



## **Payne Prayer Update**

Nov. 8, 2017

### **DC Evangelism Training Sat Nov. 4**

The students were from Georgetown, George Washington, and the U of Maryland. About a dozen were present for the morning session led Ravi Zacharias Ministry staffer Michal Suderman. Just four students (men) were able to stay for the afternoon session which I led. However, this made for good interaction. I was addressing science and faith issues. There was no powerpoint projector, but the result of this was that a wider range of issues were addressed and I would have addressed if I had used a powerpoint. Given that the overall theme for the day was evangelism, I spent a fair amount of time explaining how both the nature of persons and of moral beliefs can provide effective was of undercutting the secular presumption of naturalism and providing motivation to hope that it is not true. Usually I don't try to cover the question of animal suffering and death, but there was time to address that question as well. Both Kevin Offner (IV staff) and the students said they found the session quite helpful.

### **Church speaking events**

Sunday am Nov. 5: Faith Community Fellowship - Baltimore "The Reliability of Scripture"

Sunday afternoon Nov. 5: 4-5 pm: Grace Evangelical Free - Newark DE "Speaking of Jesus"

Monday evening Nov. 6 Stone Hill - Princeton "Muhammad and the Qur'an"

All three were enjoyable events for me. Since our sons had attended the first and we had visited it periodically, it was nice to reconnect. Present at the Princeton talk was Dick Kanzer, a close friend of my older brothers when we were all kids in Wheaton.

### **Iranian friends/Church Restoration**

The past four days have been a chance for me to connect with friends in Maine and New Hampshire. When Janet and I lived in Ann Arbor I got to know an Iranian couple. He came to evening discussions about the faith that I hosted and then would share with his wife about what was said. One summer I met with both of them for some discussion of C.S.

Lewis' *Mere Christianity*. She was a surgeon in Iran who upon moving to the U.S. was able to pass the medical board exams. We visited them in NY while she was in her residency. She is now a surgeon in Bangor, Maine. The curious thing is that although they are not yet Christians, they bought a beautiful old stone Catholic Church + covenant in Orono, Maine. The church and covenant were in huge disrepair (condemned for use) and the Catholic Church had been unable to find a buyer. My friends, Shahram and Fariba, bought it, and over the past 10 years have restored the church. A huge project! After they bought it, the local rumor was "Surely this Iranian couple intend to convert the church into a mosque." They have, in fact, sought to restore it to its original condition (but with modern heating, wiring, plumbing, sprinkler system (even into the attic). The day before I met with them they had received the certificate of occupancy! Their desire is that a Christian congregation would chose to rent the church, starting as early as January.

My question was, Where are they in their thinking about the faith that they would expend so much time and money to restore a church? I still am not sure where Shahram is on this. (I think he is open towards the faith.) Fariba believes there is a god (a good God) but that people don't need to follow any particular religion; rather the point of faith in God is that it makes one a better person in response to seeing God in the natural world, in other persons, and in acts of love. Pray for my ongoing connections with them.

Interestingly, one of the graduates from GCF Michigan and her husband live just .6 miles from Shahram and Fariba! After staying with Shahram and Fariba I had breakfast with her and her husband, Ellen (Walkling) and Roger White. They know of a Christian church that might be interested in using the Catholic church. It currently meets in a theatre in Orono.

If find it delightful the way in which God orchestrates connections and events in our lives!

**Coming Up:**

**Harvard Discussion:** Today, Sat. Nov. 11 "Does Ethics Need a Foundation in God?"

From 3-5 pm today I will be meeting with a group of Harvard students (I think mostly grad students) that are part of an apologetics discussion group. I have been invited to join them to facilitate a discussion around the relationship between ethics and God.

Thanks for your prayers,  
Peter