

Thoughts on a Prayer

On Sunday, January 3, 2021, Representative Emanuel Cleave gave the following prayer ““We ask it in the name of the monotheistic God, Brahma, and 'god' known by many names, by many different faiths. Amen and awoman.” This created quite a stir on social media due to the “Amen and awoman” at the end. In a later interview, Cleave, a United Methodist Minister, said it was meant as a light hearted pun, due to the number of women in the current House of Representatives.

There are a number of things I want to address concerning the said prayer. The term “monotheistic God” is not one usually used by most folks. Mono means one, so it can be interpreted to mean there is one God. Continuing in the definition it says in a narrower sense it is the belief there is only one God that created the universe, is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. Thus, we have a term which seems to speak of the one true God but only in the strictest definition. Upon further investigation the term “monotheist god” goes back to Ancient times. In Ancient times polytheism, the belief in many gods, was common. Hence, we read of various idols and false gods in the Bible. To those people “monotheistic God” referred not to the one and only God the god above all the other gods.

Mr. Emanuel Cleave then mentioned specifically “Braham.” Once again this was something, I was unfamiliar. This name is connected to the Hindu religion.

Hinduism perceives the whole creation and its cosmic activity as the work of three fundamental forces symbolized by three gods, which constitutes the Hindu Trinity or ‘Trimurti’: Brahma — the creator, Vishnu — the sustainer, and Shiva — the destroyer. <https://www.learnreligions.com/lord-brahma-the-god-of-creation-177030>

The Hindu religion actually believes in more than three gods as Brahman, not to be confused with Brahma, is the Supreme God. Brahma is considered to be lower than Vishnu and Shiva.

Looking at a website listing the basic doctrines of the United Methodist Church, it says, they believe in the One True God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It appears Mr. Cleave, a preacher of his religion, does not hold to such a doctrine as he prays to a “god known by many names, by many faiths.”

We must be careful to distinguish the name of God in numerous languages as opposed to redefining who God is and His qualities. The God of the Bible is not the

Supreme God of the Hindu's, or the God of the Muslims.

Finally, Mr. Cleave said the ending to his prayer was meant as a witty pun. Prayer is our avenue to communicate with our Heavenly Father, as David wrote, "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me; For I am poor and needy." (Psalms 86:1). We should think of how we approach God in prayer for it is a great opportunity but also a great responsibility in our request, and attitude. It is not a time to be funny or witty.

This gets me to the "Amen or awoman" at the end of Mr. Cleave's prayer. There has been a movement over the last 20 to 30 years to redefine God. To make Him more in our image, to think like we think, to want what we want. The Feminist Movement has sought to feminize God with terms such as "Mother God".

We need to keep in mind, the name of God, designates who He is and how we think of Him. There are numerous terms used to describe God in the Bible but each one recognizes Him as the one true God. In the Ten Commandments we read. **"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain." (Exodus 20:7).** To use God's name improperly was punishable by death. **'And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the LORD, he shall be put to death.'** (Leviticus 24:16). I dare say, there were not any puny prayer endings at that time. Neither did they use His name to curse or to show excitement.

What we are seeing in Christianity today is the trend to humanize and thus minimize God. People want to think of Him as a fellow human being. Folks, God is not just like us and He does not think like we do. **"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."** (Isaiah 55:8-9). As the same time of lowering God to man's status, some then elevate man to being his own god.

God is not a man as He is our Creator and Sustainer. One day in the future all of mankind will appear before Him in judgement. We need to take Him and that day seriously. -- Dennis Tucker