

Stand to Reason

Moments of truth

March 2005

Dear Friend,

I love Cold Stone Creamery. It's my favorite place to get ice cream. I typically purchase coffee ice cream loaded with Oreo cookie, brownies, marshmallow cream, and fudge. This is my favorite concoction. While I think this tastes the best, you might dream up a different combination of flavors that you prefer. That's the beauty of ice cream – you can choose what you *prefer*. When it comes to medicine, however, it doesn't make sense to choose what you prefer. Rather, it's essential to choose what *heals*. It would be silly to choose NyQuil over penicillin simply because it tastes better.

When it comes to deciding on a religion, it may not surprise you that many people in our culture approach this task as if they're choosing a flavor of ice cream. They pick what they prefer instead of what heals. Then they tell you that their preference in religion is true for them while your preference is true for you. No one is wrong. After all, it's just your favorite flavor. This is known as relativism – the belief that different people can have contrary beliefs that are all true.

What surprises many believers today is that relativism is thriving within the church. According to pollster George Barna, during the last decade, relativism was growing faster among Christians than among non-Christians. Tragically, too many Christians treat their faith like ice cream. They believe that Christianity is their personal flavor of religion, a flavor that non-Christians are free to ignore.

Relativism also affects Christian morality. Many believers are willing to compromise on moral issues that personally affect them. They erroneously believe that some biblical mandates don't apply to them even if they apply to all other Christians. Some say their sexual activity outside of marriage is legitimate. Others say homosexuality is not a sin, but rather a God-ordained lifestyle. Whatever the issue, a Christian can relativize it as though it were merely a flavor of ice cream.

I spoke to a group of about 50 Christians last month in Los Angeles about the trend of relativism in the church. They were surprised. Then, I spent the remaining time training them how to respond to relativist claims and to deal with relativism in the church. I concluded my training with three points:

1. We need to decide today that *we* will not compromise on moral issues. If we are challenged with an issue, we need to learn how to deal with it from resources we trust (Stand to Reason, for example). Then, we should respond by acting morally.
2. We need to promote our ideas and teach other believers about the importance of resisting relativism. If we are unable to teach or influence others, then we need to support organizations that will be an influence for us.
3. We need to encourage Christians, especially young Christians, to pursue positions of influence in our culture: education, entertainment, law, politics, etc. Then we will have the ability to create and retain an atmosphere in our society that allows for the freedom of religious expression. It's



I spoke at the Homebuilders group at Rolling Hills Covenant Church, in Rolling Hills Estates (L.A.).

not that we are trying to create a type of heaven on earth (we are aliens on earth and our home is in heaven), but we should care about maintaining a society that makes the great commission easier to accomplish.

Did you know?

According to pollster George Barna...

- Only 32% of Christians who claim to be “born again” believe in moral absolutes
- “Substantial numbers of Christians believe that activities such as abortion, gay sex, sexual fantasies, cohabitation, drunkenness and viewing pornography are morally acceptable.”

<http://www.barna.org>

The Homebuilders group I spoke to can thank you for their training. It is only possible through your generous support of my work with Stand to Reason that those believers are equipped to face the pressing issue of relativism. Your support enables me to be your hands, your feet, and your mouth. You are able to communicate what you believe is important for others to know. I’m grateful to be a good steward of the resources you’ve given me.

This is only the beginning. I have yet to begin full time work. When I start, this kind of training will be magnified tenfold and more. That is why I’m counting on your continued support. That is why others, like the Homebuilders group in LA, are also counting on your support. More importantly, I’m spending the next few months searching for others who are eager to join you helping me train Christians.

Given this task, I ask you to pray that God will lead me to other people like you who believe in Stand to Reason’s mission. Pray also that I will be successful at finding a special team of people who will consistently pray for my support raising efforts and work with Stand to Reason. This will be vital to my success as valuable tool in God’s kingdom.

Thank you, again, for supporting my work with Stand to Reason. It is an honor to partner with you and serve our great King.

With great thanks,



Alan Shlemon

Moments of Truth

One woman emailed me a few days after my speaking engagement at the Homebuilders group and stated how shocked she was about relativism’s trend in the church. I was able to share with her the source material for some of the statistics and emphasized the importance of the three steps that concluded my talk. She replied by resolving to teach others and “to wake people up into doing some thinking about this”. She will make a difference for the kingdom. Thank God for small “moments of truth” like these.

*Please make your tax-deductible gifts payable to **Stand to Reason** and clearly mark them **Alan Shlemon** so they are designated properly. Thank you.*