

resources. It's whether our central purpose is loving our neighbors. If it is, the church will prioritize its spending accordingly. Otherwise, not.

What we need is people whose role it is to show us how to fulfill the command to love God and our neighbors. People who have the vision to make the match between Matthew's church and those with the resources. People with a mandate to lead, not just talk.

I think they're called pastors. So . . . who's it going to be?

*Leave your thought*

## RE: DOES RELIGION HAVE ADDED VALUE

*Posted on November 2, 2012 by Daniel Kelly*

I LOVE THE WAY YOU TITLED YOUR POST. IF I MIGHT BE SO BOLD, IT seems there is lurking in the shadows this further question: Does it have added value *that can be shared*? That is to say, to the extent religion is something beyond reason and experience, is that element sharable?

By "shared" I don't mean something that we simply do together, but rather something that we can transmit one to another. And, more importantly,

something that we can transmit and others can receive even when we do not already hold the same beliefs.

Reason can be shared. Mathematical principles, for example, can easily form a shared foundation because they are based on reason. Even if someone starts with the belief that 2 and 2 are 5, we can use a rational process to show the poor benighted person that only government accounting can get that answer.

We can share experience too, to the extent it involves something outside ourselves. Even when we don't simultaneously experience the same event, we have likely had contact with sufficiently similar matters that we can easily analogize. I've never driven a Ford F150, but my Dodge Ram 1500 is pretty similar; those are close enough that we both know what the other is saying when we talk about truck-ness.

But religion, it seems to me, is significantly different in this regard. To the extent it is something other than reason or experience, I don't know it is capable of being shared in this way, and that creates potential problems when we are trying to reach a moral consensus upon which we can build and sustain a culture.

There is all manner of historical validation for the historicity of Christianity.

But the core of Christianity is something one must take on faith – that Jesus told the truth about our fallenness, and that only his death could repair the rift between us. This is something beyond reason and experience. We've never seen this thing called "sin." Nor were we around when the rift occurred. So we have no experience of either. Once you assume their existence you will see their effects, but you cannot use the effects to reverse engineer the fall and rift.

Reason and experience cannot get us there.

From those conjoined truths – sin and salvation – flow all the subsidiary truths of Christianity. If you do not accept those premises, you won't accept what follows. Well, at least you won't accept the legitimacy of the subsidiary conclusions by virtue of their provenance in the first truths. It is still possible you could reach them via different avenues. But that means the part of religion that is not reason or experience did not lead to the consensus, and so was not effectively shared. Which then brings me back full circle to asking whether religion offers any added value *that can be shared*.

But perhaps I'm getting ahead of myself. Greg promises a response next week, to which I will look forward with anticipation.

*1 Thought*

## RE: COMPASSION UPON CULTURE OR CONSIGNED TO IT

*Posted on October 30, 2012 by Daniel Kelly*

