HOW NOT TO TALK TO ATHEISTS

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Category: Mission

The Daily Telegraph has an alarming story about wildlife documentary maker, David Attenborough.

> *Sir David Attenborough receives hate mail from viewers because he does not credit God in his nature programmes, he has disclosed.*
> *The BBC television presenter and conservationist said he expected to be sent more such letters when his latest project, a documentary about Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, is broadcast on Sunday.*
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> *"They tell me to burn in hell and good riddance," Sir David said, explaining that he is regularly asked why he does not "give credit" to the Lord for creating the flora and fauna featured in his programmes.*

Of course it is appropriate to challenge people like Sir David on his views; but since when did sending hate letters and saying that it would be good riddance if someone burned in hell form part of Christian witness? I don't suppose that these sorts of letters to anything to make Jesus Christ more attractive to the recipient.

Mind you, being polite is not enough either. Sir David also receives some rather naive letters which are unlikely to convince him of the rightness of the Christian case:

> *"They always mean beautiful things like hummingbirds. I always reply by saying that I think of a little child in East Africa with a worm burrowing through his eyeball. The worm cannot live in any other way, except by burrowing through eyeballs. I find that hard to reconcile with the notion of a divine and benevolent creator."*

If we are to be good witnesses to our Lord we must avoid the temptation to give simplistic statements and answers. It's no good talking about the beauty of creation if we fail to do justice to the ugliness of the fall. But above everything else, our attitudes must reflect the grace and love of Christ Jesus. Hate letters from Christians? There is something seriously wrong here.

By the way; our family knows all about worms in eyeballs: Sue suffered from this back in late 1989 when we first lived in West Africa. It's not fun, but the ressurection of Jesus provides us with hope of a new and better world.

Read the full Telegraph article here.