe for yourself, you may do so at www.marketfaith.org. If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, simply follow the instructions found at the bottom of each edition.

Contact Information

If you wish to contact us directly, you may do so by the following methods:

321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312

E-mail:

info@marketfaith.org

Phone: 850-383-9756 (Tallahassee, Florida)

Fax: 850-514-4571

You can order our products and examine our services at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

This issue of **Worldview Made Practical** is a production of **MarketFaith Ministries**, © 2023. All rights reserved.

witnessed, reported, and recorded by numerous people. Hundreds of people were witnesses to His resurrection appearances over a 40 day period (see 1 Corinthians 15). Those eye-witnesses included some who did not believe in His messiahship before they saw Him. One example was His own brother James. Another was Saul (Paul) who not only did not believe in Him, but sought to exterminate the Christian movement. Additionally many of those who witnessed Christ's appearances were later martyred for refusing to recant their faith in Him. Why would they do that if they knew it was not true that He did not rise from the dead? As Paul boldly stated in answer to a question about who will be raised from the dead at the end of time:

"12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, your faith also is in vain. 15 Moreover, we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ only in this life, we are of all people most to be pitied." (1 Corinthians 15:12-19 NASB)

Buzz

In the case of Mormonism your argument could be made for any religion. Even your own. You just want something to believe in. And you have fallen prey to propaganda and sales from your religion. Why else do

Christians attempt to sell their beliefs to others? From my perspective it's the need for validation. If you also believe what I believe then it validates to me that I must be right. At its core its doubt. I need validation to stave off that doubt.

TAL

I do agree that many professing Christians simply believe because it is how they are raised. As I mentioned in my previous message I always encourage people, even Christians, to investigate the truth-claims of their own worldviews and faiths. All people have some worldview perspective. They are either THEISTS, NATURALISTS, believers in FAR EASTERN THOUGHT, or ANIMISTS. There are no exceptions, though most folks have no idea what worldview they possess – they just live with it. Christians are Theists, but not all Theists are Christians (egs. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, et. al.) For more about worldview systems go here:

<http://www.marketfaith.org/what-is-a-worldview>

Christians who share their faith with others (and most don't), do so not because they are trying to convince themselves they are right, but because they genuinely care for people who don't know Jesus and His way of salvation and eternal life.

BUZZ

I feel that in the case of Mormonism it's power. It's money. It's control. What other religion believes that you can become a god? The Mormons have an interesting approach to the outside world. Kindness. The want for you to think they have perfection in their family. They want things to look perfect. Well behaved kids. No family problems. But it's all a facade. Behind those closed doors it's just as much turmoil as any other family, maybe even more.

Completely agree that those raised in Mormonism are mentally conditioned to think that it's true. That it is the one true religion on the planet. Even in the face of their shadowy past such as polygamy and the Mormon murders to just scratch the surface. Kids at the ripe age of eight are given the choice to follow along or not. They are told that all others are wrong and we should care for them. It is a massive effort to grow the religion. Baptism for the dead to save them and help them get to the highest level of heaven. It's a massive control effort and money grab. Because without new members their religion will die.

Now similar arguments can be made for Christianity as a whole and all sects of it. However Mormonism is differentiated by the effort that they sink into the effort.

TAL

I have been studying Mormonism and Mormon culture for over 40 years and I agree with your analysis of Mormonism.

BUZZ

Thank you again for your response. First I want to say that I enjoy the discussion and in no way are my responses meant to offend you or upset you. I am sure you already know that, but felt the need to call it out.

TAL

Of course, no offense taken.

BUZZ

It is a fair question to ask my beliefs. I will first say that I am certain that you have never met a person with my beliefs. I have never met another person with my beliefs. I believe in creation but not from a god. I believe man had a purpose but not the Christian purpose. I don't fit into those broad categories of atheism or Christianity or agnostic. More on this topic another time.

TAL

Your response makes me even more interested in what you believe. The truth is, I think I have just about heard it all. So whatever your views are, they won't shock me.

BUZZ

Faith by definition is hope.

Faith: noun

1. Complete trust or confidence in someone or something.
2. Strong belief in god or the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof.

Changing the definition doesn't change the definition. Religion is based on hope. It is founded on it. Hope that their belief is right. Hope that this man that claimed to be the son of god told the truth. Faith is trust that their belief is correct. If there was proof then faith would not be needed.

TAL

Hope is a consequence of faith, but not the same thing. "Faith" is indeed trust in someone or something (definition #1). People have faith in all kinds of things: the government, other people, money, a political

ideology, or in a god. As Christians we put our faith in Jesus Christ. But I disagree with definition #2 above. As I indicated before, it is not based on wishful thinking or blind hope. Christian faith is based on the facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Those facts indeed give us a real confident hope for this life and life after death in heaven. If Jesus did not rise from the dead then Christianity is false. As the Apostle Paul wrote in the passage I quoted in my last post (1 Cor. 15:17-19):

17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ only in this life, we are of all people most to be pitied.

BUZZ

You would be incorrect to say that Mormonism is not Christianity. It certainly is. Christianity is defined as a religion based on the person and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, or its beliefs and practices. Mormonism fits right into that mold. If you would argue that Joseph Smith taught something otherwise you would be incorrect. Then the same contrary argument could be made for Martin Luther or the pope.

TAL

In order to know what is authentically Christian, or what I prefer to call Historic Christianity as taught in the Bible and the early church fathers, we first have to define what it is. There are several key essential doctrines that establish the boundaries of historic Christian faith. They include the doctrine of the Trinity which teaches there is only One infinite and Eternal Creator God who exists in Three Infinite and Eternal Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Also it must affirm the full humanity and eternal deity of Jesus Christ, His life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

Joseph Smith, and the LDS ever since, has definitely taught and teaches something entirely different. They teach that God, the Heavenly Father, is a physical man who lives on another planet with his wife and spiritual children (humanity) who they procreated in a preexistent life. God did not create the universe, it has always existed containing millions of gods before our Heavenly Father. Jesus was "Jehovah," the Heavenly Father and Mother's first born child in that preexistent world. He was also the only begotten physical offspring of the Heavenly Father and the Virgin Mary.

I don't have time to cover all the other theological errors of Mormonism. But just those I mentioned above are sufficient to disqualify Mormonism from being included in Historic Christianity.

BUZZ

A man did live that was called Jesus. He did things that may have been perceived as miracles. He may have appeared to rise from the dead. Not claiming he did or did not. However with the knowledge that was possessed in those times people could easily be tricked with technology or things they did not understand. And in their mind it must have been a miracle. There are always two sides to every story.

TAL

The evidence for the reliability of the Gospel accounts of the life and events of Jesus are considered by historians to be the highest of any ancient documents.

BUZZ

I would argue that your assessment below is also incorrect. I would be an exception. I do not fit any of these.

"They are either THEISTS, NATURALISTS, believers in FAR EASTERN THOUGHT, or ANIMISTS."

TAL

Okay. But I look forward to your explanation of your beliefs. I would be willing to bet (but I don't gamble) that your views fit into one of the four worldviews listed above. Some belief systems have tried to combine more than one of the four worldviews in a single religious perspective. That doesn't work since the four worldviews are all mutually exclusive of the others. If what I am saying doesn't make sense to you, I suggest you read the article on worldview that I mentioned before: <http://www.marketfaith.org/what-is-a-worldview>.

BUZZ

Do Christians genuinely care for others and share or force their beliefs to help or save others? Why are the majority of convicts in America Christian? Why do they get defensive when challenged on their beliefs?

Sadly the majority of them don't know what they really believe. They say they believe what they are told. They say they are Christian because they want that image. When asked specifics they are not able to answer. When Christian's get defensive it's because that is doubt speaking out. They would have no other reason to be defensive of a true belief.

TAL

I don't know that the majority of convicts in America are Christian. Where did you get that assertion? I do agree that someone who is a genuine Christian who has studied its foundations has no reason to be defensive.

BUZZ

I must ask why you have studied Mormonism? And why for so long? What is your obsession with it?

TAL

I have studied all sorts of religions and teachings for more than 50 years (yes, I'm pretty old). I have contributed to several books about them. Mormonism does have a special interest to me because so many people believe it. I co-wrote a book on that subject in the 1990s. See it on Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/Mormonism-Unmasked-Phillip-Roberts/dp/0805416528/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1X7SXFDXGABJ7&keywords=mormonism+unmasked&qid=1684433824&srefix=MORMONISM+UNMASKED%2Caps%2C112&sr=8-1&asin=0805416528&revisionId=&format=4&deph=1

Unfortunately, as of yet, Buzz has not sent me any further messages. Hopefully he will again soon. I think He really is looking for something to believe in that is true.

Would You Consider Supporting Us?

Would you consider financial support for **MarketFaith Ministries**? I feel confident that what we are doing is consistent with your beliefs about spreading the gospel and equipping the saints for ministry. Would you let us be one element of your hands and feet in this process? **MarketFaith Ministries** is a 501 (c) (3) not for profit corporation, so your contributions are tax deductible. If you would consider this we would be very grateful. Also, if you would like to know more about the ministry, it would be my pleasure to share with you personally what we are working on and how you can plug in. I can be reached at 850-383-9756 or by e-mail at Freddy@marketfaith.org. As for any donations, they may be sent directly to **MarketFaith Ministries** at 321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312, or you can contribute through our secure website at www.marketfaith.org. Simply click on the "Donate" button at the bottom of the homepage. We are deeply grateful for your support of this ministry.

And, as always, if you have any thoughts, opinions or suggestions about how **MarketFaith Ministries** can help you, please feel free, at any time, to call (850-383-9756) or e-mail (info@marketfaith.org). We are here to serve you.