



Prez Release

Words Actually Mean Something May 2005

Much has been said and will continue to be said about the infamous *Newsweek* story on the Qu'ran being flushed down a toilet. Some see it as another example of the erosion of the integrity of journalism. Others observe it to be just another “offered up on a platter” excuse for radical Muslims to spread destruction under the guise of reaction to the shameful actions of western “infidels.” There are more qualified people than I to debate any and all of the issues surrounding this tragic event, but it does point out some very shocking ideas to many westerners who think faith is passé, or at best private. It must be a shock to their systems that some people in this world really do revere their sacred writings and see anyone with great disdain, who dares desecrate them. Imagine the surprise, for many, that literature seen to be mere myth or interesting fable, actually guides people’s lives and is viewed as sacred and therefore authoritative.

Media elites feign interest that there are actually people in this world who view these sacred writings as authoritative. Imagine the literary deconstructionists who would suggest that words are meaningless or murky at best and to whom all this talk about God “speaking through His Word” is dismissed with a sigh. I might suggest they revisit their abstract theories and consider the real lives that were really lost when the phrase *Qu'ran flushed down the toilet* hit the headlines in the Middle East. Connection between communicative intent and clear understanding by the hearer resulted in turmoil, tragedy and death. The suggestion that the Qu'ran should be seen by Muslims as “just a book” or just words that are fine for nice moralisms and politically correct speeches, reveals a naiveté or at least a willful disconnect from reality.

In the current climate, where religious faith is yet seen through the interpretive lens of Sigmund Freud and William James, people of faith will continue to be viewed as objects of curiosity. Through this outdated 19th century interpretation, all religious experience is humanly devised and merely a coping mechanism for liabilities in one’s life. This time honored, yet hopelessly misplaced, assumption does not find root in the lives of billions of people of faith worldwide. Only in the developed nations of the world, where people have the luxury to live life without reference to God, can we find a cynicism about the Divine and a divine initiative to speak to human beings.

The events surrounding the *Newsweek* fiasco typify what will increasingly be the disparate way in which differing worldviews will clash. I must admit I have limited understanding of the death that could ensue from outraged Muslims. However, I do understand the constant state of frustration at the continued marginalization by those who live life by their own rules and not a worldview of faith. The fact is that the *majority of the world* is not being misled and ignorant for taking their faith seriously and God's Word authoritatively.

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