

Jesus and Joss Sticks*: Being Christian in a Buddhist Culture

*Joss sticks = 香

Discussion:

Where **might** Christianity and traditional Buddhist practices (e.g. funerals, CNY etc) come into conflict? List as many examples as you can think of (if you're not sure whether it's a conflict or not, put it down anyway for the minute).

What different approaches do Christians take to - for example - attending a relative's funeral? What reasons might they give for why their approach is justified?

Why is it difficult for those from traditional families to get these decisions right?

A. Five Big Bible Principles

1. Idols (偶像) aren't real... and actually, they kind of are

Do idols exist?

No! 1 Corinthians 8:4

Yes! 1 Corinthians 8:5-6, and more importantly...

Yes! 1 Corinthians 10:20-22 (c.f. Revelation 9:1-11 and 20-21)

Which means that idolatry isn't just harmless, so...

2. Idolatry (拜偶像) and Christianity are irreconcilable (不可调和)

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

Revelation 9, 13:7-8 (and 11-18), 14:9-12, 19:10, 20:4, 21:8, 22:8-9, 22:15

But what constitutes idolatry?

3. Worship is objective, not merely subjective (敬拜是客观的, 不仅是主观的)

"Isn't what you know in your heart the main thing?"

But: 1 Corinthians 10:20-22

And: Revelation's "Nicolaitans" - c.f. Revelation 21:8

4. However, not *everything* that has some past connection with idolatry is idolatry

1 Corinthians 8(?) and certainly 10:23-27

5. It is *much* better to suffer than to compromise (妥协)

Revelation 12-14 and the worship war

Implications:

- a. This matters
- b. There *are* things that could have been on your list at the beginning that are probably ok
- c. The key is **worship**
(A rule of thumb 经验法则)

Discussion:

Go back to your thinking about Christian approaches at the beginning. How is what we've said so far different from (some of) what you've heard Christians say before?

Go back to your list from the beginning. Which practices are clearly worship? Which ones probably aren't? Where do you find it hard to tell?

B. Three Practical Tips

1. **Communicate clearly with your parents** (和父母清楚的沟通)
 - a. In general
 - b. About death
2. **Get baptized** (受洗)
3. **Love them better (Filial Piety reborn)** (更好地爱父母)
4. **Use the monk** (和尚/法师)

C. Interview - Jun Bin

Conclusion: Grace and Glory

Discussion:

Are there ways in which this affects you directly? Are there things you might need to do / conversations you might need to have when you head back home? Pray about those things.

If this doesn't affect you directly now, are there other issues where some of the principles might apply?