

English 1120-1121 FALL

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Our Faith and Why it Matters

Everyday people interact; they share their stories, and we learn more and more with every word spoken. But there are some things considered too taboo to speak about with many people, and one of these things is asking someone, what do they believe? Who is their God? Or Gods? Do they follow one? Or do they devote themselves to some other power?

I personally like to indulge in these questions, and I love to ask about others' lives and cultures to learn what I can. Sometimes though, when asked, some folk may get rather upset, sometimes they'll tell you off and not to be noisy... Ok rude. But it is important to consider their opinions on this matter. When you ask someone what their faith is, it may be comparable to asking someone where they last had sex. Now that is something that would really ruin a conversation, let alone a first interaction. Once I had asked my coworker if she was religious, I was quickly met with a swift "██████████, don't." I was about to say something then figured against it. I thought this was odd because she is usually friendly and talkative, so it threw me off when I was met with this response.

It was here that I started to learn of the prejudice regarding one's faith and how finicky that conversation can be with someone. And more recently, I have come to realize the extent of effect that religion has on politics. Because it is with religion that political grounds are built

from. But these troublesome questions can quickly lead to an awkward situation that can easily ruin one's opinion of another, and even more quickly lead to a quiet room. Or some might welcome others' curiosity to indulge in their background and beliefs. Because how can we grow as individuals if we cannot learn what rich history and culture blossoms on this green globe?

But it's because of this association with politics some people may see speaking of religion taboo, which is unfortunate because of the culture that grows from a population's faith, and it can be so incredible to witness a land so rich in life and diversity. It's so important to learn about as there are so many great lessons within these diverse cultures built from the faith of our ancestors and a structure that's still being built by us and our children and then theirs.

Once, this other time quite a while ago, when I hopped on an online chatroom with this other guy, and we began our introductions and later in conversation I asked what religion he followed, and he said that he was Islamic (at this point it was 2am in my time) I was thinking to myself "oh? This is cool to talk to someone who is not Christian" (I grew up far west of the city's, there is not a lot of diversity) what I meant to say to this guy was "Oh? That is super cool! Tell me a bit about yourself! But what came out was "Oh... cool" and just that. As anyone would they were rather offput by what I just said and responded with "Do you have something against Islamics?" It was here I had just finished processing what I just said initially and was quick to say, "No no, I'm just tired." I think he was unsure about the situation but when along with it anyways. Soon though I was met with a positive reaction to my question of his faith as we soon began to talk about the many similarities and differences between our faiths, we talked about the prophets Muhamad and Jesus and the story of Aberaham and his son Isac. We spoke of our gods, Yahweh and Allah and their truths.

The stories people share are incredible and seriously make one think about aspects of a society and how a culture is built from it, and we shouldn't be shunned when we share our beliefs with one another as we have so much to learn and so many horizons to broaden by doing so. It's only with the mix of our views that we share our collective knowledge to better ourselves as people and a society. And to enjoy the fruits of this world and take a break from daily life.

But Sometimes, religion can frustrate me. I had been raised in an atheist household and became religious when I was about nine. I don't remember how or why I just remember that I did. I also remember that growing up I had very limited resources to educate myself in my faith so for the longest time I just had the basics. Maybe that's why I'm not sure what branch I might be. I believe in things from various branches. And don't believe in some things that I should. But also because of being ill knowledgeable in the text, I'll try to make heads and tails of God's word even though the bible instructs us not to as God's thinking is above our own. But there is the scientist in me that will try to make head or tail of it.

For example, we are told the world was created in 7 days but logically speaking that's impossible. I mean there's one thing that would make this statement possible and that is the big bang theory. That everything just proofed into existence, and it is a theory that would make the saying God created everything at once technically true. But then again, the bible also said that the world is 7,000 years old so this theory wouldn't really work with that either. Because 13 billion years and 7,000 is quite the difference.

But every single person can learn from religion no matter who they are or what they believe. Sometimes some people become close minded only open their horizons when given the chance to see from another's perspective, but it's also important to keep in mind that there's

people who don't want to learn and many of the world's religions teach us to love and forgive so we should respect this and their values.

But overall, should speaking of religion really be so taboo? The collective knowledge of this world can be more powerful than anything. The lessons and practices that we learned from our elders, and that we will teach our kids, will be the building grounds for our society for when we are gone. To learn the wonders of this stunning world can mean so much for so many and these brilliant cultures should be shared with the world.

For example, ever since coming to Anoka I've been able to meet so many different types people, all with different stories to share and ideas to spread. Some are more willing than others and that's ok. But for those who do share I have been able to learn so much about them, this world, and these cultures. The town I grew up in was quite bland. Everyone is white. Everyone is Christian. They are all rich and entitled. It's all the same and it gets repetitive and becomes a bore. But Anoka is not like that.

To start, I've never met someone from Libya before, or Vietnam, or Korea, Egypt, Morocco, Spain, Nigeria, Pakistan, and I'm sure many to come. Everyone I've met here has had some amazing story(s) to share about their home country. And even more about their faith and the grace it brings to them, and I'll always find that amazing about others.