

MISSION: IMPERATIVE!

...presenting the nature of creation

Does the devil care which of these two views holds sway over the hearts of these men? No, he doesn't. They're both fine to him! Either way, Jesus is not followed.

A Suitable Substitute for Islam?

Sometimes I'm pretty naïve. Occasionally I fall into the same trap that many others have fallen into when watching the news. As an example, I remember years ago being angry at the TV networks for portraying South Africa as one, big tinderbox, where racism ran rampant and whites and blacks were constantly at each other's throats, and the entire nation was in turmoil, etc. I knew better because I lived there. I knew how molehills were being portrayed as huge mountains and how isolated incidents were being reported as being epidemic. So, people ignorant of the truth believed what they were told.

A recent, minor incident surprised me, but it illustrated three truths to me. Here's what happened – A friend asked me if I knew anything about “death metal music”. (I know, I know --- *DEATH* metal?!!) Anyway, I had heard of it, but knew nothing of it. I try to stay somewhat up on cultural things so I'm at least aware of what society is doing. So, I went onto YouTube and watched a number of videos showing these bands at work. I expected very “heavy” sounds, violence, pieces of pipe and metal fragments mounted on lips, eyes, noses, etc., --- I guess a sort-of “Alice Cooper on serious steroids”.

Well, to a degree, I wasn't that far off. To say the least, this is not music that will lull you to sleep. There is no singing – there is growling and various other sordid vocal sounds. There is no tune – there is highly technical noise. There is no regular rhythm – there is.....something I can't quite describe. If there are words, they are not meant to be understood. Not as words, anyway. Like rap, it is a genre of music that doesn't seem to be meant to be enjoyed. You live through it. You exist during the performance, then you come out on the other side and wonder what happened.

OK, all of that is the story behind the story. Discovering what “death metal music” is wasn't really that big a surprise. What WAS a surprise is one particular secular group. They call themselves “ARSAMES”. They are named after King Arsames, who was a lesser king who served under Cyrus II of Persia long ago. Does that give you a clue? Iran is modern-day Persia, and this death metal band is *from* there. In fact, the members live in Tehran! Even more surprising to me is their popularity.



Now, are you as surprised as I was? Perhaps as naïve? What do you think of when you hear of Iran? We get the picture, and therefore the mindset, that everyone there is a radical Muslim extremist waiting to kill anyone who steps out of the strict line the clerics teach. You'd think that *at least* the hands – if not the heads – of the guys in Arsames would be chopped off for this travesty.

I also watched a clip where an American was interviewing young Iranian men in a Tehran park. When asked if they were religious, none admitted to being very interested in religion. When asked about their music tastes, they replied, “metal!”

My first inclination was to feel happy that Islam doesn't have the grip on everyone there that I thought it did. I was initially elated to see that outside influences are causing the rule of the imams to fail... until I thought about it a bit and was reminded of several truths ---

Truth #1: Does the devil care which of these two views holds sway over the hearts of these men? No, he doesn't. Islam? Arsames death metal? VERY opposite! But, they're both fine to him! Either way, Jesus is not followed. A false religion is replaced by apathy and worldliness. Like with evolution. Many people realize that evolution doesn't work, but it's not necessarily replaced, in their minds and hearts, with creation and godliness. It's not enough to show people what's wrong with evolution. It needs to be replaced by the truth, not another “belief system”.

Truth #2: I can be just as easily caught up in believing a certain way about people, events, etc. – perhaps just because that's the way the news promotes it? Perhaps it's my presuppositions? Am I presuming things to be a certain way, or am I looking at people and issues through the lens of God's Word?

Truth #3: The void of ignorance WILL be filled with *something*. Most people probably don't know why they believe what they believe. As far as evolution is concerned, most people who say they believe it probably do so only because it's what they've been taught. And if they're convinced otherwise, it's not a given that they'll automatically follow the straight and narrow. The devil will try to ensure that there's a “suitable alternative”.

Secular lures? Science lures? Religious lures? Whatever works! I can picture the devil standing near people who are becoming disillusioned with what they thought they believed, what they thought was true – like Islam, or evolution. I can imagine his wry smile as he holds out to them another illusion to replace the first one. □