



The Beacon

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(*throughout 2016 Pastor Curtis is writing articles on Progressive Theology)

Progressive Theology 101 - Pluralism

For a great deal of the history of Christianity the claim has been one of exclusivity. It goes something like this: In order to have eternal life one must believe in Jesus. However, believing in Jesus often means believing a particular set of ideas about Jesus. Or, in many instances, doing particular actions that confirm you into heaven. For the Catholic, infant baptism has eternal significance. For the Mormon, these activities and rituals of the church have eternal significance. For certain evangelical groups it is about praying a certain prayer and asking Jesus to redeem you. Whatever the requirement, it all added up to, “If you don’t believe or do this particular thing, you will not be going to heaven.” The notion of exclusive claims on salvation has become increasingly difficult as the world has gotten smaller. There are too many other faith traditions that we intersect with. In addition, this particular issue has sparked a tremendous amount of animosity between Christianity and many other faiths.

As a progressive Christian I suggest that we can be faithful to the Biblical teachings of Christ without making exclusive claims on salvation. In other words, we can appreciate and affirm other faiths for people while still retaining our faithful witness of who Jesus is for ourselves and for the world. I often say it to people in this way (which I stole from Pastor Tim Philips), “Jesus is the lens through which I make sense of the world.” There are other lenses, but this is the one I have chosen and the one that makes sense to me.

So what do we do with the understanding from Scripture that Jesus is the only way? Without going into too much detail about it, I would suggest that the texts that seem to suggest that in order to gain salvation one must declare one's faith in Christ can be understood in another way. While some, like the writer of John, wanted to make clear that Jesus represents a better way than the corruption and abuses of the religious aristocracy of his time, to read into that a mandate that all persons everywhere must be Christians as we understand it today would be a very big leap.

So what does this mean for the Great Commission? What does this mean for evangelism? To this I would say that while it is not helpful to make exclusive claims about Christ, we still have a unique and compelling story to tell. We each have important events and experiences that are only understood

through the life of Jesus. The wisdom of Jesus as passed to us in the Bible is still “good news” that draws people together. The difference is that our story is one that adds to the conversation, not one that dominates and drowns out all other stories. Furthermore, our story is still an invitation to “come follow me.” But this is an invitation that is prompted by love and compassion, not because we feel the threat of hell is in the balance.

So I encourage us all to learn to tell our story in a way that is authentic and genuine and yet leaves room to appreciate other stories. The Holy Spirit is at work and draws people toward God even if they never come to choose the lens of Christ.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Curtis

Happening at FBC:

July 10: Kids and Teens Camp begins at Camp Utaba
July 15: Young Adults leave for mission trip to Alaska
July 19: Beers and Bros at Fiddler’s Elbow at 6:30 pm
July 21: ABGIRLS leave for National Gathering in Washington DC
July 25: Church and Child Development Center closed for holiday.

Happy Birthday to: July 3: Paula Walker. July 4: Phyllis Hollen. July 6: Matt Chaney. July 13: Chuck McCarty, Gene Miner. July 16: Zack Petersen. July 18: Verna Cook, Melissa Lepore. July 22: Lee Fry. July 28: Marquita Halvorsen.

Congratulations Harriet and Frank Arreola, Winners of the Starr Spangled Award 2016 for years of dedication to the city of Magna, UT.

Pave The Way:

The generous people of FBC have pledged \$85,900 toward the parking lot renovation! We just need \$14,100 more. If you have not yet pledged to help with this project it is not too late. Talk to Dennis and he will be happy to help you. We have \$7900.00 already in the bank.

New Church Directory:

We will be printing a new directory to hand out in September. On the Sundays of July there will be proof sheets in the hall during coffee hour. Please check your listing and make corrections as needed. Please PRINT and write legibly so we can make sure the directory is as up to date as possible.

Thank you for being so faithful in keeping up on your pledges and offerings during the summer.

Please Remember in Your Prayers:

All those who will be at Camp Utaba July 10-15 for Kids and Teens Camps.

Shirley Rogers and her Young Adult Class who leave for Alaska on July 15 for their mission trip. They return July 25.

Karen Carter, Amy David and the ABGIRLS who leave July 21 for the National Gathering in Washington DC. They will be joined by Pastor Curtis later in their trip. They return July 30.

Lunches of Love: Come help make a difference by putting together lunches for homeless youth. We meet at 11:30 every Wednesday. We need: granola bars, chips, jelly, rice krispy treats, individual fruit cups, cookies.

HYC is looking for volunteers to help with preparing, cooking, and serving meals at the new Homeless Youth Center in SLC. (400 W Harvey Milk Blvd). They have a commercial kitchen. Even kids can help. You would need 4-10 people to help with each meal. You can either organize your own group, or let me know when you'd be available to help another group. Groups can either prepare the meal and bring it to the center to warm / cook and serve, or you can come and use the food that is available and cook the meal there. It needs to serve 40 – 50 people.

For breakfast, arrive by 7:45 and be ready to serve the meal at 8:30 SHARP. Serve for EXACTLY one hour, then clean up until 10:00 am

For lunch, arrive by 12:30 and be ready to serve the meal at 1:00 SHARP. Serve for EXACTLY one hour, then clean up until 2:30 pm

For dinner, arrive by 5:30 and be ready to serve the meal at 6:00 SHARP. Serve for EXACTLY one hour, then clean up until 8:00 pm

Text Scott Fausett 801-860-6559 for dates that are open.

Rummage Sale News:

It's getting close to the rummage sale. Here are a few items to remind you of:

No TVs or computer monitors. They don't sell and we have to dispose of them.

Please bring big items to the gym after Aug 29th; this way we don't have to move them twice.

We need everyone's help to move to the gym on Aug 28th. Bob will need some help the morning of Aug 26th to put the tarps down.

Sorting will begin Aug 29—watch the bulletin for times you can help.