

The Reason for God by Timothy Keller

Introduction

We live in a world and culture that is increasingly skeptical of the Christian faith. Churches who take seriously the evangelistic challenge to “proclaim the gospel to all nations” must make plans to address this task in our post-modern, post-Christian culture. If we are to grow the Kingdom we must make more aggressive plans for church growth than just welcoming the ones who choose to walk through our doors on Sunday.

Timothy Keller, an acclaimed pastor and U.S. apologist, has addressed this challenge at the Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York. He has since authored *The Reason for God* and packaged it for use by other faith communities.

This class will be offered as a pilot course in the fall of 2011. The class will be promoted and supported in collaboration between the Evangelism Committee and Adult Christian Education ministry.

Study Approach

Purpose: The purpose of this class is to equip committed Christians with intellectually satisfying answers to common objections about Christianity posed by sophisticated seekers (the “unchurched.”)

Approach: The class will meet over six, weekly sessions in a casual, supportive environment. Each session will begin with a pot luck meal, and time of prayer. After the gathering time, participants will view the DVD and meet to discuss study questions, in small groups as appropriate.

Typical Evening Schedule:

6:30 pm – gathering for blessing and Pot Luck Meal

7:15 pm – Introduction to evening schedule

7:20 pm – Play DVD

7:40 pm – Small Group Breakout Discussion

8:30 pm – Summary and Closing Prayer

Schedule: The following Monday evenings, beginning at 6:30 pm are planned for the pilot:

September 19 – Introduction/Discussion 1: Isn't the Bible a Myth? Hasn't Science Disproved Christianity?

September 26 - Discussion 2: How Can You Say There is Only One Way to God? What About Other Religions?

October 3 – What Gives You the Right to Tell Me How to Live My Life? Why are There So Many Rules?

October 10 – Why Does God Allow Suffering? Why is There So Much Evil in the World?

October 17 – Why is the Church Responsible for So Much Injustice? Why are Christians Such Hypocrites?

October 24 – How Can God Be Full of Love and Wrath at the Same Time? How Can God Send Good People to Hell?

Method of Evaluation of the Pilot: Immediately following the completion of the Pilot the participants will fill out a course evaluation and asked to make a judgment on whether or not to go forward with the class in 2011. Course evaluation criteria will need to be developed to make more rigorous the final evaluation.

Other Considerations: It is recommended that curriculum costs for the pilot be funded jointly by Evangelism and Adult Christian Education. This will lower the boundaries for those agreeing to participate in the pilot. A budget of \$350 should cover a class of twelve participants, including book and discussion guides. Food costs are note included in this estimate. If we pay for the main dish over the duration of the course, the budget would likely double. Either Pastor Andy or Pastor Kristin should lead the pilot sessions and discussion groups. Volunteers will need to be recruited for meal planning and hospitality. Effective promotion of the class (including hand-picked participants) will better ensure the success of the pilot.