

Aren't all religions the same - discussion

Aug 2019 John Robertshaw

Look at these three cases. Discuss your approaches to these tricky situations!

Case #1

Your friend Julie at church has been obviously anxious and depressed for a long time. One Sunday you arrive at church and find that she's a much more cheerful and you ask her how she is. Julie says that she's been a lot happier since going to this fantastic midweek class called "Finding Peace through Mindfulness and Yoga". She's very enthusiastic about the class and has made lots of new friends there. She invites you to come along with her next week and try it out.

- What do you think about this midweek class?
- What would you say to Julie?
- Would go along with her and try it out for yourself?

Case #2

You work for an IT company and your desk is next to that of Salim who is a Muslim. You often chat with each other about all sorts of things and occasionally about religion. He usually complains that Christians have three gods.

Your church is having a mission and you pluck up courage to invite Salim to an outreach meeting and to your surprise he comes along. You're encouraged because Salim enjoys the meeting and is impressed by the lively music and the speaker.

The next day at work, Salim gives you a copy of the Qur'an in English and asks you to read it. He also invites you to attend his mosque with him this Friday lunchtime.

- How do you feel about this?
- Would you agree to read the Qur'an and would you do it diligently?
- Would you go to the mosque with Salim on Friday?
- How would you answer Salim's complaint that Christians have three gods (Father, Son and Mary!)?

Case #3

Your aunt Dorothy lives on her own and you go to see her every two or three weeks. You've tried a few times to talk about your faith but she really isn't interested. You think she might have had a bad experience with church when she was young.

One day you pop in to visit her and are amazed to find her reading a Bible and she looks a bit embarrassed. You ask her where she got it from and she tells you that two friends gave it to her. Rose and Sharon visit her every Thursday and explain the Bible to her. You look at the Bible and discover it's a New World Translation and you also notice a copy of the Watchtower in her magazine rack! Eventually she admits that she's been going to Kingdom Hall every Sunday for the last month and enjoys the talks and finds everybody very friendly.

- What's your reaction? Are you pleased or alarmed?
- Do you feel bad that you didn't manage to invite her to your church?
- Do you think it's good that she's reading the Bible?
- Do you tell her that she's in a sect and that she should avoid Rose and Sharon?
- How do you explain to her the differences between "mainstream" Christianity and the Jehovah's Witnesses?